

Learning to fly

Business



One of my favorite quotes is by a Korean rapper and producer.

Kwon Jiyong, also known as G Dragon, once said during an interview, “ I’ve just grown wings to try and fly higher; I’ve come too far to fall now and there’s no way back at this point anyway.” He was going through a controversy with plagiarizing and being too provocative on stage, but he kept his faith in himself and was able to overcome it all. That’s how I like to think of myself; that I’ve grown my own pair of wings to overcome the troubles that have plagued my life. I’m still young, but I see myself as being a very mature person. I think of myself as being generous and loving towards my family and friends. I’m very self consciousness, but I try not to let the little things affect me so much.

One of my favorite things to do is to learn, especially about other countries, history, and art. Some of my other hobbies are cooking, sewing, reading, and going to concerts. My parents’ personalities and choices have had a great impact on the person I’ve become and because of them I want to enjoy my life by being myself and becoming more cultured. When I was 7, my parents told me they didn’t love each other anymore. I was very confused. Up until that point, I believed love lasted until death and once someone was married, they stayed married.

But here were my parents telling me that they weren’t in love anymore, and that they were going to get a divorce. At first, my mother stayed in the house, but just kept away from my father. She worked days while he worked nights, so it was easy for them. Sometimes she would spend weekends at a

motel, but she never took me with her. She finally moved out to an apartment above a small bar named that Tic & Tin.

It was a tiny place, but it was enough for her, my brother, and I. There, she started babysitting her friend's son, Brian, for a bit of extra cash. Sean, Brian's father, worked as a cashier at Game Stop, where my brother and I would frequent, and was a single father. At that point, I was around 9 and I started to dislike living with my mother. I enjoyed spending time with her, but she rarely had time for me anymore. She was busy with work and babysitting Brian.

So I spent more and more time with my father. This is when we got really close. He instilled a lot of my current interests at that time. For example; one of my favorite bands is the Red Hot Chili peppers, I love to cook and to make up my own recipes, I love walking through the forest, I try to read as much as possible, and I strive to travel and learn. After the Tic & Tin, my mother moved in with Sean and started falling for him, and my brother went to another school.

I usually spent the evenings after school and the weekends with my father then. I went to school out by my mother, in Orland Park. Living with her was tedious and irritating, so I tried to be out of the house as much as possible, especially after she took in my brother's friend and girlfriend, who both had a small child to care for. I loved my nephew and the other baby, but I couldn't take living with two babies in a cramped house. My father would frequently pick me up from school and we would go to the forest preserve or browse a

book store for the evening. One of my fondest memories of him is just driving with him.

We would always listen to music we both like, like Red Hot Chili Peppers or David Bowie, and just talk about everything. We would talk about school and our dreams and how my friends were doing. We always talked about traveling and visiting family across the world and what new recipes and cuisines we wanted to try. He would always ask me, "What're you thinking about?", when I would fall silent, and I loved that he did. It's rare to find someone who cares what you actually think about, and I was blessed that my father actually did care. To this day, he was the only one to ever ask me that, and I hold that in high regard.

The summer after my freshman year was the worst summer of my life. My grandmother, who lived in a tiny town called Raymond in Washington State, wanted me to visit and I was looking forward to it. I haven't seen her in years and I've always wanted to see Washington and travel on my own. So, shortly after the 4th of July, I took off from O'hare Airport and met up with my grandmother and great aunt at Sea-Tac Airport. I loved staying with her and had a great time exploring the west coast of Washington. During my freshman year, my mom finally told my brother's friend and girlfriend they had to leave because they were the cause of my now step-father's drinking and partying problem.

He eventually lost his job that summer. While I was in Washington, my mother decided that the best choice for her, my step-father, and step-brother financially was to move to Washington and live with my

grandmother, her mother. So, she talked to my father and set up the divorce agreement that I was to live with him until I graduate. He was all ready to enroll me at Oak Lawn. On August 4, 2009, my parents made it to Washington after driving the U-Haul across the country.

The next day, we went out to do a couple errands, like set up a savings account for myself, when my mother got a call from my aunt. I was told to leave the bank and wait outside. I didn't know that it was my aunt on the phone, and the way my mother reacted had me believing that my grandfather had passed away. We left the bank without a word about the call and when we got back to my grandmother's, my mother told me that my father had died of a heart attack. There are no words to describe how devastated I was when I heard that. My father meant everything to me and in that second, he was gone from my life.

I immediately withdrew from everyone. My family was also mourning the loss of my other great aunt that same day, so I was mostly left alone. I distinctly remember watching I Survived a Japanese Game Show and talking to my best friend, Allyssa, that whole evening. It was strange, because earlier that day, I had called Allyssa because I was home sick and missed her and my father. I don't know what it was, but I somehow knew I guess before I was told what had happened. A few days later, my mother and I flew back to O'hare for the wake and funeral.

Before we left, I had the intention of eventually coming back to Illinois, but while we were here for the wake, she decided she wanted me to stay with her in Washington. I hated it. She made me start my sophomore year at a

new school. I had about 400 students for 7th through 12th grade. I couldn't stand being in such a small town.

I made no effort to make friends, although some of the kids tried with me. The only class I enjoyed at that school was jewelry, otherwise I didn't care to do my work and I actually missed about one or two days a week if I could. I was too depressed to do anything there. My family there started to fall apart. My mother was depressed because I was depressed, my step-father had a severe drinking problem, my step-brother was being a brat in school, and my grandmother started to get irritated with us and fought with my mother often. I felt so hopeless and alone out there.

I cut off almost all contact with my old friends when I was there because I firmly believed that I wouldn't see them again. My only friend I kept in contact with was Allyssa. The most prominent event from that time was Raymond's homecoming night. I decided to actually try to have fun for once and went to the dance. I met up with a couple kids I knew from my lunch table and I did have fun.

When I got home, I talked to my mother about visiting my uncle and friends for Halloween, since I've always spent Halloween with my friends. At first she said it was ok, but in the middle of our conversation, she changed her mind. That was the last straw for me, because she's done it many times before while living in Raymond. I blew up at her and said " I wish I was the one that died." Despite hating my life out there, I actually did not believe that statement.

I just said that to her because I was at my wits end with arguing with her and it was my last ditch effort to show how much I wanted to leave. I stormed out after saying that to her. I spent about 3 to 4 hours sitting in the backyard just talking to Allyssa and trying to calm down. The next day my mother told me something I thought I never hear; she said she'd let me live with my uncle. I can truthfully say that that was the only true moment of happiness I felt while living in Raymond. I felt terrible for my mother, but at that moment I was so happy that she decided to let me go.

I'm eternally grateful to her for that decision. I know it wasn't easy, but she made the sacrifice for me. In the words of G Dragon, I too have grown wings to fly higher. My wings have helped me overcome the darkest moments of my life and helped me realize how precious my parents really are. My parents have taught me so much about being myself and how to make hard decision. I'll forever be thinking back to the advice they've given me.

When I'm travelling the world and learning languages and trying new foods, I'll always think of them and how it's because of them that I'm there, where ever it may be. I have these dark parts of my life, but I also have the experience I've gained from them. I could've easily become self-harming or turned to drugs, but I didn't. I may have been depressed, but I never once wanted to hurt or kill myself. I always thought that life is too precious for that.

It might suck in the moment, but I knew that eventually things would get better, even if it had to get worse first.