

## DIVERSITY

On paper, I come from a solid middle-class Korean family. I really do not stand out in a crowd.

But depending on how you slice it, I can be considered bit different in some ways; I literally grew up with cows as my house was in the countryside, next to cattle sheds.

That is, nearly 90% of my life was lived in remote regions whereas most if not all the key resources are in Seoul.

Likewise, most of my friends stayed and settled down young.

I was no exception. My plan was already laid out. I was going to go on that path as well – until someone very special to me opened doors for me, showing me that all that I see is not everything.

My fiancé of six years, now a student at a top MBA school in the US, was the ambassador of diversity. Whereas I was growing compliant, risk-averse eager to protect my little world that was safe and stable, she was a maverick who always asked, “Why not?” and an adventurer who always wondered, “What is on the other side of the fence?”

These questions are what motivated her to push beyond, to go beyond her comfort zone. What may be interesting is that we share very similar background; like me, she also comes from a regional city; born and raised and educated there.

Yet she was different from me. And as I saw her open one door after the other, and as she brought stories, interesting, amazing stories of the so-called outside world, I started to become *curious*. And with her encouragement, I also became courageous, daring to open doors, and this was how my CV was born; I now work for LG, a dream company of many years that I dared to apply to and got in.

To be honest, until I was influenced by her who is now more than a fiancé, but also a mentor, I was skeptical about someone’s life changing drastically by another human being. But I experienced this; my life did indeed change 180 degrees. Yes, it was a gradual process, but I did change.

And now I am about to embark yet on another journey for the next chapter of my life where I will continue to push boundaries. But this pushing won’t be for my own sake alone. Instead, I want to become heavily involved with my future community, especially volunteering for the sake of the youths as I had in the past - volunteering for the children with Down Syndrome, and listening and observing carefully what our plant people need for optimal efficiency (so that they can return home on time to enjoy dinner with their family) and for safety.

Along the way, I realized the beauty of diversity. These days, for instance, STEMCO engineers, we meet via Zoom every week to participate in ‘cultural exchange’ seminars. Witnessing how different people come up with different views on the same topics, is an amazing experience. Moreover, I got exposed to even greater diversity when I joined LG. Compared to STEMCO, LG is huge. It is almost like a small city where I am learning every day how different people who think differently can bring so much to a table per se.

Thus, I will eagerly anticipate an even richer experience at your school, and also volunteer for the youths in the community who may be like me years ago; thinking what they see is all that there is to the world.