

December, 2013

A message from the counselor for international students no.7

by Kaoru Ikuta

Counselor for International Students, Center for Health Services

Searching for clothes which fit you

Do you have any phrases which you keep saying to yourself?

My phrase was “Finish things first”. I used to say to myself, “If I’m lazy about, finish things first”, when I had lots of time on my hands. My mother always said to me, “I don’t like being late” or “Finish things first”.

When I started studying psychology, I learned that my mother’s usual messages influenced my way of thinking and behavior patterns. If I didn’t feel comfortable with the messages from my mother, I learned I could rewrite them based on my preferences.

A female student came to me to get help. Her problem was blaming herself when she couldn’t get a perfect score on a small quiz. After rebuking herself, she became lazy and wasted her time, so she wanted to change her usual patterns.

I asked her, “Have you ever felt the same mood where you blamed yourself, when you were a child?” And I asked her to recall the scene. She remembered the scene where her mother was angry with her about the results of a third grade test.

I asked her, “What did you want to say to your mother at that time?” She answered, “Mother, you always focus on the number of wrong answers.” Moreover, I asked her, “What kind of message did you want to hear from her?” She said gently, “You did your best and you only made a few mistakes.”

Through the sessions, she realized she evaluated herself through her mother’s eyes. Those standards were necessary when she was an 8 year old girl. She is in her twenties now and old enough to decide anything based on her own evaluation. She knows that even if she makes one or two mistakes on a small quiz, that has nothing to do with her result at the end of the school year. She declared, “I can evaluate myself on my own scale.” She stopped blaming herself for her score on a small quiz. (To protect the privacy of the individual concerned, only the main points of the case have been included.)

As we cannot wear our old ill-fitting clothes when we get older, we similarly come to feel uncomfortable with old ways of thinking and behavior patterns. This unpleasant feeling might be the first step in becoming independent from our own parents.

Would you like to keep wearing your old clothes? Or, select clothes which fit you?

*I’m located in the Center for Health Services on Mondays from 10:00~17:00.

*To make an appointment, please contact the Center for Health Services. ☎:045-339-3153

*Previous messages are available on the ISC’s webpage.