

Have you ever come across the person that changed your life ?

Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon.

If I had to describe my precious experience, I would say : “One encounter in my youth led to a self-discovery”.

“How so ?” you may ask.

It’s quite simple : only a few words to ease your mind.

One meeting, one advice, marking words ... those gave me the courage to step up from my comfort zone.

Now, let me tell you about my story.

The first step to my self-discovery started at the end of junior high school.

Mrs C. was my English teacher at that time. She presented to my class the American Literature course proposed by my high school. I thought it was the perfect occasion to learn about another culture.

However, it was a class where more than half of the students were raised by one of their parents being English speakers.

Thus, I was caught in a dilemma.

Do you know this feeling of frustration ? You have the desire to do it, you want to give it a try, you want to put all your strength into it ... but suddenly, you are caught up by the fear that you are not fit to do so.

When I sought advice to Mrs C. she only told me : “I know that you put effort into English so I know you can do it”.

That was enough to convince me that it was a golden opportunity to prove that there is nothing to be scared of.

Have you ever imagined that only a few words can blow all concerns away like this ?

Because I didn’t. And yet, it easily put an end to my dilemma.

Looking back, what was I scared of ? No one is ever too unfit to challenge. And the person that helped me understand that was my English teacher.

I came across the person that draws a path to my future.

According to public research, in Japan, it is said that out of 66 million Japanese, only 7% of them can actually speak English used in Global business even though they excel in writing and listening.

And many complain that the reason they can’t speak is because they don’t learn how to speak. Which I agree with.

Learning English’s grammar isn’t the way to master the speaking.

In fact, me joining the debating club of my university wasn't a coincidence. I was already a part of one in high school, again, created and presented by Mrs C.

She was the connection between my youth and adulthood.

She was the key to my self-development.

Thanks to her, I was able to meet my debate coach who was the second person to have helped me overcome my lack of self-confidence.

I still vividly remember his words on my first session.

“Who cares if others think you are ridiculous ? I don't care about what others feel. What's important is what you say and how you say it, not how you are seen”

These words were a revelation.

He taught us that debating isn't only the act of debating.

He taught us the importance of listening, communicating, understanding and mutual respect.

That's what the art of debate is.

It's not a fight, it's discussion.

The debate club has a special place in my heart. It is where I grew up to be an adult. But it is also the place where I met my incredible friends.

They are real friends, not virtual ones that you meet on social media.

Real friends with whom there are no boundaries. You can talk about any subject in the world, politics, geography, history, literature and many more without quarrels.

We just debate.

That's why we can maintain our relationship. We've already seen each other's true colors.

That's how important communication is. We meet people, we discuss, we debate, we teach and learn with each other's knowledge.

Mrs C. introduced me to a world where I could choose the path of my future. I met an incredible teacher.

That's how powerful an encounter is.

And you, have you ever come across the person that changed your life ?