

What is your character?

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Ladies and gentlemen, I want to ask you a question. What is your character? Each person consists of lots of components. I mean we have various aspects, like the community we belong to, or things we can be proud of, etc. Of course, the word “character” has lots of meaning, but today, I want to talk about “character” from this perspective, that is, our membership, or our strong point, like that.

In our case, for example, we are members of ESS speech section, so “I am a member of Supiseku”, or “I am good at delivering my idea in front of people!” can be your character and that is great. So, ladies and gentlemen, I change my question a little bit. What is your character in the specific community you belong to, like ESS speech section?

In this situation, “the fact that we belong to the speech section” cannot be our character, because as you can easily guess, everyone in this hall has that feature. Besides that, for most of us, it is really difficult to say, “My character is that I am good at delivering my idea in English!” in front of lots of great speakers. Then what is your character? What is your uniqueness? Can you answer these questions immediately and confidently?

Having your own character is important for your mental health, because your character supports you as a strong core in your heart. So even when you tackle a hard

situation, you still can be confident. In other words, without your character, your heart will be easily broken. Then, what should we do? Afraid of being hurt and not do anything might be one “solution,” to this problem, I guess. Avoid seeing the things you don’t want to, and pretend not to notice. What a wonderful, what an easy life it is! However, you cannot ignore this “character loss” forever.

Some of you **may have been asked** this kind of question, “what is your character?”. Even if you never have, you cannot run away from this question, especially when you do job hunting. In fact, one of my seniors said that he had difficulty in taking interview tests, because he is not sure what his character is like. As this example shows, for university students, understanding your own character is important. However, in reality, these days, it is said that young people are suffering because they cannot find their uniqueness. According to the Cabinet office, only 15% of young Japanese people think they have strongpoint. Considering this fact, having your character seems tough challenge. However, is that really true? Is it so hard to find your character? Now, I don’t think so, but actually, I had a moment when I used to think so.

When I was an elementary school student, my character was like “I am good at studying” and in fact, I always got good scores. However, I was not good at playing sports, for example when I played baseball, I couldn’t throw the ball well and my teammates sighed. When I played soccer, I often passed the ball to the opposite team and sighed again. Yes, I was a kind of nonathletic, but I had confidence in my ability, so, even though I had a weakness, I didn’t feel inferior to others at all.

After I graduated from elementary school, I entered Kaisei Junior High. As you may know, Kaisei is famous for studying, so at first, I was a bit nervous about smart classmates that I have not seen yet. However, I came to think that there is no problem because at that moment, I was a bit arrogant.

However, my thought was wrong. After the first mid-term exam, I was shocked. I prepared for the exam for the longest time I had ever spent on and got the worst score I had ever taken! I completely lost my confidence, and it was as if I lost my identity. Gradually, I felt inferior to others. Since then, I tried other activities to find my character, but only time passed.

After all, I graduated from my junior-high without finding my character, and I entered Kaisei high school. Actually, it was when my life changed dramatically. When I was a freshman of high school, one of my teachers asked, "Do you have any trouble in high school life?" I trusted him, so I consulted him about my "problem." In fact, his answer changed my way of thinking and affected my life so much. "You don't have to be the TOP in the field. In each field, only one person can be the top, so it is not easy to achieve, you see? Instead, if you think being top makes your character, why don't you find something you can do BETTER THAN AVERAGE. It means that you are the top 50 % in that field. If you find that kind of things ten times, it means that you are the top 0.1% of that "field" because 0.5 to the tenth power is about 0.001. That is, even the COMBINATION of small pieces can sufficiently be your character!"

Now, of course I know it was a mathematically wrong statement, but I was

impressed by that story. Then I started finding my new character. During my free time I spent lots of time thinking of myself and comparing to others. Through this action, I finally found lots of “seed” of my character. We don’t have time, so if you are interested in my character, please ask in Q&A session. Anyway, the important thing is that I finally found my new character and regain confidence.

Next three years have passed and I entered this university. Actually, in the first-semester exam, I got bad scores again. However, this time I didn’t lose my confidence or my character. That is because I already know I have many other uniqueness, identity, and strong points besides studying.

Through my experience, you may understand that how important it is to have your own character and how to find them. Without my new character, I might lose my confidence again, and I don’t think I can deliver this speech as I do now, such a confident way.

Ladies and gentlemen, do you still think that it is difficult to have your own character? As you learned, you can have your character, by these two steps. 1st, find your uniqueness or strong points as many as possible. Even if these are small pieces, that is fine. Then, 2nd, mix them up. That all. It is quite easy, isn’t it?

So, now, I think you may already know what to do next,(or you already forget? Then it can be your character that you quickly forget things and move on to the next stage!) so before I finish my speech, I would like to ask you a final question.

Ladies and gentlemen, WHAT IS YOUR CHARACTER?