

2019

# Turning Point

Vincent To

*Xavier University of Louisiana*, [pathways@xula.edu](mailto:pathways@xula.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.xula.edu/pathways\\_journal](https://digitalcommons.xula.edu/pathways_journal)

---

## Recommended Citation

To, Vincent (2019) "Turning Point," *Pathways*: Vol. 2015 : Iss. 1 , Article 15.

Available at: [https://digitalcommons.xula.edu/pathways\\_journal/vol2015/iss1/15](https://digitalcommons.xula.edu/pathways_journal/vol2015/iss1/15)

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by XULA Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pathways by an authorized editor of XULA Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [ksiddell@xula.edu](mailto:ksiddell@xula.edu).

Vincent To

*Turning Point*

“Không có gì quý giá hơn gia đình của con.” Nothing is more precious than your family. This was something my parents used to tell me when I was growing up. Both of my parents came from Vietnam to America for a brighter future for themselves and me. My father escaped from the communist government as a refugee on a boat, in 1980. My mother escaped in 1992, thanks to the Humanitarian Operation (HO). My mother and her immediate family were allowed to come to America because of my grandfather’s service for the United States during the Vietnam War. He was persecuted and jailed for five-and-a-half years by the communist regime. My parents believed that everything that occurred before and after that event was for family. So a strong foundation of “for family” was built into our heritage. However, as a child I never had this sense of family importance.

Ever since I was young, my parents lectured me about the importance of family. Despite all of the nagging, I was still a rebellious and misbehaving child. I cared more about playing video games and enjoying my free time than about my grades. I was a C-to-D-range student, and I did not hang out with the right group of friends during those years. That group of people did not help me get to where I was capable of going academically. They only dragged me down. My parents knew about this, but they did not know how to help me with the problems I had. Sometimes they couldn’t help me even if they wanted to because they were busy working, paying bills, and putting food on the dinner table. Even though my parents are first generation Vietnamese Americans, they still gave me all they could and kept my livelihood their top priority, regardless of any struggles we had.

The turning point of my life was in sixth grade, when I failed that grade and had to repeat it. This point in my life made me think about who I was going to be in the future. I deeply contemplated thoughts like, what the hell am I going to do with my life? Am I just going to be a failure for the rest of my life? How do my parents feel about me? These thoughts finally gave me a mindset like the one my parents had when they left Vietnam for a better future. My parents kept me their top priority but I did not think much of it because I thought it was their job to do so. I began to grow up and realized that I had been taking advantage of my parents' strong love for me, their only son. At this point I began to take everything in school seriously. I became a B-to-C student in sixth grade, an A-to-B student in seventh grade, and a straight-A student in eighth grade. My school was a small one and everyone knew everyone, from the students to the faculty and the staff. During eighth grade graduation I was utterly surprised to hear my name being called to receive the Student of the Year Award. While walking up to receive the award, I knew I had achieved a goal that I did not knowingly set for myself. My mom ran up to me at the end of the ceremony, crying and telling me how proud she was of me, something she had never told me before. As a result of knowing that I had finally achieved a goal in life and made my parents proud, I set a new goal for myself. This goal was to complete as high a level of school as I could, so that I can raise a family of my own. I plan to give my family everything they need and completely support them the way my parents did for me, plus the attention and help that my parents could not give me when I was growing up. My journey continues as I was ranked third out of 300 students at my high school graduation, and one of three students to receive the International Baccalaureate Diploma that year.