

The Other Hand

Do you like the annual school sports festival? I think it is the biggest event in the school year. It is loved not only by students but also their families. However, when I was in elementary school, one of my classmates couldn't enjoy it. She was not good at sports and when she failed, her classmates said about her, "If she weren't in our class, we would have won". When she heard this, she was really hurt. This type of bullying is seen not only in my school, but also schools all over Japan. Last year there were 610,000 reports of bullying in Japanese schools. I want you to understand the problem of bullying and what we can do to solve it.

So, let's go back to my friend for a minute. At that time, I didn't know what I could do to help her. But looking back now, I understand that I should have stuck up for her and told our classmates to stop bullying her. It's difficult to stand up to bullies. We must be strong and self-confident. I think the first way to stop bullying is to show solidarity for the victims; remember that we are always stronger together.

However, it is not always easy to identify bullying in our schools. I think that it's vital to stop bullying before it escalates. Our school has a teacher-student meeting twice a year. In this meeting students can discuss their problems privately. These meetings are very helpful; however, we need more opportunities like this, and I think it is easier for students to discuss their problems with other students. So, I suggest that schools introduce regular meetings between the student leaders and their fellow students. It is my belief that by increasing student-student conversation, we can identify and stop bullying before anyone gets hurt.

Unfortunately, bullying now reaches beyond the boundaries of our schools. Social networking services are a place where bullies can hide. Right now, people can say anything they want without seeing the other person, so some people say hurtful things carelessly. To solve this problem, we must think carefully about the words we use when speaking to people. Also, I think that SNS should have a system where you cannot use bad words and if you do, a warning message is sent to your parents. In this way, I think bullying across Japan will gradually decrease.

Finally, let me share a quote I read from the comedian Sam Levenson. He said, "As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands: one for helping yourself, and one for helping others". With my other hand, as a school leader I try to stop bullying by taking good care of each and every one of my classmates, listening to their problems, and caring about their feelings. Let me ask you, what can you do with your other hand to help people suffering from bullying?