Big Bang – Shout Out To The World!

(English Translation)
Shout out to the World: TOP

“I came here because of that string of hope. Where do I stand now? I ask myself this but even I don’t have a specific answer yet. During the process where I search for my other self, all my worries will fade away because I must find the person who will lend his shoulders to me.” ~TOP

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Date of Birth: November 4, 1987
Skills: Rap, Writing lyrics, Beatbox
*Starred in the KBS Drama, ‘I am Sam’

The power to awaken a soul, sometimes it takes pain to be re-born. [~ Pt.One~]
-I once wanted to be a lyric poet that composed and recited verses.~

I became mesmerized with ‘Hip-Hop’ music when I was in Grade 5. I went crazy for this type of music because I listened to it all day and carefully noted all the rap lyrics. If we have to talk about Hip-Hop music, I have to briefly talk about the roots of American Hip-Hop.

When I first started listening to Hip-Hop, it was divided up into East Coast and West Coast in America. Wu Tang Clan and Notorius B.I.G. represented the East Coast (New York) scene and they focused largely on the rap and the lyrics, while representing the West Coast (LA) was 2Pac who focused more on the melody. Although at that time in Korea and from my memory, more people listened to West Coast hip hop but I was more into the East Coast style. When I listened to their raps, I would always exclaim to myself, “Ah this kind of music should be attempted by a man at least once in his life”. I wanted to be like them: where I could express my own philosophy and messages for people.

Their rap lyrics usually talk about the life of these young boys. If I have to briefly describe the feeling, it would be: “my family is poor, I live in a world of crime but now I’m successful, if my parents are thirsty they no longer have to drink water but they can drink champagne”. Sometimes the lyrics were violent
and very dark but this type of greed would happen at least once in a man’s lifetime. This kind of feeling started to eventually grow in me.

After entering high school, I seemed to be in the spotlight a lot...perhaps because I was taller than children the same age and I was wearing a lot of hip hop style clothes. I was into fashion when I was young so I used to wear hip hop brands that my friends didn’t wear. I would save up my money to buy the clothes I wanted even if my parents didn’t give me allowance.

I had absolutely no interest in school and started to hang around “the problem teens”, as the adults would say. They are my most precious friends now but in our society, people would refer to them as bad influences. When I was growing up, I saw a lot of things I shouldn’t have seen and experienced a lot that I shouldn’t have.

It was also during this time where emotions were running high and a lot of things weren’t going as planned. It was the first time that I experienced what the feeling of “being hurt” and “scared” was. Even though I was doing things the adults didn’t want me to do, my friends doing meaningless things were also a problem. Compared to those who were trying to positively affect these children again, I hated the adults who punished without reason. Rather than teaching children what was right, they used punishment to make these children fall deeper into the hole...and because of this constant hurt and outbursts, they turned for the worse.

The adults labeled these children who had just entered high school as “problem teens”, while the parents cried because they “raised a juvenile delinquent”. Even for those who, in the beginning weren’t doing much harm, but after being kicked out of school, transferred to a new one and having the label as a “problem child” made them fall deeper into their delinquent activities.

I slowly started to fall into a dark hole myself after watching my friends change around me.

Discovering dreams within a vague shadow (~ Pt.Two~)

What happened in Grade 9/10 made me determined that I could no longer dwell in this “painful world”. A close friend of mine left this world after a
motorcycle accident and soon after that, another friend of mine passed away from a car accident after driving without a license.

People were cold and distant about my friends’ deaths...they were not even slightly concerned about them. My other friends started to drop out of school after being constantly reminded they were “problem teens”. Up until this moment, I have no friends that are still in school. I felt that my life was non-existent after watching my friends leave one by one, but I still slowly tried to sort it out. However, reality was harsh and even after changing schools, the rumors and gossip kept surrounding me. Some kids at school picked fights with me and teachers were vigilant around me. Not one of them would actively stand up for me nor give me advice. Besides being an invisible person, there was nothing else I could do and I started to hate going to school.

If there is anyone out there now who feels the same way as me when I was still a student, I want to say one thing, “what you’re doing now is inadequate and shameful.” Even though I think the current me is much better, but to ruin your own reality by showing people what you think and want is very stupid.

During that time in Grade 9/10, I started to officially write lyrics. I started talking less and my thought process started to change too. Perhaps it was because I thought of one thing after another and it started to get deeper and darker. When I was in too deep, I couldn’t deal with the frustrations. My goal was still in front of me though and since it was always something that I wanted to do, I didn’t allow myself to be wary of anything.

I had 2 wishes when it came to doing things related to Hip-hop. One was to become a rapper and the second one was to sell a lot of brand name items together. It was hard to find Hip-hop items back then because almost all were imported so I thought about finding all the rare items and and sell it at a ‘Hip-hop Multishop’ to make things easier for Hip-hop buyers.

Now that I think about it, although it was a dream that was far-fetched but it became more real as I attempted it.
Adults have their way, children have theirs (~Pt.Three~)

I started working at a clothing store in Itaewon. I was happy that I could simply listen to Hip-hop music all day long and look at clothes I liked. I even had a thought that, “since I now have experience with direct sales and I know what the customers want, I can use that to my advantage for my Hip-hop Multishop”. After a few months however, my conclusion changed to “it’s not as easy as I thought.”

Even though I was still a child and didn’t have to do most of the work, but mentally there were a lot of restraints and it was physically hard on me too. To get sales, I had to go out and find people to go into the store. The owner wanted me to sell as much as I could using whatever method I could. When the shop closed at around 7pm or 8pm, I had to go to the night market to bring the clothes back. Around 3-4am, I had to place the clothes nicely before the shop opened. If I couldn’t finish the tasks on time, the owner would yell at me and half playfully, half seriously hit my hands. My wage per day was fairly high at that time compared to other kids...around 40,000won/day but the owner would say things like “you’re still young...why do you need so much money?” and take away some of mine.

Even though I wasn’t earning money because my family needed it, but I thought like a kid. I was still young, I wanted to buy what I wanted and I wanted to see the world like how it was. Unfortunately it wasn’t easy and I quit working there after being miserable for some time. From that day onwards, I started rapping.

“If my hip hop multishop didn’t work out, then I’ll be a rapper”...I had that kind of opinion. Perhaps because I was still young and I wasn’t scared at all...if one thing didn’t work out then I could always try my best at another thing. At first I wanted to perform on stages but since I didn’t know the right people it was hard for me to do so. The DJs in the clubs were very popular at that time. They were the ones who knew most about Hip-hop. Through my hyung DJ D-maker, I was able to know many rappers and eventually became either their guest rapper or helped them with their performances.

Anyhow, my new world began like this.
Becoming the first Underground rapper in YG (~ Pt.Four~)

Back then, the dream of being a singer was overshadowed by “being a famous underground rapper”. Since there were only a few “overground” rappers that was successful based purely on talent in the industry, so I had a thought that “to do real rap, I had to do do real underground Hip-hop”. During Grade 9, I met and dated a girlfriend when I was performing for clubs. We dated for a year before I was signed into YG Entertainment. She was older than me and because there were a lot of other smart university students, I wanted to show myself off a little too.

The voice that I had about my unforeseeable future was slowly diminishing and I told my girlfriend about my strong passion. My future started to look brighter and better. Telling people about my dream made me realize that it was becoming more realistic. I found that my passion was stronger than before when I had the thought of becoming a rapper that people approved.

That was also the first time I wanted to “become a rapper on TV”. How I got to make a street rap CD to hand to Jiyong was because of that girlfriend. However, after I entered YG Entertainment, we broke up before our 1yr anniversary. I was lucky to be a YG trainee and I looked forward to “rapping as much as I wanted”. I was even more looking forward to working with music composers so we could exchange ideas. My dream of being a rapper was slowly folding out.

During my time as a trainee, along with my dream of being a rapper, the thought of being a music producer was running through my mind as well. Just like Mr. Yang Hyun Suk, I had an ambition where Hip-hop and R&B music enthusiasts could go to one place to spread their wings. I realized that if I wanted to be an accomplished music producer, I had to go through that process on my own. I had to step forward if I wanted to be a rapper or a singer.

However, as my days of a trainee were about to end and as I went to my last audition, the reality of the situation versus what I thought were completely different.
“Our plan is to produce a group where dancing is a major element during their group activities. For the members who are chosen to be in the group, their actions will be recorded for a documentary.”

I was astounded when I heard the above 3 points.

A dancing rapper? (~ Pt.Five~)

Before entering into YGE as a trainee, the word ‘dancing’ was something that I never thought about. Even though I performed in a lot of clubs when I was younger but for a person that liked hip-hop and wanted to be a rapper, ‘dancing’ was never part of that equation. Now it was waiting for me.

Even though I said I wanted to be a lyric poet earlier on but to me, a rapper helped deliver messages to others too. An MC (short for ‘Move the Crowd’) could also be a rapper…they had to move the audience! The first time I heard that explanation, I thought it was a very cool way to express oneself. A rapper has his own color and is different than a singer who can show off his elegant moves on stage. The power of a rapper is that he has his own philosophical lyrics and his own way to express it.

The joy of delivering a rap creatively for listeners was already enough for me and I didn’t need an element such as dancing to complete it. Even without dancing, standing on stage and moving the audience with words was the charm of Hip-hop.

My thoughts are a bit different now. Rapping and dancing on stage can express more and “having fun with the audience” is more important. I’m thankful that Mr. Yang Hyun Suk’s expectation of me dancing is not that high. Perhaps he also thinks that “T.O.P. dancing well” isn’t really suitable to my image. It was different when I was auditioning however since I didn’t know what would happen in the future and that was all I could think about. To learn dancing that I had never even touched during my 20yrs of existence was a hard and difficult process. My heart wasn’t in it so my body didn’t adjust well either.

My mind was a bit complicated during auditioning. Not only was I worried about dancing but knowing that the documentary would be recording the members who would/wouldn’t make the cut, my biggest concern was: “I’m an idol
group so does that mean I have to learn choreography?” How would my seniors, juniors, and coworkers think of me now? I had mentioned to them my passion for music during my activity as an Underground rapper. Would they think I’m yet another “singer” following other people’s footsteps? These thoughts passed through my head day after day.

The hyung who did choreography yelled at me several times a day because I had thoughts like that. “It’s fine if you can’t dance, but at least have the will to do it! If you can’t show me that you want to try, then I can’t teach you anything else.”

Hardened, no feeling, no passion….I used one sentence to express myself.

If we had a picture that showed us the future of BIGBANG, I don’t think I would have had so many worries back then. I couldn’t see what a dancing rapper was so that’s why there were so many doubts. After a long time of debating with myself, I had a conclusion, “Even though I never imagined a dancing rapper, but if that was the only thing blocking me from my successful audition, then let’s try it out. If successful hip hop artists like MC Hammer & B2K’s Lil Fizz could act and rap too, I can also work hard with my ability to rap creatively and providing the audience with a visual joy.” When I thought about it like that, my frustrations all eased at once.

To be honest, it would have been very funny if I missed my chance to be part of YGE due to my poor dancing. When I first started to become a trainee, I couldn’t bear the thought of being stuck in a room for the entire day. I had a thought that, “if I train for 5hrs with a serious attitude, can I at least go outside and live my life?” I felt that was more important than dancing.

Another idea I had was to think if it was okay that I was separated from the other members during our dancing practice. Thinking back however, if we weren’t treated equally during our trainee days, the group called BIGBANG wouldn’t be created so well. Mr. YG probably thought of that too while creating his groups.

“Be a person before being a singer”. Since I didn’t have a lot of passion in things when I was a child but after going through a difficult process where I was stuck in a room that I couldn’t stand, a sense of pride started to ignite within me.
If I gave up the chance to audition, the life that I have now may not even appear in my dreams.

My belief that liking hip hop meant that I had to listen to different cultures and music was a dangerous way of thinking. If a rapper has skills, he can perform rap not only in hip hop but in all sorts of music genres like folk, love songs, and even in dance. Practicing with BIGBANG members are a joy everyday, especially when working with Jiyong. The balance between his high pitch combined with my low pitch matches quite well together.

If there’s anything I want to achieve, I have to believe in myself through my hard work and my own skills that I’ve accumulated. Even though it’s great to enjoy what we’ve got in the situation, but using my hard work to continue further down the road is also important.

If I grab the chance to lead now, I will diminish the amount of stress I get. If I miss the chance then I fail. If I grab a hold of it, then I’m lucky.

**Creating a color solely for myself (~ Pt.Six~)**

I sometimes have a thought where I “don’t want to become an adult”. I’m not saying that I want to return to the days when I was a child or because I want to whine like one, but I don’t want to stay in the moment forever. I want to keep creating my own music and have impressive performances. I want to be remembered as a person with lively passion. I will work my hardest as a member of BIGBANG and to enrich my life. Though it’s rare but I also want to become the musician that both the general public and the audience love.

My passion of wanting to use my own way to reveal myself increases every day, but it makes me uncomfortable when some people start talking about having the same expectations for those “who makes music” and “a celebrity”.

A stage is the best place for a singer to perform and the screen is the best for a celebrity. What they want to present to the audience is a “good and perfect” scene they envisioned in their minds. When situations occur unexpectedly and I have to do something that I don’t know how, I get shy and scared simply because I don’t know what to do. I don’t wish to be seen as a frivolous idol or losing my identity due to certain circumstances. In Uhm Jung Hwa’s ‘DISCO’, the rap
encompasses what I think: “At certain times, I lose my identity after being led...where is the smooth life...”

In 2008, I was featured in Gummy noona’s song, ‘I’m Sorry’ and acted in the MV. Every time I performed, I did my best and showed different sides of myself because I believed that “since I was a celebrity and a singer”, it was what I had to do.

If you use my reasoning and listen to the raps I wrote during these few years, you will notice that my music color has changed a bit. I also had “a process where I created my voice” and I’m still in that process. I want to create different feelings to show people what T.O.P’s voice is. My voice can sometimes be softer or louder. Every time there’s a new song, I have to spend a long time figuring out what my voice will be like to adapt to the lyrics.

“T.O.P ah, compose more music” (~ Pt.Seven~)

Up till now, the solo song, ‘Big Boy’, ‘As if Nothing’s Wrong’, and BIGBANG’s 착한사람 (A Good Man) are all songs that I helped produce. Even though I’ve written a lot of raps but composing songs are still a recent thing for me.

If I was frustrated with what type of music I should create before, recently the frustration has stretched into finding suitable music for people in their 10-20s and those in their 30s-40s. I want to create and merge different types of music that all these age groups can enjoy. I’ve also started listening to different genres of music like classical music because of that reason. From a recommendation by a friend, I’ve started to learn about fusion style jazz by a French musician, Tete. I’ve learned to use music “to show off my different feelings”.

After co-producing ‘A Good Man’ with Kush hyung, Mr. YG gifted me with a present after listening to our song. He gave me an instrument called MIKO. It is the special edition version with Timbaland’s autograph on it and the music he’s produced has been incorporated into the instrument. It is the first time this kind of music instrument has been imported into Korea. It can be connected to a
computer and has millions of different electronic sounds installed in it. It also has a camera and a keyboard. With this, anyone can make music.

When Mr. YG gave me the present, he came up with a challenging task for me. “TOP ah, it would be good if you could compose more music. Put your imagination into this instrument and produce different kinds of music.” After I received the instrument, my passion for anything got even greater.

I was still frustrated that time for certain things but after receiving that instrument, I tried to figure it out for 3 days without sleep. I didn’t go out anywhere for the next 20 days either. I experimented with the instrument every day and it seemed that I had found my new hobby.

Although all the members were like that, but I wanted to get out of the TOP image that everyone had and because of that thought, I wrote the following words into my diary:

“Become a transformer!”

”I haven’t been set in stone. Only I can create me.”

I wanted to level up and become a transformer.

T.O.P. that sings, T.O.P. that acts (~ Pt.Eight~)

In July of 2007, I became an actor in Rapper Redroc’s ‘Hello' MV. I had barely any acting experience unless you counted me revealing my face in some CFs. It wasn’t that I didn’t have any solo acting stress but I was excited at yet another new opportunity. Learning new techniques such as using my whole body to act out love and betrayal as well as the part where I cut my own hair.

When actors get their first script, they have a sense of joy because they live in another person’s life and it was the first time I had that feeling. It was a great achievement for me that not only could I show that I was a singer, but now an actor. As time went on, that desire became even more powerful. The desire that I didn’t only want to be doing well in one aspect but in many other aspects. Before my final goal in life to become a producer, I wanted to gain as much experience as I could in other aspects.

If I was going to hastily do things, then I might as well not start it. When I said I wanted to become an actor in a drama, Mr. YG helped me prepare an
acting course. After receiving 2 lessons, my teacher gave me this advice: if I wanted to act well, I would have to start by correcting how I pronounced words. Even though it was reasonable advice but I had a different way of thinking. I didn’t want to act like how I learned at acting school and lose my unique character, but I still went for the acting exam and answered carefully.

I received a drama called, ‘I am Sam’ where I was to be the high school king. Since I wanted to act the role out as lively and naturally as possible, I worked hard for it. I researched on expressions, poses and read the script over and over again to put the right feeling in.

However, after entering into the actual shooting there were a lot of restraints. When that happened, Mr. Kim Jung Kyu, the director for ‘I am Sam’ would give me a lot of good advice. Since I wasn’t born talkative, I had difficulties going out naturally and talk a lot like the actors the same age as me. The director saw me like that and knew my mind was preoccupied. He knew it wasn’t because I didn’t know how...it was simply that I didn’t know how to express it.

The director didn’t treat me like I was TOP from BIGBANG, but as a person called Choi Seung-hyun. He said things like, “I want to create a handsome actor through this drama”. He gave me a lot of advice for Choi Seung-hyun’s personality to shine through the drama role so a lot of faces that weren’t shown before were now starting to appear. The director even found my strong points that I had never known about and pointed them out to me one after another.

“This is your strength. Merge it well and then perfecting it is what you should do.”

Director Kim became the teacher that taught me very well when I first started acting. One thing that I’m very thankful and is a memory that I will forever remember is that even though some people had a first impression of me being “a singer actor”, but a lot of people truly admired my acting skills.

Director Kim also said the following to me, “People will automatically pay more attention to a piece of paper painted with lots of rich colors because of its strong character, but that piece of paper will be unable to accept other colors. If
you want to grow more powerful as a singer or an actor, you should know the
method to absorb different colors and how to mix them well.”

After hearing his words, I wake up every morning and practice hard to
forget about the infatuations, sadness and regrets that I have from the day
before so that my mind is a clean slate. I will then use my attitude which is as
pure as a sheet of paper and welcome the new day, because I know I can only
accept new things by doing so.

**From this moment, I want to slowly improve myself (~ Pt.Nine~)**

Although I seem to appear to have a very strong image, in fact, I have
many ideas and also many worries. I’m a bit feeble, that’s my style. “What can I
do better?”, “what do I already do well?” I’m the type of person that worries for a
long time once I start thinking like this. Recently, I’ve been trying to minimize
the times when I’m like this, because I feel that by spending 1-2 months of my
valuable youth thinking like this is extravagant behavior. I need to first believe
myself, to think “this is me” rather than trying to be what’s right. Without the
stiff thought of “myself”, I change myself to become how I think I should be.

In this world, not all greed is good-natured, but true greediness is “to
make myself the person I want to become”. Although I’ve encountered bad
experiences when I was young, but because of these experiences, I’ve found the
“leap” to overcome these obstacles. More than anything, thinking that “I’m
lacking”, such indiscreet worries are forbidden. Reflecting on my flaws and
trying to improve myself, that I feel is sufficient. I have a certain type of
paranoia. When I open the fridge, if I place things such as milk or soy milk in a
position where I can see the labels, I get a sense of joy.

My hobby is collecting figurines, seeing all the plastic-made figures placed
perfectly together puts me in a good mood. Maybe all artists think this way too.
Even if one day I feel tired or lonely, returning home to see my neatly placed
figurines gives me a sense of comfort. Afterwards, as though I were like them, I’d
reorganize myself again.

Not long ago, I had a long talk with my mom. We mentioned my
grandfather who used to be an author. My mother said “You and your
grandfather are similar”. My grandfather’s name is Seon Gun Bae, like me, he spoke very little and thinks for awhile before speaking up. He wrote novels such as “Alley”, and also wrote the movie script for “The Land of Korea”, and more. He used written words to express his thoughts. His way of expressing himself is different from others, but very similar to me. Though he had no interest in compromising with the world nor conforming to society, but his appreciation for his family was heart-warming. Maybe it was because I spent a lot of time with my grandfather and felt his warmth, my grandfather was my best friend.

This happened 3 weeks before I shot the MV “Hello”. Big Bang was still fairly unknown to the public then, this was also before “Lies” was released. The members were worried with the thought “are we able to do well?” I was worried too. We were also worried about our “identity as a singer”. During that time, my grandfather was very sick, I wanted to hurry over to see him but was unable to due to my busy schedule.

One day, my mother called me, and told me that my grandfather was deathly ill. I let go of everything and rushed to the hospital. My grandfather’s state had worsened to a point where he was unable to speak. Maybe you knew that you wouldn’t make it past “today”. My grandfather used all his strength and energy to write down the words he wanted to say on a piece of paper:

“Seunghyun ah, give me your autograph”

Though I obliged to my grandfather’s wishes, but my heart was in pain. My grandfather, with shaky hands, wrote his own signature next to mine. Then, using the last of his energy he wrote the following:

“Seunghyun ah, even if I die I will bring this autograph with me as my last memory. So you must pursue your dreams, so that this autograph that I am holding will be truly valuable. It’d be great if my grandson Seunghyun can be like that.”

Holding onto my grandfather’s hands crying, that was his last wish. It was also the best gift he could have given me and the best encouragement. From then one, no matter what I encountered, I faced it strong-willingly. No matter when, whenever I encounter hardships I think of my grandfather, in my heart I have left a place for my grandfather.
TOP, charged out like a bull! (~ Pt.Ten~)

-When in pain, to be able to regard it not as a poison but as a medicine.-

Though I have now become a well known singer, but if I were to talk about my school days, I really don’t have much to say. This was because I had no interest in studying at all, maybe it was because I disliked school’s restrictions or how everything felt like a duty. Thus, going to school was particularly tiring and hard for me. Even if I didn’t go to school, I wouldn’t waste my time doing nothing. Even if I needed to go somewhere, I still abide by my “16 line rap” or “write 24 lines” rule and fulfill my promise to myself before I go out. Afterwards, I slowly become more and more devoted to music, and my time spent going out with friends grew shorter and shorter.

I hope you don’t use me as an example to form the judgment that “If you have a steady dream, then you don’t need to go school”. In life, we must “endure even if we hate it”. If ever anything temporarily obscure causes you to disregard your studies, there cannot be a bigger fool that that.

There are countless people in this world who want to become singers, but less than 1% of them are able to actually become a singer. Before you take the challenge, you must be sure this is the road you will take until the end. Even if you have such confidence, this is not an easy path to take.

One thing that I slightly regret, is that if I had studied harder would I have been able to achieve more? When I was young I had the impression that I’ve encountered experiences that other kids have not. I had the false impression that I was more mature than they were. “Challenge yourself” and “Enjoy your experiences”. If you choose a different dream from those who are the same age as you, you will need definite confidence and passion. If you start aimlessly running towards something that you “seem to think you like”, then that could be very dangerous and may end up becoming a nightmare instead of a dream.

During my school days, other than Hip Hop I had nothing else, so there was no other path for me. To put it nicely, from early on I got caught in a particular area. From a different point of view, it’s the same as having nothing to do and then unknowingly becoming attracted to it.
Dreams are something that is buried deep in everyone’s hearts, and that no one can suppress. Just like an exploding volcano, but to clearly know the direction of your dream, you need to have a lot of knowledge. Even though studying seriously is a good thing, but you must think about the best way to do it. If you don’t know this then all your hard work from before will be useless.

As an obligation to prepare for the future, from school and your family, you might feel that sometimes things are pointless. Maybe you will get annoyed thinking about why you are sitting there listening to your teacher ramble on. Even if you don’t feel pressured because you don’t yet have a dream, one day your true dream will appear. Compared to the past where you were hurriedly preparing, is it not better to put all your effort and try your hardest?

Work hard to do all to your capability now, and when something alluring presents itself to you and you feel that “you must do this even if you die”, it’ll be great if you can accept that challenge bravely.

Family (Ka-Juk), the two words to which I am most thankful for, giving me encouragement (~ Pt.Eleven~)

My 3rd grade teacher in high school, Jeong Yuk Kyeong, is someone I will never forget. Because I was a trainee at YG, I slowly attended school less and less. It slowly got to a point where it became unbearable to go to school, but my homeroom teacher believed in me and my dream. He went to the principal and asked him please make the best of the situation. Due to my homeroom teacher’s help, I was able to successfully graduate from high school, and to become a member of Big Bang.

If someone believes and helps them, maybe kids won’t grow up as a bad person. When I see kids wandering on the streets late at night, I think back to when I didn’t know better. Those who rebel against their parents and teachers, using cigarettes and alcohol to numb their reasoning, going against the world, my two eyes are poisoned with my own memories.

Children who grow up with a hard childhood are the same as a sick person. They might be thinking “I’m in so much pain and suffering, but no one’s here to take care of me”. To those who are in need of a doctor to cure life, please
tell them “It’s ridiculous to live your life like this” and “Your pain can be healed”. Not long ago, I was admitted to the hospital, I was thankful to the “family” that I had forgotten about. How I got to be where I am today, is all because they believed in me and love me.

It’s been a long time since I’ve spoken to my family with warm words. Not because I don’t want to, but because I feel that if I express it, it’ll be awkward and a little unfamiliar. Although my mom would come to our dorm twice a week and prepare food for us, but because of our busy schedule it’s almost impossible to bump into her. While staying at the hospital, for the first time in my life, my mother and I talked for the entire night.

At that time I thought about many things, about the love my family gives me and how much they missed it. It was bigger and warmer than I’d thought it was. Because I was sad so I never said it, I regretted not being able to express what I felt in my heart. From then on, I would call my family a few times a day or send text messages. No matter how busy my schedule, communicating with my family is not longer a “troublesome work” but instead “a valuable time to recharge myself”.

Although it’s something ordinary, but because we’re together, it’s valuable. When I’m hurt or tired, the people standing by me are my family. Don’t rank them second because you’re closest to them, but your family should always come first.

**Position as Big Bang’s big hyung (~ Pt.Twelve~)**

I feel extremely lucky to be able to be with my strong willed and sincere Big Bang members. The hold my hand when I’m tired and give me the strength to develop and grow. Being the hyung, and to keep their confidence in me I must not show my suffering, this helps me become stronger.

As a hyung who wants to help his dongseng, even though I’m older in age, I want them to think “I can lean on TOP hyung”, and I will work hard to be like that. And so, I’m very happy to be the oldest in Big Bang.

I don’t know where to start, I feel awkward as to what to say. In the hot underground practice room, we sweat and laugh together, forgetting about time
and working hard. Sometimes it gets so tiring that you just want to run away, but thinking back to those times, it was the most beautiful flowered that blossomed from the memories of my youth.

I had nothing to give and was immature, but you all looked up to me as your hyung. The first time we had a press conference, the 5 of us wore white suits and posed for pictures. Facing comments such as “An ugly idol group, let’s see how well you’ll do” and “Let’s what you can be”, we shrugged off the burden and just tried our hardest. Because the 5 of us were very close, we made the impossible possible. To those who helped us, to our parents who were by our sides taking care of us, in order to repay them, shouldn’t we work hard and more than anyone be determined?

Even though I am the elder hyung, but you’re all my closest friends. Sometimes the 4 of you are like my hyung. Sometimes we have different personalities, but we’re like brothers now. Even our faces as though when we laugh or cry are starting to look more and more similar. If we continue working as hard as we are now, in 10, 20 year we’ll still be together. The group that will always be heard and in people’s hearts, that is Big Bang.

This was the contents of I letter that I wrote to Big Bang. As we were reading the letter, both fans and the members had tears in their eyes. With love as pure as a drop of tear, I want to become a hyung that the members can count on.

Although I want to play my role as a hyung well, but sometimes I become troubled and I get so sensitive that I won’t allow anyone to touch even a single of my hair. During those times I stay in my room and get lost in my own thoughts. Getting lost in my own world, without fail Yang Hyun Seok will always come find me. With a personality that worries over things that have not happened, it deeply affects my negative thinking. When this happens, President Yang will scold me so severely that tears fall. If I appear to seem like I’m falling into my own swamp, my manager and coordi nuna will constantly check on me and throw me a life jacket.

Using his nasally voice, President will say to me:

“TOP what are you doing now? Are you zoned out again?”
Then he’ll call me over to talk. Whenever he has a chance, President Yang will remind me of how much I am loved by others, and to look at how much I have. To me, President Yang is like an older brother and like a father. I think all the members of Big Bang feels this way.

There’s something that President often says to me:

“In this world, there are surprisingly many people who abuse themselves. They look down on themselves and cause themselves to lose sleep over this damaging thinking. These people are not capable of receiving love from others. With a determined way of thinking, get a good grasp of your own strengths and weaknesses and get in the habit of constantly complimenting yourself. This type of habit will help you learn to love yourself and to be proud of yourself. “

That’s right. Being modest and having low self esteem is two different things. Before entering YG, no one ever told me that I was capable of “growing bigger wings”. Everyone has a pair of wings that can fly them into the blinding sky, but just don’t forget that these invisible wings “move accordingly to your self-love”.

Seeing President Yang, I realized I have another dream. When I become older and more mature, I want to be a person that helps those that are troubled like I was. Though it’s a big dream, but I will make it come true.

“I have legs that will stand up even after falling 8 times” (~ Pt.Thirteen~)

-This was the title of a diary entry I once wrote on my homepage.-

To be honest, behind the luxury of being a celebrity, the self-regulation needed surpasses your imagination. A celebrity works under the public eye, so it’s very easy to be buried under negative press or rumors. In Big Bang’s case, the members are more thorough when it comes to self-control. We don’t go out often, and barely have any close relationships with other entertainers.

When I was an underground rapper, my name was TEMPO. Life’s tempo is so important, so to say, I slowed it down from its originally fast pace. When I debuted with Big Bang, I shortened the initials to TOP. So the name TOP partially stands for TEMPO.
Our killer schedule pushes our bodies to the limit, so I feel like I should be greedy and something. If I don't do anything, I feel like I might not get the chance.

The world's most fragrant perfume comes from the roses on the Balkans mountains. In order to make the best perfume, they must go during the coldest weather and pick the flowers at 2am. This is because the scent of the flower is the best at the time. Just like how the roses give off their scent at night in the cold weather, in life, we must go through many experiences to be able to give off our own scent.

While others my age were studying hard to enter college, we gave up our studies in order to pursue music. While others are enjoying their youth on campus, we are in the practice room practicing to our heart’s content. We are what we want most in this world, we don’t even have time to contemplate about how different our lives are from others.

When I first dreamed about becoming a rapper, rather just stopping at the thought of “becoming a singer”, I wrote down the reason why I wanted to be a rapper in my lyrics and thought deeply about it. To just rap without worrying is just babbling with adjectives. Rap helps express what’s on my mind to the public. I like when I have many opinions. After much thought before coming to a conclusion, it was only then I courageously rushed out. “where does this path end?” This endless curiosity and anticipation led me to this day to be deep in thought.

**What the staff thinks of TOP : The King of curiosity, he can feel with his body [~Pt.Fourteen~]**

At the beginning the member that disliked sports the most was TOP. Since we were unable to meet often, as expected the hardest person to approach was TOP. I think it was because of his role in <I am Sam> that he decided to start training. And so, we started to exercise together. Once he sets his mind on something, he will inquire about it in a scary manner. He’s the type that needs a reason to do something. Though, before that reason disappears, he will absolutely not set his eyes on something else.
He is very curious so once he’s curiosity is sparked, he’s the type that can’t resist. Once he has free time, he’ll go do strange experiments and would suddenly ask random questions. For example, he’ll call me in the middle of the night to ask “Ssabu-nim! I was curious so I wanted to ask. A 2-person portion of steak vs a 2-person portion of porkchop, which one has more calories?” Or he’ll tell you about “his personal experiments about whether eating 5 egg-whites (from boiled eggs) or eating only 2.5 boiled eggs (including the yolk) is more effective for building muscles.” Like this, he needs to personally experience it to be satisfied. If he achieves a good result, he will go at it even more passionately.

Honestly, a trainer isn’t just someone who tells how to exercise. When to sleep, when to get up, when to eat and what you should eat, when to snack, what to do during vocal practice and dance practice, they must tell you how to deal with all the bits and pieces within a 24 hour day. If they don’t do that, then they’re not a trainer.

At beginning, TOP was the type of person who criticized everything about himself, it made him seem like a very burdened and depressed person. However, once he found the goal to exercise and to see results, it felt like he totally changed. Once he starts to trust you, he’ll have a little bit of aegyo and have a childish behavior sometimes.

One day he came to me and said “Ssabu-nim, I stole two oranges from the dorms for you”. He said this with a big smile and holding two oranges.

—Hwang Sang Chan, trainer
Shout out to the World: G-DRAGON

Big Bang has lots of talents? No. we are people who strive hard for our dreams!

GD’s opinion on his fellow members (~ Pt.One~)

Before our debut, people said we were going to be the idols who sing ‘Hip-Hop’, we are the ones who have loads of talents... However, I think that we are not only these, we are the ones who try to exceed our own limits with our hard work and let them blossom into beautiful flowers.

People said I do all the parts for the albums since I compose songs, write lyrics and arrang them. Do you think it is true? I don’t. We all work so hard to show our own colours via the songs. We don’t know what means by ‘enough, that’s okay already,’ when we are in the studio. We will only stop until we find our own colors in the songs.

GD’s opinion on T.O.P: His rap is outstanding and sentimental. These qualities are well delievered not only when he is rapping but also when he is singing other songs. His singing does resemble the voice of the wild animals.’

GD’s opinion on Daesung: Daesung is like a coffee making machine. He can alter his voice according to the different genres of the songs. He can be deep when singing sad songs but energetic and funky when singing Trot. He is talented in singing. ‘

GD’s opinion on Seungri: Although he is just like a little brother to us, he can be so masculine in his stage performances. He thought of what should be included on his stage of ‘Strong Baby’ and worked it out themselves, he is our hardworking maknae.

We have been growing like this everyday. I and Taeyang both agreed, ‘we cannot imagine if just two of us debutted at the very first place.’

I am so grateful that I can form the group with these 4 boys. Even if I had the chance to form a group with famous singers, I would not be as happy and grateful as I am now.
Back to the days when we were trainees .. (~ Pt.Two~)

I concentrate on whatever I do. I play hard when I am with friends and I work with all my heart when I have to concentrate on my career. *I am that kind of person who can even sacrifice my sleep to complete the tasks that I have to and yes, this is the person which is present in front of you.*

You should have heard of someone said I am ‘rude and indifferent to others’ feelings’ but I think they form such perceptions of me just because *I hate people who are irresponsible and do not exert themselves fully to achieve what they have to.* I will speak out my mind straight to your face if I do not agree with what you are doing no matter who you are. That is the reason why I always leave a deep impression on others.

I have been answering ‘being a singer’ as my dream career ever since I was young. It may seem to be so distant for a kid who started training at the age of 10 but I can never think of other careers that I am interested in. *Music is my air, I breathe it and it strikes my heart chord too. I love being on that gorgeous stage which allows me to display what I have gotten.* That’s why I cannot imagine what else I could be if I were not a singer.

Originally there were 6 people competing to be debuted under the name of ‘Big Bang’. During that training days, we did not know how many of us would be selected as the final members actually so I could only gave out all I had to show that I am the qualified one.

In the eyes of our president, it does not matter whether we had been trained for 6 years (I had been trained for 6 years by that time) or 60 years, *if we did not possess the ability which enables us to excel in this industry, he would rather choosing no one to debut.* Therefore, I and Taeyang were leading a very stressful life in that period of time. In short, Having been trained for a longer time did not bring me any advantages to outwit the others.

At that time, we had to practice a variety of things each day, dancing, singing, learning 2 foreign languages, etc... *When teenagers of our age were enjoying their youth at school, hanging around with friends, busy memorizing the English vocabulary for their exams, what we were doing? We were stuck in the poorly ventilated basement practicing, practicing and practicing.*
When people of our age were annoyed by their mum always telling them, ‘hey, don’t forget to have breakfast.’ we could only be afraid of our mums seeing us being so exhausted after all of these practices when they visited us once a week. We could only dry up our tears after they had returned. For us, we did not even have the choice of turning back once we had chosen this path.

‘Why I had been so strict towards my members back to the days...’ (~ Pt.Three~)

‘I don’t think that you can ever be successful if you keep doing things of this standard. Even if you have tried many times, you are still doomed to fail.’ ‘Okay, I see, you are scared of pain so you have not even tried at all. I think you should really try to spin when you are dancing, it is a shame that if you don’t want to do it just because you are fear of getting hurt.’ ‘Are you sure this is the best that you can show when you are facing the evaluation tomorrow? Are you really a sleepyhead like this?’

You can hear all of these when you are watching our debut documentary. People said I was so strict to my fellow members so I was named as ‘aggressive Kwon Jiyong’, ‘stone-hearted Kwon Jiyong’ after this.

In June, 2006, we were given a chance to perform in Se7en’s concert. Depending on how well we performed in it, the president would decide which of us would be able to stay. Therefore, we were determined to bring out all that we had been learning and accumulating for this rare chance. Even Se7en hyung worried so much about us.

The rehearsal finally started and we were so concentrated that we wanted every part of it well prepared. However, Youngbae was hurt very seriously when he was doing a flip, not only was he fainted at the spot, his hands were also bleeding so much. We were so worried about his wounds as well as whether we would have to prepare something different from what we had kept on doing.

I was glad that Yongbae, the one who bore so much pain consoled us, ‘I am okay.’ There were no doubts that he was very painful at that moment but he was so determined to complete the task with us. We were all strengthened by him and finished the rehearsal smoothly.
However, after the rehearsal had finished, I immediately talked to the members very seriously, ‘why were you all seemed like, ‘the whole world has fallen down’ when you saw Yongbae’s hands were hurt? What if we were doing it in the middle of the live performances? I am wondering what’s wrong with all of you…’

*I know I should have been tolerant to them; however, what was in my mind at that moment was, I really don’t want any of them to be eliminated at all.*

What kinds of person I am? (~ Pt.Four~)

I was taken to the various auditions by my mum when I was a kid. I was granted the chance to be the trainee of YGE after the president seeing my participation in the MV of Roora senior. I was so used to appearing in this kind of auditions, I did not feel embarrassed when I was in front of the seniors of my families. They thought that I was a naughty kid but I was just doing what I wanted to do. I love performing in front of a crowd people and my parents support it by actions.

*I think I am the person who is 100% optimistic, there is not even a trace of pessimistic that you can find in me.* Even if I fail, I will keep trying hard next time. I will not lose my heart in doing the things that I love.

*I love being with friends so much.* Although I do not keep close contact with many of my friends, we are still close to each other. I am that kind of person whom treasured his friends a lot. However, it was still weird that when the friends of my age were playing happily under the sun, I was busy writing my songs and lyrics. This was my entertainment at that time. Of course there were times that I did feel tired and annoyed too and in times like these, I would always go watch the performances of my seniors, I wanted to learn from them and be enlightened by them.

After talking about my entertainment, let’s also talk about what my homework is. *I was asked by the president to hand in 1 song per week. During those 6 trainee years, I had kept on doing so. I really like this homework since I*
do not like singing others’ songs without adding my own thinking, I adapted the songs and rewrote the lyrics. That was what I enjoyed doing most at that time.

**What is worse than facing failures? (Pt.Five~)**

Although I am a very optimistic person, I felt nervous when the day of announcement (which members were going to be selected) drew nearer and nearer.

I felt breathless since the competition was so fierce. Even a optimistic person likes me felt so much stressed at that time, I felt if people of my age had to face similar situation, they would be even more tensed up. I kept saying to myself, ‘it is okay, I can do it.’ but it seemed that these words did not help much.

However, I could not show what I was actually feeling at that time, I was just acting like nothing had happened or even I pretended that I was indifferent to all of this.

The president always told us, ‘being able to live up to your goal is totally different from you THINK you are able to do it.’

**What I thought at that time was. ’I had been treating being a singer to be my ultimate dream ever since I was small. What if I fail this time? What else I can be if I am not granted a chance to be a singer?’**

I was thinking so much about these questions that I could not sleep properly at night. I was even haunted by nightmares at night.

Luckily, the turning point came one night. That was a stormy night and the rain was so heavy that I had to shut the windows lest the raindrops would be splashed into my room. When I was running to shut the window, I noticed there was something amazing happening...

There was a little spider which was busy knitting its web at that time...It was so small but it kept trying its best to fight against the big raindrops. He wanted to keep its web intact. I was so stunned seeing it so I even forgot that I wanted to close the window originally. I stared at it for a long period of time. Then, I realized what I should do at that very spur of time.
'This small thing knows that what follows stormy nights will always be sunny days so it has not given up no matter how many times it has to try. It DESIRES to live so much and being a singer is also what I DESIRE most.'

I saw myself in it. For me, I desire to be singer as much as desiring to live for the little spider did. If I could not achieve this, my life would become meaningless.

This is THE reason why I had been working so hard. I DESIRE my music can be an inspiration to many people, I DESIRE to be a singer.

That’s it. That is my desire. That is my purpose of living.

What is worse than facing failures?
I think it is the thought of giving up trying.

We Shine the brightest when we are in 5 (~ Pt.Six~)

I am really grateful to be with my fellow members to form the band under the name of Big Bang. I would not be as grateful and glad if I was debuted with Taeyang only or with other famous artists.

Each of us shines in our own way but together in 5, we shine the brightest. Before I develop my own potential, what I learnt when working with these people were how to be humble and control my own self. Not only me, all 5 of us have been doing so, we accommodate ourselves in order to let Big Bang shine the most as a group. What else can I do besides being grateful to them?

I remembered that once when we were holding a concert in Japan, something went wrong and it seemed that we could not continue the show anymore. Suddenly, one of us started to do beatboxing, then we all started to beatbox and rap together. The atmosphere of the venue hyped up again and we could hear screams from the fans here and there. They loved the performance.

We were not prepared to face situations like this; however, at that very moment, we found trust in each other's eyes and we knew that with our concerted efforts and beliefs, we could get through whatever difficulties, no matter how unexpected they seem to be.

When we finished the show, we said nothing but we hugged each other very, very, tightly.
Yes, we are Big Bang which can perform well on the stage; however, we are not good at socializing personally. I know it sounds like I am trying to find an excuse for ourselves but it is true since we had spent so much time in the practicing room.

We had been spending all of our time there so we barely had any social life. When we 5 are together, we can fool around and laugh our heads off no matter how trivial the matters are. We find it so funny watching each other doing things in front of our eyes, even if maybe it was just a pair of weird shoes that our fellow members bought. However, when we are with strangers, we just don’t know how to strike a conversation with them. We are really ‘social idiots’.

I would rather face thousands of audience rather than speaking to a person face to face alone. My face would turn red if I was left alone to speak to a fan. Even Daesung said that he only got used to facing the fans after quite a period of time.

If I have to point out a weakness of Big Bang, I would say we are not sociable enough. When I met a senior, I really wanted to say, ‘Senbei, your new album is daebak’ but it turned out to be a mere ‘hi, how are you?’ etc. I feel we were really lacking in this aspect.

**However, I have promised myself I would work hard on it since it is of no use to keep saying,’ I cannot do this or that’. I believe that if I am determined enough, I will be able to overcome this.**

Moreover, we all know that although we started a bit earlier than others and we were able to do a little better, we would still be eliminated if we did not keep working hard on our goal.

When we were still trainees, we had to be responsible for almost everything for ourselves, namely what to wear and how to go to the performance venues... Just like other people, we crammed ourselves in a bus when we were rushing time and when we saw there were things that we could help out for others, we would be more than happy to do so with our very own hands.

**Even until now, I have not changed. Only things and circumstances have changed, we now have our fellow designers to choose what customs we should**
wear, etc. However, what changed in the environment has not changed the inner qualities of us. We know that we have to keep the humbleness and the determination to work hard no matter how far we can go. Getting 1st places in the charts or being awarded are just bonus.

We have to lead our whole life as if we were still trainees.

What kind of trees are we? [~ Pt.Eight~]

Our president once said the following words to us, ‘you 5 are just like trees of different kinds.’ You are that kind of trees which can grow very beautiful and attractive flowers, T.O.P. is the kind of trees which are strong enough to withstand any difficulties, Taeyang is the tree that can grow strong even he was left on his own. Daesung is the one which can bear a lot of fruits and Seungri is a small tree which can grow up to a very broad and strong one... I think his description of us is too right.’

Every time before we go on the stage, we will tell each other, ‘Hey, let’s play!’ It is not only because we really do enjoy our stages so much but it is also due to the fact that we had been accumulating the experience of performing on various stages. We love how ‘unplanned’ our stage performance we can bring to our audiences.

Since we do not have everything fixed before our performance, we might make trivial mistakes on the stage. And when these happen, we will laugh at each other for making such silly mistakes. People may think that we are really silly but the main point is we DO really enjoy being on the stage like that, we play on the stage rather than sticking to the rigid routines. We want to show you as many faces of Big Bang as we can when we are on the stage and share the enjoyment with all of you.

We have been playing like this ever since we have debuted since we were given so many chances to perform in various shows, like YG 10th anniversary concert, etc. And this is how our performance skills have developed.
What ‘FRIEND’ mean to me (~Pt.Nine~)

Father once said to me, ‘as a man, we need to have loads of friends.’ In fact, even without his saying to me, I treasure my friends so much since I can learn so many things from them.

I have read the definition of ‘F.R.I.E.N.D.S’ somewhere before:

- **F** = Face (we have to be able to read the facial expressions of our friends)
- **R** = Recognition (we need to recognize the importance of the friends in our life)
- **I** = Interaction
- **E** = Equality
- **N** = Need (we have to need each other mutually)
- **D** = Dependence (we have to be the one who the others can rely on us)

I think the definition is very true and it can be applied to my life, too. To me, my friends are the reason of my living. I am especially happy if I am with my old friend.

When I was writing the ‘thank you list’ of my solo album, I had written so many names to it. My fans said I really have a lot of friends. Hmmm, I think it is because I can befriend people very easily, there were so many friends that I had to thank. I would be very happy if I heard somebody said, ‘I am a friend of Kwon Ji Yong’!

However, besides having so many friends, Taeyang has a very special place in my life. When people were watching our debut documentary, they would picture that I and Taeyang were the competitors; however, it is not true, Taeyang has been a special friend for me ever since a very long time ago.

When I was harshly blaming my fellow members, Taeyang is always the one who consoled them afterwards with his very gentle heart. And when I am not able to perform my leader’s duties sometimes due to different reasons, he will be the one who carry out all of these duties. I am encouraged, stimulated and warmed by Taeyang every day, I want to walk along this path with him together until the very end since he always reminds me not to go astray when we are pursuing our music career.

If I had to choose 1 person to replace my position after I die, I would definately choose Taeyang, the friend whom I forever feel grateful to have.
Where does my inspiration come? (~ Pt.Ten~)

I am that kind of person who cannot let myself rest, even on Sunday, I do not rest much. People are worried about my being like this; however, I cannot help creating something whenever I am free. After a day’s busy schedule, when I am back to my room, I always want to write something, compose a song or draw a picture. If I have no mood to do all of these, I would then watch a movie.

Anyway, I think I really don’t like resting. On the next day, when I show my members the pieces of works that I had just created in the previous night, they would all be surprised, and asked, ‘when did you do this?’ I don’t know neither. Whenever I want to create something, I will be kind of crazy. Whatever I see, I will associate them to my music creation, be it a movie, a book or other trivial things that I meet in my life. And if the inspiration suddenly comes, I will immediately take out my notebook to jot everything down. Although I am happy about being able to rap on the stage but what really moves me is I can sing the songs that I created by myself there.

The process of transforming what I read/experience into the music that I share is really amazing. I have been being like this ever since I was 13 years old. I witnessed people who have worked as hard as me but they do not have the chances to let them shine on the stage. I also know people who were able to shine on the stage for a short time but they disappeared very shortly like how the water vapours are evaporated when the sun comes out. Therefore, I treasure every opportunity that is given to me. I really treasure every one of them so much. I know it is not only me who thinks like this, I have lost count already about how much time has passed, I can still hear someone is playing the music in his room and some others are practicing their dance steps in the dancing rooms. All of us do them not out of duties, but love.

To me, fashion is... (~ Pt.Eleven~)

Ever since I was small, I have been into fashion. I still remember that when I was small, I anticipated the coming of weekend most since I could go shopping with my mum and sister. I think that the boutiques are just like
museums which display arts work, maybe I like it since I can also create something out of it.

When I was asked by the MCs of the TV programme what I liked most when I was little, my answer always surprised them since they expected that I would answer them something like, toy cars or figures but I said ‘fashion’. It just sounds like I had told them I wanted a picture of ‘Mona Lisa’ when I answered him that I wanted something which is just like a combination of dream and reality.

I don’t think that wearing brand-named clothes means that I have better fashion sense. Although I do buy them too, I feel happier if I can find suitable clothes from the street stalls. To me, fashion is not a price tag or a brand but a pair of wings that I put on in order to show you my real colors. If music is said to be the source of my happiness, then fashion is the wings that enables me to explore my creativity.

Because I really do not follow the fashion trend nor do I care about what others think of what I am wearing, something bad has happened to me and it enabled me to realize that I have to be responsible for everything I do since I am a celebrity whom many people pay attention to.

I was once wearing a shirt with the words, ‘I LOVE SEX’ on and I was criticized by the press for this. I chose this just because it was designed by my favourite designer, John Galliano. It sounds like an excuse to say that we were not aware of the words printed on the clothes. I felt really sorry for the mistake that I made.

What meanings do my tattoos carry? (~Pt.Twelve~)

‘Lies’ that we released in 2007 was very well received and so did ‘Haru Haru’ in the following year. However, after that, we were accused that we have plagiarized the song of Free Tempo, a Japanese singer. Even the singer himself had to stand out for us to acknowledge that we had not copied his song. Although the issue was settled afterwards, I was still so confused about what I was doing at that time.

At that time, one sentence popped up in my mind, that is,
‘Too young to live, to fast to die.’ (This is the sentence said by Sex Pistols when a member was trying to take up the role of the legendary bassist Sid Vicous in the movie)

People can have many different interpretations of this sentence but for me, it means,

‘no matter how many hardships I have to overcome, it is just too early for me to give up at this moment.’ I think this is the right attitude that I should adopt at that time since I had to deal with so many difficulties.

I usually think a lot when I am preparing an album. After thinking about the meaning of my life for so many times, I decided to make a tattoo of ‘Vita Dolce’ on my right shoulder. Originally it should be ‘Dolce Vita’ which means ‘whenever and whatever, I have to lead a happy life’ but I change it to ‘Vita Dolce’ which means ‘a blissful life’. And for my left shoulder, I have tattooed ‘Moderato’ since I have to remind myself not to run too fast in my life since I also have to watch my sideways with a not-too-fast pace.

What ‘freedom’ means to me (~ Pt.Thirteen~)

I have been thinking a lot about the word ‘freedom’ after I have become an artist.

More people pay attention to what I do now then before. I felt that I was so blissful to be a ‘free’ man back then but now, I felt so tired because it seemed that I have been deprived of it.

Sometimes I do think like this, ’it will be so good that if I can chit-chat freely with my friends on whatever topics we want to or go dating with my beloved girlfriend. It will also be so nice if I can know how a deep and prolonged relationship taste like or how painful I can be in a heartbreaking relationship… These all can serve as the inspiration for me to write better songs and lyrics, aren’t they?

However, I do not have the chances of trying out all these stuff. Even so, I still think that what I have gained is more than what I have lost after opting this path as my life-long career.
In fact, I want to keep it as a secret but it is okay to tell you. I sneak into the theme parks to have fun from time to time. In order to cover up my true identity, I will wear masks or put on some animal costumes. I do not just go there very silently, I try to scare people by touching them or shouting at them suddenly. This is my way of getting some freedom back and everytime, after I play like this, I feel that some of my stress is relieved.

**Why I am not afraid of failures? (~ Pt.Fourteen~)**

- Because we are young, it is okay to face the pain that brought by the failures.

I think I really am a lucky guy. When the people of my age were worrying about how to meet the expectations set up by their parents, I could just strive for my goals and did whatever I want because my parents were supportive to me. I did not have to do what they wanted me to do, they let me decide the path of my life.

I am lucky because although I did not pay much attention to my school work, I was still able to get good results at school. I was young when I received the invitation of YGE to be one of their trainees. I even met a lot of talented and helpful people when I was at such a young age. And, yes, the most important of all, I have met our president, Mr. Yang Geun Sok. Some people may think that, ‘Oppsss, I really cannot stand Kwon Jiyong who is so arrogant of speaking these with this attitude...’

However, the life I was actually leading is the following: Starting from 13 years old, I had to go to school very early, then I had to attend training sessions after school. Of course, I could not have regular meals not to mention that I can sleep enough every day.

I am just a teenager who has just passed his 20 years old but I can only sleep 2-3 hours a day because of the heavy workload. I have written so many songs but most of them have been dumped into the rubbish bin. I always think, ‘in fact, how many of them can be popular?’ I really don’t know so I feel very stressful almost every day.

Although sometimes I do think that the world is unfair but I still think *that what I reap is what I sow.* I just have to listen to the stories of the senior
singers who have themselves experienced some painful moments in the past, for instance, Rain once said that he wore the ring left by his deceased mother on the stage in order to pay a tribute to her, I felt sad about hearing this.

And there was another time, when the musician Cho So-mi was doing an American tour, she suddenly received the news that her father had just passed away. The one who told her this piece of bad news was her mother. Her mum told her that her dad wanted her to finish her tour first instead of returning back to Korea immediately. Therefore, in the last show, she sang ‘On, my dear father’ to commemorate him.

*I believe that pains can be a driving force for us to do what we have to do.*

*Don’t just do the things to a mediocre extent, no matter when we are talking about ‘love’, ‘learning’ or ‘pursuing dreams’.*

What we should really fear of are not failures but the heart that is no longer brave enough to take risks and embrace challenges. If there are people who are crying secretly because they are facing failures, I would like to say the following words to them,

*It is okay that we fail now since we are still so young.*’

**In the designer’s eyes, G-Dragon is... (~ Pt.Fifteen~)**

*‘He is born to be a fashionista’*

I think it is because he is full of confident, he can accept every type of fashion that I want him to try on. Combining with his own creativity, he can come up with a brand new type of fashion which only belongs to himself.

Although he is only looking at 1 object, he can come up with 10 different aspects of that object. I feel really shocked about his creativity, for example, when I show a costume to others, they will just say, ‘oh, it is really nice.’ However, G·Dragon will talk about under which situations he should wear it in order to let the clothes and himself shine the most on the stage. *No matter how ordinary the things are, he can still think of innovative ways to make it extraordinary. I think he was born with this ability.*

When he sees something he really does not like, he will not be hesitant to say ’i don’t like it’ or ‘no, please don’t do it’. This is where his charisma lies.
However, maybe because he is the leader, it is more often for him to convince his fellow members to follow him instead of venting his dissatisfaction.

No matter what he does, he has a very clear goal. That’s why he can learn and grow very fast. Even when we are just talking about which costumes we should wear, he will still figure out what he will actually look like in his mind. He knows what kind of feelings he would like to bring out by wearing his clothes and he knows how to bring them out. I heard that even when he is with his trainer, he will tell the trainer that he wants to develop a body shape which can carry the clothes well. *You may think that he can do so only because he is talented; however, to me, he is the one who work very hard to achieve what he wants.*

—Ji Eun, designer

**In the eyes of the vocal trainer, G-Dragon is... (Pt.Sixteen-)**

“GD to the vocal trainer: ‘Teacher, I don’t think it should be like this?’”

Before the debut of Bigbang, it is a norm that the singers in the music industry sings R&B and emotional songs so our practice also focused on these areas.

However, there was a day that GD told me after much of his consideration, ‘I don’t think we should sing emotional songs, I think it does not suit our needs now. We have to change the focus of our training.’ I was quite surprised to hear such a comment from a trainee; however, I did agree with him.

*Although they were really leading a very tight schedule, GD was still able to squeeze some of his time to write songs. I really thought that, ‘woo, such an amazing kid!’ And I always had to remind myself, ‘I have to be very good at everything myself in order to teach him’. Jiyong ah, please let me have some rest too...*

He was said to be the legendary fashionista in the showbiz, I have always been anticipating what kinds of albums that he would introduce in the coming future. I know Jiyong know that everyone put so much expectation on him too and he must be feeling so much pressure!
However, I do truly believe that he will keep alive his determination towards music and the spirit of ‘never give up’ to pursue his dreams!

To the staff of the YG Fans Community, G-Dragon is...+ the preface of G-Dragon written for his part (~ Pt.Seventeen~)

Recently, the schedule of the members of Big Bang is really hectic; however, no matter how many things are packed in it, they will always say, ‘it is okay, we can still have a try.’ I really want to say, ‘hey, you guys are so amazing’ and I also want them to know we don’t want them to be so tiring for we love them so much.

Under such a situation, it is not easy for us to suggest them to try more new things so most of the time, we just keep silent. Nevertheless, GD can always spot that there are something happening and he will ask us what actually are going go. He is our ‘all-rounded leader’ and ‘Kwon professional’. Whenever he is with us, he can always cheer up his members and under his influence, we do not feel that we are working but we are enjoying what we are doing.

Jiyong is really a professional when he is working. He can influence the people whom he works with. The outcomes of our works become better if we work with him. Although from time to time, we have different opinions with each other, we can still sort our our ways because of his guidance. I do always want to say a ‘thank you’ to him for what he has done.

— From the staff of the YG Fans community

The preface of GD written for his part in Shout To The World

In order to achieve my dreams, I have been challenging myself. Although the process is hard but it is really worthy, The tears that I have been shedding up til this moment have all become the foundation of my success.

I want to become the kind of person who can create miracles and looks charismatic.

For me, the greatest blessing is: I can stand on the stage forever to show you what I have.
Shout out to the World: TAEYANG

Stage 2 - With honest hard work, one can shine anywhere.

“So jump... there’s nothing fascinating about going around in circles.”
The only prerequisite for a hopeful tomorrow is a today that’s different from yesterday. For this hopeful tomorrow, we are still working hard even up to now. In the next section, I will share my recollection of this journey I’ve taken with no regrets. My destiny found me, like it was pre-ordained.

Towards the Exciting “Wild Road” (~ Pt.One~)

In senior high school, there was a student in my class who was crazy about video games. There were no other words to describe him. He not only played video games all night long; he even went to internet cafes in the morning before school to play. It’s not just a simple hobby. In terms of skill, he was completely comparable to a professional gamer. Whenever a new game was released, he would be the fastest in finishing all the levels. If he found a bug or a glitch in a game, he would write cheat codes and share to everyone.

One day, we had the chance to chat. Because I was a trainee, I spent more days out of school than in school. But the times I was able to chat with my friends are beautiful memories for me, so I could never forget about this incident.

“Hey you, what’s your dream?”

Since he loved games so much, and his family was pretty well-off, I asked and waited in anticipation for an answer from him that would be compatible with his passion and skills.

“Ah? Erm...Of course, my dream is to own an internet café! That way I can still play games without having to pay!”

“What?!!”

Of course, this was his dream. There’s no right or wrong. But I was really expecting that he’d have a huge ambition so I felt somewhat disappointed.

In my heart, I wanted to say “You could easily realize that dream! Why not dream of something bigger and further from your reach?”
But I couldn’t say my thoughts out loud. He had his own life. And his choice deserved to be respected and affirmed. But if I had the chance now, I would tell him “For someone who could become a world-class professional gamer, having that little aspiration is dangerous and is such a huge waste.”

Ever since I began concrete actions to actually fulfill my dream of becoming a singer, quite frankly I had lost interest in school. It’s not because I disliked my teachers or my classmates, but I was disappointed with the “slow progress” of school. The repetitiveness, purposelessness, and meaninglessness of the academic path, the irrationality and slow efficiency of the learning methods, and the incoherency of systems all made me feel resentful and dissatisfied.

But what I couldn’t bear was seeing some of my classmates cooped up in school, who were sated with food and remained idle. To my young eyes, they were purposelessly wasting each valuable day. They ate good food. As long as their teachers did not scold them, they were fine. As long as they improved their grades even for just a little bit, they were happy. They selected answers on multiple choice questions like selecting a drink from the vending machine.

I have long given up on the idea that I could be like them – that I could take pleasure in having a stable life and live happily. Maybe someday I would regret the choice I made. But I removed the illusions and chose to leave earlier because of this.

I left the somewhat boring but stable sidewalk with a friendly warning sign and chose the rough “Wild Road”, in which I have no idea where it led to. It was a choice that could not be remade again the moment I had made my choice. I could not enjoy the lives my friends were leading; and likewise my friends would not have what I had.

One day, I suddenly had a chance encounter with my dream, like it was pre-destined.

“My heart won’t stop racing. What should I do?” (~ Pt.Two~)

Every person has a memory that sticks to them, like a movie they can replay in their heads at will. My life then, my friends... my memories of those
simple days were blurry like shadows in the water. But there was something that happened one day, which I remember clearly like it was yesterday.

The very first highlight of my life took place in my brother’s room. This experience is probably the reason why I like to secretly hide in TOP hyung’s room nowadays.

The cassette tape player placed on my brother’s table was his most prized possession. To the six-year-old me, this was a doorway to figuratively traveling all over the world. Being five years older than me, my brother was already in the upper levels of grade school then. He was very interested in music and had very high standards in selecting his music. He is currently studying musicals. He had a special relationship with music ever since he was little, wearing his earphones every day, bobbing his head and tapping his feet. This made me even more curious about the music he was listening to.

One day, I secretly borrowed my brother’s cassette tape player while he was sleeping. For a moment I just froze there as I listened to Michael Jackson, bringing me into the world of black music, and to the revolutionary Seo Taiji and Boys, enlightening me. For someone who was supposed to be listening to children’s music at that age, I was completely moved and taken over by the beat and the feeling.

Naturally, I followed my brother in terms of my musical taste. I remember my sunbaes telling me stories about how they listened to Guns N’ Roses or Deep Purple music because of their hyungs in senior high school or in college, and how this awakened their instinct for rock and roll and heavy metal. I guess it’s the same for me.

After that I would often listen to music all night long until the sun came up. In the daytime, my brother would monopolize the cassette tape player, so I could only self-study at night. I didn’t understand English so I had no idea what the lyrics meant. Occasionally I would write down the rap lyrics based on what they sounded like in Korean, under the light of the reading lamp, so that I could sing along to the songs. I was afraid someone would hear me or the music so I often hid under my blankets.
Currently, I still like R&B, Soul, Pop, Rock and Roll, and Hip-hop music from artists like Brian Mcknight, R.Kelly… I studied different aspects of music. I must have listened to Stevie Wonder and Boyz II Men’s music repeatedly hundreds of times, to the point that the cassette tapes had to be replaced.

At that time, the thought of becoming a singer didn’t once cross my mind. But I felt then that music must comprise half of my DNA.

"Hyung, do you want to try out to be a child actor in Jinusean’s MV? (~ Pt.Three~)

During the third grade, my parents sent me to live with my aunt temporarily because they were too busy and had to take care of some things.

I had a younger cousin who was attending performing classes at the academy. Because I wasn’t familiar with the neighborhood and it wasn’t fun playing by myself, I went along with him to his classes. I wasn’t really good at anything at ten years old, and I was very shy and introverted. I had no interest in performing at all. Besides listening to music and playing the piano, I did not have any other interests. When asked about what I wanted to be when I grew up, I would immediately get red in the face and just say any random thing that came into mind to get by.

But, one day, something a friend said changed my entire life. I had a very good friend from the academy. Although he was younger than me by a year, we had similar interests and our personalities matched well. We were as close as blood-related brothers.

“Hyung, why don’t you audition?”

“Audition? What audition?”

“For Jinusean. You know them. Right, hyung? They need actors to portray Jinusean as kids. I was chosen to play Jinu, but they still need someone to play Sean.”

When I heard Jinusean, I asked...

“Jinusean as kids? Tell me more.”

“It’s for their MV. They are looking for someone who can portray them when as kids.”
He then proceeded to ask casually if I wanted to try out for the role. But at that moment, I felt like I was electrified. I loved Jinusean! I was already immersed in my brother’s music at that age. I had already memorized their lyrics, rap, and choreography! It was like I was made for the role.

My other classmates were targeting commercial films and television drama series. They weren’t really into music, especially Hip-Hop. They weren’t interested in dancing or rap as well.

This was the first time in my life that I was determined to reach for what I really wanted to achieve. If I continued being shy, this opportunity won’t find me again. This was the moment wherein a fearful child who had no idea what he needed transformed into a child who would give his all to be able to move towards the direction his heart was pointing to. After that, I put my entire focus on preparing for the audition. I practiced the moves and the rap. Even though we looked nothing alike, I tried my best to imitate Sean Hyung’s expressions. I prepared hard for it like I was preparing for my own solo stage.

After that… I got the part. I’m not sure if this was the expected outcome or not. They might have been able to find others who looked more like Sean, but it must not be easy finding another mini version of Sean with the same skills and passion. Looking back at that time, I was already starting to have the philosophy of “With passion and determination, there’s nothing I can’t do.” The child that nobody paid attention to in the academy, the child who was shy and wasn’t exceptional in anything… he was reborn through this audition.

I arrived at the set, full of expectations. Yet the MV filming set was an entirely different world. For me who liked music and was satisfying this desire by listening to it, it was the first time that I experienced (though indirectly) creating music as a means to satisfy this desire. Watching a basketball game and actually stepping on the court to play the game are two completely different things. Clothes drenched in sweat, heart racing like it’s about to explode out of your chest, and body temp so high it burns… there is nothing more real than this.

Selecting my outfit for the MV, presenting a rapper’s expressions and movements… I was very happy with the excitement and joy of me about to
become an entertainer. Although they weren’t recording my voice, I acted like the singer, moving my hands and feet and lips. That moment, a soul called “singer” entered my body through my limbs and lips.

Before this, I thought that with honest and hard work, sooner or later one would reach that unknown world. When others asked me what my dream was, I would answer “pianist” or “music teacher” out of politeness. My mom bought me a piano with the slightest hint of talent that I might have. As my skills improved bit by bit, my mom would endlessly give me new Beyer and Czerny sheet music. My life was like these piano teaching materials. Listen to what my parents say; complete my tasks well. It was like climbing up the stairs step by step, level by level. Taking two steps at a time was unthinkable to someone who was as introverted as me.

However, in this world, there is an alternative option of creating my own world, and not just climbing up the steps that someone provided for me. I can create my own path, and open the door to the new world.

That day we were shooting the MV, I deeply felt the sound of my heart racing. Not once have I forgotten that feeling, even up to now.

“President Yang, if you won’t allow me to be a trainee, I’d be nothing!” (~Pt.Four~)

Shooting this MV marked the second time in my life I’ve done acting. I once again tried to gather up my courage in that setting. That day, the CEO of YG Entertainment, Yang Hyun Suk visited the set. Since I rarely saw him, I couldn’t bring myself to look at him directly when I was actually seeing him with my own eyes. At that time, I felt my heart threatening to fly out of my ribcage. I couldn’t let this opportunity pass me by. Since once we finish filming the MV, my role as little Sean would be over and so would any connection I had with YG. Thoughts like “I can’t not do something” and “I can’t just do nothing” were running through my mind, pushing me to action.

With that, I suddenly walked towards President Yang who was in the middle of a conversation with Jinusean. Although I had already gathered up the guts to do it, once I was actually in front of him, I started shaking.
“President Yang, I want to be a singer.”

With my shaking voice, I expressed my aspiration. Maybe from President Yang's perspective, hearing a grade school student fearlessly saying something like this to him was both cute and absurd at the same time. He smiled slightly and said something to address the situation at hand.

“We will contact you after a while. Go home and wait to hear from us.”

Looking back, I think I caused the lively atmosphere on set to dissipate with my actions. That’s why President Yang was quick to appease a child with an absurd request. But I actually pinned all my hopes on that vague promise of “after a while”, waiting earnestly for President Yang to contact me.

After roughly a month, which felt like 10 agonizing years to me, I couldn’t wait any longer and just decided to go to YG office. Because I did not make an appointment, I just barged into President Yang’s office and asked,

“President Yang, why did you say you’d be contacting me yet I still haven’t heard from you?”

Having a kid suddenly appearing out of nowhere is enough to make you flustered, what more a kid who's acting like a debt collector here to pick a bone with you?

Caught off-guard and momentarily speechless, President Yang actually gave an apology he shouldn’t have had to give.

“Ah? Really? You... It’s you... Ah, I’m sorry. I was too busy”

I immediately replied,

“So that means you’ll let me become a trainee?”

After recovering from the initial shock, President Yang gave me a swift “Okay, go!” It’s possible that he was more impressed with my courage than with my talent then. After some time, President Yang shared what he felt on our encounter that day.

“At first I was thinking how a little kid could say something like that, so I just told him vaguely that we’ll contact him after some time to appease him. I did not expect the kid to just barge into my office and berate me for not contacting him. I was shocked to say the least. I was so flustered that I apologized to him
and said it was because I was too busy. Nevertheless, a kid brave enough to enter our office is impressive. I felt his courage was commendable.”

And that marked the beginning of my life as a YG trainee, the start of six years of happiness and hard work.

“Since this is what you’ve chosen, you have to take responsibility.” (~ Pt.Five~)

My parents hoped that when we grew up, my brother and I would choose professions such as lawyers, doctors, or professors, which is probably not much different from other families. Unfortunately, my brother and I both had more interest for music than for studying. They were fine with us becoming piano or music teachers too if we couldn’t go with their first choices. I had once thought that their dream for us was my dream for myself too.

However, as I’ve always been a child who followed his parents’ wishes, they were visibly shocked when I announced that I am to become a contracted trainee for YG. They even tried to talk me out of it. They said if I really liked the fields of music or entertainment, why not become an actor instead of a singer so that it’s a more stable career path?

Although I had the principles of “no field/line of work was easy”, and “at least becoming a singer was what I wanted and what I was good at” to my defense, I still had to disobey my parents’ wishes for the first time in order to sign the contract that would solidify my stubbornness. My way of getting my parents to agree did not include running away from home, going on hunger strike, or giving them the silent treatment. Even though realizing my dreams was important to me, I wouldn’t want this to strain my relationships or bring others pain and sadness. Nevertheless, I am very thankful that my parents weren’t immovable mountains.

I always do what I am told. Cleaning is the most basic, a task I would do even if I wasn’t instructed to since it was something that would make my parents happy if I did it. This is one of those things that would not change even after I become a trainee and then a singer, a kind of unspoken promise from a loving son. As long as I had the time and the chance, I would sincerely say what I feel.
I would like to share my experience for those who are feeling troubled because their parents are opposed what they want.

If I had something I really wanted to do and the people around me were against it, I could kiss my chance to get their blessing goodbye if I just scowled and refused to talk.

There will also be times when I am very certain about my ideas, but because I am young and inexperienced I cannot find the words to convince them. If I had just given up then or turned my back complaining that my parents don’t understand me at all, the chance to convince them would be gone for good, and this would only cause misunderstandings and hurt feelings. Both sides would forever be unable to understand one another. This was how I felt then. I will not cause conflict, but instead I’ll try to truly understand from my parent’s perspective, using my quiet voice to convince them to come around.

Finally, all the convincing paid off and my parents gave me their approval... on one condition.

“Okay, if you really want to do this, go ahead. But since this is the path you’ve chosen, you have to be responsible and see it through. You have to finish what you start. Regardless if you encounter failures or setbacks, you’re not allowed to make excuses.

Oh, and there was another condition. “You can’t neglect your studies because of your becoming a trainee.” More importantly, I had to keep my grades up.

With my parents’ blessing as I agreed to their conditions, I started to formally embark on my journey upon the “Wild Road” of my dreams.

“Through the dark tunnels, my burning passion made me stronger.” (~Pt.Six~)

In the four years between sixth grade and third year high school, I went back and forth between school, home, and the studio, juggling my roles as a student, a son, and a trainee. Since I didn’t have any idea what I was getting myself into, I was excited and curious so I didn’t feel tired at all.

It was difficult for my mother seeing me work so hard to meet all my responsibilities. She only told me about this later on. She supported me in my
decision, and never cried in front of me or shared her worries, but I know she has
cried many times out of her love for me and not wanting to see me suffer. Even
today, she still occasionally sheds tears for me.

My experience as a trainee is not simply “fun” as the others would put it. If I say that working hard and getting the training I wanted already made me feel blessed and satisfied, that would be a lie. I felt uneasy day by day, and that the situation I was in was desolate.

During these times, I would adjust my thinking and tell myself “every trainee goes through this”, and “it’ll be more surprising if it wasn’t this difficult”. I didn’t have any other solution.

Like what Big Mama noonas once said, “Whatever happens to you as a trainee makes you feel bad”. Nobody is concerned about you, and most of the time you’d feel out of place. There are times wherein you’d have to pretend to be unaware and just wait. There’s not even a person to tell you that “by this year/month/day if you perfect this or that training, you can become a singer.” There’s no plan for tomorrow, no blueprint for the future, so what you can do each day is just work hard.

Because of that, I needed to be extra patient as a trainee. There was no other way but to have faith in myself and be determined in my thinking. Like the disciples of the old monks in those martial arts movies, you have to carry the burden on your shoulder “until you can stand on your own.” This was the only mindset one could have in preparation for this kind of life. I constantly recited in my heart three promises to feel stronger:

“Don’t feel discouraged”, “Don’t give up”, and “Don’t let my mind wander off track”.

These are the promises I made to myself.

“**The challenges I face won’t change my resolve**” (~ Pt.Seven~)

On an ordinary school day, I received a call from the company.

“Youngbae-ah. Due to some scheduling conflicts we might need you to stand in and perform. Come immediately to XX subway station.”
As trainees, there were occasionally times wherein we had to take the place of sunbaes who suddenly had scheduling conflicts. After I hung up the phone I ran as fast as I could towards the agreed meeting place. I was supposed to be attending classes in preparation for the final exams, and some were scheduled for the next day.

However, to be able to stand on stage wasn’t an opportunity that was given every day. So I decided to just drop everything and head towards the meeting place.

When I arrived at the station and called back to the staff member, no one was answering the phone. It was probably time for the event to start. I had no choice but to just stand on the street and wait for him to contact me again. After 3 to 4 hours, manager hyung finally gave me a call.

“Hyung, I’m still waiting here at XX subway station.”

Hyung was surprised to hear that.

“What? You’re still waiting there?”

“Yes.”

And then came the disappointing words from Hyung.

“The concert is over. We thought you weren’t coming so we just skipped that portion of the show. It ended for a while now actually. Go back to the training room.”

It was beginning to look like whichever company a person trained in, we trainees would always be baggage that won’t be picked up even when we were dropped on the ground. We have no idea what we’d be good at, and it was possible that the hard work we put in would be all for naught. But we were still rocks that couldn’t be carved yet. If we had time to go around begging “please acknowledge me!” to people, then that time would be better spent practicing voice and dance.

So with that, I conditioned myself to be patient and started to seriously think about the positive side of things. Luckily, the exams for the next day were subjects that only needed memorization. Rather than spending the 3 to 4 hours just waiting for a call, I was able to study while I waited. Although the place was
full of people coming and going, I was very focused in memorizing so what I learned stayed with me. And then I started thinking more...

“It’s a good thing that I was able to get in some studying while I was waiting, since because of that I would have more time to train. Although I was disappointed and felt hungry and cold, this should still be okay, right?”

The period before we debuted was when I really taught myself to be stronger. It was the time wherein before I could become an iron lock, I had to be heated, forged, and then submerged in cold water, before I could be heated again.

Even if I reach the point wherein I break my legs, or meet any other challenges along the way, I cannot give up. Maintaining a sense of optimism and self-security amidst an environment wherein praises and encouragement from others were rare, in order to still be able to showcase one’s strengths, is a trainee’s most important mission.

“People will grow according to the path they’ve chosen” (~ Pt.Eight~)

President Yang Hyun Suk often says, “We are not creating singers. Instead, we are helping you make use of what you were given.” However, the times wherein I truly grasped the meaning of this occurred frequently during my trainee days.

I did not become a trainee because it was my interest, but because I wanted to allow myself to adequately and substantially grow during the training period, in order to become a professional with results. The road I chose to take is a cold and unfeeling career path. The childish mentality of “I already did my best. Why doesn’t anyone understand?” won’t be acceptable. Everybody’s doing their best. There’s not one person who hasn’t faced obstacles in their career, not one person who’s without worry. Everybody has experienced being cold or hungry.

Because it’s work and the start of a career, the feedback received during training were already cold and unfeeling. If you are not willing or unprepared to calmly accept objective criticisms about your efforts, you would find out that you won’t be successful in anything. However, ultimately, we are human and we
have emotions. It’s normal to feel disheartened after getting negative feedback. That was a very miserable time to the point of wanting to just cry out loud.

It was when BigBang Documentary was about to start filming that this conversation arose. Because I have never seen a documentary before, they had to explain how we were going to go about it.

During May of 2006, we had to be supervised and receive feedback daily to prepare for the finalization of members which was happening that June. One day, President Yang suddenly called all the trainees together for a talk, like he was about to speak about problems with the recording submitted the day before.

President Yang asked me a direct question, “Aren’t Youngbae’s and Jiyong’s duration of training just about the same? But I anticipated that Youngbae would be the one who sings better. Why is it then that Jiyong’s level of singing suddenly caught up with you? How did that happen, Youngbae? You should do better. Youngbae, what do you think is your biggest problem?

“Little Seunghyun (Seungri), your problem is your foundation is insufficient. If you don’t work on that you’d be just like Youngbae.”


That was so humiliating. I wanted to crawl into a rat hole and hide. I’ve been training for 6 years, yet a younger brother was warned about becoming like me. I felt my heart die at that moment.

However, I did not decide to be hopeless that night, and instead chose to train for the entire night. This is why I feel both fear and respect towards President Yang, because he knows which aspect trainees should set their sights on and train harder on. I am very thankful to have a mentor like him.

It’s natural to feel hurt when hearing criticisms. Yet there are people who would convert this into a motivating force, and there are people who would take this as poison and just give up. It would be better if one could calmly and objectively judge his own results, compared to receiving strict feedback from others yet being unable to judge himself, thereby leading to hurt feelings and pain. Knowing where the problem lies would make it easier to solve.

Jiyong jokingly said, “Whoever points out a certain something where Youngbae is lacking in, Youngbae would work on that something for a hundred
times when he gets to the dorm.” More accurately put, it’s not just because I’m
prudent, but because I am a perfectionist.

If I receive a criticism and feel bad after, I would focus on that problem
and analyze it. I feel bad because I feel uneasy, so I need to find the reason
behind my uneasiness. I would analyze the situation from a third person’s point
of view. Looking at problems objectively, an abstract or gigantic problem would
gradually take form and become more manageable. The next step would then be
the most important part, which is solving the problem.

If I feel down because of a certain thing, I hope people won’t think that I’m
beaten down, but that I am in the process of analyzing the problem. This is
because if I don’t figure out the correct direction in order to solve the problem, I
would end up in an unrelated place and waste precious time and effort.

“As much as possible, set your dreams higher. Because dreams give every
person equal opportunities”
Shout out to the World: DAESUNG

Stand me at the path leading to my ambitions

Expected to be a pastor, but aspired to be a singer (~ Pt.One~)

My dad always mentioned two sayings to me: “A word spoken is past recalling.”; and “You must at least try what you want to do”. But when I figured out what I ultimately wanted to do, my dad said, “You can do anything but never that job.”.

“It is time for you to focus on your studies, why do you want to be a singer? Just ask any passerby on the street, how many parents would be supportive of their children who want to be artists? You’re crazy.”

I understood that it would be hard to get my dad’s permission. Some of my dad’s friends dropped out of school to become singers, but eventually they didn’t succeed. Moreover, since I was a kid, my dad always criticized those singers on music shows, saying, “How could such a kid turn out like this?” Thus I knew it would be very hard to get his support and permission.

In spite of that, I still believed in dad’s saying “You must at least try what you want to do”, and I was hoping he would change his mind if I persisted. But he said only “No” without even considering. I thought, “Why don’t you believe in me just for once?” My heart was like being punctured by a thousand blades.

In fact my dad wanted me to be a pastor. In my name, “Dae” means “Big/Loud” while “Sung” means “Success/Voice”. So my name means to spread message with a sonorous voice. (Although what I’m doing now is not what my parents expected for, I’m using my voice to spread musical messages to people. Doesn’t this well prove my name’s meaning too? Hahaha...)

My dad was probably feeling anxious because I started to argue about my ambition, since I have been a docile son all this while. Even my sister, who always supported me no matter what, was puzzled, “Why do you want to be a singer suddenly?” My proclamation to be a singer seemed to be broken off.
My “ridiculous singer-dream” that caused chaos to my family was actually due to something unintentionally said by my class teacher, when I was in secondary school second-year.

Once after school activities, my whole class went to sing karaoke together with the class teacher. Probably you won’t believe that was my first time being to karaoke. I felt thrilled and wonderful when I heard my voice amplified with echo in the room. When I finished singing, my teacher said, “Wow, our Daesung sang so beautifully, you can be a singer!” Although I always loved to sing, my class teacher was the very first person who said I could become a singer.

Other people of my age received counseling from teachers about their future, while I got the idea from my teacher in a karaoke room, isn’t this rejoicing? From that very moment, I was preoccupied by the statement “be a singer” so much that I couldn’t hear my friends’ singing in the room.

Not too long after that incident, there was a ceremony at my school. In the singing contest session, I won the first prize and it was my first time joining a singing contest. I thought: “Ah, becoming a singer is God’s will for me! God and my class teacher signified my direction!” After a long while, I got to know that my class teacher wasn’t suggesting me to be a singer; she was just making a polite comment when she heard a rather-good singing voice. Ah! But what could I do? I was so fascinated by the idea of “becoming a singer”.

A stubborn fight to beat dad’s stubbornness (~ Pt.Two~)

My dad thought my singer-dream was just a naive thought during teenager years, but I had been insisted for 2 years. Although I had been an obedient son all this while, this time I insisted to do what I wanted and was in a bad term with my dad. I could understand that my dad was probably very angry. Perhaps it was a I-will-do-what-you-don’t-allow mentality, my passion towards music was burning hotter and hotter when my dream was objected. I think: from taekwondo to hapkido to soccer, I was allowed to do those, why not singing?

The fight between my dad and I seemed it could never end. My sister was working hard to mediate between my dad and I, but she wasn’t a very good mediator.
“Dad is really angry now. When he is angry nothing can change his mind, you should know this very well too. Just patiently wait.” But both of us knew it very well that the waiting would be useless.

It wasn’t the matter of doing music anymore. I was determined to become a singer to prove my dad wrong. Then this battle of pride started and caused stiff atmosphere to the family. I was sorry that my mom and sister were stressed out, but I was insisted to hold on to my pride and decision.

One day, when I was getting ready to go to school, my dad brought a big box into my room. Seeing this, I could sense something bad coming.

“Pack and leave the house, if you really want to be a singer.”

My prediction was right. Telling me that, he seemed really determined. Suddenly my mind went blank.

I knew my dad’s personality; once he gets angry, nothing can calm him down. Although he is a very caring father who can be as casual as a friend with his children, his pride and dignity make him a very strict person as well.

As I could recall, it was when I was grade 3. I don’t remember the details, but I was very sure that I lost my rationality that time, or else I won’t rudely throw my spoon while having dinner at home. Immediately I was taken off my clothes like an onion being peeled, then got chased out of the house. Even though I was very young that time, I was already 10 years old. It was an age that I should be knowing stuff (in need to cover up private part too…).

When embarrassment and depression were still lingering, I curled up and cried. A lady who was my neighbour saw me and decided to help me. My family had been in a very good term with neighbours so I guessed she thought my dad would forgive me because of her.

She held my hand and knocked on my house door. My dad came out and angrily said, “It’s none of your business that I chase my kids out of my house.”

After that day, my mom and sister got embarrassed every time when they saw the lady. We became awkward with this neighbour who used to be very close with us.
From that experience, I could see that dad bringing in a box for me was not merely a threat. I told myself that I shouldn’t be chased out of the house again.

I would need a place to stay if I were to leave the house. Immediately I got into obedient-son mode and said, “Dad, I need to go to school now. I even have an exam next week! I’m going to be late, bye!” Although I was very nervous and scared, I was trying to be cool and then left for school. Becoming a singer was my ambition, but I needed to open my dad’s heart and mind, instead of showing temper and causing tension between us.

**Finally it really begins! Be a singer! (~Pt.Three~)**

After I decided to take the strategy of taking one step back before moving further, I was like a solo fighter trying to not appear in front of my dad much, quietly getting ready for my goal.

Instead of saying “I want to be a singer”, I wanted to convince my dad using practical action. Since most adults prefer something “official”, I thought some kind of document or certificate would help me a lot. So I went for an audition at a TV station’s academy. Although it was a little bit late, I was trying to do something to achieve compromise between me and my dad.

After a while, I received notice from the academy that I passed the audition. Because it was a TV station so I wished my dad would change his mind. However, his words cut my hope into pieces.

“What is this? Isn’t it a place that you can get in as long as you have the money?”

My 5-minute confidence disappeared immediately after he said, “you can get in as long as you have the money.”

How to convince my dad to approve my ambition? I was again in frustration. I felt very upset that I wasn’t obedient to my parents, but I shouldn’t give up my dream like this, should I? In order to end the tension between me and my dad, I decided to be brave and take a risk.

I decided to “run away from home”. Because it was during school break, it wouldn’t bring trouble to my school life. I decided that I won’t go home unless my
parents approved my ambition. But after leaving home, in the afternoon, I started to feel uneasy. The confidence and courage that I had in the morning suddenly disappeared. To make some “excuses”, I called home.

“Dad, I’m…with my music friends, probably won’t come back for a few days.”

“……”

A short silence following a sigh, he said, “Up to you.”

The call ended, and my feelings became even more complicated. Hyungs who heard my call teased me and said, “This is called going out, not leaving home.”

I wanted to “leave home”, my parents thought I was just “going out”. This incident ended within a week before my family knew the details.

I don’t remember how long it took, my dad suddenly approved. The saying “there are no parents who can win over their children” seems true.

“Okay, be it a TV station or anything, you can try it. You will only realize things after having some hardships,” he said.

Finally, my singing ambition officially started.

School and training!!! (~ Pt.Four~)

Not long after my dad allowed me to do singing, I was suggested to audition for YG Entertainment, the dream company. I was either being naive or courageous, before going for the tough audition, I only knew one pop song which was R. Kelly’s “I Believe I Can Fly”. And it was a last minute preparation just for the audition. I had always loved to sing tradition songs, so I didn’t have much exposure to pop music. Either me being lucky or fate making fun of me, I passed the audition and became a YG trainee.

My dad knew about Se7en, so he was okay with this. But giving up studies for singer training was definitely a no-no for him, because debuting time was not confirmed and even being a singer doesn’t necessarily lead to successful career. If I gave up studies for it, I might end up not achieving anything at all.

“Not skipping any classes, going home by 11pm every day no matter what.”
Promising to my family those 2 points, I began my trainee’s life. There’s no such thing as a free lunch, so if I had this chance to fulfil my ambition, I had to be obedient to my parents by fulfilling a student’s responsibility too.

So I was the only YG trainee who went to school every day.

The life after joining YG was similar to what I had imagined. Jiyong hyung and Youngbae hyung who had been trainees for 6 years were impressively awesome. Being in front of them, I was like a toddler who just started to walk. There were so many things to learn. I needed to work harder than everyone but I had less time to spend, so I had to be extremely diligent.

Because my will to learn was very strong, I started to absorb everything like a sponge. It was my first time dancing; the basement practice studio was where I learned and practice new things. There, I learned songs and dance that I had never seen, and I got to know sunbaes/hyungs (senior/older brothers) and namdongsaeng (younger brother). Moreover, the studio was such a heaven to me, because no one would complain no matter how loudly I sang.

“What a wonderful place, I want to learn so many songs...”

Because I couldn’t believe I was at such a nice place, I was very happy and smiled every day. But when “BIGBANG Documentary” started shooting, the situation changed. We needed to do shooting and had test once a week, and 12-hour daily training schedule was very tough. I felt unconfident with the future, so I always felt very insecure. But there is nothing too easy in this world, isn’t it?

There was a day that we didn’t do anything but it was indeed a very tough day. All the trainees had been spending a long period of time together like a family, but when someone needed to be eliminated, the atmosphere totally changed. Anyone could be eliminated — just that thought was enough to stress us out so much, because we wouldn’t know among us, who would be the one eliminated.

When we knew there would be 2 people eliminated, I wondered if it was a dramatic effect intentionally made by Yang president. But I was wrong, reality is cruel. All of us used to rely on and trust each other during this training period, so whoever staying or leaving would feel sad too. I was feeling very sorry and
heartache, but I couldn’t do anything; even after so many years, I still feel sad when I think of this.

I was 18 years old, for the first time I experienced the cruelty of the society. The world of professionalism can be horrifying, and I finally realized it.

So in June 2006, I grew up a little bit more after experiencing that pain.

**Needed to go to school but also need practising! huhuh! (~Pt.Five~)**

Because My dad knows that Se7en is a singer there so he let me be a trainee of YG quite easily. However, my father would not let me give up my studies for the sake of being a singer and he always thought even if I were to be a singer, it did not mean that I would be successful. He did not want me to have nothing afterall.

‘You cannot skip any lessons and you must go back home before 11pm.’

After promising these two points with them, I started my life as a trainee! There is no free lunch in the world, after getting my parents’ permission of being a trainee, I have to abide to these rules if I really want to achieve my dreams.

The only trainee of YG who went to school was born in this way!

After entering YG, things were just like what I had expected. Having 6 years of training, Jiyong hyun and Yongbae hyun had already become the trainees who outwitted others. In front of them, I felt that I was just a toddler who just learnt how to walk. There were too many things for me to learn, I had to work extraordinarily hard to catch up with others but I just had the least time to do so. In order to learn the most things within the really short period of time, I had to work really really hard.

**(~Pt.Six~)**

Because my desire to learn is too strong so I was just like a sponge which absorbed knowledge liked water. That was my first time to practice dancing as well. For me, the choreography room in the underground was just like a melting pot which enabled me to come up with new dancing skills.
I came across with dances and songs which I had not encountered before. I had also met hyuns and dongsangs there. The place was really a heaven to me, since no matter how loud I sang, no one would come and complain.

‘It is really a place that I want to stay so much, it is really the songs that I want to learn so much…’

Because I did not believe that I could stay at that place, I walked there from home every day. However, after ‘BIGBANG documentary’ started filming, the story was different. We had to film once every week and passed one test. It was even more tiring when we had to finish a 12-hour training every day. Because our future was not guaranteed in that period of time, we were emotionally unstable, too. But there is really no free lunch in this world!

It is so right to say even if one does not do anything, he will feel tired too. We, as trainees, passed each day in a warm atmosphere, we were just like each other’s family members. However, because we had to follow the rules of the game, whenever someone was eliminated, the atmosphere would change 180 degrees. Anyone would have been eliminated… whenever we thought of this, it was really a torture.

When we were informed that 2 would be eliminated from us, I had thought whether it was for the sake of creating tension but that was just my illusion. Reality is cruel. Although it was short, we did rely on each other to walk through the path. No matter who had to be eliminated, we still felt upset. Because we were so sorry about it that we could not even speak. I felt sad even when I think of it now.

At the age of 18, I experienced the reality as always told by the adults. I finally started to realize how terrifying the professional world is.

I had been growing bit by bit amid all of these challenges.

It is still too early to give up because of all of the hardships I have gone through!

[- Pt.Seven-]

In fact, my singing career started because of the possibilities of ‘singing’. Because I started late so when comparing with other members, I am inadequate in many areas so I have to keep working hard. I had kept singing
again and again to an extent that others were afraid that I would damage my vocal chords because of this.

Since others were too concerned about me, I could only hide in the dressing room to practice after the normal training hours. Maybe because I was too greedy? I ended up really hurting my vocal chords on the eve of recording the 3rd single.

Since we had just debuted for a short period of time and we are groups with good singing ability, I was so worried since I thought the reputation of Big Bang might be affected by it. Thanks to my really active members, I could overcome this difficulty rather easily. However, my voice was so cracked that I could not reach most of the pitches in the songs of the album. Whenever I was on the stage, I would be worried about whether the same mistake would appear again, again and again. I also could not catch up the beats with others because I was so scared of my situation at that time. This was the prelude of my being depressed for a long time.

‘My stage which I have dreamt for a long time... I so want to use my voice to sing... NO matter how hard I was trying, I could not even produce a sound...’

‘It is because you are too serious, just be careful next time!’ Others’ words could not soothed me. I was just like a soldier who was facing his last battle... I didn’t think that there was a next chance waiting for me in the future.

There are too many people who work hard in the world and I know this is a world not only demands someone who have tried their best but also those who ARE the best. A singer who has lost his voice is just like a soldier who does not have any weapons but he still has to fight a hard battle. The fact that I had to undergo the album recording made the whole thing worse.

[~ Pt.Eight~)

Seeing me in such a depressing state, Gummy noona tried to soothe me by telling me she had also experienced such a state before. She had told me how to use my voice in a different way...

‘This is the solo song that I have been waiting ... People are working so hard just because of me.... As a singer, why can I not manage my voice well?
Why I have messed all the things up?’ I had been blaming myself repeatedly. ‘What if...What if I cannot sing anymore in the future?’ Although I wanted to show that I was really okay, I just could not hold back my tears whenever I think of the situation...

I had been carrying out my recording for more than 12 hours. There were times that I only needed to final two notes of ‘Try Smiling’ then the procedure would be done. However, I could not finish them at all since my voice just did not come out... I tried to drink as much water as I could... but all of my efforts were in vain...At that time, I really thought my world was going to end...I was like that for 2 hours...

At last, miracles did happen... I sang the final two notes. At that very moment, I bursted out crying.

I cried not only because of the thanks that I want to give because of being able to finish up the recording but also because I felt deeply sorry for Gummy noona and all the staff who had been working for 14 hours because of me.

This is a solo song which I sang with my bad voice and sorrow.

After putting people’s kindness aside, I had to begin fighting with myself. Because it was something that even my beloved members and company staff could not help, I could only rely on myself. I thought this all happened because I had not protected my voice well enough so later, even when I was answering a phone call, I would just use the softest voice that I could ever produce in order to protect it. I would do whatever was good to my voice. If I could not speak, I would just smile instead.

I passed several months like this. Thanks to ‘Lies’, my voice was back again as if all had happened were just some lies....

**The biggest ‘positiveness’ in my life [~ Pt.Nine-~]**

‘Daesung ah, no matter what you do, if you want to do, you can do it. Therefore, please believe in yourself.’ Ever since I was small, mum has been telling me to ‘think positively’.

No matter what I face, be it a drop in my academic results, be it an argument with my friends or even my arguing with my dad heatedly, she kept
reminding me ‘no matter what it is, just treat it seriously. Then you will not have a reason to feel regretful in the future.’

‘You are really a positive kid, aren’t you?’

‘Our Daesung has a really positive mindset so he can smile under all circumstances!’

‘Daesung ah, Mum feels happy because you have positive thinking!’

Positive Positive Positive…. Sometimes I think that because of hearing this word for too many times, I have interpreted it as ‘denial’. However, the ‘positive thinking’ of my mum has empowered me the ability to face all the challenges and tortures in my life. The word ‘positive’ has engraved in my mind unconsciously already so whenever hard times come, this word will pop up in my mind.

Those were the days when I was preparing the single ‘Look At me Gwi Soon’. Before I had my own stage, I heard people taking bad about me behind.

‘Big Bang member sings Trot? It is just not acceptable!’ ‘It is the move which tarnishes the image of Big Bang.’ Even I am a fan, I cannot accept it.’ etc.

“Even if it is a trot, then so what? Why don’t you just wait and watch the stage first before you make any judgment?” I know that people who love Big Bang would think like this; however, I still felt so upset. Because it was the present from Jiyong hyun, I felt even sadder. Originally I planned to show the stage with this special gift of hyun in a cool way, I became desperate because of the criticism from the public.

‘Am I this untrustable? Am I the one who tarnishes the name of Big Bang...’ I always thought like this at that time. The word ‘positive’ still gave me power. Thanks to the repetition of ‘Positive Education’ of my mum, it was really deep rooted in my mindset, I could overcome the situation.

I have not yet stepped on the stage first. If people are worried, then I have to stretch my potential to show them the coolest stage in order to ease their worries!’ When I thought in this way, I felt confident again.

I had been practicing hard ever since that day. I practiced the dancing, thinking of what facial expressions were most suitable on the stage and
preparing the costumes... I had to work 24 hours since my schedule crashed with Big Bang’s but I had never felt a bit tired.

Finally ... It came the stage of ‘Look at me, Gwi Soon!’. Ever since I shouted, ‘hello, everybody! I am Daesung!’ the atmosphere had been heated up. The stage and the audience had been merged together because of the heated atmosphere. I don’t know whether it was because of the ecstasy of the audience or it was the first stage, I felt that I was a superhero. Ah~That exciting stage... From that day onwards, I had never been worried and anxious as I was before. All of these had turned into support and cheering words.

‘Trot is not a burden to Big Bang’ but one of the genres that Big Bang could manage.

*If I did not have that ‘positive’ thinking, perhaps I would just have treated the dream of ‘being a singer’ as something which is not achievable. And now, when I face any challenges in the middle of my work, I will think very ‘positively’ and go return to the square one. If there had not been the teaching of my mum, I would just have treated everything that I have in a negative way. Perhaps I would have given up already.*

‘Being positive’ is the motivation of my working hard always. Whenever I feel desperate and tiring, I would just tell myself, ‘it is okay!’ ‘Work hard!’. In this way, I can be motivated again.

~’My most precious placebo , ’ you will be okay’ ~ (~Pt.Ten~)

My sister is my mental support and also my greatest backup.

She is the only person in my family who understands the reason of my being a singer is not for gaining glory but for doing what I really want to do. Whenever I felt exhausted or losing hope, my sister would go to my room and tell me,’ you will be okay.’ This sentence was not said by her carelessly, she always used a calm and warm tone to speak it out.

Until now, whenever I feel I am tired, I will think of this sentence, ‘Nevermind. You just need to endure a while, everything will be okay.’
In fact, before we had entered primary school, we were still competitors. We did not need to argue with each other, whenever our eyes met, we would fight. We were like this every day so our relationship was really bad.

After a while, we fought really hard again. Because we were too involved in the fight, I did not bear in mind that she is a girl anymore, I hit her with all my might. Although she did fight too, she is still a girl. When I looked at her tears, I felt very sorry so I just stayed there and let her hit me.

My sister cried because she was too painful and I cried too because I did not control my power right, then I needed to let her beat me up. This was the time that we cried very hard together...

And after this unusual experience, the one that I hate most in this world had suddenly become my favourite person.

Because she is the one who always supports me no matter what I opt to do. She is also the one who comes to me first whenever I feel exhausted. Moreover, because my sister had really outstanding academic performance, my parents gave up on mind very quickly. (Haha!) This also helps us to walk the path that I choose to walk on.

In fact, I really did well in my Maths in the past and I had interest in it. However, later I could not manage to do functions well so I gave it up. No matter what I do, my sister teaches me a lot of things.

I also want to thank my dad! Although he used to make me tired for a period of time, if not for his opposition, I would not have achieved today’s achievement. If dad had supported me right from the very beginning, maybe I would have lost my passion in music already. It was because his opposition that I was so determined to overcome the difficulties to insist what I want.

10 inspirations that smiling gives me (~ Pt.Eleven~)

1) Laugh! Laughing is the best exercise and if you laugh for 1 minute every day, your life will be lengthened by 8 days. You will have more confidence if you laugh louder, too.

2) Even if this is a force smile, you have to smile! When you smile, even diseases will run away from you.
3) If you feel happy right away when you wake up, then smile! Smiling in the morning is the best medicine for your body. If you smile, then you and your next generation and your next next generation will be healthy too! :P

4) Set a time table for you to smile every day! Then you will say goodbye to the hospital forever!

5) When you smile, smile from your heart! Comparing with the smiles that you plaster on your face, the smiles coming from the heart are more important!

6) Think of some happy things, then smile! Happy smiles create blessings. Whenever you smile, you will be blessed.

7) Let’s smile! If you smile with others, the results will be 33 times better!

8) When you are tired, you should also smile. The real smiles come out in the middle of the hardest time.

9) Don’t just smile once. If you don’t smile at all in a day then that day is wasted.

10) Think of the day when your dreams come true, then smile. Dreams and smiling are in one family.

~Learn the secret techniques from others~ [~ Pt.Twelve~]

‘What do you think define who you are,’ tomorrow will be the result of our decisions today.’

These are the quotes that I like so before I go to sleep, I pray and reflect on what I have done today. When I sleep thinking of these things that I want to do, I will sleep very soundly. However, because of the tight schedule, I suddenly did not like to smile anymore. There are many people who think that I am an arrogant and active person but in fact I am afraid to changes and an introvert. Perhaps because the setting of my image is someone who is really cheerful so whenever I wear a blank expression on my face, people will ask me if I feel sad or something. There are times that I do feel upset but I still force myself to smile. The difficulty of doing this is beyond imagination.

However, there was a day that I found there was a note entitled ‘the 10 inspirations that smiling gives you’ on the door of the office. At first, I just glanced through it but later whenever I don’t feel like smiling, I will go there to
read it again in order to practice smiling. I was there practicing how to smile, and then suddenly I started to smile from the bottom of my heart. That’s why we all need to keep learning… After learning how to smile, you will know how to smile better and become happier.

i also think of a precious learning opportunity. Because I did not want to trouble my fellow members too much, I did not share my worries with them even when I was very troubled.

When I started filming ‘Family Outing’ again, because I needed to stay with strangers in some unfamiliar areas, I was really nervous. Although my members said, ‘you have been living with us for some time, you will be okay!’ I was still so worried.

Before the night that we started filming, I was so nervous that I could not sleep. I was thinking I should really keep calm in the episode because they were all my seniors who had known each other for a long time. I did not think that I was able to strike up a conversation with them.

However, the members seemed to be really worried about me, each of them sent a message to me. When I was returning, I sent them the following message, ‘because I have lost my heart, I did not speak much today.’ Then they all replied me, unsurprisingly.

‘Daesung, fighting!’

‘Who is this! The one who does not let our Daesung speak, hyun will beat him up for you!’

‘Whatwhatwhat? Next week we will film a ‘Big Bang Outing’
All of their warm messages have melted my heart.
And at the same time, I also received a message from HaHa hyun.
‘You just need to adjust yourself and observe the manners in front of the camera.’

Then I said to myself, ‘well, I will try my best despite of my worries. I have already won my tiger-liked father’s trust coupled with the care of so many people, I should be able to overcome every difficulty.’

I have so many people who love me this dearly, I cannot want more. There is almost nothing that I can accomplish on my own.
Friend are just like a bankbook (~ Pt.Thirteen~)

When I was studying in secondary school, I had a personality which was similar to Seungri's. You may ask, 'then what is it like?' That is a type that rather than giving up because of the challenges but to face them squarely. I was that kind of person. When I knew there are possibilities of getting success, I would try all the means to do the job; however, if there are still no ways out, then I would give it up without thinking about it further.

But after my vocal chord got hurt, I started to realize, 'there are something on this world that I cannot do too.' and 'there are no perfect people on this world'. Therefore, I had been matured and become more and more introvert.

If I encountered troubles, I would not disclose them to my family, not to mention my members. Maybe because of this, I felt lonely sometimes too.

What I need is neither gourmet nor beautiful scenery. I don't need beautiful clothes but I need friends who can understand me.

When I was a trainee, I did not have time to take care of my friends or the mood of doing so.

Perhaps my friends would think like this, 'he has changed after rising as a star.' We had met each other less too... So there were also friends saying 'it was not the original Daesung that I have met at the beginning.'

**In fact, I was just waiting them to phone me first. After 1 year of waiting, I had been missing them so much... The feeling was just like waiting for the call of the girl that you are secretly in love.**

**If I had known that my friends would not phone me because I am a singer, I would have phoned them first. Despite the fact that I was super busy, they still mean the whole world for me.**

The smiling angel Daesung, ‘the book which has shaped my life...’ (~ Pt.Fourteen~)

If I have to choose a book to be my 'book of life', I might choose Joe Austin’s ‘Strong Positive’ because the writer, Joe Austin, who is also a preacher loves smiling so much, he is called. ‘the Smiling Preacher’. 
At the very moment that I heard this, I felt close to him although we had not met each other before. I know it is embarrassing to say it... but isn’t my nickname ‘smiling angel’ too?

In others’ eyes, Kang Daesung is just like a pabo who is really positive but I do have a lot of dark sides too, for example, there are times that I keep blaming myself if something wrong happens and there are times that I am just like a blade which can hurt people easily and keep people from approaching.

When I just debuted, I felt so tired because of the problem concerning my vocal chord. Because those were the times that I often sang out of pitch so no one dared to approach me. They said they did not even dare to me... It seemed that I was just surrounded by a layer of dark clouds.

I did not have power to take others’ feeling in consideration because I was so depressed and disappointed with myself. I was facing the feelings that I myself could not even face/endure so I fell into an infernal hell. Comparing with ‘the smiling angel’, I was more like a ‘hell angel’.

However, in the eyes of fans, I am always a cheerful person. When I was just debuted, I used to be tired because of the difference between what people saw me and how I actually felt. I even thought, ‘whether it is too fake for me to act like this when I am not actually happy...’ However, I had not been troubled by it for a long time, since the people around me all thought I was a happy kid, I was gradually molded to be someone like this.

Even when there are sad things, people will say,’ whenever we talk about positiveness, we will think of Daesung. You will not give up because of this little thing, right?’ I wanted to be the one that people thought I was so I walked to that side step by step.

I want to be a happy person. I am not asking people to be happy because of me but at least, I don’t want them to be unhappy because of me. No, I want to be a very happy person. I want to spread my ‘happy virus’ to the people around me just like what Joel Austin does.

Because it is something that I feel blessed and the way that I can repay the people who have been helping me out so much.
"There are no meaningless challenges in this world (~Pt.Fifteen~)

After Big Bang had debuted, we started a series of promotions and we all worked for the same goal. Although I was already satisfied with the activities that we had together, I was still curious about how much I could achieve with my own strength...

I wanted to know how much things I could achieve if I did it myself and I also wanted to test my own ability. Although I did not have 100% confidence about how much I could achieve, I still wanted to test my own limits.

I had been hoping it days after days, a chance that I could know where my limits lie. I longed for a chance that I could stand out of the people without relying on my members... No matter when... when I was having meals, lying in the bed or travelling in the bus... I thought of it... Whenever I was free, I would think of it. If there is such a chance, it would come to look for you. And finally, my wish did really come true. I was invited to take up a role in the musical, 'Cats'. Although I did not think about what I really wanted to do in the coming days, I was really glad about it! I was so thrilled that I trembled...

After accepting the offer, I wanted to take part in the musical more than ever. Even though I had rewatched it three times, whenever I started rewatching it once again, new feelings would emerge. Seeing so many energetic people acting on the stage, even though I was sitting in my chair, I was trembling from top to the bottom.

'I really can stand on that stage? I can really take up that role?' I was pinching my own arms to see whether it was just a dream.

The time that I practiced for the musical was so happy. Although I did not have much time for it, whenever I went for the rehearsal, my body would be filled up by unknown power. I think it is because I was going to enter a brand new world, my anticipation and excitement kept strengthening me.

Whenever I walked to the door of the practice room, I would shout to my friends, 'hello, everybody, I am Daesung!' I used this to cheer myself!

I was so happy that even though I was willing to wear my embarrassing tight outfit! Although at the beginning, I wore casual wear to practice, everybody else were wearing the tight outfit... And there was a senior
reminded me only by wearing it in the practices could I be used to it when I was in the real show... Therefore, I wore it even for rehearsal...

No matter what I encountered at that time, I just felt it was so interesting.

Because I had been infected with the ‘positive virus’, a virus that I did not even need a medicine to cure.

**Things will turn out like what I believe (~ Pt.Sixteen~)**

I have not forgotten the feelings of my taking part in ‘Cats’. There was a long period of time that I had to lie for a long time in the drama but at that time, I just thought of the exciting feeling emerged after I knew I had been invited to perform in the play and how little time I had spent on rehearsing... Then I kept on thinking about how my acting skills had been matured...

‘It’s amazing now that I can stand on the stage to perform! This is a miracle! A miracle!’ Even though I did not always cry... I was teary at that time but that was for the staff and other actors in the play...

However, because the audience gave me applause because I was an actor but not as a singer so I regarded all of the applause was for me!

Moreover, because it was the first time that I have received the applause from the people who were of my parents’ age, I was especially touched.

The audience had been keeping their mouths shut throughout the whole performance but when the performance was over, all of them showed their excitement all in a suddenly... It really left a deep impression on me.

**Ever since I had done audition for Big Bang, miracles kept happening on me (~ Pt.Seventeen~)**

Leader G-Dragon and Taeyang had been training for at least 6/7 years, TOP hyun had started his underground activities when he was young and even the maknae had been dancing in his own team when he was schooling... I was auditioned with them and I was selected with them... All was just like a miracle to me...
In front of president Yang, because it was my first time of doing an audition, I was too nervous that I did not sing the song well. I still can remember it very clearly. After a few months, president Yang told me one of the reasons that he selected me was ‘I have a bright smile’.

It is said that there is a ‘self-fulfillment prophecy’, things will develop like what I expect, for example, if I think ‘I cannot do it’ or ‘only me is like that...’ then it is destined that I cannot do it in the future. If I think about negative results, then these thoughts will generate more negative thoughts and in turn, it will lead to worse results.

‘My life is so fabulous!’ if I think like this, then my life will become better and better and this is the core of this rule.

If there is someone who is mourning for his uncertain future in somewhere and keeps thinking, ‘I cannot do it’ or he is troubled by other stuff, I want to tell him,’ you have to start thinking I CAN DO IT from now on and the world will become what you expect it to be.’

It is not difficult at all. You just need to change your mindset. Even Daesung can do it, why you can’t do so?

I want to get infected with the ‘Positive Virus’ (~Pt.Eighteen~)

Once I came into a passage entitled ‘Kang Daesung, when will your transformation end’. The author used ‘transformation’ to describe me who has been challenging myself to sing Trot, guesting in variety shows, musicals and even trying to be a MC of the music shows.

When I read this, I felt like flying because people did not regard my various activities as meaningless challenges but as a transformation! I felt that I had not wasted my efforts trying out different things in this period of time.

In fact, I have a bad habit. When something troublesome happens, even when the people around me are actually trying to help out, I will say no until I cannot really handle it. Although it seems that I do not want to bring troubles to my friends, it often ends up I worsen the problems if I handle them myself.

It was the same when I was guesting in ‘Family Outing’, ‘Cats’ and ‘Music Bank’. Because I had a super tight schedule, I was nearly burnt out but I did not
say anything and tried to handle it myself. It was just like I was snowballing a
small problem until it had become really big. After that I did know that I had to
give up that habit. I was really stupid at that time.

The tight schedule has also generated many problems, like I used to throw
tantrums because of my lacking of time to use.

‘Why there are only 24 hours in a day?’ I asked this question loads of
times.

It was especially true when I was preparing myself to perform in ‘Cats’. Because of having not enough time, I asked my manager, ’how can I perform in
the musical if I don’t practice at all? Please at least give me a little time to do so!’ I
was regretful immediately after I spoke these. It was me who knew I myself
had a super tight schedule but still wanted to guest in a musical... but then I
was blaming others...I was so guilty that I did not know what should I say
afterwards. However, I really felt anxious since there were too many things to do
but I just had so little time. If it was possible, I would like to borrow time from
others too.

I saved my eating time as well as the sleeping time. I squeezed out all the
time that I could to practice. Although it was hard to fight against time, it is of
no use if I blame it either.

I was worried whether I would fail because I was too greedy to do too
many things as the same time as well as whether I would bring troubles to the
people around me.

Even until now, I still want to do a lot of things and I have a lot of dreams
too. And I do really believe that they will really come true one day. Now, if I give
up just because I am leading some hard days, then it is an disrespectful act to
my own dreams.

Every breathe that I take, every steps that I move, I have sowed the
insistence towards my dreams.

Therefore, I have to smile today too. If I give up on hope, I will become
desperate. On the contrary, won't there be miracles if I truely believe in hopes?

Life always knocks on the door of our dreams and hope.
In Hwangshhabu’s eyes:

Just have a try first, if it is okay, then it will turn out right and vice versa!

I have nothing to pick on Daesung since he is really determined about the things that he wants to do and is very honest.

When I assign different workout that the members of Big Bang have to do, I will judge it according to their physical strengths and the sports that they are good at. I also assign more than they can manage in case that they would give up in the middle. Daesung will just finish up all of the assigned exercises even for the most difficult part, for example, if I ask the members to do 120 sit-ups, other members will say, ’can’t I just do more of the others?’ But Daesung will not say anything but just do them. He will try to finish the part which exceeds his ability although he has to finish it with difficulty. If I tell him later; ’those parts were designed because I thought you guys might give up in the middle... ’ Then Daesung will just reply,’ah... I see... I wanted to say.... I was a little bit exhausted...’ Then he will smile shyly.

Because he has loads of patience, I believe he can manage no matter what is assigned to him. When I just knew he had to appear in the music programmes regularly, I was a little bit worried so I asked him, ‘is it okay for you to handle it?’ He just replied me softly,’I will just have a try first. If it is okay, then it will turns out right and vice versa. Because everything has two sides. I will have a go first in order to gain some experience.’

Daesung is this kind of person. He will not alter what he wants to do just because of some small obstacles lying on his road.

There is nothing to worry, nothing to be scared of.

In Lee Jaewook’s eyes: I am really anticipating how Daesung will be like in 5 years’ time

Daesung used to be a person who did not like dancing at all. Originally I was worried whether he could catch up with other members and if he can digest the dancing steps well. However, he is able to do all of these. And he does not
only dance well, he can also sing. No matter what you teach him, he can make them all his.

Undoubtedly, Daesung is the mood boaster, especially his smiles can lift up your mood. But you can also see feel his own thoughts in his smile. You can feel that he is trying to tell you that no matter who you are, if you try, you can do it well. However, before everything starts, Daesung would be worried about if for a long time still. Even for the things that people will surely help him if he asks, he will still try to sort them out himself first. However, I do think that this is why he has been growing gradually.

No matter he is leading his life or making his music, Daesung is very mature. Although the future of all members is promising, Daesung has infinitive possibilities.

Therefore, I am really looking forward to seeing how Daesung will be like in 5 years’ time.

— Li jae wook, the choreographer

I would ask for nothing if I had such a son  (~ Pt.Twenty~)

Apparently, he is the one who is the least greedy, but in fact he is really ambitious. Therefore, he is really harsh to himself. If he cannot reach his expectations, he will feel very depressed. When we see him being like this, we would be unhappy too. He is usually the one who wakes up the earliest in the dorm, too. Even there are bad things, he will admit them if it is really he who has done that.

Comparing with the way that he treats himself, he treats others really generously. He has been working hard for making people happy. However, not many people like his nice personality. People who have known him for a long time will also say, ’I would just ask for nothing if I had such a son’!

When he first saw me, he directly addressed me as ’adjuma’ I was so surprised that he called me like this. He asked my age and said, ‘so if you have reached this age, then aren’t you an adjuma already?’ At that time, I thought, ‘why there is such a kid.’ But it was for this address that we had then become closer.
Daesung will move forward because of his character of treating himself strictly and others generously.

— From: the captain of YG Entertainment A&
Shout out to the World: SEUNGRI

“Please erase the comma inside your heart and replace it with an exclamation mark. Life is always speeding away with failures and setbacks appearing repeatedly. Please believe that you are working hard for yourself because having confidence is the most important form of competitiveness.” ~ Seungri

Name: Lee Seung-hyun
Date of Birth: December 12, 1990
Skills: Singing, Dancing, Japanese
Music Drama: “Sonagi” / Movie: “Why Did You Come to my House?”
Solo song: “Strong Baby” activities

You must grasp your dreams even if the chance is as small as gravel

Relying on a 10% chance (~ Pt.One~)
- “The last member, Big Seung-hyun (T.O.P.) please step out to the front.”-

In the summer of 2006, a year of voice testing ended before the members were chosen to be part of BIGBANG. After President Yang called out Jiyong hyung, Taeyang hyung, Daesung hyung and finally TOP hyung’s names, my name was never called out.

At that moment, I had no other thoughts except being angry at myself until I felt like I lost my mind. I missed this hard to come across chance and felt regrettable and worried. But there was no point to regret it anymore because I couldn’t turn back time and change anything. Until now, I still don’t believe what had happened. I couldn’t accept the fact that I could no longer sing and dance with my hyungs who shared the same dreams as me. I had no concept that I had to start my life fresh so my tears didn’t even drop.

I felt wronged. I was simply following my dream of becoming a singer and came to Seoul alone with no family and no friends. All I did was practice. I knew clearly that my talent was not on par with my hyungs so I would go to the practice room by myself at dawn. I insisted on perseverance through those times
but now I felt empty that I wasn’t chosen. Like that phase, “working hard like a fool” I didn’t know what sort of excuses I could use to explain the result that was unsatisfactory. When I thought about it in the past, I didn’t want to be a person that lived up to those words.

“I know that little Seung-hyun has the talent to become a singer and you can dance very well, but aren’t I choosing singers and not dancers? Your singing is still insufficient.” I felt hurt by President Yang’s blunt and accurate evaluation of me. The thing that I liked the most and had the most confidence in was dancing and there was no doubt that I tried my best at it. However it was my fault that I failed, I couldn’t explain it and there was no need to protest either.

When I first heard that evaluation, the words that were hard to believe floated to me. “If you have a will to try out again, you can go to the practice room to practice by yourself after the BIGBANG members finish theirs. However, the chance of being chosen again is less than 10%.”

The will, the possibility, 10%...even though I knew it meant there was “no point in trying”, but I still felt a ray of light shining through. Knowing simply that the reality didn’t end there made me thankful and excited. Even if the chance of being successful was slim but my heart was racing with excitement at the thought of challenging myself like before.

People cry when they are happy because it’s a big feeling. The tears I cry now are for the laughter of next time. I was determined to seize the opportunity and increase “my less than 10% chance”.

**Where is my practice room? Wherever my foot come contact with! [~ Pt.Two~]**

I happened to see the legs of Ji-Sung Park (a famous Korean footballer) in the newspaper and immediately I recognized that there were so many bruises and scars on his legs. Wounds and marks of sprinkles were everywhere too. At that time, I was really sorry reading that. However, his situation resembled to mine. When I was preparing to challenge the 2nd round of the Big Bang members selection process, these legs always popped up in my mind. Then I would encourage myself that ‘**the tortures that I am suffering now will become the new**
blood of my legs.’ I am always strengthened by such a saying and I am luckier than Ji-Sung Park senior since my legs are in good condition.

Although I did really want to work hard one more time in order to see whether I could rewrite my destiny, I encountered many difficulties at that time. I could no longer live in the dormitory that I once shared with the hyuns and I was not old enough to register a room in the hostels nearby, not to mention that the fees were expensive too. I did not want to ask for money from my parents neither. Finally, I only had 1 resort-asked the manager hyun to let me sleep in his apartment.

‘I will not trouble you, I promise. What I need is only a place where I can sleep at night so please let me sleep there…’

It is lucky that the manager hyun said yes to me without any hesitation but then, another difficulty came in my way- I could no longer receive the training sessions that I used to have neither.

Then I could only rely on myself. I decided not to spend any time on worrying since I did not have much time left actually but I had so many things to do, including improving myself at a drastic pace within the time limit. If I spent the precious time on worrying, it was not different from wasting the time. I had to grab every second to do what I had to do.

I started my practice without really knowing what I should do, I chose to practise ‘Haru Haru’ by Taxiana (transliteration first).

Then I wanted to switch the song. I was so busy that I did not even have time to think about negative things. If I had remaining time, I would choose to spend it on trying new ways to deliver the song.

In fact, I had listened to the song for hundreds of times. No matter where I was, I sang regardlessly. Be it the practice room (after the hyuns finished their practice, I went there at midnight), the streets that many people walked by, or the house of the manager hyun... I sang and sang. There were some people who tried to stop me from singing in the public, ‘keep quiet’. Some people even pointed their fingers at me and criticized what I was doing at that moment. Although I did experience something like this, I did not lose heart. On the
contrary, I wanted to succeed so much in order to prove them the things that I insisted were right.

* I am like a lunatic at this moment but one day, praises will go to this lunatic who insists doing what he knows is right. * I always cheered myself up by this sentence.

My mind lingers on how I can improve my singing so I jotted down my thoughts on the score whenever I came up with something new. Finally, almost the whole sheet of scores was covered with my notes and I could not find any blank space to scribble anything on anymore.

The 1-week time granted by the president passed very swiftly when I was busy doing all of these.

**No fifth reason (~ Pt.Three~)**

The day finally came for the decisive battle. It was a decisive battle for the member who wasn’t chosen to see President Yang. I went to his office wearing the clothes I asked my hyung-deul to choose for me.

But what was going on? My mind became blank and no words came out of my mouth when I exchanged glances with the President. My body was so stiff that it seemed like all my functions in my body stopped working.

“Lee Seung-hyun, show me your energy. Do you want your hard work to vanish into thin air?”

I reluctantly gathered my energy and walked to face President Yang. Before I started to sing, I dug out my mystery card. In «BIGBANG Debut Documentary», there is a part where it shows me talking to President Yang about my “5 reasons that I have to be chosen” story. We sometimes talk about what happened back then. The hyung-deul even thought I was “trying to be funny” but yes, I agree. I get goosebumps now that I think back to it but the dream of “I needed to be chosen” was there so I didn’t feel ashamed of myself.

My confidence was created due to my sincerity because perhaps this chance will never appear in my lifetime again. It was then that I had an urgent feeling that I could not miss this opportunity. When our eyes met, my heart
started racing fast and I reluctantly stood before President Yang and stuttered when I opened my mouth. To prevent my voice from trembling, I gathered my strength in my throat and to prevent my eyes from darting back and forth, I opened them as wide as I could. I spoke each word clearly to show my true feelings.

“The first reason why I should be chosen is aren’t I the most suitable person to be the maknae of the group? The second reason is dancing. Since I have a lot of experience with performances and choreography, I can use that to help the group in those aspects. The third is image. The hyung-deul use their strong and handsome faces to keep the fans and I am certain I can use my cute, naive and clever appearance to keep fans. The fourth reason is confidence. No matter where I am, I can exude confidence in my appearance and my talking skills.”

By the time I reached my fifth reason, from my blank mind to my well prepared speech, I used my strong tone of voice and exclaimed “I have no fifth reason. I won’t make you regret anything if you give me a chance. I will definitely use the potential and confidence that I haven’t shown yet to surprise everyone.”

It happened exactly like that. Were there any more suitable reasons? Even if I were to speak of hundreds of reasons, if President Yang didn’t think I was a necessity to the group, he would still consider me worthless. Perhaps thinking of the reasons for “Little Seung-hyun to be part of the group” were hopeless but I still wanted to try. To grab that last chance, I didn’t care if I had to do embarrassing things because I had the passion of becoming a singer and I dreamed of being chosen. I only had one thought at that time, “I had to be chosen”.

After I listed my reasons, it was time for me to sing. I had no space to observe what other people’s expressions were but I sang to the best of my ability because I knew this was my last chance to impress. I had to show people what I had learned in 3yrs and sing it in 3 mins. My new clothes were drenched in sweat. I did my best and didn’t regret it.
A week later, by a miraculous chance, I became part of BIGBANG. The joy of being qualified couldn’t be compared to my feeling of a sense of achievement. My hard work didn’t go to waste. I grasped on to the hope that was as thin as silk.

There are many challenges in life. If you don’t challenge yourself, you will never taste defeat and will never be near to the road of success. What would happen if I had returned home after I was not chosen for my voice testing? I am too lazy to think of that, though of course it is something that will never happen.

Fear is NOTHING [~ Pt.Four~]

I really like this jargon of the advertisement, ’impossible is nothing’, I can feel how determined and enthusiastic that people are when they are saying this phrase. However, I have come up a new jargon for myself, ’fear is NOTHING.’ I cannot be more stupid if I give up what I want to do when difficulties arise. I am sympathetic to those who say, ’I cannot do it’, ’I am afraid that I will fail.’ since they give up before they really try to attempt the tasks.

Nevertheless, I am fear of the new situations that I have to face too. ‘What is waiting ahead on this path?’ I am scared of the uncertainties too but whenever I feel like this, I will remind myself with the following words, ’I will not know what are actually waiting for me if I don’t give it a try.’ Then, I will regain my courage and head for my goals.

When I was in grade 7, I went to attend a ceremony of another school. There were a group of people who were wearing the same set of clothes and performing on the stage. When they were dancing, none of us could refrain ourselves from staring at them. I was one of them. I even forgot breathing when they were on the stage.

‘THAT is the thing that I want to do!’ I knew very clearly right at that moment. I had never felt like this before throughout my whole life. My heart was beating so fast that I thought my chest was going to burst. To me, it is really what we call ’the dream which causes my heart thumping so fast’.

On the next day, I went to YMCA to pay a visit to the seniors whom danced so amazingly on the previous day without much thinking.
‘Do you know how to dance?’ *No, I don’t know but I will try very very hard starting from today. I also have the confidence to do it well.’*

After saying this, I tried to move my body according to the melody that I heard. I had not prepared any dance steps in advance. I just danced randomly. I must have looked very silly at that time. However, I could not care less about this since what I wanted is to dance with them.

Since I have the ‘talent’. although I did not know what actually I was dancing, I did do it perfectly with the music. The seniors were so surprised by my courage too and they finally accepted me to be part of them.

“**Hyung-deul, let me try and choreograph a dance routine**” (~Pt.Five~)

(Note: Hyung-deul is plural for more than 1 hyung)

My new life started when I became a member of a dance team. Back then when school was over, I used to hang out with my friends and my days and nights disappeared without a trace. After joining the team, I practiced our dance routines after class for 4.5hrs in the scary practice room. I was at the level where I could learn my hyung-deul dances in a few days. I enjoyed it and practicing like this was not bad.

During class, I memorized the moves in my head. At break time and at lunch, I practiced vigorously behind the classroom. As a result, teachers always yelled at me but honestly, a student who neglected his studies because of his dance addiction was absurd.

I had utter confidence in myself even if other people noted that my dreams were unreal. I didn’t dance because I didn’t like to learn in school, but because if it was something that I really wanted to do, I would work hard at it after I had chosen it. **Doing something isn't the most important but it's how you do it that matters**, isn't that so? Even though it’s not literally learning, but working hard at it is something to be proud of. These days didn’t last long because after 3 months, the group was deciding to be disbanded.

“**Definitely not! I didn’t even have the chance to perform on stage yet...will we really end it like this?**”
I couldn’t bring myself to give up everything I worked so hard for. After the group disbanded, the members went to find other dance teams to join. We had 4 members in our group but the unlucky thing was, no one knew how to choreograph. Since I didn’t have a lot of experience, I only did what I was able to do. The hyung-deul choreographed some dances during this time but the moves were unoriginal.

My hyung-deul displayed a sense of giving up. Our passion of trying out certain moves disappeared in a flash and we rested a lot during this time because we were depressed. In the end, I stepped up to the plate and created an idea where I would arrange new members and take on the role of the leader of the team.

“Hyung-deul, please believe me. Let me try and choreograph a dance routine.”
“You? Choreograph? Hahaha….you just finished learning the basic moves..forget it. We can still ask around other dance teams, maybe they will have a choreographer.”
“How can we find a new person? Let me try, give me a few days.”

After a difficult process to persuade my hyung-deul to let me choreograph a dance routine, they finally relented. Even though I didn’t know how to begin, but there was no time to worry. If I couldn’t prepare a routine in a few days, I would lose all the trust that my hyung-deul had for me. I looked at all sorts of MVs and thought of the dance groups that my hyung-deul didn’t think of. There was not even time to sigh and be amazed at these groups’ talents. I was under the pressure that I had to concentrate on creating a routine.

My hyung-deul all praised my choreography and said it was “good”, “well done” and that ignited our morale. We heard there was a dance performance at ‘훙로동’ ceremony. We decided to enter it because we could accumulate more experience and we could establish how big the response for this routine would be. I called our dance team, ‘Il Hwa’. It carried the meaning of “leaving a legend behind”.

On the day of the ceremony, a lot of teams were present. Some were amateurs, others had strong reputations for bringing their teams to perform at
clubs. We didn’t even dream of winning any prizes; we simply didn’t want to embarrass ourselves so we calmed our faltering hearts and went on stage. The audiences’ gazes all froze during that moment, but we still had to continue the performance.

However, something we hadn’t anticipated happened. When all the performances were over and it was time for the prizes to be given out, ‘Il Hwa’ won first place. My legs turned weak. From joining the dance team to having it almost disbanded to reuniting again...all these times seemed to flash by in my mind. My challenge wasn’t an imagination or a dream not was it actions by an immature child. This was real, and my tears blurred my line of vision.

From that day onwards, ‘Il Hwa’ went from a dance team that no one knew to one that kept moving forward. Everyone knew me as Lee Seung-hyun, the person who had a dream to dance. Even though there was another leader on the team, but my hyung-deul took me as someone they always relied on. My strong appearance was the breakthrough whenever we went through any difficult times.

Hereafter, when I go on TV shows I think...there are no correlation between ages and numbers. If there’s talent, it doesn’t matter how old you are because you can still prove your worth and it'll influence others to do the same. On the other hand, there are things you can’t do when you’re young. The perfect path to life would be hard to complete if you believe that age is a barrier.

If I fell down because of fear and didn’t start, what would happen when I encountered a crisis and gave up? I don’t know what kind of life I will have but one thing is certain. I will definitely not feel the thrill of harvesting my first triumph.

Seungri is a chicken which can fly (~ Pt.Six~)

When I was watching television one day at home, suddenly I saw a stunning scene on my screen.

’Am I seeing things?’ I could not believe what I was seeing but when I watched it with much attention again, the screen was still showing the same scene - a chicken was flying freely among the trees.
‘Chicken? What? A chicken can fly?’ I knew that I was not very hardworking in studying but I still knew that chickens cannot fly at all. When people are eating chicken, don’t they love chicken legs and wings most? However, at that moment, what I was seeing was a chicken was FLYING with its own WINGS.

According to the MC, The chicken learnt how to fly because her ‘family members’ had been killed by other animals when she was small, she had to protect herself by learning how to live high up the trees. When she had just started learning how to fly, she failed repeatedly but in order to protect the safety of herself and her children, she had to do it. She had to grab that 0.1 % chance and overcome the difficulty.

Finally, the chicken succeeded.

After struggling for 3 months, she learnt the skill successfully. She flew among the trees like she was born with the skill. She is now a grandma and her children, grandchildren are all following her footsteps to be the FLYING chickens. Maybe it is because the juniors have been seeing the senior flying ever since they were small. They think that they are able to do so too.

Although I cannot remember what the MCs said about the story, I could still remember very clearly the inspiration that this chicken brought me - I have to learn from it to grab the chance which is less than 0.01 % and do the things that even I myself don’t believe that I can attempt successfully.

I was a very ordinary chicken not long ago. I have wings but I did not know how to fly but now I am using them to fly to the sky and trying to challenge the ‘impossibility’. I know how to fly now.

Therefore, Seungri is ‘a chicken which can fly’.

There is only a small difference between feeling inferior and feeling confident. (~Pt.Seven~)

A lot of people say I’m full of confidence and that I will always try my best at the things I do. In reality, besides ‘inherent confidence’, there are other reasons that no one knows of. During my path and dream of becoming a singer, I was tormented by extreme inferiority. The chance might roll away if my talent
wasn’t on par. I felt uneasy all the time. **When I wanted to give up half way, I reminded myself to be strong.** Besides telling myself to stay strong, there was nothing more I could do.

“You can do it Lee Seung-hyun. Don’t forget that you’re the best!”

“Confidence is the only thing I can choose from my competition. Confidence is a strength I need when there are no improvements in my talents of singing or dancing. In order to not give up my dream and to keep moving forward, I will keep relying on my confidence.”

There were times where we didn’t work hard and over-confidence came. When ‘Il Hwa’ was famous, our days passed by in a trance. When we went out, fans recognized us on the streets and we received official invitations to perform in all sorts of events. Our fan cafe members went up to 3000 people.

After securing a contract with a certain brand, I had a fixed income. Every month, we would receive one million and two hundred thousand won and I would go out with my dance members to eat and play. To a child that was just entering high school, this amount was huge. I felt pressured wondering if I could spend each day like this. Can I live like this with no worries for the rest of my life? It is impossible to be lucky every day. At that time, I only wanted to perform on TV and gain more popularity and confidence.

**However, that was only an illusion. It didn’t take long before I realized that I was too arrogant.**

On one random day in junior high (Grade 9), I received a phone call from an area code of ‘02’. A manager who had heard rumors about me found me earlier and suggested that I go to an entertainment planning company to participate in voice testing. Even though I knew no one in Seoul, but since this was a chance of a lifetime so I immediately answered the phone.

“Is this Seung-hyun?”

“Yes, that’s correct.”

“I called because I saw your performance last time. MNet is currently planning a program called «Battle Shinhwa» and the prize is one hundred million won. Do you want to join?”

“Oh? Ahh, I will go.”
Even though I wasn't being chosen for voice testing, but the reality of having another bigger chance at something else made me very happy. I jumped with joy and my cheers were so loud that it spread to other rooms. I started calling people I knew, “I, Lee Seung-hyun will appear on TV! I am going to conquer the world and fly higher than the sky!” After I had notified everyone I knew, I was left with little energy and I didn’t notice my parents’ subtle cheers for me when they heard the news. Parents are always like that - even though they were worried about their son who was obsessed with dancing, but they always supported me.

“Son! Do what you want to do! We will always support you, but remember: once you start something, do it steadily and don’t give up halfway!”

What kind of parents could believe their young 18yr old son’s dreams so much? **My parents’ “unconditional trust” is my biggest catalyst of how I work.**

Every time I confirm their trust and anticipation, the duty of “I’m going to do it” pops up in my mind. I use that to encourage myself so I can repay their unconditional trust.

I brought with me the support from my parents and the feeling of “I must work hard” to the TV program. It seemed that I could become a celebrity just like that. Unfortunately, reality wasn’t so.

**I finally realize that I am nobody at all (~ Pt.Eight~)**

I went to film that programme very enthusiastically at the beginning but I started to get wearied after several months of commuting between Gwangju and Seoul. Not only did I feel physically tired but I had also lost my confidence.

Yes, I was very famous in Gwangju for I was good at dancing but when I went to the captial, I realized that I was nobody but a boy from the countryside. It seemed that I could not even handle my dancing steps well, not to mention my singing. I had only been thining about how to dance well all over the time but I had never been trained how to sing well.

I wanted to go to attend some vocal training classes but it was not possible since I had already spent so much time travelling between Gwangju and Seoul. I could only spare my free time on watching the videos of my favourite seniors,
Rain, Saiben Daeng (transliteration). I tried hard to observe their dancing steps, singing techniques and costumes, etc. I jotted the details down, too. As the old saying goes, ‘imitation is the mother of creation’. Although I did not know how to create my own style at that moment, I believed by imitating them I could find my own path one day.

However, I did not undergo much improvement with these practices. The cold comments given by the judges did hurt me. Yes, I started to doubt my intention of going there to film such a programme, I just liked dancing a lot, I had not thought of singing before but I decided to go there just because I wanted to appear in a TV programme. I was really disgusted by myself at that moment. I could not cheer myself up with my ‘do whatever I want’ motto either. Therefore, I did not persist on winning in this programme and I was eliminated after several months. Since I had already expected that in advance, I was okay with the result but it was the clips which the programme showed to the public that hurt me.

One episode of the programme was asking us to be a model at a fashion show for the disabled people. The whole process of preparation was filmed for the judges to have their final evaluation. The cameraman happened to film the moments that I was sleeping. It was not the whole picture. I was just taking a little nap in the middle of my journey to Seoul and I woke up very quickly to continue my work. However, it was the scene of my sleeping which was broadcasted… I felt it was very unfair so I said to the judges, ‘I was only doing that for making people laugh. Actually, I strive very hard for my goal.’ But it all came out like I was finding excuses for my laziness. Although I knew that I was not as competent as other contestants, it was very unfair to me since the judges used it as the major reason to eliminate me.

I did feel really bad about this but the worst was yet to come. When I was back to my hometown, my friends started to tease me. Many of them said to me, ‘Aw, here comes the kid whom cannot sing…’ It was really torturing that I cannot forget it up till now. I had been treating them as my friends but what they did to me were teasing and bullying. I felt really sad about all of these.

‘Seunghyun ar, you are not the singing materials anyway, how about thinking of other paths to walk on?’ I was madly crazy with what they said to
me. They did not believe in me but I believed in myself since I had been working so hard to achieve what I had, I knew I could do it. On my way home, I could not hold back my tears, I even weeped like a child. ‘wu..wu.’ That day was the day that I shedded the most tears but at the same time, I promised myself, ’I have to show them how successful I am one day. I am not the kind of useless person that they describe me!’

If I was a celebrity, I would not have this empty feeling anymore. I had decided, ‘even if I could not be a celebrity, I have to be a singer.’

“Seungri ah, I like you a lot.” (~ Pt.Nine~)

After passing the training for the TV program and the academy, I realized the harsh reality that I was just a nobody but this seemed to be a little misunderstanding too. Upon entering YGE, I realized I had only come in contact with a small amount of people in the world and I crumbled for a short time.

During my time as a trainee, my voice testing was recorded down and President Yang came to see me after he watched my tape.

“I’ve watched the recording. You seem to have a talent…perhaps you know Jiyong and Youngbae?”

“Ah? Ah…I know.”

“Jiyong and Youngbae have trained in our company for 6yrs and will debut next year in a group. Their talents are surprisingly outstanding. To me, your singing skills are 50 points and your dancing skills are 50 points as well but it seems that you can improve them. When you start training tomorrow, allow both to be 100 points.”

Actually, I didn’t really know who the hyungs were but I answered like that when President Yang asked me. Of course, I also didn’t realize how talented and incredible they were. I only realized what “unbelievable talent” was when my trainee life started.

Our differences in talent were a huge gap. Singing, dancing, personal style…nothing could be compared. It wasn’t only Jiyong hyung and Youngbae hyung who trained for so long, but the hyungs who entered YGE around the
same time were just as good. Daesung hyung has a bright and positive attitude that was appealing. TOP hyung’s rapping skills and his middle-low voice to his smooth feeling control were outstanding. **There were other areas where they were better but I didn’t have one thing to boast about. My evaluation was that I was the maknae! My self esteem was shot.**

Furthermore, YG was a company known for its hip-hop but I didn’t know much about it. When the sunbaes talked about music, I couldn’t actively participate so I found hip hop music to listen instead. I listened to a lot of hip hop music that the YG sunbaes produced but compared to them who spent a lot of time in this culture, I was still in the imitation standard.

When people are prejudiced, it is hard to change their thoughts. Those who have watched the episode of «Battle Shinhwa», I was cut because my singing wasn’t impressive enough. It left a deep impression on people and they didn’t greet me with friendly eyes. There was a time when I had dinner with SE7EN hyung and he asked me,

“Why did you come to YG?”
“I wanted to come so that’s why I’m here.”
“Really?”

I was sad when I saw that SE7EN hyung didn’t believe me. Even though we have solved this misunderstanding now but I felt like I was a child that didn’t know any better at that time. I didn’t perform my best but **I felt regrettable that these people couldn’t see my strengths.** “Can I still do my best when people have such sharp bias towards me? Will people’s impression of me change?” It was becoming frustrating for me. “What can I do to make people realize that I wasn’t at fault?” **I wasn’t able to fall asleep each night because I was so depressed.**

At this whirlwind time, the recording of «BIGBANG Debut Documentary» began. When it was the actual recording, it was an intense war zone every day.

Furthermore, President Yang’s report of us was taped on top of our practice room door every week. **It was humiliating to not do well and my score was always the lowest.** One time I only got 7 out of 100 points. My impression was already not good and now my score was even worse. I couldn’t even ask for forgiveness because even I hated myself.
However, I stopped being depressed after awhile. 80-90% of people look defeated when they don’t know what to do when faced with difficulties. I was determined. I had to like myself first. If I can’t even accept the love from myself, then how can I accept other people’s love? I had to treasure myself and confirm my abilities before I could get other people’s approval. When my talent didn’t increase or when I committed a mistake, I said this to myself,

“Seung-hyun ah, it’s okay. Do it again.”

My skin was so thick that I could put a steel board on it. I even exclaimed this to my hyungs,

“Hyung! I’m the maknae. I’m still young so I still haven’t produced my full strength. Please wait a bit. I will make you shocked!”

Until now, I still like to mumble to myself and say things like “Seungri ah, I like you a lot!” Even though it may look silly to some people but to me, it is a realistic spell. It is my last weapon when I want to feel confident and break away from feeling inferior.

People who have talent and are successful automatically have confidence. To create my own confidence, I trained in the practice room before dawn and practiced singing whenever I had free time. It had come to my understanding that no matter how much confidence I had and exclaimed it, it was meaningless if I had no one’s approval.

No matter how determined I was, there were times where I was still faced with difficulties such as whenever Jiyong hyung lets other people listen to his new songs or when Youngbae hyung shows off his handsome self while dancing. I questioned myself whenever I felt down.

“Why can’t I ever do my best?”

Correct, I’m asking the reason why other people can do things that I can’t. Having no sufficient ability is an excuse and that can be filled in with hard work. If hard work doesn’t do the trick, then work hard again. Some people run on the ground while others fly in the sky. I want to know why this person can’t fly. A person with innate talent keep as running forward and when he puts his hard work to test, wings will spread out. The finish line will be up ahead like so.
I don’t have any outstanding abilities. I struggle with showing my confidence and tearing off the inferior mask. As a singer, I still have a lot of room for improvement when I go to events. Even so, I will not give up. I will keep working hard. I like myself a lot!

If you love yourself, you have to be responsible to yourself (~Pt.Ten~)

At the end of 2007, I have hurt myself quite seriously 2 times. When I was rehearsing the prize giving ceremony of Inkigayo, I twisted my foot for a wrong step. I was so painful but for the fact that our concert was approaching, I could not give up but took some painkillers instead.

In the middle of rehearsing for our concert, we also had to attend other activities. My foot had been swollen to an extent that I could not even wear my shoes. When I was standing on the stage, I could not concentrate on singing my songs.

Another accident happened when I was performing on the stage. The fireworks had splashed on my face. Although I was not hurt, I was pretty stunned by what had happened. When I walked down from the stage, a lot of people came to me and asked, ‘are you okay?’ I just kept saying, ‘yes, I am, please don’t worry.’ Since I knew that no matter what happened, we could not give up the concert which we had been preparing for such long time. However, despite of my strong will, my body still collapsed. When I was waiting for my turn at the backstage, I fainted suddenly and when I woke up, I found that I had already been taken to a hospital with my parents accompanying me. There was also a staff, too.

‘What happened?’
‘You have just fainted.’
‘Is the concert going well?’
‘They are still doing their parts, just take a rest today.’

When I was heading back to the dormitory, I could not hold back my tears since I felt so desperate that I could not stand on the stage which I love and perform for the thousands of people whom love me. I blamed myself. ‘What can
a physically-weak person do?’ Whenever I thought of it, my tears could not be dried.

The hyuns came back when I was still crying. They did not ask me anything other than my condition. My anger towards myself had been growing when they treated me like this. We had been practicing as a team and without me, all of our efforts had been wasted. I felt so sorry for my hyuns who must had been angry and sad.

*I surely had to bear the responsibility since if I love myself, then I have to discipline myself to be a better person too. It is just the same case as the parents treating their children harshly in order to lead them to the right path of life. Instead of forgiving myself so easily, I have to face the mistakes I make squarely and solemnly. This is the real way of loving myself.*

*I do not only need to train up my performing skills but also my physical fitness since skills would be of no use if I did not have good health to support me.*

**Enjoying criticism because of my passion and love (~ Pt.Eleven~)**

Even though listening to criticisms and complaints aren’t things to be happy about, but I gladly accept them. A more accurate way to describe my feelings should be that I welcome them with open arms. I learn a bit more about myself and my weaknesses when I am criticized.

When I first debuted, I couldn’t control my facial expressions and was insulted. It was when I went on a talk show with my hyungs. When the MC asked “The member you see the most”, everyone chose me. I was especially confused. Actually it wasn’t me, but to see my hyungs talking and laughing made me resent them. I couldn’t laugh because I was so angry and annoyed. I had to quickly break away from my bad mood but I couldn’t do it so my face was expressionless and I didn’t say anything until the show was over.

After the show was broadcasted, things started to spread out. Netizens started to write comments like “teach Seungri well” and these protests went on continuously. Finally, President Yang had to come talk to me.
“Seungri ah, how can you change how others view of you when you can’t even control your feelings? Aren’t singers supposed to touch other people with their voices? You can’t be a singer if you continue to be like this.”

My heart quickly dropped. I used to say things like “I’m also human so there are times when I’m not in a good mood. Why can’t I be like that?” to comfort myself and to justify my actions. Of course “Human Lee Seung-hyun” can do that. I can get angry if I’m not in a good mood and I may even curse, but when I go on shows, I am a singer. That is my identity. The reality was I couldn’t even explain why I couldn’t control my expressions on TV. I was disappointed that I wanted to die right there on the spot. Thank you to President Yang. Even though I get sad and hurt when I hear criticisms, but if I wasn’t scolded properly I wouldn’t understand where I did wrong.

From that day onwards, I accepted criticisms unconditionally. I took this advice close to heart and worked very hard so that I wouldn’t commit the same mistake twice. When it appears once, it’s a “mistake” but when it appears repeatedly, it becomes “failure”.

My principle that I insist on after I debuted is this: “I will not let the same mistakes appear twice”.

I sometimes think that “I’m a monster”. When I get hurt, I become stronger. I won’t back away when I receive criticisms and complaints. I feel that I’m a “self-abusing abnormal person” because I will try my best when I get provoked. Most celebrities avoid reading antis comments about their dancing and singing or even personal attacks because the words will be embedded into their brains. Being determined and answering a simple “I understand and I won’t let others’ bad comments enter my brain” will help.

I think that besides criticisms there is also praise. Facts have proven that criticisms become praise if you are criticized and you change and grow from it. Everyone wants to progress so I enjoy being criticized. The day that criticism turns to praise, I will thank myself who is willing and happy to accept criticisms, my character that have encouraged myself to progress, and my quality of working hard when being given a second chance.
Create a ‘dream’ which can change your life (~Pt.Twelve~)

‘It is okay. Although you have been eliminated in another audition before, if you keep trying, you can do it. Son, Do it until you succeed. We believe in you.’

When I returned to Gwangju after the selection of Big Bang members, my parents had not said anything to me besides encouraging words. I was sure they were disappointed at my failure but they did not show any traces of it. I always reminded myself that ‘I cannot let the efforts that I paid to be in vain.’ so I relaxed a bit. My mum had prepared some good dished for me at the late night for me since I was heading to Seoul again very early on the next year. She showed her support by providing me with good food.

I cannot give up since I don’t want to disappoint such a pair of good parents. In order to repay what my parents have given me, I have to work really really hard. I have to try again’ I promised myself.

I guess all parents support their children like how my parents do but my parents are especially supportive. When I was small, I did not put studying at the top of my list of priority but they never complaint. They knew that I was very interested in singing and dancing, they just supported me to do whatever I want and have never, ever blamed me once for this.

‘You can do whatever you want but I want you to work hard on them.’ I am really thankful for having them as my parents. Even after I was accepted by YGE to be a trainee, they had been helping me out too. They asked the school to allow me to take leaves for training even though I was only a junior school student. On the other hand, I was stressful for their support so I worked very hard to achieve what I promised them.

When I was still a student, I once met some classmates whom did not pay any attention to schoolwork. I went to the game rooms and comics stores with them every day after school. It was the time before I had met the dancing team that I later enrolled in. At that time, I did fight with people sometimes, too. However, one day, I suddenly saw the sad faces of my parents and from there, I discovered deep disappointment. At that very particular moment, I knew that what I had done was wrong since I thought, ‘if even parents could not place their
trust in me, who would? And I am so glad that I also started to dance at that
time.

_Ever since I was small, I have had a dream, I have to be a person who
can repay the trust and love that my parents have been giving me.’ Although I
did not know what I should do in order to make them happy, I was so
determined to do so. I want to try my best in every aspect and be the son that my
parents can always be proud of._

_This is the dream which motivates me to work very hard throughout the
course of my life._

**So what if it’s difficult? So what if it’s humiliating? [~ Pt.Thirteen~]**

My father is a typical person who made fortunes out of nothing. He is the
youngest from 2 males and 3 females. He basically grew up without any parental
care so he trained himself to be independent from a very young age. When he
was 20yrs old, he made up his mind to “rely on himself to live” and left his
hometown to settle in GwangJu.

Golf was still a sport that wasn’t popular with everyone back then but by a
random chance, my father started playing it. He became a golf player after
training for merely 2 yrs. He met my mother at the golf course. She was helping
her relatives take care of the golf business by working behind the cashier. I came
to this earth a year after they married.

_When I was young, my family was considered wealthy._ My father’s
monthly salary was 2.3 times the normal working class. My mother was still
working. I grew up in an environment where I didn’t know what I lacked. I could
learn whatever I could and buy whatever I wanted. Our household was filled
with laughter and the relationship between my parents were the best.

When I reached Grade 6 however, my life turned upside down. The stem of
the problem was that my father was coaxed into buying some golf equipment. He
believed his friend of 6 yrs and started working with him but that friend took the
funds that my parents had saved all their lives and fled. _Their hard earned
money vanished into thin air._
We sold our house in order to pay the debts. The creditors kept calling our phones and a situation happened where our relatives didn’t even bother to help us. **I realized that when it came to money, even if people share the most closest relationship and bond with one another, they might treat you differently too.** My sister and I got looks from people and we would definitely hear the loud cries from the living room as we entered our rooms.

The day we moved homes, I cried when the unpleasant smell of our home filled the air. Since I was too young to understand, the tears that dropped from my eyes were like daggers in my parents’ hearts. From that day onwards, my father drank every day. There wasn’t a time where I didn’t see my father not be drunk. When I woke up in the morning, the living room was filled with cigarette stubs and beer bottles were scattered everywhere. **Every time I saw the figure of my mother cleaning up the living room and saying nothing, the resentment towards my father was crazy.** To me, the father who I looked up to the most in the world had disappeared without a trace.

However, even living under such bad environments, my parents never changed their support for me. I still wore the best clothes, used the best learning materials, ate the best packed lunch. **“Son, do whatever you like to do. We will give you whatever you need. Our biggest wish is that you’re never unhappy.”**

Even if they collapsed, they still wanted to nurture and give the best to their son. When I saw my parents smiling even though their eyes were red and swelling from crying before, I was determined to not allow my parents to have tears in their eyes anymore. **This is my responsibility to my parents. Even though I can’t do much now but I will give them happiness thereafter.**

**Parents, I have to bring you happiness (~ Pt.Fourteen~)**

If I am asked whom I respect most in this world, I will answer they are my parents without any hesitation. They do not only teach me how to persist in the middle of difficulties but they also let me know how important working hard is for a person to achieve his dreams. They tell me I should not lose my smiles even in face of huge obstacle.
My father who was once so desperate about his losing almost everything because of the trap set by his friend also restarted his life as a professional golf player again. He chose to face the reality finally though we were still heavily indebted. Therefore my mother also started working in a tuck shop of a football court. I was afraid that I would be teased by my friends so I decided not to hang around the place where my mother was working at. I was sorry about being like this but at that young age, I still cared about the opinions of my friends so much.

‘Mum, how many bottles of drinks have you sold today?’

‘I have not sold many in fact.’

‘You have to sell more. If you sell 5 cans today, then you can proceed to 6 tomorrow and 7 the day after tomorrow. Then we are proceeding every day.’

Whenever my mum came back to home after work, I would also tell jokes to amuse her. I hoped that could ease her pains. However, even with the rescheduling of our life, my parents had not been the same anymore. I could even hear their silent sighs at night. ‘How can I ease their pains and bring back smiles to their faces?’ I had been always thinking of this since I wanted to find their long lost smiles and put them back on their faces.

*People say we should have great dreams so we should dream of being a scientist or the president of a country; however, I have a different dream. I want to bring happiness to my parents. I think it is the reasons behind your dreams which count most, it does not matter very much what your dreams are. The most important thing is I have a burning desire to achieve this dream. With this burning desire, I am determined to be successful and I also have been working very hard on my dreams. The words ‘give up’ do not ever exist in my dictionary. I do not only work hard for myself but also my parents. When the heavy responsibility is laid on my shoulders, I have not backed down but to embrace it. When we were well received by the public at the beginning stage of our career, what made me feel blissful was that I could finally bring happiness to my parents.*

*My father even learnt to use the internet and read every piece of news about me. When he saw me, he would talk about them with me and he said, ‘we*
are so encouraged when we see how successful you are now so we have decided to work hard in order to surpass you one day.’ This is the biggest compliment that I have ever heard of.

No matter how much I have bore before, I felt so relieved and happy at that moment and it seemed that all of the wounds that people engraved on me before were not important anymore.

*I embrace my dreams and I believe in the amazing power of having dreams. I have to look for other dreams since they are the very reason of my keeping on striving hard in my life and they record every phrase of my life journey just like the beautiful milestones.*

**Progressing powerfully for my goal (~ Pt.Fifteen~)**

“Seungri ah, choreograph a dance routine. After BIGBANG start activities in January will be Seungri’s solo.”

When I heard President Yang’s words, I was shocked to the point where I didn’t know how to close my mouth. My solo activities plan was announced during this dinner party. I was exhilarated that I didn’t know if the food went into my nose or into my mouth. I clearly heard this news with my own ears but I still couldn’t believe it. I knew that my chance would come but I didn’t expect it to be so soon.

“Congratulations” “Work hard on it” “Fighting”

The realization that “I was really going to have my solo activities” happened the moment I received my hyung members’ blessings.

Until now, I was still being addressed as “BIGBANG” when I performed on stage but it would be different during my solo activities. The burden was huge as I would be the only main character controlling my own stage. Besides being overjoyed, I had no other feeling.

When everyone’s attention fell on me, I couldn’t describe how nervous I was but I had this chance. My brain felt like it was bolted with nails and I sat like a doll listening to President Yang’s words:
“You know you only have one chance. If you don’t do well this this, you won’t have any other chances. We will pave the way for your solo just like how we did with Youngbae (Taeyang). Don’t waste it.”

Suddenly I was full of energy. I came to the realization that I carried a huge responsibility of “doing only the best”. If I failed, there was a high possibility that I would affect BIGBANG’s image too. It was frightening because I had this huge responsibility on my back and the feeling came rushing to me. From that day onwards, every time I laid in bed I would hear President Yang’s voice telling me: “you only have one chance, you only have one chance.”

My mood changed many times as the days crept closer. I felt that this was my chance to show others that I had changed, but at the same time if I failed or was defeated, everything would end. My will to fight dropped and I was depressed. The feeling I was in was between heaven and hell.

I still anticipated it even with the overbearing responsibility. The truth was, at that time I was still lacking praise. Compared to my hyungs, I still fell behind with a lot of things. I felt that the praise and cheers weren’t for me. I could count President Yang’s praise for me altogether with 5 fingers. Even though I received a lot of love from fans but I still hadn’t received confirmation of my talent as a singer. A steady income, popularity.... compared to my age and ability, the significance was huge but that kind of reason still lingered. It wasn’t BIGBANG but Seungri that hadn’t received approval.

Roles in musicals, movies, MCs and such were a continuous challenge for myself because of the same reason. I wanted to analyze my own potential and qualifications. I wanted to find out what I was best at and to know what areas I could be the finest at. If I didn’t know what to do before, I would take it as a challenge.

Special musicals are things I want to continue challenging myself in. I can perform singing, dancing and acting on stage all at once. It’s charming and what’s amazing is the fact that it can touch people of all ages and sexes. Even though people of all ages like BIGBANG but the audience of «Sonagi» included grandfathers and grandmothers with frosted hair. When I saw them stand up to applaud, my mood was indescribable.
I’ve been asked repeatedly, “don’t you get tired of doing so many things at once?” Of course I get tired. There are often days where I can’t get 1hr of sleep properly and there are times when I eat my first meal at 3am after finishing all my schedules. But strangely, I don’t have any complaints. Even I feel astonished. Perhaps I’m abnormal? **The more tired I am, the more joyful I am.**

I believe that pain is proof of hard work. You will feel satisfied even when you feel tired and are in pain because of your hard work...not to mention that pain doesn’t last forever. It’s like when you start going to the gym for the first time. Your muscles are stiff because you haven’t used much of them but when you continue working out, your body will no longer have that painful feeling. Sometimes pain won’t really vanish away but even if you’re in pain, you have to smile and bear through it. You can only continue challenging yourself like so.

Challenges aren’t frightening, defeats aren’t terrifying either. **A principle that I now insist and persist on is the understanding that you can fulfill your dreams when you work hard and don’t give up.**

I will still continue moving forward no matter how hard, dangerous and rough the road I chose is. The world that I dreamed of is waiting for me at the end of that road.

**How do other see Seungri (~ Pt.Sixteen~)**

*The world is so beautiful when you are a hardworking person*

Seungri was taken to the hospital in the middle of the concert which they held in 2007. In fact, before the concert, his foot was already sprinkled but he still insisted to participate in the concert. During the concert, he fainted because of the fireworks which jumped to his face accidentally, coupled with the foot pain. When he was taken to the waiting room, he cried, ’it is our own concert, how can I be as weak as this? What should I do now?’ He did not cry for his pain but the troubles that he had brought to his members and his absence from the rest of the concert. I really think that it was a painful facial expression. When the president visited him at the hospital afterwards, he said he would certainly join the concert held on the next day. It was very obvious that he was wearing a worrying and painful look at that very moment.
In the early morning of the next day, Seungri phoned me. I thought he was going to ask me how he could relieve his foot pain but what he asked when he first picked up the phone was, ‘SSabu, can I have some fried rice?’ etc. It seemed that he had already forgotten he was hurt. *Is your foot okay now?* I asked him. ‘Ah… my foot? Yes, it seemed to be okay now.’ He did not feel painful anymore and immediately he thought of food.

_This is the world of Seungri, and his world is so beautiful for he is such a hardworking person._

_Forgotten the things which depress himself or hurt their self-confidence most at a lightning seed, this is our Seungri. He is good at encouraging himself with a ‘fighting’ shouting to himself._ It was hard for him to get used to the life as a trainee in this team at the very beginning but he has overcome these with his optimism and self-confidence!

— Hwangssabu, trainer

-Seungri ah, I think what you have done at your 20 are very scary-

We have said to Seungri, ‘what you have done at your 20 are very scary.’ He wanted to do so many things in the past and now he wants to do more. When chances come, he wants to do this and that. And of course, he tries his very best to seize every opportunity that comes to him.

If we say that Taeyang transforms the negative comments into his nutrients for growing, then, we can regard Seungri as that kind of person which motivate themselves by praises. He can even distinguish which compliments are good for him and which are not, for example, he will say, ’ these comments are left by a small group of people only, they just have not understood me thoroughly.‘

_Seungri loves to hear praises from others but he also compliment others a lot. Even when he is so tired, he will still encourage and praise the people around him. He is especially thankful to the staff who are very hard working._

_How to gain the ‘victory’? Be positive towards all the people and things around you. No matter what, just say, ‘let me do it, I want to do it!’ Just like how Seungri always does. When he knows that there is something that he is not able
to complete, he will be very sad and his world seems to have collapsed at that very moment.

He is very positive towards everything. If he has to film a TV programme which he has not watched before, he will try his best to understand the running of the programme beforehand. He will prepare everything in advance and always stuns us by his extraordinary performance. At the same time, the people around him will also be influenced by him and be as hardworking as him.

Seungri devotes all of his efforts to his works and he works very hard to strive for his goals. He does not care whether his energy will be drained, he will be successful or not or whether he will suffer because of being too hardworking, he just wants to give his best under all circumstances.

— Mr Yang Hyun Suk, President of YGE