

Start with What You Have Now

Have you ever counted the number of the things you have lost? For example, the items that you misplaced, the dreams you had or the friends that have drifted away. I think almost every person has had this kind of experience. One of my friends had been practicing soccer for many years to become a pro. But unfortunately, he had to give up on his dream because of an injury to his leg. As a result of this accident he was disappointed in himself. Like him, many people easily get discouraged and frustrated.

I was that person three years ago when I moved to Japan from South Korea. When I first came to Japan at the age of 11, I had to give up everything such as close friends, delicious Korean food and the comfortable environment. And I had to give up the language that I could speak fluently and learn Japanese. Over the first months in Japan I only focused on the things that I lost. I did not have any close friends who I could communicate with. I couldn't understand a word of my teacher's lectures! The way to eat food was new to me, also. For example, in Korea, you should never pick up your rice bowl, but in Japan, you are expected to hold the bowl close to your mouth. At first, I sometimes forgot to pick up my bowl at school lunch time, and was always pointed out by my teacher as the other students stared at me.

Without any close friends, I lost my voice and became silent. And for a year, I lost my bright and outgoing personality. One day as I was trying to read my textbook in Japanese, I was captured by one sentence: "Do not count your losses but try to do your best with what you have now". When I read this, I began to think about my attitude. I started trying to do my best with what I have and to trust in myself.

Even though my Japanese was not fluent, I tried to express my opinions using body language. If that didn't work, I spoke English. This kind of attitude gradually changed my life. I became more positive and active. I started expressing my thoughts and opinions. Wow~! I could finally make some friends. Changing my attitude made my whole life bright and happy. Now I can share about Korean culture with my friends. You would be surprised at how many of my classmates are fascinated with K-pop. In addition, I have grown to love sushi which I had never tried before coming to Japan.

Recently, the relationship between Korea and Japan is not good, so I am worried about it. Yet I was able to learn about the cultures of two different countries and enjoy both. I have no idea what I want to do in the future. But I'm sure that I want to become a bridge between Korea and Japan. As I am growing into that role, I want to always remember what I learned: rather than living with regret and giving up in the face of trials, first start with the one thing you can do.