EUGENE Domingo is on a roll. Despite having bagged a number of acting awards, Uge's not one to sit on her laurels. I love how she outdoes herself in every movie she makes. The People's Choice Best Actress at the Asian Awards bares her heart in this tete-a-tete. Kudos, Uge! Passion is truly in everything you do. If only you could be cloned, because the industry is in dire need of more actors like you!

How has winning the Asian Awards changed you and your perception of your craft?

That beautiful moment when I won came at the right time. I am more secure about my job, and the most important thing for me now is to give hope and inspiration to everybody who needs it. I prayed that I would bring back something not only for myself but for all Filipinos who continue to believe in what artists can do. I feel more selfless and have a genuine concern on how I can possibly help upgrade the industry in my own unique and small way.

Are good thespians like you born and not made?

Everybody has a gift. Some are developed. But the truly gifted are born with it. But they should never take it for granted. Acting workshops can help, but practice and exposure and training constitute the real deal.

Your background in theater has helped you a lot. How is acting on stage different from acting in film? Which is more challenging?

Both are equally challenging. The stage is an actor's medium while film is a director's medium. I find fulfillment in both. I am challenged both by the proper way of moving onstage and how to act in front of the camera. I constantly refine my techniques.

I find it sad that theater actors here are not paid as much as movie stars. What do you think should be done to make stage plays more marketable especially for the masses?

Oh, good question! I'd like to share with you the good news! I am doing a play with PETA. We will do the stage version of Lino Brocka's Bona. The rights to this film are owned by Nora Aunor and I am forever grateful for her trust, support and love. She has signed already, so tuloy na tuloy na! I will be with a very hot actor now whom I sense is very serious about his craft! I am very excited! Popular actors should bring themselves to perform onstage so their followers will have a chance to see them live in action. This will arouse curiosity and eventually attract more people to watch theater productions.

What is the most important lesson you've learned so far?

It doesn't stop with being gifted. You have to share your gift. No one is more amazing than God and you can never imagine the greatness of His plan.

If there's something you could change in the local movie industry, what would it be? And how do you suggest it be done?

The number of working hours! I hope actors, especially the veterans and the bigger stars, unite to implement a maximum number of working hours for everybody. We are only human, after all. Fortunately, I have a “cutoff,” not because I want to be stariray but because my brain shuts down after

10 p.m.! I am a day person.

Any roles you still want to portray?

None in particular. Although it thrills me to learn a new dialect or language. In Kimmy Dora and the Temple of Kiyeme, I had to learn Korean!

What is your guilty pleasure?

Traveling extravagantly!

What are you not good at?

Math and Natural Sciences.

What’s the naughtiest thing you’ve done?

Being super pa-close with Andy Lau onstage. But when we were backstage at the Asian Film Awards, I said to him, “Thank you, sir!” He smiled.

What’s the most embarrassing moment you’ve had?

Why is it difficult to think of this right now? Makapal na yata mukha ko talaga!

What’s love to you at this point in your life?

Learning to love yourself is the greatest gift of all. Because if you love yourself, you won’t harm your body nor destroy your spirit. Stay in touch with what’s really important and surround yourself with those who genuinely love you.

Do you still yearn for a lifetime partner or are you happy being a woman at the top of her game?

I’m in a good place right now. To yearn for more is to overlook what God has designed for me.

I am a person who can easily move on because I can laugh at myself! I feel frustrated at times, but that’s human nature and I don’t let it discourage me. I pray often.

If you were not an actress what would you be?

A bank teller!

What's the hardest part of being Eugene Domingo?

I work hard and expect the same from my team. So when I'm taken for granted, or people don't listen, I lose my trust and that breaks my heart.

What's the best part of being Eugene Domingo?

My honesty.

How would you like to be remembered?

As the people's actress who has opened doors to many possibilities and shared her victory. Wow! Dami pang kakaining bigas. Brown ha!