

Born Japanese

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Some Japanese people have said, some for decades, that Japan has lost its energy and enthusiasm. I agree with that. I'm sure you think so too. The economy is not growing as expected, there are no outstanding technological advances, and the amount of happiness people experience is also going down. This country is ending. It's done, right? Hmm. But I don't think so. I think we can revive Japan once again.

In fact, Japan has crawled out from rock bottom since the end of the war! My biggest dream is to energise Japan once again. But what can I... No, what can WE do as simple KOSEN students? I've been thinking about it for a long, long time, and came up with three important ideas that I will share with you all.

First, do something that only you can do. Making use of your own originality is most important. However, in the current Japanese education system, originality isn't always emphasised, and children are made to fit into standardised moulds. This is a serious problem, because losing originality means there is no point in you being you. Nobody in the history of mankind – past, present, or future – will be as good as you are at being you. You have unique dreams and infinite possibilities, unlike anyone else. Find what is your calling and try doing something only you can do.

Second, try starting your own business. If you work for a conventional company, all authority lies with the higher ups. These higher ups have lived through the last 30 years of this stagnant period. To be honest, I don't think they have any ideas or energy to expand or even change. So, even if you have an idea that may better the world or make operations more efficient, there is no guarantee it will be acted on. However, modern start-up companies are more open to new ideas and technologies. They are also more flexible and socially aware. If you started your own business, you can do anything you want! Because of these, starting your own business can be a step towards changing the norms. It can create new jobs and stimulate corporate competitiveness. So, if you have a dream you want to come true, starting your own business could be the way.

My final bit of advice is to take action. This is VERY important. 8 months ago, I wasn't accepted to my first choice of university. I had a clear plan for my future, and could have refined my engineering knowledge to develop original products that would get praise from around the world. But, I hadn't taken any action to achieve any of these dreams. Then, I finally noticed. Without taking affirmative action, I wasted all my possibilities. The first step is always the hardest to take. However, because of this shameful experience, I have decided to take a step forward. I entered a KOSEN entrepreneurial contest with my revolutionary coffee roaster design. There is no guarantee it will be praised, but nothing can start if we ALL don't take action.

This country is not done – not just yet. There is still so much room for growth. But if we all become more productive, we can easily fill the evident gaps in society. It is once again time to bring back our beloved, energetic country – full of originality and possibilities, with pride in being born Japanese.