

Michael Ko

My Life

Growing up I was always a trouble maker, I would always be sent to the office for something I shouldn't have done.

I've always heard people whispering, "Oh it's that kid again."

"I heard he cursed at a classmate the other day in class during math because he took the last computer," whispered the other.

"I hope my kid doesn't end up like him," the parent quietly told the other.

I was well known among adults. I would get in fights, call people names, or taunt or make fun of other kids. There were several people that helped me change into someone who is respected by others. I've changed a lot since then, I am currently a leader of a group in a non-profit organization. I tutor little kids and help out at my church. I trained hard and got in varsity soccer and volleyball as a freshman in Colorado. I was lacking in studying but now I'm trying harder.

My life so far is like a butterfly, I start off as an ugly bug, people avoiding me because of how disgusting I was. Later when I moved to Colorado for two years, I cocooned myself or learned to become mature (I'm from Irvine but moved to Colorado when I finished 7th grade and then moved back this year). When I came back, I've grown into a butterfly, but I haven't completely matured. I need to know how to survive and get on with life.

The people that changed me the most are my parents. They helped me become respectful and prepare me for college and life. They are always giving me advice. I will

never be here if it weren't for them, I'd probably have ended up in juvenile prison. I didn't want anyone to become what I could've been. I want to be like them and change other people's lives, so I started volunteering at places where I can change other kids' lives in unprivileged places. Most of the kids I teach can't do single digit addition as a 4th grader, so I'm always figuring out ways to make learning easier and more fun just like any other teacher.

One day after school, I got in trouble for punching a kid, so when I got home, my mom brought an egg outside.

"Michael, I want you to hold this egg and run around the house while running toss it up and down." my mom ordered me.

So I began to amble around the house.

"Faster, run even faster!!" my mother yelled.

I started jogging.

"EVEN FASTER!!"

I start running.

"C'mon I know you can run faster than that."

"But mom! It's gonna break." I replied.

"You're right, son, the egg will break. People are like eggs, they are easily cracked if not handled properly. Be careful of what you say and do because if you don't, they'll crack," my mom told me.

This is one of the most important and memorable lessons that changed my life. I had other memorable memories like how my mother taught me manners either on a dinner table, at someone's house, etc. or my father's hard work and dedication and to

give your maximum effort in everything you do. Even today, they are always telling me advice about driving, dating/marriage, and how to handle babies/toddlers. They always trying to keep me safe and prepared for what's ahead.

Visiting my relatives in South Korea put a huge impact on my life. I learned more about the history and struggles in the past. The people of South Korea suffered a lot especially in the first half of the 20th century. They first had Japan invade Korea during World War II from 1910-1945, then the separation of families during the Korean War from 1950-1953. But an event that struck my family hard was the death of my favorite aunt and my great-grandmother. My great-grandmother died of old age, she was 108 years old. My aunt was diagnosed with a very rare cancer and died not too long after our visit. When she discovered it, she was already at stage 3 liposarcoma later it became stage 4. Before she died, she tried to live her life to the fullest by visiting places she wanted to go, foods she wanted to eat, and spend time with her family. What I learned from her and my relatives is that you don't know when you'll die so live your life to the fullest with no regrets.

In life, there are many things that will change someone whether its a person, place, symbol or an event. They've all changed my life. There are memories I cherish and people I love that can help me mature and keeps pushing me forward.