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“Mission: Impossible.” To say that the impossible cannot be done would be stating the obvious, but even after turning 60, Tom Cruise continues to take on dangerous action scenes himself. Whenever I see him on the screen, I am astonished: “How far will he go?”

The rival British 007 series has repeatedly changed its leading actor. By contrast, in the American Mission: Impossible series, Tom Cruise has remained the sole actor to play the protagonist, Ethan Hunt, for nearly 30 years. He is a professional-level driver and motorcyclist, and he pilots airplanes and helicopters himself. It is precisely his determination to keep pushing the limits that attracts so many fans. He has no time to put on airs as a star or lead a decadent life!

It is not only the fans who are drawn to him. Members of the film crew often offer praises such as, “He encourages everyone on set to do their very best.” As an ideal colleague and an ideal boss, he seems to draw many people around him.

Yet the road to the glamorous screen was by no means smooth. He grew up in a disadvantaged family environment and also had dyslexia, which made it difficult for him to read and memorize written words. He has said that he learned to understand what he read by turning it into images in his mind. Through many difficulties, he must have honed the cards with which he could compete.

He performs dangerous stunts himself while creating an environment in which everyone can do their best. Perhaps because the difficulties were so great, he carefully accumulated the cards in his hand over the course of his life and was able to play them boldly. Watching his films, I feel the exhilaration of watching Tom Cruise's own life unfold like a real-life Mission: Impossible.

Tom Cruise's life may sound extraordinary. Yet to me, it is quite similar to and closely connected to our everyday lives.

As a routine, when my hair grows, I have my regular barber cut it. When ants appear in the house veranda (“engawa”) during the rainy season, I turn to the contractor I regularly rely on. That contractor, too, may seek advice from a nearby greengrocer on how best to enjoy summer vegetables in season. It goes without saying that we are helped by family and colleagues. If we strain to do everything by ourselves, we only spin our wheels. With people taking on their roles, supporting one another, one day ends and another begins.

Tom Cruise chose the role of entertaining people and has continued to hone that role. I can see only the character he reveals through his performances, so I cannot know the whole person. Even so, I want to cheer on the next mission of Tom Cruise, who continues to act tirelessly and without compromise.