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本作品では、ディベートというコミュニケーションの力が、私をどう変えたのか、ということを書きました。ディベートの秘めるコミュニケーションの力について少しでも知って頂く、もしくはディベートを始めるきっかけになれば幸いです。

To Quarrel or Debate, That is the Question

The judge's final word echoed in the silent room: "The winner is... the affirmative side." We lost. The match that would have sent us to the tournament was over. Yet, in that moment of defeat, I felt not the sting of disappointment, but an electrifying connection to the very rivals who had just bested us. We had thrown every ounce of our logic and passion at each other, and in the aftermath, what remained was not bitterness, but a profound, shared respect. This was not a quarrel. This was debate.

Many people imagine debate as a civilized form of fighting, but they often aren't right. It is not about fighting at all; it is about a desperate attempt to understand. To debate a topic like 'green energy' for instance, is not merely to list facts and figures. It is to force yourself into the shoes of an environmental activist watching glaciers melt, and simultaneously into the worn-out boots of a coal miner whose job is the only thing feeding his family. I remember arguing fiercely for carbon taxes, and as my logic cornered my opponent, I felt a surge of victory. But that night, I thought of the imaginary miner I had rendered jobless.

My argument was sound, my logic impeccable, but my heart ached with a strange sense of guilt. The world, I realized, was not a clean syllogism of right and wrong. It was a messy, complex, and also beautiful tapestry of conflicting truths. Truth is not only one. My world didn't just expand with new knowledge; it deepened with the weight of human complexity.

This lesson was hard-won. When I first started debate, I was a child wielding words and evidence like knives. I saw opponents not as people, but as arguments to be dismantled. My goal was just to listen only for their weaknesses, to find the cracks in their logic and devastate them. I was often successful, but I was never connecting. When I lost a match, I often blamed opponents or even judges.

The turning point came in a devastating loss against a team from another high school. I was selfish and naive. They didn't just refute my points; they respectfully took them and gently showed me a much larger picture I hadn't seen. I was silenced not by aggression, but by their profound understanding. In that humbling defeat, I learned the true art of listening: not as a tool for rebuttal, but as a bridge to another's reality. Connecting our hearts doesn't begin with speaking; it begins with the courageous act of truly wanting to understand.

In the end, I believe the most meaningful journeys are not measured in kilometers. While a plane ticket can show you a different part of the world, a willingness to engage in structured, respectful dialogue can show you a different world within another person. Emotional arguments build walls that imprison us in our own perspectives. But debate, in its ideal form, provides the tools to build a bridge—a bridge built of logic, empathy, and a shared set of rules.

To truly connect our hearts and expand our world, we don't need to cross oceans. We just need the courage to cross the space between ourselves and another, to listen, and to see the world, for a moment, through someone else's eyes. This journey of understanding has no final destination; it is a path I have only just begun to walk. If you're looking to take a similar first step—to build your own bridges—I can definitely recommend a place to start.

Now, did I win this debate?