

You Need Help!

Growing up in the Philippines I was always taught that I can do anything on my own and that I shouldn't ask for help. When I was young my aunt once said "You don't need anyone's help in order to achieve something in your life". From that time, I applied what she said to everything I did. When there was something I didn't understand I wouldn't ask for help because I thought if I asked for help everyone would think I was a loser, or that I was weak.

Everything changed after I came to Japan. When I first went to a school here I was nervous that everyone would think of me as the dumb new student. I stayed silent in class. I was embarrassed about not knowing the language because I knew eventually I would need someone's help to speak and write. I did my best by myself, I studied Japanese really hard but I didn't improve at all. At first I hated that I needed to ask for help because I lacked communication skills. Whenever my teacher would ask if I understood I would say, "Hai" thinking I could catch up at home. Then one day at school I was listening to my teacher when my Japanese classmate asked them to explain more. I was so surprised because they didn't hesitate to ask. I was

used to not asking questions at school. In the Philippines people just nodded, everybody thought asking questions was stupid, if there was something they didn't know they'd just leave it.

After that class I immediately talked to a teacher and I asked her if its normal to ask for help in Japan. She said, "You see all the teachers here? Before we became teachers we were students too, we needed help, we asked for help. By asking for help you can learn a lot. Your way of thinking will be changed!" At first I was hesitant to ask questions because every time I would remember what my aunt told me but eventually I started asking for help. If there was something that I didn't know I'd ask my classmates or teachers. I learned more things about Japan. And I got high scores on my exams! It was the best feeling.

Asking for help influences you to help other people. When I asked my classmate to teach me Japanese, he wasn't hesitant to help. He helped with my grammar, so I was able to speak Japanese better. My teachers were impressed. Then when a new student came to our school who was like me; she didn't know any Japanese, I was inspired to help her because my classmate had done the same for me. Asking for help

makes us feel grateful to, and connected with others. Helping is also a good way to improve cross-cultural relationships. Another time there was a different Filipino student at my school who would ask me questions about school and about Japan. Every time she asked me for help I would feel more connected with her because she was showing that she trusted my ideas and skills.

I learned that asking for help from other people doesn't make you stupid because asking for help is a great way to learn from other people and build cross-cultural relationships. I learned that there is nothing to be afraid of when asking for help. For us humans to survive we need each other. We cannot survive on our own. Asking for help builds relationships that we didn't expect. Asking for help opens you up to new thoughts, approaches, and solutions that you wouldn't otherwise have access too. Asking for help develops our "growth mind-set" which will make us more curious, creative and give us the desire to learn. Admitting you need help and asking for it teaches you and those around you that asking for help is allowed and normal. As Les Brown once said, "Ask for help. Not because you are weak but because you want to remain strong." [669 words]