

## **Respect Others as well as Yourself**

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Hello, everyone. Today, I'd like to talk to you about the importance of balancing individuality and the needs of others.

Recently, we often hear words, such as "individuality" and "the age of the individual." It is also said, "Be yourself." We are living in an era where individual freedom is respected. But I think having too much emphasis on individuality may lead to a failure to notice something important in our society.

Last year, I had the wrong idea about individuality. I thought doing anything freely was the most important thing in my life and felt like I could do whatever I wanted. So, I hated my mother who cared so much about me. I didn't want her to interfere with what I did. One day I was severely scolded by my father for my behavior. After that, I realized something was missing. But I didn't know what it was.

Thanks to my guidance counselor as well as books written by German philosopher, Erich Fromm, I finally realized what I was missing. It was sociality. Erich Fromm explains that we always need help from other people. It is necessary for us to care for each other and respect each other. I also got to actually experience it. Last year, I couldn't make up my mind if I should keep on studying engineering or not. I didn't know what to do next in my life. It was at that time when my teacher kindly listened to my story. He took me seriously and encouraged me to move forward with confidence. Never had I felt so happy. My teacher looked happy, too. After a while, I realized that he also taught me about collective well-being. It is the ability to care about other people's feelings and act with consideration.

Individuality and the needs of others seem to be at odds with each other. But we need to have both of them. We should not lose ourselves. It is important not to be easily swayed by the opinions of others. However, we should avoid not only judging others by our own standards but we should also avoid letting our emotions take over. We have to respect individual differences. Then, how can we keep a good balance between individuality and the needs of others? I think each individual should be encouraged to maintain a good portion of their own uniqueness, but, at the same time, they should respect the rights of others. In addition, we have to create more opportunities to seek our own happiness by giving consideration to other people's feelings. How about adjusting your actions in small ways to accommodate other people's needs and feelings? Making others happy will surely make you happy, too.

From elementary school students to the elderly, there is no one who is not involved in society. We are inspired by the people around us. We also have an influence on those around us. There would be no individuality without community. So, it is becoming more and more important for us to be aware of the balance between individuality and the needs of others. If we can't do that, we may lose not only ourselves but also consideration for other people. Thank you very much for listening.