

How to Say "Bittersweet" in Korean and Create Long-Lasting Memories

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The Korean language has an interesting adjective that refers to the state of feeling relieved and sad at the same time, *siweon-seobseobhada*. It's a compound of *siweonhada*, 'to feel relieved' and *seobseobhada*, 'to feel sorry/regret.'

Imagine getting a diploma, but saying goodbye to your school friends at the same time. It's the feeling elicited when parents marry off their children. It's when someone gets promoted but would have less opportunity to see longtime friends in the office, or when one decides to end a difficult relationship but still struggles to move on.

It is therefore important to always put your best foot forward, to be at your best in every occasion. In Korean, it's quite common to say *choi-seon-eul-da-ha-get-seum-ni-da*, 'I will do my best' when a certain opportunity comes. When you do your best, the 'sorry' or 'regret' would be lessened.

Doing your best—whether it's about doing a particular task or simply enjoying a certain moment—makes one create a more vivid *chu-eok*, 'memory.' But *chu-eok* is special because it keeps you attached to a life moment and allows you to relive that experience. It's not simply recording something into your memory, a meaning conveyed by a different Korean word, *gi-eok*. *Chu-eok* instead binds you to the moment, allowing you not just to recall but also to re-experience the past.

When something ends, and you wish you could have done more, what you feel is not *siweon-seobseobhada*, but perhaps *antakkabda*. It's when you regret that the outcome could have been better had you exerted more effort, or when you're a little disappointed, thinking that you should have done it differently, or simply because you did not do your best.