Sunny: I came to the United States in 1974. I was grown up and lived in South Korea for a long time. I was about 30 years old, and then I decided to come to the United States. The reason I want to be an American because I met Americans during the Korean War. Those soldiers to me they weird looking. They got long nose, to me yellow hairs. I never seen people like that, but they are so good people. They fought for me, saved my freedom, and then that wasn’t it; they give me food when I was hungry. We were so poor, and then so cold they … and the American people sent cloth to wear, keep my body warm. I was thinking, who are Americans, who are these people. It’s like a god.

Then one day, as I started growing up my admiration for Americans has grown. I want to go to United States and I want to be like them, who sent me food, clothing and then go out there fight for us, people they had never met for life. I decided to come to the United States. It was a little late in my life but I made it here in 1974.

It was brand new country, and nobody speak Korean but it was like a heaven. As I heard before, the country, the United States of America was and still is a land of opportunity. I decided to maximize what this country give. Work hard and make sure I have my own foundation to stand on, so I was happy. It was September 5th about 1974 I land in Chicago O’Hare airport and changed the flight to Indianapolis. It was only a short flight, about 25 minute’s flight.

I got on this small airplane, and there was a gentleman sitting next to me. He finished to read a newspaper and then he gave it to me and he say something, but I didn’t understand what he is saying but it seems like he, you want to read the newspaper I am ready to … I have finished now ready to throw it away. I took that newspaper, I looked at it and there was … [inaudible 00:03:20] Richard Nixon from Watergate, all that big pictures on the front page but I didn’t care about it much. I just went straight back to the last page with … three page [inaudible 00:03:33] help wanted.

So many employers are looking for somebody to work. This is the land of opportunity, I just left the country 40% unemployment and I came to this country you got three pages full, very small letters all these employers looking for some good people to work for them. I was so happy to see that help wanted section. I looked through, I went down to find out, because of my English the first day of the United States I had to start from the bottom.

I found one job, some steak house in north part of Indianapolis looking for a cleaner. I circled that, tear down and put in my pocket and then we landed, very short ride. We landed in Indianapolis airport and before my luggage come out from the airplane I went, straight went to a pay phone and call them and with broken English said, “Is the job still open?” The cleaning, the position is available, and then they say yes. “Okay, can I come by for interview”, “Sure.” “Can I come by now?” “Sure.”

I was so happy and went back to [inaudible 00:05:00] pick up my luggage and straight out the door, airport, and I got in a yellow cab and gave that little piece of advertisement and the address in there, gave it to the cab driver and dropped me over that restaurant. Cody’s steak house on 82nd Street in north part of Indianapolis, is Marion County.

I walked in there about, it was about four o’clock in the afternoon. I sat down and I told them I just got here and that I don’t have a reference but I am not going to steal anything, you hire me I will do good job. Then 20 minutes later I was hired. “When can I start”, and then the manager say, “Anytime you want.” I said, “Can I start today”, and he said, “Yes, come back at 11 o’clock.”

My job would start at 11 pm and go through 7 am, all night long. When the steak house closed down I needed to clean the kitchen. 11 o’clock I showed up and then I start cleaning. One thing I didn’t like is I was alone in the steak house but they locked up, they locked … big padlock all around the steak house, and I was locked in and I had no way to get out because I am the first, they never know me. I could possibly steal some steak or the [inaudible 00:06:42] the big … whatever, in the restaurant.

They locked me in a full eight hours, okay that’s the rule and then what if get fire, and I asked that question, what if there is a fire or something going on what should I do, and he goes, there is a key at the … and he give me the little pickle jar, empty pickle jar and key in it, you can see the key inside and they glue around. He gave it to me and I said, okay.

After he left I look at the pickle jar, the key is in it and [inaudible 00:07:20], the Americans are very good people but I think they are also the dumbs. If I am a criminal or a thief I will break that thing anyway, open the door and get out there with whatever valuables. Anyway, that was my first day of the United States. I made a decision to come to United States be an American, and I have done good.

Today I am a millionaire, I would say multimillionaire. I start cleaning a stake kitchen steak house, now I am owner of a cleaning company, commercial cleaning contractor, have branches in 21 cities in the United States. I have more than 3200 people involved in this business. I came to this country with 200 dollars in my pocket. I owe a lot to this country. The opportunity was given to me. I made the most of it. I don’t know how I made the most of it, but I used it and then I work hard but it was rewarded.

However, the bottom line is I am much better than the day I got here. It’s the country who give me all this opportunity, is it better than the day I got here. September 1974 I was poor, now I am rich. It’s the country, the united states of America, is it richer or poorer than September 1974, sure we have enjoyed 27, I think the united states GDP was at 21,000 dollars 27,000 dollar I have no data with me, but much richer than Korea that time. However, we grew up to go 47,000 dollars.

Economically, we enjoying all this prosperness, however work ethic and the value, the American value also looking for, sometimes I feel like it diminishing and then I do not like it. It’s not what I want to see. There’s some tangible thing I need to do, what, how can I be a good citizen of this country. While I was working at the steak house cleaning kitchen and during the break time … I pick up the magazines, old magazines.

They got stack of magazines and I pick up one magazine, there was a US news and world report. It’s a very old magazine. I flipped through one page shows all the list of highest tax payers of United States, the list of names of who pay high tax. I looked at it, and some people pay 40 million dollar in taxes, wow I am making dollar eighty right now, how can they pay this amount of tax.

The next night, next break I look at it again and again. I looked at it more than 2000 times, reading all that names, and memorized them. I tried to figure out who made that [inaudible 00:10:50] the last of the list, 400 people, the last [inaudible 00:10:55] paid it was about three million dollars. That time it was a lot of money. I said to myself, I am alone, locked in, every night I worked there eight hours and then I was thinking, talking to myself saying, you want to be in there one day, and don’t cage yourself.

You are making a dollar eighty cleaning kitchen, and I am going to school at day time and then cleaning this kitchen at night. I want to be there, I still want to be there. I was aggravating myself. Then one day I made a decision. I may not going to be there but one day I will pay least one million dollar in income tax to the United States. If my mother was there and she thought you finally go crazy become crazy, but I determine to be a million dollar tax payer a year.

Then the people wonder, so have you reached that goal? Be honest, I forgot that I made a decision one day I will be a million dollar tax payer, annual income tax payer. 1997 I was complaining to my CPA, why I am paying this so much tax why, did you calculate it correctly? I was upset about this too much tax, too much tax. I ended up paying more than a million, and then come home that evening, come home and before I go to sleep I said, wait a minute didn’t I make a goal one day when I got here first time 1974 22 years ago, yeah.

I dig out all the paper work and I wrote it down, in that same magazine, I wrote it down I will be a … one day I will be a million dollar income tax payer. I was sitting down, kneel down and pray god, thank you. You sent me to the United States, it’s a much more meaningful thing for you god sent me to United States I will never be a million dollar tax payer or noticeable person to anybody but you made me. You are almighty and you made me. I am not no way I am not that kind of person, but I paid a lot of tax.

A lot of people, over thousands, thousands of people come to my company and work for me and under my leadership. They clean toilets, floors, corners, and this got to be God, it’s not me. I am overwhelmed. I could not sleep at night, I cried all night, overwhelming, thankful to God and said, God you picked me to show somebody that your power, please use me, use me I am yours. I was so thrilled and happy that God picked me to one of those front runners.

Ever since then I have become a new person, and I see things differently. Everything what I do, everything other people do, everything my family members do is under God’s plan. I am a Presbyterian, so I maybe heard too many sermons for Presbyterian preachers, but I should yet feel like, I still feel like everyone has their own journey set by God.

Today I still think God give me life to be a janitor. This world, this whole world without janitors is going to be very, very dirty and we took that important part and make place immaculately clean. People enjoy to work, and then productivity will go up, simply because we the janitors clean their places. I am very proud. I decide change my title, I was a chief executive officer before and I changed my title to chief executive janitor. CEJ, people wonder what is a CEJ, and then I tell them it’s chief executive janitor. When President George W Bush asked me “What is a CEJ?” and I say, “Sir it is a chief executive janitor, and we clean all those bad dirty restrooms. We clean millions of toilets every night.” Any job I am in I want to do good, and God is amazing constantly pouring power and wisdom strength, whatever needed in coming [inaudible 00:16:36] if you want to do good job.

Looking back United States also was created by God with all different people, people from everywhere come to one place and make a country and it become a strongest, the most prosperous country in whole world. It’s got to be God. I don’t think it is some few people. Sure, there are leaders, founding fathers there are all the good state men, absolutely but they are also created by God. I am looking at my life is very comfortable and then I all I have to do, I don’t want to worry about something I can’t control, I keep doing what I need to do every day and come home happy.

If I have done all my best and then I will be happy, if I have missed something I need to sit down and pray and say I will try to do more tomorrow or this coming weekend. Something else I have done in the first days in the United States, I memorized the American national anthem. It is hard for me, hard for any immigrant to come to this country and then make America, the United States of America my country which means you have to abandon your former country, that’s hard.

It’s not easy but you cannot have two wives, you cannot have two mothers. [Ukraine 00:18:21] immigrants tried to do that, I suggest them to give up, it aint going to work. There is only one country we need to serve. I am not asking anyone, and I agonized myself for a long time before I was sworn as an American citizen, should I stay here as a South Korean or should I be American. You can be US because [inaudible 00:18:50] country better.

You left your former country to come to this country to have a better life, so you use all that … cream of the pie and then leave all the crumbs just throw it away, no. Every rose has thorns. You got to take that too. I want to be American. My body, soul, everything become American, yet in my heart Korea lives right here. I will never be out of a Korean heritage but me and my future generation family will be American, and good American.

One of those things that in my first days in the US I want to do is I want to memorize national anthem, star spangled banner, always powerful. It took me a long time. Memorizing star spangled banner is not, God bless America is much easier, but I did. In fact I printed out in Korean and then translate it to Korean and Chinese and Vietnamese and over millions of copies and give it out to the community. A lot of the immigrants from Asia have a little card they can put in their wallet and then they pull it out and then join the singing together along with the fellow other Americans.

It’s a beauty to do, pledge your allegiance, look at the American flag with heartfelt thanks and then allegiance to the flag. It’s very important. You want to do something better do good, not mediocre, not 80%, not 99%, 100%. At least the goal should be 100%. I want to be good American, in fact the day I was sworn in at the court house, down town Atlanta when I was sworn in as an American citizen a lady from the Daughters of American Revolution gave me the constitution, a small book of constitution and the American flag and a small carnation. I came out and I look at the sky and then say, “God I will be the best American this country ever had.” I really did.

I was sworn in inside the court house, I will be patriotic, I will be a good American, I came out and now I swore to God. I said I will be the best one. It is … there is something, a good lesson I learnt from that and when I become a true good American a lot of things I start seeing, what this country needed from me. These days I am working hard toward high school drop outs. I made a pretty good life so far, and I want to utilize that story to influence somebody. One of the best way to pay back to this country is to help young people in the United States, to inspire by my story so they do good.

I visit and travel to nine different states and work with high school drop outs at the boot camps, they are run by National Guard, it’s called Youth Challenge Academy. A lot of kids, about 14,000 kids a year are graduating that program from 29 boot camps in the United States. I go out there, few boot camps and get to share my story. Gentlemen, ladies, this is 16 year old 17 year old kids and I say, I came to this country with no money, no language, no cousin to call when I am in trouble but I made it through.

All you have to do is use what you have. You have everything I didn’t have. You’ve got more than 200 dollars in your pocket. You know how to speak English. You have cousins and some parents or sisters and brothers, all we are asking is read a book and go get your high school diploma. Is that something really hard, no. If you are determined to do it, you can do it.

I came to this country when I was making only dollar eighty an hour. I determined to be a millionaire and not only millionaire, I want to be … I determine to be a million dollar income tax payer, annual income tax payer. You can finish high school, and they think, yeah. Same message is this, they heard from several different people over and over. I feel like my message works a little better than others, so I keep going back.

I was in Louisiana, I was in Fort Steward and I was in Augusta. Actually next week I am going out to Augusta again. Augusta there is … inside of Fort Gordon base there is another high school dropout boot camp. I was in [inaudible 00:24:46] Arizona. I was at Fort Dixon New Jersey, go around and they send me to same young people. They are all bright and very good, however they got the wrong direction, and in this country is have about 34% of high school kids are dropping out, that is wrong. That is really wrong.

Almost one third, indeed more than one third dropping out from high school, inner city 56% average kids dropping out, more than half. Those … about 45% of those people, those kids will end up in jail. It’s going to cost them their whole life and then taxpayers it’s going to cost at least 18,000 dollars per year now. It’s going to go up in the future.

I thought that my role is to help those young people, so I am spending a little time with them and then … that’s about patriotism. I serve the USO. I go at the airport meeting at the … the troops are coming home from overseas, abroad and that are fighting our enemies, and they keep our freedom. They come home and then they have really tired bodies but we give them hug and then coffee and donuts. Atlanta USO is doing great job and I have been a part of that and I [inaudible 00:26:24] board member for over 20 years and I am very proud in doing that service.

I was invited by Steve Forbes, the Forbes Magazine publisher in Boston Harbor invited to have a dinner in his yacht called Highlands. I walk up there with my wife and I found inside his ship, yacht there was Nancy Reagan, Mrs. Reagan sat there. Then prime minister, former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was sitting there, obviously that was before she died, about 20 guests.

Then I know Steve, I met Steve Forbes before, we share this patriotism, Americas future, however I didn’t know, he thought I was belong to that group, Margaret Thatcher and Nancy Reagan in. About three hours we took off to the harbor and enjoying the dinner and came back to the harbor, Boston Harbor and talked to my wife, “Wow why are we here” and how to Steve Forbes, “Why you invite me to here. You want me to clean toilet here or what?”

Another similar reason, similar incident, I was invited … I am involved at the Billy Graham evangelical association. One time I was invited by Frank, he is reverend Graham’s son, Frank Graham. He is running Samaritan support. Frank invited me to join a CEO group. I said okay I will be there. [Inaudible 00:28:37] North Carolina [inaudible 00:28:38] I joined that group. It was three nights and four days seminar.

Three straight days we talked about worship at the work place, and I was a part of that group. What I want to talk about, significant about that meeting when I got there, there is a CEO of fortune 500 companies, Walmart vice chairman. Chairman of the [steel case 00:29:11] furniture, Chick fil A founder Truett Cathy, Georgia Power chairman, and I was thinking why I am here. Who am I they think. What did I do wrong, they must have a different message than I think I have.

I had to ask a friend why I am here, what is wrong. You are the best model and I don’t believe so, I really can’t agree with you. I share these stories like, in Steve’s yacht, Steve Forbes yacht and Franklin Graham’s invitation to CEO group meeting. Then I started one thing, I start a small business. I start cleaning toilet in steak house and later I found a janitor service company called General Building Maintenance.

People ask me a lot, how you start General Building Maintenance, how you got into janitorial service business. I already talked about the … my first job in the US was cleaning kitchen of a steak house. General Building Maintenance was born accidentally. I was a community volunteer and a lot of the immigrants from Asia come into this part of the country come to Georgia and [inaudible 00:30:57] area and I got here obviously older than they, about 10 year before the immigrant wave coming in.

Then their people need a job, their people need get some help to get apartment, buy an even used car and get a driver’s license, and they can’t speak English. I had to, somebody had to help them and I was one of the volunteers to go out to help them. Someday, I had to stand half day in the line at the driver’s license place to interpret so they must have a driver’s license. Testing and everything, I had to go out there, pro bono volunteer, to help them while I was selling life insurance.

I want to talk about the New York Life insurance business separately. When I was helping them, the most difficult thing was finding job for them. I have 20, 30, 40 people and I supply them to go find a job at the factories, the plants and the janitorial service companies and then still coming, there would be more immigrants need a job. They all speak no English. I try to help them here and there.

One day I got too many, I got 12 people who need a job now, they desperately need it. I pray about it and then God inspired, what if I start some business to use that labor and then … it was in 1983, April 1 I start a janitorial service company called General Building Maintenance. I started and then I used them, hired them. It took me about six weeks to get a first contract.

The contract is a presidential office park at a [inaudible 00:33:03] area in north east Atlanta. I walk into that office park, management office and say I am Sunny Park. I don’t even have a business card. I don’t even have a brochure. I don’t even have references, but I would like to get a cleaning contract. I need help. These people need a job desperately.

It took me weeks but I got the contract, first contract. That small office park is only 90,000 square feet and they only need about three people to clean, three full time, but I put all 12 in it. I didn’t take any profit. I gave a share, all the money I received I share it with the 12 people, which is still not enough for the people that are working cleaning toilets.

 Obviously a lot of people, they have done a great job and a few weeks later the owner, not the owner, the manager of the building was very, very pleased to see the result. We don’t steal. We don’t talk much. We don’t speak English anyway, and then we work hard. The place is clean, price is decent, and then owner was happy. Then he start calling his friend in the industry. You got to see, meet this guy, this guys is good, a very good contractor. He charge less and his quality is superb.

 This person, my first customer, his name is Ben Lily. He become my salesman, he is pretty much calling everybody in town, the building management industry. I have been picking up the new contract every other week, new one, another one, another one. Then I start, I have to go look for people to work for me. What magic about my business, use of full time people. That early 80’s the most cleaning companies hire people as part timers.

 People work somewhere else and come do this about three hours the evening and they go home to make extra money. I hire these people as a full time. I put them in their work five o’clock, let them work until 1 am, and then this is the only job for them. They have more commitment to the job and they want to clean the space instead of filling of the time.

 The bottom line is that we got pretty good quality. I didn’t plan it. I didn’t even know the cleaning business. Then I learnt two things, when you satisfy customer they love you. When you use community employees they do better job. That’s the two major things I learn, so I keep doing it. Then I made a lot of friends in the industry. Now like I said earlier, now we are in the 21 US cities and it’s still growing.

 This business was actually created by God, not Sunny Park. I just did it, what I inspired and then clean one bathroom at a time, good and then this business become one of the top 10 private cleaning companies in the US. I am very proud of my people. From that moment when I start the cleaning business 32 years ago we still continue to expand and then we become … diverse to other industry like building maintenance, like HBT, electrical and plumbing and other sort.

 Now I have a different business, with retired general Larry Ellis. I partner with him. Then we start a business called Vet Connect. It’s a veteran’s connection. These days we have a budget cut. A lot of people, a lot of soldiers coming out of the military and now they are looking for a job. General Ellis and I inspired and wanted to find something to do with it, and then we hire them. We start a company called Vet Connect and then we do call center.

 We answer phone call, right now we working with several major corporations in the US, hundreds of people answering phone calls from the customers for the major corporations like AT&T, USAA. This job was actually brought back from abroad. It was in the Philippines, Indonesia or somewhere else, and then now we brought them back. We have over 100 people answering the phone, it’s going to grow. It is a meaningful thing while we make some money. These veterans found a job, and it is very good to see.

 I also involve in nonprofit. Nonprofit name is Good Neighboring Foundation. I do want it to increase and stimulate immigrants to this country to become royal and patriotic American citizen, like me. I wanted to show them there is a more meaningful life when you serve one country and when you do good job you will gain much more proud, a proud life. It’s been working good. We have national anthem classes, American history classes to make sure they understand how this country, young country was born.

 We try to make themselves aware of where they live and then what country really want from them, each one of us, all the citizens and new citizens, old citizens need to all together serve this country to make it better in the future. Good Neighboring Foundation has been working very hard with the Asian American immigrant community since 1998 and they are working out good, and the nationwide campaign is sort of civic movement. We have several people involved and I am very happy about what is going on with that organization.

 I also want to brag about some of the awards I received. In business sector I received the small business person of the year by Atlanta chamber of commerce and Atlanta business chronicle. I also was inducted to Atlanta business hall of fame by junior achievements. There was overwhelming me, please because I can use that tool, use that awards as a tool to motivate and stimulate high school drop outs. This award is a meaningful thing for me, because I needed a tool, I can tell all day about I am good but when I have some kind of award I can make most of it and then stimulate others. It is a good tool.

 I also received very, very unique awards. I am a recipient of Patrick Henry trophy. National Guard Association picked me in 1998 the Patrick Henry award recipient. The Daughters of American Revolution gave me Americanism medal. That was a great honor. The USO gave me a patriotism award. These three awards I got and I put these medals in the highest place in my wall because that’s a meaningful thing.

 I want to be American. I don’t want to be a mediocre American. I want to be a good American, and recognized by somebody, so possibly influence others to even better Americans, because this country since our kids not giving birth to many kids, we have to maintain our population with immigrants. No other choice. As we take in so many immigrants we have to have good way to make them patriotic American, not just somebody coming and leaving, make a living. It is important. I thought it was important my role can do something about that.

 Talking about patriotism, I’ve become a Republican Party member and that was very early days in my US life. I came to the US, one of the reasons was I wanted to be like I said before, I want to be like a brave, kind and American, who cannot … Americans to me, my imagination the Americans stand up for right things. Just like they come to Korea and help us, save my freedom, saved my life. That’s American.

 I came to US in 1974, two years later Mr. Jimmy Carter got elected and I was disappointed. He is a great man, actually I am serving his foundation as a counselor. His foreign policy was not in line with my thought. Americans are leading the world and we cannot have a weak foreign policy. I read and I saw the TV news, American soldiers in Germany got trapped in, and gangsters and then got [inaudible 00:44:40]. They can’t even go out to pass because they are scared to death. It’s about the anti-Americanism things, activities is going on.

 Everybody knows about our journalists got locked in as hostage in Iran and the way we handle, I didn’t like it. That was not American that I saw. I was, although I was young and making living in cleaning toilets and then selling life insurance I was not happy. Then I decided to support anybody go against Jimmy Carter. Then I moved to Atlanta Georgia from Indianapolis in 1978, few months later 1979 Ronald Reagan visiting [inaudible 00:45:38] civic center, he has a fundraiser.

 That time, 1979 … Georgia Republican party is very weak, most of Georgians were Democrats. At the annual convention maybe 100 people showed up. This fundraiser, there were not many people but Ronald Reagan came, and I jumped in. I went there, at the fundraiser, nobody invited me. I had my check book right here. I went to the fundraiser they asked me, what are you doing here, and I said … because the appearance is I don’t belong there, but I said I am here joining the fundraiser. I think that Ronald Reagan is here to raise money so I brought my check book.

 They let me in, then you got to give me a check. Then I said, wait a minute I want to see if I really want to give. I listened to his speech, and this is a man I think restored the American, the power. I got excited and then went in line of people and the handshake with Ronald Reagan. Newt Gingrich was very small then and he was next to him, and I walk up to Mr. Reagan with a 1000 dollar check. That time 1000 dollars was my net monthly income, entire monthly income. That’s a lot of money.

 I didn’t realize, but I was the highest donor, one of the highest donors in that campaign. I gave a 1000 dollar check, I didn’t give him them I showed him and said, “Mr. Reagan, I came to US and I want to be a strong American but America become so weak to my eyes, would you promise me to restore this trend. Make this county as powerful as used to be.” He said, “Mr. Park, I will do it. I will make sure this country restore that strong, that powerful national image” then I gave him the check.

 That was the moment that, and I was so proud. When he did a much better job, restore the Americanism in the world and then I [always feel 00:48:17], I am the one who made it happen. I felt like I am the one who had that. I had ownership of that. Ever since then I didn’t realize the difference of a Democrat and a Republican, but I am already American, I mean a Republican. I made a lot of good friends in the Republican side.

 That was my political life. Then I am only Asian born, like the president elector in the country, in the state of Georgia and I am one of the 15 presidents electors and two straight years, consecutive terms that have become electors, and I am very proud to be that, because of that relationship and I got to know a lot of leaders in Georgia administration. I have become the vice chairman of the Georgia port authority. I had a privilege to serve Georgia, Georgia citizens in eight years in the port business.

 I travel all around the world as a port authority vice chairman and then trying to bring more ships to Savanah port and Brunswick, so help the Georgia economy. I think that little part of it, when I joined the Georgia ports authority Savanah port was producing about one million boxes coming in every year. Eight years later when I was leaving Georgia ports authority there were about three million boxes is coming every year.

 I want to take a little bit of credit that we have done something good to attract more cargo owners and the shipping line companies is coming to Savanah rather than any other ports in the east coast. Bottom line, Savanah become number two port in the east coast next to New York New Jersey port, we surprise Norfolk, Baltimore, Jacksonville, Wilmington, they are all behind us, way behind us. In fact Savanah port is going to … the harbor deepening project going on right now. It will be Long Beach of the east.

 We have to see the Georgia economy is going to be very, very prosperous because of the Georgia ports. Then Brunswick become number one, I take it back, number two in the east coast about the cars and the cargo with the [inaudible 00:51:18] they call roll, roll, roll in roll out cargo port in the United States. It is very important for the Georgians to remember that the Georgia port is a great part of the Georgia economy.

 I want to share, actually testify what God did to me. I was involved very, very bad car accident. It was in 1991 two days before Thanksgiving Day. I was travelling to Columbia South Carolina, coming home at night. It was very early in the morning, November about one o’clock, 1 am. Coming home on I 20 past Augusta and then I slept on the wheel. I had two passengers. I hit the guardrail, edge of the guardrail and turn over.

 When I was awake, and I was sleeping, when I wake up car was rolling, keep rolling, one, two, three and finally stopped upside down. The two passengers screaming, I was upside down. I got my seatbelt out, come out, I couldn’t move my body left hand side, my left side of the body I couldn’t move to the right. I pulled them out, the passengers. The car was ready to blow up, if you like it, steam all over. It was cold, and bring them out to the far side because maybe the car blow up and then I don’t want them to get hurt.

 Then, because the car was under the ditch, the cars passing by the highway cannot see us. I climb up to the hill and try and stop traffic. At one o’clock, two o’clock, three o’clock about four hours the cars wouldn’t stop. The trucks passing by, it was Sunday morning and people would not see me or even see me, or even they see me and then I wave and they won’t stop. It took about four hours before I saw, somebody radioed to police station and the police was coming back, come and pick us up.

 When police come there they finally saw and then ambulance came. During that time, about four hours my left side body was numb, all I could move the left arm but I was going east bound, west bound every time I see some kind of vehicle, headlights showed up I go out to wave and stop them. I have done it about four hours. When I got to university hospital in Augusta, when they take x-ray of my body they just couldn’t believe I had a neck fracture, six, seven bones have fracture.

 Usually whenever have a neck fracture you tied up and be gone. Four hours’ time I am moving around up and down, up and down, run all over but I was fine. It’s got to be big breeze, big breeze, strong you can’t imagine that God’s hand was holding my neck. That’s the only thing I can imagine. There is another moment and I was saying it’s got to be God. He wants to use me a little longer and I say, you have it.

 Then, ever since then I try to think today is my last day of my life, and then I am so relaxed, so happy. I don’t agonize too much about the small things. If it’s my last day, today is the day I be gone to God and I say, why you worry about that small thing, is make the big difference from that moment. I found happiness. You talking about life. I don’t want to be the philosophical but there’s two things. I try to divide my life in three part.

 If I life 90, I am 72 going on 73, if I live 90 years, first 30 years been learning and second 30 years is gain, and last 30 years is sharing what you learn and gain. I am in the sharing stage of my life. We came with empty hand. We are going to leave with empty hand, and I am no exception. That I know. All I need is three minutes a day, some nice coat, a nice place to keep my body warm at night, family and colleagues, friends. To God’s eye this very small, but sometimes my ego reaches 100 feet high is useless. When I am thinking about today is my last day and then I get relaxed and much better, enjoying in my life.

 I also think I was fortunate to have a good mother. My mother, I am biased obviously but my mother was one of the best mothers in the whole world ever in history. She taught me during the cold and poor days after Korean War, during the Korean War, we were so poor but my mother never, never thought about we are poor. In heart and brain we are rich, we are skipping meal but we are still rich. People think is weird, how can you do that but my mother knows how to make me to think so I learn that. My mother is a strong, one of the strong women in the whole world. I never felt that I was poor although I was skipping meals.

 I want to talk about prejudice. A lot of people talk about discrimination of this country. I have a few incidents, experience I can share. I moved to US and then I moved to Atlanta and I need to get a haircut. I am walking to barber shop and sit in there and I could tell the barber didn’t like to cut my hair. I sit there and then he took a while to come to start cutting my hair. He spent maybe two minute. He cut my left hand side hair all the way up and leave one side long and say hold on.

 I said, with broken English, “What about this side, this is new style,” and very mean face. My sense tell me you better get out of here. I wanted to pay and he says, “I don’t want to take your money, just get out of here.” That’s one incident, but I have numerous of those incidents. Every time I get through those experience and talk to myself and say, is that a prejudice, yes. Is that discrimination, yes, but I am same way. We all the human being are born that way.

 If I am in Korea and there are some people that look different or not like me, different culture … they are going to be treated differently. It’s the human nature, it’s not … or trying to hurt me in any way, its human nature. The barber is one of the millions people I met, one barber, or maybe altogether, give me the number, maybe 20 people hurt my feeling in the entire life in the US 40 years, so what. I did the same way.

 I don’t want to think about negative thing too much, just positive and keep going. I have customers who mistreated me, prejudice, bad mind but I work along fine. They pay me good money, I work, I don’t listen to those. The way I learnt how to deal with discrimination, if you call it, or prejudice is upon your own decision not anybody else. We all mingle with the same people with this thinking like look alike, and that’s not anything wrong. That is our nature.

 Sure, this country is the best country, best model in the whole world about how to deal with discrimination and diversity. We have a certain rule. I appreciate Martin Luther King Junior civic movement, civil right movement, their leaders because if they didn’t fight and they didn’t fight for that change of rule I probably wouldn’t be here. I don’t want to have my life in the middle of discrimination.

 American people adopt it and changed it, sure we still have people have a different strong mind against colored people and the people that don’t look like them, like KKK or anyone, but that’s a reality. Any country, any society, any place in the world have that part. They are a very small part. I do care, but … it’s not a big portion of my thinking. While dealing with those and I want to think and I would spend my life, my time with something I can control.

 Some people I know, good friends of mine agonize all day too upset about somebody did something and then worry about something they cannot control. I want to get away from those. I learn lots of lessons while I was making a living today. I came to Us in 1974, in 1976 I got out of cleaning as kitchen … steak house kitchen cleaning and I found a job at the New York Life insurance company.

 In the New York Life insurance company I was selling life insurance to Indiana farmers with broken English. Today my English as you can tell, about 60% good. By the way I want to apologize to you listening all this broken English, because it’s hard. However, I got some story to share, and this is obstacles you could call it, all difficult things can get over if you wanted to get over. If you are stuck with those things, this is all your choice, people’s choice but I decided to get over and get going.

 While I was working, when I was working for New York Life selling life insurance two and a half years my English was about 15% good, maybe 20% but I was knocking on doors of Indiana farmers and sell life insurance. Not only sell life insurance, but I was top salesman. Not only top salesman but I was elected as president of career conference of new agents. Any new agents less than three years old with the company together at Milwaukee and Illinois we are meeting every year. About 300 agents at the last day of the conference, after five days they elect one president for the conference.

 I ran campaign with broken English, I was elected as career conference president. That’s not it. I became a trainer for the new agents for eight month, for New York Life insurance company, with broken English. There is nothing impossible, nothing is impossible. However, people ask me how I did it. I just go by the rule. I went by what my manager say. My manager make [over write 01:06:49] little income of my sale.

 If I sell many life insurance policies my manager makes a little extra money. I should listen to him because he and I are in the same boat. He will teach me right thing to do. He asked me this, I thought it was ridiculous, he asked me “Sunny, you need to make 30 contacts a day”, “30 contacts I don’t have any cousin. I don’t have any brother in law, who should I call.” “It’s up to you, you go find people, 30.” Then a few days later I made a decision, I want to do 33 a day, contact, six days a week I will do it. I just follow the rule. My job was getting 33 no’s before I go to bed. Every day I go out to meet people, go to mall and stopping people. Just imagine the Asian faced guy with very poor English that stop the people. “I am from New York life insurance company I want to sell you life insurance can we talk.”

 I have done it, people they bought a lot of policies. I am thinking nothing is impossible. I made 33 contacts every day and I get 10% return, 10% success rate. Then I become top salesman. A lot of people, a lot of my colleagues in the office about, we had Indianapolis is general office we had 28 agents. Every one of them looking for, prospecting to millionaires, but Indianapolis there were only few millionaires and people who wants to buy 100,000 policies, no. They may not need life insurance bad as low income.

 I started going knocking on doors of low income people who never visited by life insurance salesman. I was like a subdivision, low income housing, there’s hundreds homes there, I am knocking them. In all the work that blue collar work, like the factories, in RCA factory and GM factories, they work all day, so Saturday and Sunday is the only day home. I started knocking on doors at nine o’clock in the morning, knock on doors of these Indiana farmers and the blue collar subdivisions.

 They having a good sleep, that morning sleep, and then somebody knock door so they come in pajamas and open the door and then ask me, what do you want. I heard all kind of cursing as you can imagine, but I did call 33 people every day. That was the beginning of it, and that was the fundamental of things. Truett Cathy, Mr. Cathy founder of Chick-fil-A wrote a book called, the first book actually, 'it's easier to succeed than to fail'. I agree whole heartedly with him.

 People follow the rule of success do what you need to do and you get there but people think they're smarter than God, smarter than books so they want to put their own rule and they end up fail. That’s what Mr. Cathy say and that’s what I also say. I accept to tape this interview for couple of reasons. I think I have few experience I'd like to share and then influence others possibly. My story was more than just for myself or few others. I want to leave this interview with a couple good wisdom. I always believe that treat others the way you want to be treated, maybe the best way to be successful and have a happiness life, happy in life. I have a good story.

 I was a part time car sales man, long hours selling life insurance, on weekends I was also selling cars for Chevrolet dealer. I only worked two days a week and some evenings. One time I had a customer about four, husband and wife and the two kids so walk in the showroom and looking for a car to buy. You know selling cars is like selling life insurance, it's fun because not many people buy cars every other year but car buying is a very, very unique privilege history of any family especially those days in 70s that people don’t buy a car every other year or every three, four years, that people drive cars 10, 15 years. Car buying is so important for them and I was helping in the position to help them.

 This family walked in two kids and they have a very, very old car that they drove in, they're looking for a Malibu classic, four door. I show them all the cars and they pick the car, they hesitated but they pick a car that is in dark blue Malibu classic four door. While I was writing over this buyer's order we made a deal and their buying car and I noticed that lady of the house, the mother of the two kids one that really, really happy because I see every time I sell a car this exciting seeing them excited it excite me. It's pretty much like a festival but I notice that this woman, the mother was not really excited. I had to ask "oh mamma is there anything else I can do? Are you fine?" so I said, "No tell me please something tells me that you're not completely happy with this car or me or whatever."

 She goes "It's okay I settle with this" "what do you mean?" "well last five years I will admire light blue car but you don’t have light blue car here but so we settle with dark blue car" so I said "I'll find a light blue car for you" "oh don’t even try, we check every dealership in town and there are no light blue car, Chevy Malibu classic in town" "Oh really" "I checked sure not there is no light blue car in town." And I said "I'll find you, find a light blue car for you"

 Then I found one in Knoxville Tennessee, and then I said well don’t buy this car, go home and come back five in the afternoon tomorrow. It was a Friday night and then come back on Saturday afternoon. "Are you sure, we're going to get that light blue car?" "Yeah I guarantee I'll get you a light blue car" so they left four o'clock in the morning I drove this dark blue car to Knoxville Tennessee and exchange we trade each other the Chevrolet dealers. I picked the light blue car and drove down. It took me four hours one way so eight hours.

 All Saturday I could sell two cars that day but I missed it. Anyway I brought that car back, car, the light blue car and washed it off and then five in the afternoon they showed up and then there was the light blue car. Now I see this lady his face get to open and really happy. I said this is it, this is it and so rewarding the feeling. They were very happy, they got to sigh all the paper work and they left. After I came back to my little cubicle again I counted all the commission day I already made 20 dollars the expenses in this and that I should have make at least minimum 100 bucks for car commission but I only made 20 dollars two days’ work.

 I said man am I damn or what? This is a bad business, but there is nothing I can do about it, is already passed and I sold at you know the smiling faces of the family left. All right I got to go find somebody else to buy a car and then I tried to forget but keep coming back. I forgot about it and about a month and half later I got a phone call from the man of the house, the woman's husband. He called me and said "I want you to visit my office" so I said "okay you're going to buy a car?" "Maybe" and then I stopped by.

 There was a small it's called scientific Atlanta, very small company in 1978, it was a very small company and so they started a garage, they making satellite in Tennessee, they but they growing so fast. When I got there I found out this man was a purchasing manager for scientific Atlanta. He was so impressed with what I did. Then he's been buying cars for his company from me, he order tracks, he order vans, Chevy they were buying Ford and they changed to Chevrolet and they've been a car through me. I made a lot more commission than this 100 dollars.

 This is the lesson I'd like to share with a lot of young people that don’t rush, do what you can do the best you can and treat others the way you want to be treated. Then is a real world, maybe not come immediately but there is no free lunch, giving or taking same way no free lunch. You put more in, you get more out. That’s what I share with my kids and my young people and especially those high school drop outs. In Korean my mother has only one child, that was me. Then even through those poor days she treated me like a prince so I would become very spoiled. I thought that there is no other people in the world but only me, this everybody live there for me. I thought I was the center of everybody and spoiled kid.

 Then my neighbors they talk about me bad and I overheard the women in our neighborhood talk about me. I overheard that so they say that spoiled kid Sunny Park will never in anything, such a brat and no good. When I heard that and I was shocked and I was scared. I'm nobody, I'm not going to be any good person oh I can do that; you got to make my own. Few months later I ran away from home, I don't want to be a prince no more. Then I want to become, I want to become independent. I found a job, I trained in high school. I've been going to nice school, the high school, nice school. I work from four in the morning to four in the afternoon and go to school at five and finish school at 10:30. That was my schedule, six days a week in Korea.

 My employer didn’t pay me anything for 12 hours of work every day but feed me and send me to school, give me tuition. In Korea you only get a free education for elementary school after six years and then you got to pay at that time. Tuition was had a lot of money and then my employer pay for that. He feed me, there is a place to sleep and I was a bad child to my mom because my mom miss me so much. She found out, she I let her know where I am and I told her I'm not going to go back this is my way to make a living and then I don't want to be independent on anybody even you so I'm going to be staying alone. During that time, during that time I learned so many lessons and working for a grocery store, there is a wholesales grocery stores we deliver.

 I was a delivering lot of merchandise flowers and sugar, bag of sugar like that to response. Now there is the track but those days deliver with bicycle. The bicycle so big twice heavier than my body but I was running it and I couldn’t believe I could move that bicycle. I learned a lesson the wheel, the magic of a wheel for some little reason I let the wheel work for me and then I struggle with that thing first in a couple of months but I can stuck a 22 pounds bags flowers and I can stack nine of them and still riding the bicycle, bicycle [inaudible 01:22:09] while I was riding delivering that to restaurants I learned a lot of lesson. One lesson I want to share with the young people is persistency, you got to ... you started you got to finish.

 There is a little hill one round I was delivering these flowers, one little hill and with cargo in it and there is a heavy cargo bicycle and I will just keep pedaling. Then climb up to the hill and then in the middle of the hill if you don’t push you fall. I learned the lesson because I couldn’t it anymore, I give up the bicycle fall, all cargo will fall and then what I do I need to redo it, reset, take all the cargo down and put a bicycle downhill, stack them again, tied up with a rubber tie and then ride that bicycle to downhill and crack it again and then start it, get enough power to get over hill. This time you don't want to give up, keep pushing, keep pushing, keep pedaling and then once you get over the hill the free ride. Cool air, so nice going down the hill and then enjoying all this. I put more in on there but I get the free ride in a bit later.

 It's like a life story, when you're young, when I was young I put more in it, so I'm enjoying that later part of my life, free ride which not actually free ride but easy. I don’t have to push that pedal that much like I did before. That’s the thing I learned it and I thought it is some good lesson that I like to I can share. One other thing I do is a stand up the mirror; I reflect my life and say Sunny Park how are you today? Are you going to be somebody special today or just one of the mediocres? Because a new me every day is a new day, new sun come out and I need to figure out how I'm going to be productive today, what I'm going to ... what am I going to do today for others?

T hen you feel that you're determined, you're going to spend some time ... some of the time today for others and then you feel good. Rather if you have a friend who spend all day for me … me my family I tell you don’t make me happy, that’s a magic of how you might set goals. I thought this interview is a pretty honorable thing for me but actually some experience some of the experience I share with you and others, other viewers. Hopefully it work in their lives and then it's like a cash track, a track with cash driving down to highway and then back to open there are a lot of cash flowing around the highway and the people start pick it up. Some people will pick it up, some people ignore then go. I give a little bit of advice for especially young people if somebody make a deal on, somebody will pass by, so either lose it or use it and I hope everyone will listen to my poor English, I got some idea .and then make it best for your life. God bless you all, thank you.