My first time in a VEX team. It was both a thrilling but hazardous place. Metal bars, pieces and blades of various uses were scattered along the room. It looked like a battlefield between Lego and Star Wars.

VEX meant and means to me how I always perceived it, as pure fun. It may have been the spark of curiosity as I gazed at the robots at play, or it could have been the almost too familiar faces. All these reminded me of home, of friendship, and I realized that this was going to be fun.

My first team was both a train wreck and a stairway to heaven. We never agreed, we constantly argued, and our robot was honestly, a piece of scrap metal. We couldn’t pull it together as the first competition crept to only 10 days away. I was really struck with grief and frustration; I never knew what I could have done. As if an angel of the great lord in the sky fell upon us, we had a mentor. He gave us perfect instruction, at least enough to get through with a passable robot. We ended up scoring decently, and my hopes were raised. I had never felt more proud since I first learned how to say onomatopoeia.

This is what VEX means to me. It is a cascade of emotions, success, failure, denial, resurrection and dignity. It is what makes up us all.