

2020 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – 3rd Prize]

To my past self
(Original in Japanese)

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Are you happy right now? I'm sorry for the abrupt question. I am your future self, ten years from now. I have some things I really want to tell you, so I'm writing you this letter.

But first, I'll tell you what the world is like in 2030. In this world, which is my present and your future, progress has been made in many areas. For example, in politics. Recently the number of women in Parliament has been increasing little by little. They are trying their best to solve problems that only women can understand. It is very promising.

In transportation, self-driving vehicles are now normal. The number of accidents is decreasing each year. I hope that someday, there will be no traffic accidents at all.

In the field of education, it's now possible to teach each student in the way that best suits their situation. For example, children who can't attend school can study anytime using video lessons, and for children who don't like studying, they've devised ways to make learning more fun, as if they are playing a game. At every school, they're coming up with different ideas and putting them into practice.

In the field of medicine, new drugs have been discovered to treat all kinds of illnesses. X-rays and other images can now be analyzed more accurately. We can now get test results in less than half the time it took ten years ago, so doctors can quickly determine what the disease is and how to treat it. With these new technologies, hardly any patients are beyond hope for medical treatment. It's a big step forward in medicine.

Speaking of which, I am now working as a nurse in pediatric surgery, helping children who are battling serious diseases. No matter how advanced medicine gets, there are still many diseases about which much is unknown. My job is to support these sick children and give assistance to the pediatric surgeons. The process of becoming a nurse was much more rigorous and more difficult than I imagined. But now that I'm through it, the work is very fulfilling. When a child I have cared for leaves the hospital, the happiness I feel cannot be expressed in words. Of course, when working in a hospital, there are many things that make you feel sad and depressed. But despite that, I couldn't leave this job. That's because I love this job, and even though it's harsh and sad at times, you can't quit what you love. I think that's the reason why I'm able to keep doing it. Since I am you and you are me, I'm sure we think the same way. So please, don't give up on what you want to do. That's the first thing I really want to tell you.

There's one other thing I want to say. It's about what happened in the past. As you know, when I was in grades 3 and 4, I didn't attend school. At the cram school where I went in grades 5 and 6, I was bullied terribly, and then I was bullied again in grade 7, my first year of junior high school. It was a very difficult five years. But those five years were definitely not wasted. Nothing in life is ever pointless or wasted. The day will definitely come when you feel this way. I can't tell you about it in detail, but I will just tell you this: your future is dazzlingly bright. The future I mentioned earlier is just one possibility. The future will change. Your options for the future are infinite, and everything is up to you.

So, have confidence in yourself, and cherish each and every day. Please don't forget my message. When you get a little older, do as I'm doing now—tell your younger self going through hard times whatever you feel is important to say at that moment in time.