

In Germany, it's Wunderkind – literally “Miracle Child.” In Korea, it's bibum (pronounced BEE-bum). The translation: extraordinary. But in English, the word is simply “Prodigy.”

This word is used to define someone with astonishing capabilities who shows promise in their talents. However, the success of a prodigy is not based only on the potential they show, but their desire to follow through on that potential. As professional violinist Itzhak Perlman says, “For every child prodigy that you know about, at least 50 potential ones have burned out before you even heard about them.” My undying work ethic, refusal to “burn out,” and desire to beat the best are the three ingredients that set me apart as the next Prodigy.

Since a young age I have dedicated myself to spending as much time as possible on the lanes. Early on, this was simply for the enjoyment of the game, but as I aged, I realized the relation between how good a bowler is and how much time he spends on the lane is not a coincidence. The professional bowlers I loved to watch over and over didn't just throw the ball. They *studied*. They learned – absorbing information given to them with each shot. I realized knowledge was their power. As I aged, I began to do the same – absorbing information, both on and off the lanes. I read articles, participated in online discussions, and asked questions about everything from lane play to layouts, all while attempting to achieve what Randy Pederson calls “pure efficiency of motion.” Time spent learning, on and off the lanes, soon led to me taking advantage of every opportunity I had to bowl in leagues and tournaments, as well as becoming involved as a local USBC board member.

This level of devotion would lead many people to burn out on traveling, bowling, and keeping up with the constant advancements of the game. But rather than burning out, my devotion continued – possibly due to a balanced life in which schoolwork and “being a kid” were equally as important to me as bowling was. I directed my devotion and eagerness to learn on the lanes to my life outside the alley, and graduated high school with a 4.2 GPA – 5th in my class of 450. Because of bowling, I developed a desire to improve in all areas, both personal and professional. Though bowling gave me the desire to

achieve what I wanted – personal success, it did not give me the tools, such as money to afford tournaments or the latest equipment, access to the best coaches and players, and most importantly of all – confidence. As such, I often find myself lacking in one key area – experience, which unlocks confidence; my missing piece of the puzzle. In order to take the next step, I must gain confidence not just by experiencing top level competition, but also having the right equipment in my hand.

My goal oriented attitude and refusal to back down are ultimately what sets me apart from all the other “prodigies” in the nation. Demanding lane conditions, stiff competition, and a lack of experience have not stopped me to this point, nor will I let them stop me in the future. Every time I take a chance, I give myself another opportunity to learn, and by not being afraid to make mistakes, I give myself full potential to learn and grow. In 2009, I was fortunate enough to be able to compete against the best bowlers in the world in the PBA Dick Weber Open. This tournament was full of bowlers I had watched time and again on TV, and although I did not cash in the tournament, I emerged on the other side as a better bowler. By competing against the best bowlers in the world, I was able to grow, gain confidence, and further strengthen my desire to compete at the highest level of competition available.

There are many key points in the life of a prodigy, and a chance to compete against against more experienced bowlers is a defining moment indeed. As I make the transition into my first season of adult bowling this year, ending my junior career, I realize that I am entering what could be the most important season of my bowling career. *Now* is the time to find the missing piece and strengthen the confidence that I have strived for in recent years. A structured plan to bowl more tournaments this season than ever before, as well as a list of goals to accomplish should lend a helping hand to my cause. Bowling as often as possible, learning from the best, and developing confidence in my game through better coaching and better competition are necessities that I refuse to back down from this coming year.

By setting these goals for myself, I have created a path with many hurdles that must be conquered – hopefully with the help of Storm bowling products.