108th WD Grace Eun Suk Kim

1. Why do you want to be an English teacher?

A 36-year-old Korean woman wants to be an English teacher. She got married to a Korean man who has great interest in English, but is still learning. She has two daughters who always ask her to turn original English into Korean dubbing whenever see DVDs or a sort of stuff like that. She was neither born nor brought up in any English speaking countries. The only thing she has done is pushing herself to English speaking environment. Being an English teacher is not easy even for native speakers, demanding a great deal of education and training. Then how come on earth is she trying to do such challenge?

The reason is so simple. She loves English. She has fallen in love with it since a long time ago and nobody can stop it. It’s just like destiny even though the things prevent her from loving it. When she met English for the first time at the age of 13, she just felt she was listening to music. She dearly loved music, so it was not difficult to do the same to English. And also her first English teacher had enormous influence on her, implanting joy and passion on her heart. She applauded her perfect test scores and gave her a few chances to sing before the class. She felt like she was somebody whenever she made it with English.

Like everybody has dark days, she also had to go through hard times of 5 years at middle and high schools. Except the first year with her first English teacher, she began to lose her interest in English as she got to know that she is not the only person that is fond of English and is good at it and, in fact, there are too many who are much better than her. What is worse, she didn’t see any English teachers who fueled her to keep loving it. She was so sad to be smacked by her high school teacher every time she failed to translate reading passages. By destiny, however, she majored in English education at university, but, unfortunately, she had to wonder off not to find her identity in her field by being criticized by not only her Korean professors and classmates but also British teachers and European classmates in EFL course at Westminster University in London. To make a long story short, there have been much more people who discouraged her to quit English than those who encouraged her to carry on.

Nevertheless, she doesn’t care at all no matter what people say about her qualities as an English teacher. As long as she lives, she will try and step forward. Her passion and zeal for English will drive her to do so. Above all, she loves who she is. In addition, living as an English teacher allows her to live just as she is. That is amazing Grace.

1. What effect has learning English on your way to teach? By using your experience, how can you make you a better teacher?

To be honest, I feel sorry about my fate not standing back in the safety zone, but climbing up to the rocky places where lots of challenges are waiting for me in terms of English and creativity. Because English is not my mother tongue, I am tempted to get easily frustrated whenever I make mistakes. Furthermore, the more I learn English, the more I don’t know. Then how can I solve this problem as a professional English teacher?

Looking back on my life, I realized that my endless curiosity drove me go to see the world and broke my illusion that English I learned at school in Korea is enough for my living. I’ve never given my opinion publicly, but now I do know that I’ve been fooled by Korean education system over 16 years and I know most of my English teachers fooled me and all of us are victims of conspiracy that English education must be unchanged not to confuse the majority of Korean parents and children who just follow the policy of the government without sensing the changes of the world.

Being aware of the fact that I am not a native speaker and have no intuition, I am enlightened to see that the world is so huge than I imagine and I can do many things making my own platforms as long as I keep updating myself as a professional English teacher. In order to do that, I must make much more efforts than teachers from English speaking countries. For instance, I raise more learning resources and prepare for my classes and rehearse again and again. Although I might make many trials and errors, I will ensure that there is no room for complacency as a professional English teacher. Hopefully, my students will get lessons from me that people who learn English as a second language don’t have to feel themselves small, compared to native speakers. And I will make sure that they will speak out in confidence expressing themselves in their unique English. I want to give them a breakthrough to take heart and exercise courage and also desire to be their role model and mentor to do that. Definitely, being an excellent “world class” teacher is a quite tough path to take, but I made a decision to do it because I am convinced that it’s absolutely worth doing for the rest of my life. Thank you.