



“Dear Jay, my first born,

Since mom revealed she was pregnant with you 22 years ago, I’ve watched you grown. You, and younger brother Jin’s arrivals are the happiest moments of our lives.

Father-son relationships are special, and grandpa and I are still very close. A man of a bygone age, his prejudices run deep, and some of these memes rubbed off on me, e.g. wanting a male offspring to carry on the family name, when a girl is just as much blood line. Gramps has never been physically abusive, something that I appreciate and deliver the same to Jin & you. Violence tend to run in families with a history of that. "Do unto others what you want others to do unto you", the Golden Rule says.

You were a lively boy, getting into trouble when given a chance. As a toddler, you once smacked an older Malay girl on her back. Besides shocked, I was bewildered, wondering where mom and I had gone wrong? Racism, ageism, misogyny, what was it? Eventually, we felt your action was "innate", for you also had a similar tyrannical hold over Jin then. However, you grew into a caring older brother. This is when I knew you learned the Silver Rule: "Don't do unto others what you don't want to be done unto yourself".

A society is defined by how it treats its weak; a person, by how much restraint he wields when he has power. You will learn, as you meet more people, to savour differences, and to forge commonalities.

Being alone in UK can be daunting, but we know you are now fully equipped to deal with the challenges in life. Temptations are part of life, and you must guard yourself and others, always. A few pints at the pub may sound innocuous, but be vigilant of herd mentality and peer pressure, especially when drunken women feel like easy preys. Never just be concerned about what is legal, but about what might be hurtful, to others and to yourself.

Rules and edicts these are not, not from a father to a son at this new stage of our relationship. I find comfort that the young man reading this letter now, will question things and internalise the conclusions, and the resulting actions will be honourable, and with dignity.

Love, Papa ”

Tan Tatt Si (who penned this letter)

An imaging professional for video & stills, and the current President of the Humanist Society (Singapore).

He feels that men are by nature more aggressive and belligerent, but men can rise above themselves, and real men do not threaten, nor feel easily threatened.

