

## Giving Thanks

I'm very thankful for a lot of things. My parents, my few friends that I have, my little brother, and my cousin Brayan because they have stayed with me throughout my life. I'm grateful to have a roof over my head, and my family has a stable income so that we can afford the necessities of life. Another thing I wish to show gratitude for and have not had the opportunity to do so is my love for music.

I've never been musically talented, but I do like to sing. I don't have the voice of Yoon Jeonghan, so I often tend to sing alone. I did join the chorus in 5th or 6th grade through the first semester of 9th grade. I quit because I lost my spark for singing. Music really helped me. It is difficult for me to express my feelings in words or through my actions, so music helps me with everything. Whenever I'm upset, I play a sad song and just let myself drown in the music while I cry. Music genuinely saved my life. During times when I thought I couldn't go on anymore and was just about to give up, I found K-Pop bands, and the song really stuck with me. They taught me that no matter what, I shouldn't let go and that I have so many people who love and care for me. "Seventeen" and "Lucy" showed me that I could get a second chance at everything if I cleaned up my act. I owe my life to seventeen guys that don't even know I exist.

When my ex and I broke up around two years ago, I relied on the Korean pop band "Seventeen," which consists of thirteen male members, and the Korean band "Lucy," which consists of four male members. This was my source of happiness. I realized that I had to do everything I could so they could be proud of me, even though they didn't know who I was. To them, I'm just another one of their fans that have devoted everything to them. I'm glad I found some friends and discovered self-love through my admiration of "Seventeen" and the band "Lucy." I owe a lot to music. It has been one of the only joys in my life besides my friends and family.

Music has also made me realize how beautiful the world is and that the world is not only filled with unpleasant things. One of my favorite idols, Do Han-se, tried to kill himself before he became a Korean idol. He has a tattoo that represents him as a survivor of self-harming. He's always making sure fans are okay and he shares his experiences with depression, which makes you realize that even idols go through hard times just like us. It also makes you realize that feeling depressed, anxious, and lost are all feelings that people experience despite being famous or not.

At the end of the day, we are all people, and we all experience the same type of feelings. I'm glad that even though sometimes it is difficult just getting out of bed and performing the most simple tasks, there are people who are willing to help me and to support me along my journey. There are people who will not give up on me just because I feel a certain way. There are people who do not call me mentally ill as a derogatory saying and do not put me down for feeling the way I feel sometimes. This is what I am thankful for, and this is the reason I keep going. This is why I'm still alive and trying to find a purpose in life.

-Natalia Zamora