Sizzle, sizzle! The egg bubbled on the frying pan. I watched as its edges turned slightly brown then a bit black. Unfortunately, my head was stuck in the clouds, wondering if my parents would like my first attempt at cooking. I tried something simple, as I was still learning this new skill. However, when I came to my senses, the egg had a ring of black burnt bits surrounding it.

“Ah! No! My egg!” I shouted.

I quickly turned off the stove and slid the blackened egg onto a plate. The colour contrasted with the beautiful egg I had seen on YouTube previously. Mine looked nothing like the one online. Again, I pondered if my parents would appreciate the egg.

I split the egg right down the middle, hoping to see the yolk ooze out. To my disappointment, a stiff yolk was revealed. I let out a frustrated sigh, turned and walked out of the kitchen with the plate in my hands.

At first, my parents were relatively pleased that the egg looked more or less like what they had imagined. But when they put it into their mouths, they tried to hide their grimace. My Mom forced out a smile as she swallowed the egg.

“Good attempt Daniel!” she chirped.

“It tastes delicious!” my Dad added in.

I could visibly see that their faces were contorted in disgust. It was painfully obvious that my egg tasted horrible.

“It’s fine,” I sighed. “I know the egg tastes bad.”

Dejected, I trudged back into my room, unable to contain the feelings of failure bursting inside of me.

Don’t give up! I told myself. This is only your first attempt and if you persevere, you will surely improve!
With determination burning in me again, I turned on my laptop and searched for any cooking techniques I needed to master in order to cook. YouTube videos gave me a bit of reference, but I needed to seek advice.

Anne is an expert at cooking! I thought. She knows how to steam, eep-fry, stir-fry, bake, mash, and many other cool things. She is a master with her ingredients, able to conjure up marvellous treats in an instant...

“Sis?” I approached her. “Can you teach me how to cook?”

She looked up from the book she was reading.

“Sure!” she replied. “We can start tonight.”

Over the next few days, she lectured me on how to flip the pan and how to use the pans and stoves in the kitchen. Next, she taught me the types of ingredients that mix well together, which ones add exciting contrasts, and how to make the flavours burst in one’s mouth.

After learning from Anne for a few months, I tried again to impress my parents. This time, I was more ambitious and cooked a special dish – a medium-rare steak.

When the steak was ready, I added the seasonings that I made previously. I sprinkled them onto the steak, making sure it had an equal amount at every part. The aroma was tantalising and the meat was succulent. However, the steak was not for me. With bated breath, I served my parents the steak. Again, they were cautious when they saw the red spot in the middle.

“Um, Daniel? Are you sure the steak is cooked? I mean, it is red! I don’t want to get a stomachache.”

“Sure it’s cooked! It’s supposed to be like that – medium rare,” I promised, injecting my words with optimism. “Don’t worry about it!”

My parents gave me one more suspicious look, then carefully sliced through the steak and stuffed it into their mouths. I saw their eyes widen with surprise as they began chewing slowly to savour the steak.

They enjoy it! I thought giddily.
When they had finished their steak, they grinned and exclaimed, “Wow Daniel! How did you get so good at cooking?”

A nostalgic smile lit up my face as I remember all the times I had practised cooking with my sister.

“Months of training, I think!” I replied.

I will never forget the sense of elation and accomplishment I felt at that moment. I was glad that I did not give up after my initial failure. Due to my persistence, I had mastered a new skill. Now I even hope to become a professional chef with my own restaurant one day!

By Toby Toh, P6