

Talking with my hands

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I am very pleased to be here with you. I would like to speak to you about sign language. Before I start I have a question for you. Have you ever heard of the word “deaf” and “sign language”? I don’t like the word “deaf”. It indicates people who cannot hear or listen to sound or voice. So I want to say that they aren’t deaf. They just find it “difficult to hear” voices. I don’t want you to reject them because of the difficulty they have. But in this speech, I will use “deaf” because I haven’t found the best word to describe them yet. I say this because of my personal experiences with deaf people, which I want to talk about now.

First, let me describe my experience with friends who are deaf from elementary school. Our school had a class for deaf children. All students had to study sign language to communicate with them. This affected my life. By knowing sign language, I could help in swimming races when I was a middle school student. I could also help customers at my part-time job. In both cases, I was a translator between people who are deaf and hearing people. I think I did a great job and I felt that my experience in elementary school improved my whole life. I’d now like to talk about barriers.

What do you think are the barriers with deaf people? Actually, I can’t see any barriers between deaf people and me. It doesn’t matter if you don’t know sign language. Some deaf people can talk without sign language because they can read our lips and they can practice pronunciation of letters. We can also communicate using pen and paper. Therefore, if you have any barriers, you can break the barriers, right? My deaf friend said that if people had motivation to accept them, social relations between deaf people and hearing people will be nicer than now. So we need to understand them more and help each other.

Finally, I want to share with you the joy of learning sign language. Sign language isn’t difficult. It really isn’t! Because you know English and you can write, read, listen and speak, right? Sign language is only speaking with your hands. It means that learning sign language is easier than learning other languages. You don’t need to prepare pen and paper. Just have motivation. Only knowing a little bit can help you to communicate and feel confident. If you complete Japanese sign language, you can start Korean sign language, American one, French one and so on.

In conclusion, I hope you will be interested in sign language. Sign language will brighten your life and affect people around you. You can expand your world, acquire new skills and make new friends. In addition, if you and your friends know sign language, you can have secret conversations hidden from adults and others who don’t know the language! Thank you very much.