

**Title: Who am I?**

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“Who am I?” This question used to be constantly replayed in my mind. What do I want to do in future? What could I do? There was always that feeling of self-doubt and uncertainty. I felt I couldn’t be honest with myself.

My older sister always had a strong drive and led her pathway to success. She was friendly, kind, radiated self-confidence and didn’t care what others thought or said about her. But when I compared myself to her, I felt I was totally different and that I had nothing to offer to the world or had nothing to be proud of. I cared what others thought about me, I had low self-esteem about my image and never had the confidence to voice out my opinion.

Till one day, I realized that my way of living needed to change and that I should stop comparing myself to others. This change all started during my study abroad in America. In America, I hit a lot of walls such as communication, culture differences, confusion between my ideal view of America and the real American life, and lastly the problem of feeling not at one with myself. My sister told me her great experience in America prior to my trip to America, but mine was different. I was left with no choice but to lead my own path. Being taken out of my usual comfort zone, has taught me to accept my unique personality and to be in control of my own life’s course. Although, it is fine to have someone to look up to, at the end of the day you’ll have to make your own decisions in life.

Nowadays, it is a common issue for teenagers to suffer from high anxiety about their future. A public opinion poll was set out by the cabinet office of government in Japan, about Japanese citizens’ viewpoint on whether Japan’s future would be bright or not 50 years later. Results suggest, 60% don’t think the future will be bright. Moreover, they found 69% have anxiety about Japan’s future, which is rather an alarming result. For the past few years there has been a rise in the number of students who have committed suicide, which has been linked to anxiety about their futures.

I believe that, from this point on, we need to help change people's way of thinking to think more positively and to not be afraid to voice out their opinions. People in Japan should show more affection to loved ones by saying phrases like, "I love you", "I am proud of you" and so on. I saw this type of connection between the family members with my host family and it truly did make me feel more special, which accordingly raised my self-esteem. In addition to this change, the government should incorporate in the education curriculum lessons based on self-esteem and self-development.

Now I guide my own footsteps and no longer look for my sister for guidance. It is time for us all to take control of our destiny and to not be anxious about one's future. Therefore, I strongly believe that the younger generation should be of main concern and that we must take action in developing ways to improve their mind and body to decrease the number of young lives lost due to anxiety problems. I hope this speech inspires you all to support one another and to accept yourself for who you are. It is time for us all to take control of our future and to develop a healthy state of well-being.