

## Enthusiasm goes beyond national borders

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“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.”

This famous saying said by Emerson had always been my favorite words, but it was lost somewhere deep in my mind while I was having a busy and hectic life up until one day I saw a man in a variety program.

Do you know Degawa Tetsuro? He is a Japanese comedian and I love variety programs he is in because they are very funny. Among all of his shows, there is one that I like the most. He visits one English-speaking country and there he has to get to a sightseeing spot, asking around local people the way to get there, only using his poor English without any translation help from anybody. His English is hilarious and makes me laugh to tears every time.

He first stops a passer-by saying, “Hello, nice to meet you.” Degawa never lets this person go until this passer-by gets really fed up with his broken English that they cannot comprehend. To make himself understood, he tries everything from using gestures to even singing songs. His is the enthusiastic English which completely ignores English grammar. And to everyone’s surprise, he gets to the destination eventually. Now people call his magical English “Degawa English.”

This summer I had a chance to join Global Leadership Training. I have never been to an English-speaking country, but I have some degree of my English communication ability. This program was held at OIST, and what I looked forward to the most was the free-chatting time with the trainees there.

Right before the chatting period, one of the authorities reminded us of saying, “Keep in mind that it is not only Americans, Canadians, and British who speak English.” People who were waiting for us in the room acquired English as a second language like us. There, some

groups were made, which consisted of four students and one OIST staff as a coach. The coach who was in charge of my group was a woman from Argentina. Her English was not understandable to me no matter how hard I tried. Not even when she said, "What grade are you in?" I was really frustrated because I was well aware that the purpose to be there was to use the opportunity for speaking English. She tried to make me understand by using gestures, and with some of the members help, we somehow managed to communicate.

During the recess after the first session, I was all down. I asked myself, "What am I lacking?" I thought about Degawa's show. Even his broken English can get him to his destination. It was then that my favorite saying came to my mind, and it answered my question that I asked myself. "Enthusiasm," I said aloud. To achieve my goal, I have to try with enthusiasm. Because "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm!"

When we started the second session, I had a strong determination to get my meaning across in English. The second coach was the man who was from Quebec Canada, where people speak French as their first language. This time, because of my strong determination and enthusiasm, I really didn't care about how I looked or how I sounded. All I cared about was to understand English, and have them understand my English. We talked about future dreams, why he came to Japan, and what he was learning at college. Of course there were sometimes words I couldn't catch, and he sometimes asked me to repeat what I said, but it didn't deter me at all. I kept pushing myself to go on. When we finally finished, I felt a sense of achievement that I had never felt before.

Through this program, I learned something I had not learned at school. It is not proper grammar or accents that is important when we communicate to others in English. It is the determination and enthusiasm that we will communicate to this person.

After the program, I came to think that I shouldn't make light of "Degawa English." That is the very attitude we should have when we learn other language. So don't be shy everyone. Let's start together. We will begin like him "Hello, nice to meet you." With our enthusiasm, I know we can do it, too.