To Thrive

I remember it so clearly in my head. I was having seollungtung with a group of friends. I initially turned down the invite, because I couldn’t afford it. I couldn’t look at my friend as I asked her to spot me 6,000 KRW. *6,000 KRW.* I knew at that point whatever I was doing at that point needed to change. I worked hard, and many long hours. But I couldn’t even afford a bowl of soup worth 5 bucks. I was tired of working until 10pm on a diet of sandwiches bought at the GS25. I was tired of my moldy apartment and my empty account. But where do I go and where do I start? How do I learn?

Being an art major I was taught to expand my imagination to as far as it would allow. At that time I had little appreciation on the subjects of loans, investments, finance and business in general. In fact, those were areas that I despised, as they were a representation of anything but liberal fine art. As I’ve grown, I’ve come to discover that one can appreciate both the arts and the world of business. Especially considering how important these things are in our lives, even from an artist’s standpoint. Art aside, business is a field I really want to get to know, especially if I ever want to start a business on my own. How do I manage a staff? Where/how do get loans or investments? How do I market/sell successfully? Oh boy, and anything to do with finance. These are things I know little about and I desperately need to understand if I were to start something on my own. How can I generate wealth? Which leads me onto my next reason for taking this course.

As I’ve stated before, I know what is it is to have neither riches nor wealth. I dreaded looking at my account, and as I was at the point where I couldn’t afford to meet friends. Meals offered by the mothers of my tutor students were the best meals of my week. They were delicious, but more importantly, they were free. I never, I mean NEVER, want to be there again. Now, I’m doing much better for myself, to the point of saving a reasonable amount. But I want to learn what it takes to become wealthy, how to use other people’s time, money and knowledge. Also, I want to learn what to do with my money, how to use it for future investments. I want to learn how to generate money without spending a single won/cent. A part of the reason why I’m hesitant to get married and start a family is the fact that I feel I cannot support them. I’m doing okay for myself as a single guy, but when it comes to family I’ll need more. Not just more, but wealth. I want to learn what it takes to create something that is systematic and self-sustaining when it comes to wealth. Learning this is key, which brings me to my last reason.

I want, no I need, to keep learning, to adapt. I’m surrounded by half-glass empties, telling me how difficult and harsh the world is. They put me down for turning the other cheek or to trying to see the positive in it all. I will not give up. I will not stop learning. I want to prove them wrong, but most importantly I want to prove myself right. I’m not a religious guy, so I feel I only have one shot at this. Why not try my damndest with the cards that I’m dealt? I owe myself that much. It seems those who tell us we’ve learned enough and to give up and just accept it outnumber those who say to try to achieve as much as you can. However, those who give up also outnumber those who have achieved something great. I want to achieve something.

*Maybe I’d like to become an art professor someday.*

*No, Mark. Don’t do that. I can see you becoming something more than that.*

This was dialogue between one of my best mentors, Jason my art professor and myself. It really struck home. I don’t want to let him down, my family down and most importantly myself. I want to give advice to my future children and to create a stable environment financially for my family. And I absolutely never want to live off of GS25 sandwiches anymore. It sounds cheesy, but I want to be the best I can be. That simple. Oh, and I paid back my friend the 6,000 KRW.

*My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.* – Maya Angelo