

“Do you want to see yourself beyond the wall?”

Now, you are in a new meeting place. Are you feeling anxious or excited?

Sometimes you keep a distance from others and are hesitant to talk. Even though you want to become good friends with them, you can't move into action. When people meet a stranger, they build a wall. It's difficult for them to open their minds to others they don't know well. Of course, it's natural. However, if you can overcome that wall, I believe that your world must expand as you expect.

When I entered junior high school, I also joined an English conversation school because I was interested in talking with foreigners. However, at that time I got nervous and I couldn't enjoy conversation in English directly with my teacher. So, I gave up going there. I could have a casual conversation with anyone in Japanese, but I felt there was a line between him and I.

In recent years, we are unable to meet people and are going online rapidly due to COVID-19. We have more opportunities to talk with people on the screen, such as online classes and online meetings, and we have no hesitation in meeting people online. Besides, Online English lessons have become widely known around the world. I thought I might not be nervous if I talk with foreigners online, so I started it in April of this year. Soon after I started Online English lessons, I had a lesson with a female teacher. We greeted each other in a usual way and were about to begin the class, but the instructor looked in a bad mood. At that time, I couldn't try to figure out why she was in a bad mood. I couldn't do anything but try speaking correct English.

It's time for the next day's lesson. On this day, I had a lesson with an instructor different from the day before. She was smiling from the moment she appeared on the screen. She was a very friendly person. She praised my English phrases and said to me, “cute”, “cool”, and “beautiful” every time. I had no confidence in my English phrases, but I came to enjoy talking with her in English. She broke my wall that I was feeling to foreigners. After the lesson was over, I remembered the last English lesson. On that day, I wasn't able to converse with a smile because I was focusing on speaking English correctly while talking with my instructor. I couldn't notice she was also nervous because she also had never met and talked with me before. I understood I myself was to blame for building a wall to others.

After I noticed that, in lessons, I have always waved to instructors and have made sure to greet them with a smile. Then they smiled and were kind to me. Besides, we had a great conversation. For example, I was able to hear more about tour spots in their countries and their experiences, and was impressed by their different perspectives on the same hobbies. I realized that it is important to open my mind of my own accord in order to enjoy the conversation with others.

In the present era, online is the norm. Everyone has a chance to connect with people not only in their own country but also around the world. I have met new people and their

values since I started online English lessons. I think that we shouldn't be biased that we can't get along together. Instead, it is necessary to make an effort to change myself so that I can be accepted by others first. It is a great experience for us to be in contact with people who have different values, both domestically and internationally. I'm sure that we will be involved with more people, from now on. To do so, you have to cross the line with others. Beyond the walls, there are opportunities to bring out your interest and increase the number of people who you can share your hobbies with.

Do you want to see yourself beyond the wall?

日本語要旨

「新しい私を見てくださいませんか？」

人は初対面の人と会う時、どうしても壁を作ってしまう。しかし、その壁を越えると、自分が想像していた以上に世界が広がります。壁を作っているのは、自分が原因かもしれません。まずは自分から心を開いて、笑顔になることが大切です。私はオンライン英会話を通して、新しい人と出会い、その人達の価値観にも出会うことができました。国内だけでなく世界の人と繋がれるチャンスが誰にでもある今、壁を越えた先にいる自分の姿を、あなたは見たくありませんか？