

## Blessing and Family Ministry Blessing Story: Introverts Attract - Hope Past Rejection

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**Filipino-American Junghwa navigates her parents' expectations and self-doubt on her journey to the Blessing.**



We've been Blessed for about three and a half years, and we started our intentional engagement process, which we call the 'matching', around late 2015. So it's been about four or five years since then.

I grew up in the States. I was born and raised here. But during the time that I was communicating with Brian, I was actually living with my grandparents in the Philippines. My immediate family was all in the States through the majority of my process. Brian was my first and only process. I don't know if I'm lucky, but I'm happy that I was able to find him on the first try.

The year before I started talking to Brian, my mom actually tried to match me with somebody. I was 100% not ready. I knew that right off the get go, but I felt really pressured by my mom to communicate with his family, but I didn't even want to entertain the idea because I knew that I wasn't ready. I was about 19 at the time. I was really frustrated with my mom, because she didn't communicate with me.

But after I was able to get over my initial feelings, I took it as an opportunity to have a conversation with my parents. I'm the eldest child and at that point, none of my siblings were married, so I thought it was a good opportunity to talk to my parents about their ideas and expectations. It was a really good conversation. I recommend this with everybody, to touch base with each other and be clear where you're all at.

***"I started doing a lot of prayer and internal preparation."***

After that conversation with my parents, the only boundary I gave them was that they could look, but to not pursue anybody without asking me first. I wanted to make it clear whether I was ready to invest in somebody. Fast forward a year later -- I'm still living in the Philippines. One day, I was just inspired to start preparing for the matching. I still wasn't ready, but I knew I wanted to start thinking about it more intentionally. I started doing a lot of prayer and internal preparation. My plan was when I moved back to the States, I would have a more serious conversation with my parents. I didn't have a definite date when I would go back, so there was no pressure on me.

***"But as you know, life doesn't always go to plan"***

But as you know, life doesn't always go to plan. I got a message from my dad saying "Dear Junghwa. I've been praying for you and your sisters and I think God has answered my prayers. Somebody came by today and wants to propose a match with you." I definitely wasn't expecting that, but I was in a really different mindset and a different place than I was one year prior. I asked my parents to let me think about it and get back to them. I prayed on it and read his profile. No red flags. He wrote a little spiel about video games, which was cool, and I decided that I'm going to give my parents the okay that if he's open to it, then I'm open to it.

*"I felt so vulnerable, putting myself out there, and I started doubting myself."*

Our parents have mutual friends who introduced Brian and I. They thought that we were opposites; that Brian was more reserved and that I was more outgoing. But actually, we're both pretty introverted people. My dad also had a very similar line of thinking that opposites attract. Since I'm the oldest child, he was really determined that I should marry somebody who was the youngest in their family, which Brian is.

There was about a month that I didn't hear anything from Brian after agreeing to talk to him. I communicated with his mom a little bit during that time and continued with my internal preparation. But I panicked a little bit. It hit me that I might potentially go through a process and talk to somebody. I felt so vulnerable, putting myself out there, and I started doubting myself. I was wondering, am I even good enough? Am I ready to talk to anybody? I cried so much during that one month. I did not have any local support, and my parents were on the other side of the world. So I would often call them at like, three to 5 am their time. It was really difficult not being able to see my parents, to talk to them whenever I felt like it. But my dad gave me some great advice. "Don't put your heart into this yet," he said. "He hasn't even said yes to talking to you."

*"I came to the realization that I'm not a perfect person. All you can do is present yourself, honestly."*

But it really wasn't about Brian. It was about me. I came to the realization that I'm not a perfect person. All you can do when you talk to somebody is present yourself, honestly. I decided to focus on continuing to grow myself to be a better person and being in the best position to be able to love my future spouse, whether it was going to be this person, Brian, or if it was going to be someone else down the line.

Our first Skype call was five hours long. I never had any experience talking to anybody. And of course, I enjoyed emailing with him for the first month. But after that first call, it was so nice talking to him that I wondered, 'Is this normal for me to get along with somebody so well?'

Keeping God at the center was really important for us during those calls, so we read scripture about relationships and prayed together, and had a lot of difficult conversations. Being so honest from the beginning laid a good foundation for our current relationship.

*"Keeping God at the center was really important for us."*

After about nine months of communicating long distance, Brian came over to the Philippines. We met for two weeks, and it was great. Before he came though, we decided that we would not make a decision while he was there. We had all this build up for nine months and we didn't want the emotions from the trip to cloud our judgment. After the visit, we did 21 days of prayer and reflection separately.

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**Investing your heart in someone is tough. Brian did it five times before finding his perfect match.**

While [Junghwa was reflecting on herself](#) and considering if she was ready, I was needing some time to recover. I had been through a pretty tough intentional engagement communication before I met and talked to Junghwa, and needed to digest what happened. Basically, I got rejected. I had five intentional engagement experiences before I met Junghwa. Some were shorter, some longer. This experience before I met Junghwa was definitely longer and I invested a lot of myself into that person and into that family. So it was hard to let go.

After that, I told my parents that I didn't want to talk to anybody and would let them know when I was ready to pursue another candidate. I think I even told them, if I talk to someone right now, I don't think I'm going to treat them very well at all. I'm not going to be very kind or patient. I needed time. And so my parents said, "Okay, well, let us know."

*"I want to have God and true love at the center of my marriage, my life."*

So I took that time to digest and reflect on who I wanted in a spouse. But more importantly, what do I have to offer? Oddly enough, I think during that time of reflecting and thinking back on all those experiences, I became more confident in myself. Especially that I have a strong faith. I want to have God and true love at the center of my marriage, my life.

What ended up happening while I was reflecting and recovering -- my parents did not wait. They introduced Junghwa's profile to me one night, and I was not happy. I didn't read Junghwa's profile right away. I don't quite remember exactly how long it was before I read it.



I have a distinct memory of my mom coming into my room one day and sitting on my bed and just talking with me about what happened with that previous intentional engagement experience, and helping me digest my feelings from it. My mom made a deliberate effort to really hear how I was doing. I definitely cried. I definitely had to digest that more, and that helped a lot.

Sometime after that, about a month later, I finally read Junghwa's profile. She checked every single one of my boxes with flying colors. I think it's one of the benefits of having gone through five experiences before. I really felt this is exactly the person that my parents and I were looking for. Let's do this. So I reached out by email and we started talking.

***"There's hope past rejection. You need to know your value, despite what other people think."***

There's hope past rejection. I was rejected a number of times. But I think it's an opportunity for you to figure out your value. You need to know your value, despite what other people think of you or do. Don't go looking for a person to make you happy, but find a person that you can make happy. I knew that I made her happy, or for the most part. That's the biggest reason I said yes to Junghwa.

I know you hear it a lot but center yourself on God. You need to know that God exists. You need to know why you're going through this process. Do you really want to live this lifestyle? No matter what stage of life you're at, figure out if God is really at the center.

***"No matter what stage of life you're at, figure out if God is really at the center."***

It felt like talking to an old friend. We talked about sex, finances, religion, and our personal faith. It's good to talk about those things. Honesty was integral for our communication to go smoothly.

***"We talked about sex, finances, religion, and our personal faith."***

We made it a point to continue talking with each other. And at the end of those 21 days, we Skyped each other to decide if we wanted to be engaged. We did a countdown to give our answer at the same time. "3,2,1...Yes!"

I guess that's our story. And now it's just hunky dory.