More

Sihoon Kim

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MORE

SIHOON KIM

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Abstract

Most people desire to succeed. Even though every person may have a different standard of success, it is necessary to succeed in order to be satisfied with our lives. We also need to value our experiences. For example, a concept called the “10,000 hours rule” has been introduced in a book titled *Outlier*. According to this concept, anyone can excel at something if he or she chooses to spend 10,000 hours on it. Actually, one should not just spend this time but use it to be passionately and actively involved. The Beatles embodied such commitment. Before they became famous, they played in Hamburg, Germany, roughly 1,200 hours over 2 years, and they often played 8 hours straight at a time. John Lennon remarked that with this strategy, they acquired courage and became more accomplished. Without this experience, it would have been hard for them to become so successful and famous.
Introduction

My thesis work, *More*, is about the importance of human experiences. Humans are born without knowledge. After we are born, our parents and teachers teach us and we listen, watch, experience, and grow. When I was young, I often did the opposite of what my parents told me to do. When they said, “Don’t run,” I ran. When they asked me to run, I did not. However, when I did the opposite of what my parents said, most of the time I got hurt and was punished. After these things happened repeatedly, I realized what I needed to do and changed my behavior. Before, when my parents merely told me what to do, I had only knowledge. After I disobeyed them, however, and understood what I had done and why it happened, the knowledge became my own experience. I am only 30 years old, but I find that if I want to learn something, I need to experience it and perhaps get hurt in order to achieve something.

I can say that my experiences have made “Sihoon Kim.” And in the same way, I think the records that humans have maintained through the centuries have made us modern human beings. Our ancestors recorded their knowledge or facts, as well as what they experienced, for their descendants. For instance, we know that Rome’s first emperor was Augustus and that Edison invented the light bulb. We can learn these things from history. Experience is very important to humans, and I wish to express the importance of experience through my work.

Thus, my work is made out of my experiences. This is who I am, and it also expresses my concept of humanity. Furthermore, I want to show that these experiences can be united in one group and aimed in one direction. My experiences are still growing and shaping me as I reach for my dreams and ideals.
Influences

The desire for success drives most people, for example, to work hard to enter a more prestigious university or work for a better company. We often give up our dreams in order to be more stable in our personal life and attain a higher salary. Furthermore, we decide our university and work places because we desire success. However, we need to ask ourselves: what constitutes a better major and a better workplace? We think that because successful people have majored in certain subjects or work in certain places, those fields of study or places of employment must be the key to success. However, for the people who succeed in life, it is possible that those aspects do not matter very much. I propose that they worked very hard and that it is their experiences that helped them succeed. I wish to present a few examples of people who, I think, illustrate my point.

Steve Jobs

Many people think about Apple and iPhone first when they hear the name Steve Jobs. For me, his passion that helped him never to give up comes to mind first rather than his output. Jobs had a lot of failures in his life, too.

Steve Jobs had a very good start to his professional life. Jobs developed Apple II and the Macintosh when he was in his 20s. Because of these inventions, he became rich. However, the reason he started making computers in the first place is notable: he loved computers. Steve Jobs quit college to establish Apple and was independent enough to choose his own path. He did not have an easy time, however. He was kicked out of Apple and his new company, Nexus, suffered many failures. Jobs almost went bankrupt, but he never gave up,
and he simply held onto his philosophy and looked towards the future. After experiencing failure for 9 years, he finally tasted success with *Toy Story* to his credit and his other company, Pixar. Soon after, he returned to Apple as the CEO and gave the company a boost. Without his failures with Nexus, would it have been possible for him to succeed again? I do not think so. Because there were huge failures, bigger successes followed. Jobs used to say that the company’s main objective was not producing profit. I like this idea. Anyone can become rich if his main goal is minting money. However, if there is no conviction in reality, why not follow a dream rather than following money? I think that his ultimate object, the “meeting of art and technique,” made him return to Apple and inspired him to make the iPod, iPhone, and iPad.

**Bill Gates**

The story of Bill Gates is a different kind of success story. Most people think of Bill Gates as one of the richest people in the world or a genius. That is true, but he was also hard worker. According to *Outliers*, Bill Gates embodies the “10,000 hours rule.” He started using a computer when he was in the 8th grade and studied programming until he quit Harvard University. By that time, he had already spent more than 10,000 hours in programming.

His efforts continued even after he made a lot of money with the DOS (Disk Operation System). One of his big products was Windows. When Microsoft first came out with Windows 1.0, it had several issues. However, Bill Gates never gave up, and Microsoft came out with endless upgrades and kept making newer versions. Subsequently, Microsoft came up with Windows 95 and Windows XP. Not many people disagree that these are the best interfaces in the computer world. Nonetheless, Gates had many failures and difficulties, which he
overcame with great effort. Gates is a hard worker, and he made me think: a smart person works hard, but what am I doing?

**Chulsoo Ahn**

Chulsoo Ahn’s life can be explained by one word: challenge. He worked as a doctor and a professor when he was in his 20s. At the same time, he was trying to develop an antivirus program for computers. Ahn developed a program called V1, which was the first antivirus program in South Korea. He decided to quit being a doctor, and he founded a company called Ahn Lab for his program. He started out with three employees and worked out of his house. Because income was low, paying his employees was difficult. He would not have had such difficulties had he continued being a doctor. Ahn refused a foreign company’s offer to buy his company. The offer was very tempting, but he decided in the interest of the public instead. Had he sold his company, Koreans would have had to pay for their antivirus software. But thanks to Chulsoo Ahn, who made the antivirus program free for use to the public, almost all Koreans are using his vaccine program.

Ahn explains that he wanted to start a company in the public interest to show that companies can be operated successfully with honest policies. Even though his company now performs very well, he decided to quit being the CEO because he felt that many companies needed his help to carry on. Hence, he decided to become an educator to share his business acumen. He received an MBA degree from the USA and later started teaching students in Kaist and Seoul National University. At the same time, he established a scholarship foundation. Last November, Ahn ran for president in Korea. He did not win, but he posed a formidable challenge to his competition.

From these three success stories, we learn that we all start at the same place. Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Chulsoo Ahn may not be smarter or have more money than other
people, but I am sure they have a strong belief in their work and do not look back. They might have a lot of failures and difficulties, too, but they never give up, and they do their best in those moments. I think that is the reason why they succeeded.

At a Stanford University graduation ceremony, Steve Jobs talked about connecting the dots. If he had not taken a calligraphy class before he quit college, the Macintosh computer would not have been introduced with its variety of font types. From this, we learn that it does not matter whether memories are good or if experiences are useful. All of them are going to be connected in the future. Therefore, do not agonize forever; do the thing you think best, and then you will see the way.
Artistic Research

As an artist, I like to make work that tells stories. In general, I think storytelling is very essential and used in many artistic fields like movies and music, as well as many other areas. However, I personally think art is an area that can be used best in storytelling. This is because artists put their own stories in their work, they make work that tell their stories. Artists can communicate with an audience and they make their audience see and feel in a desired way. Whenever I appreciate an artwork, I always ask the question “why? Why did this artist make this particular work and why did he or she use this skill?” One of the artists that, to me is a great example of this is Auguste Rodin. One of his major works, ‘The Thinker’ is a good example of storytelling. Seeing the work makes me fall into many thoughts. ‘What was he thinking?’ or ‘why did he do it this way and not that way?’ Rodin explained his work as: ‘A naked man, seated upon a rock, his feet drawn under him, his fist against his teeth, he dreams. The fertile thought slowly elaborates itself within his brain. He is no longer dreamer, he is creator.’ He did not say what this man thinks of, because of this, I can talk with Rodin through the Thinker. I hope the audiences who will attend my show make conversations with me through my work.

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1 Raphael Masson, RODIN, Distributed in USA by Rizzoli International Publications, inc, 2004
Issues

According to the Korean Adolescent (13–24) Statistical Survey, the main factors for adolescents considering job choice are aptitude and interest (33.9%), income (27.4%), and stability (20.3%). These results hold true for the 13–19-year-old group, but the most important factors for the 20–24-year-old group are income, stability, and aptitude and interest, in that order. It appears that as they grow older, if they have a stable income, they are willing to do what they do not like. Perhaps it is for this reason that these days that I see articles that speak of young people who are prone to anxiety with respect to their future. In South Korea, this is a serious problem. South Korea’s suicide rate is the highest in the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development); it also has one of the lowest birth rates in the OECD. Chulsoo Ahn often mentioned this and explained it like this: a high suicide rate means they feel desperate about their present life, and a low birth rate means they have no optimism for their future. I do not believe I can fix this problem. Nonetheless, I do believe that if I do my best in my life, I can affect the world in which I live in some positive way. My thesis show will be the first step.
Body of work

As a foundational idea, I believe that if my behavior, where I challenge myself and do my best for my work, matches the meaning of the work, my thesis will be more persuasive. This is because I believe that craftsmanship is related to a person’s past and future experiences and challenges. In exercising craftsmanship, one uses everything that one has learned before. In challenging oneself, however, one enters into previously unexplored territory to acquire new knowledge. Thus, experiences involving both challenges and craftsmanship will develop the self, and I expect to see these results in myself.

Sketches and Modeling

I focused my first sketch (Picture 1) on thinking about my inner world, which, right now, is very complicated. My experiences and past learning, and what I am learning now are mixed and have not yet blended. Thus, my inner self is somewhat confused and complicated, but I am trying to compromise and go forward. When I thought about this feeling, I got an interesting result: hundreds of books tangled up together to form one shape. The shape could represent my will, my wishes, or anything else.

Before I began my project, I made a model (Picture 2) by carving two different sizes of wax books, which I used to make rubber molds. I made hundreds of wax books by injecting wax into the molds and assembled them into one big group, as shown in the sketch. To finish the model, I placed the casted plastic hand at the top of the books. I liked the feeling of the model, so I decided to make a real piece based on it. So that I could conceptualize the completed work from the beginning, I drew an actual size drawing (Picture 3), which I placed beside my bench.
Picture 1. Idea sketch

Picture 2. Modeling

Picture 3. Actual size drawing
Hand

I constructed a reaching hand, which I put at the top of the work. I chose a hand for reasons similar to the reasons I chose it for my work named Will (Picture 4), which I made in 2011. The hand represents my strong will, because its reach represents my will—I will never give up and will go forward to grasp my dreams. In Will, the hand was the medium that could best represent my will, and the most important thing was the motion, which also evoked my strong will. Similarly, in my thesis work More, the hand is a medium whose “motion” portrays the chasing of my dreams and ideals.

The material and skills need to be chosen in relation to the meaning of the work, and so I put great thought into choosing them. I used copper, because copper is a malleable metal, the shape of which I can change as I want. For the skill, I chose hammering and chasing because these skills are the best for evoking a handmade feeling, and these skills require that a lot of time and effort be put into a piece. I used my right hand for a model, and the size was exactly twice that of my hand. I used 16-gauge (1.29 mm) copper and cut many pieces for constructing the hand, each finger having two to four pieces (Picture 5). The palm and back of the hand are one piece each. There are many little pieces between the fingers and palm. I assembled all of these pieces into one using a TIG welder. I used hammering (Picture 6) to make the form and remove the welding seam. After I assembled all of these pieces, I made little copper books by means of casting, and I welded these little books to the bottom of the hand to connect the hand to the bookshelf. I cast the wax books that I had used for modeling, so it did not take much time. However, it was a difficult decision to use copper for casting because it is not a good material for casting for several reasons. Because copper has low heat conductivity, it needs a higher temperature than bronze or silver and is very difficult to melt. Furthermore, even if copper is successfully melted, it becomes brittle after it hardens. Because of that characteristic, I focused intensely on the casting and welding. Nevertheless, I
failed at casting several times, which was quite stressful. After all my efforts, everything I succeeded in casting had big holes (Picture 7). I covered every hole by welding (Picture 8), so it is not easy to see them. Even though I knew I would have significant difficulties before I began the work, this stage justified my choice of copper. If I had used bronze or brass, which is better material for casting than copper, I would not have been able to assemble them, finally, into a hand because welding brass or bronze is more difficult than welding copper.
Picture 7. Work process – hand - welding

Picture 8. Work process – hand – after welding
Silver leaf

I decided to make the hand silver instead of white because silver is brighter and more meaningful, because this hand means my dream and ideal. I also chose to use silver leaf (Picture 9, 10) as opposed to plating the silver. Silver leaf is very thin and therefore hard to control and I needed to use glue to attach the pieces one by one. Since I needed to focus every touch, it took a very long time. Because of these reasons it is possible to show more craftsmanship with silver leaf.

Picture 10. Work process – hand – silver leaf
Frame

Just as planning and foundation work is important in architecture, I judged that they would also be very important in my thesis work, which I had decided to title *More*. Hence, I decided to use Rhino 3D which is 3D modeling program. Because I had to use exact numerical values in Rhino 3D, I could construct an accurate 3D model and blueprint, enabling me to see the complete shape before I began to make it and thus preventing many mistakes (Picture 11, 12). A colleague, Sung-mi Lee who is teaching Rhino 3D at RIT, helped me to use Rhino 3D. First, I was able to make the frame the exact size shown in the model. I used steel to make the frame and a MIG welder to assemble it (Picture 13). Though I had never worked with steel or used a MIG welder before, they were easy to learn. Steel is very similar to such materials as copper and silver, except for annealing and cleaning. A MIG welder is almost the same as a TIG welder but is easier to use.

In order to construct my work with eight levels, I made it so that the center of the work, from the first to the third level, was stable. This stability was a physical necessity to stand, but it also lent to the meaning of the work. In order to be balanced, things need to be centered – even ourselves emotionally and philosophically. For the gap between the levels, I used a thick bolt at the center, with two nuts holding each floor. Then I used bearings to attach the shelves to the frame so that the shelves from levels 4 through 8 could be rotated. These shelves were at a height that made it easy for people to spin them; thus, this part of the work was meant to establish audience communication. Connecting the bearing and the frame was tricky, however. Since there was plastic inside of the bearings, I needed to heat it carefully. After welding, I used grease to smooth the bearings.
Picture 11. Rhino 3D – with books

Picture 12. Rhino 3D – frame
Picture 13. Frame
Shelves

To address a further problem, I had to devise a way to hold the books on the frame. Professor Carlos suggested making shelves on which to place the books. I had to choose between a plasma cutter and a laser cutter for making the shelves. Plasma cutters are difficult to control, and they do not cut cleanly, so I would need to clean the pieces for the shelves one by one, using a grinder. Even so, the pieces would not be even, and it would take too long to prepare them. Therefore, I chose the laser cutter. I used Rhino 3D for the blueprint (Picture 14, 15) and ordered the steel cutting from a laser cutter factory. After they cut the steel, I used a MIG welder to assemble the shelves (Picture 16). Because I was used to making small- or medium-size works, I did not have any problem doing the welding. However, I needed to be careful when heating larger pieces. When metal gets hot, it starts to twist and warp, and the bigger and thinner the piece, the worse the warping. Since I could not control the heating well, the pieces warped a lot. To fix this situation, I welded a steel L-bracket onto the work, reducing the warp a little.

![Rhino 3D blueprint](image)
Picture 15. Rhino 3D - shelves

Picture 16. Shelves
Books

I kept asking myself a question regarding my decision to use books: Why did I choose books? Every time, my answer was the same: “Humans and books are very closely related.” Books are an integral part of human history, starting with wall paintings in caves, which were painted about 30,000 years ago. The impulse to record events never leaves humanity, no matter whether the recording is writing or painting, because they are our experiences and our thinking.

I wanted to use my own books because they are so closely related to my life. However, it would have been almost impossible to bring all of my books from Korea. Hence, I visited the RIT library to find books, which fortunately had many books for discard that were no longer used (Picture 17). I decided to use them. I got different sizes and colors of books, and I fixed and colored them to fit into my work. I used other colored books too, but I needed books, which showed the base of my work. I also needed to make books to complete my work. I used steel and extruded polystyrene for materials, and a folding machine made it easier to make the steel books (Picture 18). I made four to eight books for each level. Since the steel books were welded onto the shelves, I could shape the work better to reduce the twist. The extruded polystyrene books, on the other hand, were lightweight that I just could put them on the shelves with double sided tape. Since I used paper for the cover, they look like normal books. I used Medium-density Fiberboard (MDF) to make the part between the bookshelf and the hand (Picture 19). With help from the wood studio, I could cut them to the size that I wanted. Spray painting the MDF was almost impossible, so I used putty on the surface. The putty made it easy for the paint to adhere, and I attached these wooden books to the bookshelf with epoxy. Much of my work was done with difficulty because a lot of it was a first experience for me.
Picture 17. books

Picture 18. Steel books

Picture 19. MDF books
Painting

After the structure was assembled, the next part was the painting. I sprayed the shelves in a gradation from a dark to a bright color (Picture 20, 21). In choosing this color scheme, I wanted to show the difference between good memories and bad or difficult memories. The darker parts represent bad memories and the brighter parts, happy memories. I also chose to have fewer brighter parts than darker parts for a reason. A few years ago, I read an article about life. If we assume that our life is 70 years long, we are angry for two years and we laugh for only 88 days. Since the difficult moments fill up more of our time, the greater portion needed to be represented with darker colors.

I decided to use blue as the final color for my work because of the way it makes me feel. Dark blue reminds me of the deep ocean, which is deeper than any other thing in the world. Thus, I chose to represent the ocean for this reason, as well as for a few others. Even though the ocean is very deep and dark, there is some light in it. This represents the fact that even if we experience difficulties or feel desperate, there is hope. If we follow the light in the ocean and swim upward, we can find the sky, and if we go up to the sky, we can find the sun. Each hardship a person overcomes provides a lesson, and these lessons, in turn, provide us with chances to succeed. If we take these chances, we can eventually realize our dreams and ideals. Thus, I used shades of blue, from dark to light, to represent this ascent. I used light blue toward the top because it feels like the sky, which is higher than any other thing in the world, and I used white on the top to evoke the sun. It is difficult to see the sun directly, but if I want to see the sun, I have to look up. For me, the sun represents our ideals and dreams. We look up to our dreams, and it is difficult to catch them. For this reason, I also decided to make my work taller than a human.

2 Youngsoon Choi, What to plant in the field of heart?, Godswin, 2010
Picture 20. Painting - primer

Picture 21. Painting - blue
I decided to display my work in the middle of the gallery. Because the audience needs to be able to see all the way around my work, other places were useless. Leonard Urso who is my professor suggested that I should mark out the territory for my display. I liked that idea, so I put nine sheets of copper (90 x 90 inches) on the floor and painted them with black acrylic (Picture 22). Black was the best choice of color to connect the floor to my work. To show my work in progress, I made two big posters (Picture 23, 24), at Sung-mi’s suggestion, and displayed them. Finally, I made a card holder (Picture 25) to hold my name cards and postcards.

Picture 22. Display
Picture 23. Working process

Picture 24. Poster

Picture 25. Card holder
Evaluation

Because my work is one large piece, I was able to avoid the clutter that often besets a group show. Because the location of my work was in the middle of an open space, I felt like I became the host of this show. In terms of the work itself, I like the color and the shape. The color is pleasant, and the shape was very smooth so that the audience could enjoy it easily. In particular, making a poster detailing the entire process of putting the work together was a very good idea. It helped the audience to understand my work. On the other hand, I experienced some substantial failures with my work. The way the shelves spin is not perfect. They are too heavy to spin, and the books fall down when someone spins the shelves. Thus, the viewers were afraid to try spinning it. Another failure is lack of completeness. Using MDF for the books between the hand and the body was a mistake because it is not clean or stable. The warped shelves and the fact that I could not use my own books are all failures. However, I learned much from these mistakes and failed experiences. Furthermore, working on this project helped me to mature mentally and physically. At the same time, this project became another example of my work.
Conclusion

I learned many things in my thesis work. First, I learned how to face new challenges in creating large steel sculptural forms especially in design, material investigation and technical applications. Secondly, I learned from this work new ways of seeing and projecting concepts in space. Third, I found how to utilize common symbols such as the books and the human hand in ways that are artistic and less craft orientated. Lastly, I developed my craft to a higher skill level. As I have learned many things from my thesis work, I hope to share with my audience so that they might get something from this art.

I look forward to the future in pursing work that increases the level of interaction with the audience. In addition I will also pursue further mastering my craft and developing a higher set of technical and material knowledge.
Description of the work

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