

アルムナイ特別賞

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コミュニケーションは、人が生きるうえで欠かせないものです。それは必ずしも言葉を必要とするものではありません。私は長い間、社会的な決まりごとや家族内の関係にとらわれ、家族との対話を避けていました。しかし、母のある行動をきっかけに、言葉を交わさなくても互いを理解できるということに気づきました。この経験から、コミュニケーションで大切なのは、言葉そのものではなく、相手を理解しようとする意志なのだと考えるようになりました。

Breaking the Cage of Fixed Family Roles through Communication

It was five years ago when I started failing in class and losing passion for the future that other kids aspire to. I started being mean to my family, saying hurtful things that I didn't mean. When I first started school my little sister was born and my brothers were taking the national exam so my parents were busy with their kids and work. During this time I always felt like I came second to my siblings when it came to my parents. My brothers were smart and my little sister started talking earlier than other kids her age. I began to believe I was the black sheep in my family.

When I was in seventh grade my family decided to move to Australia. My cousins lived there, and my brothers had already gone to Germany for college. We arrived with only one suitcase per person and moved into an apartment. I had no school or friends there. While my friends back home were moving forward with their lives, I felt like time had stopped for me. Around six months later we moved back to Mongolia, but by then everyone had already progressed far ahead while I had been out of school. I lost hope when I didn't understand and couldn't catch up so I just stopped trying. I began to resent my parents for taking me out of school and moving to another country, just to return again. I stopped talking with my parents and avoided them. My grades got so bad that teachers started writing emails to my parents.

At that time my parents couldn't understand why I was acting the way I was. They had grown up in a communist county, while I was growing up in a changed capitalist Mongolia where people have freedom of speech. They had fewer opportunities and weren't able express their wants. My brothers also weren't able to understand. From their perspective I was ungrateful because our parents worked hard to pay my tuition. By the time I started school my family's financial situation had gotten significantly better, making them able to send me to private schools, opportunities my brothers didn't

have. Everyone saw the situation from their perspective, making it hard to understand each other. There was no communication.

My parents couldn't bear to see me be like that anymore and decided to talk with me. I don't remember everything from that day, or what I said in anger. I do remember how stuffy my nose got and how hot my tears were. My mother held me while she told me how much she loved me. She told me when I was born she loved me so much that she didn't let my father hold me because she wanted to keep holding me herself. After that we went to a cafe and talked and laughed, forgetting how much I had just cried. It felt like the years I spent not communicating was just a few days. From that day I started trying in school and passed all my classes. At the end of the year I graduated.

That experience made me see my family and importance of communication differently. Before, I saw my family as people with fixed roles. Father, mother, brother, sister. I forgot how each one of them had their own lives outside of our home. Outside, my father and mother are colleagues at their workplace, they are someone's son and daughter, brother and sister and my brothers are classmates at their school, a friend to their peers, a student to their teachers. Even my little sister had her own life outside of our home. I had set these people in roles that couldn't be changed. But family can also be friends, teachers and students that give you the most important lessons and opinions. If I hadn't talked with my family that day I wouldn't be here in Japan now. My dreams would not have been shared, as I thought they were just my parents and wouldn't understand. I realized that communication isn't just expressing yourself; it's putting yourself in others' shoes and understanding from their perspective.