

## Lessons Learned the Hard Way

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Two years ago, I decided to live in a dormitory when I was in my first year of Japan Women's College of Physical Education. At first, my dormitory life seemed comfortable, yet a few weeks later, I became frustrated and stressed out for two reasons. There were many strict rules which restrained our freedom, and there were some conflicts with nasty seniors who treated us as their servants. My mother said that I could learn something from dormitory life, but at that time, I was complaining every day, and my life seemed to be hopeless; nevertheless, I learned endurance and consideration through one memorable experience.

At the college, there were many strict dormitory rules that we had to follow such as a nine o'clock curfew and cleaning duty. Those rules were not severe problems for us if we got used to them. However, I had serious conflict with harsh seniors. I remember obeying their private requests all the time. To disobey our seniors could be troublesome, so we usually complained about them behind their backs. My noteworthy incident happened one Friday night in winter. When I was watching TV with my roommates after dinner, one of the meanest seniors, named Kanbe, came into our room with a sullen face and yelled at me. "Go out and buy this for me right now!" She threw a note at me, slammed the door shut, and left the room. I could hear the silence like that after a storm. I was staggered for a second, and then came back to myself. I tried to control my anger, but I simply could not understand her. "Why do I have to go out for her right now?" I asked myself. However, I could not talk back to seniors, so I decided to go.

I was amazed when I looked at the note which said "the special gloves for fencing match". As Kanbe was in the fencing club, I thought she was going to have an important match on the weekend. I realized that this mission was not as easy as usual because the sports shop which had the particular gloves was quite far from our dormitory, and it was already seven o'clock at that time. I had to be back by nine, our curfew, so there was no time to hesitate or be irritated. I jumped on my bicycle and rushed to the shop. I had been riding my bicycle as fast as I could for about one hour before I got there. I was so tired that I was out of breath, but I had to look for the gloves even though my legs were exhausted. Because I had found the gloves before my legs recovered, I did not have enough time to take a rest. I grabbed the gloves and left the shop immediately. It was ten past eight. The only thought in my mind was to return to the dormitory on time. Every time I stopped at the red light, my heart gave a heavy beat as if playing drums. My legs had already died, so I could feel almost nothing, but I did not want to stop to take a rest because I did not want to give up. I felt as if I wanted to show my grit to myself that I could do anything.

I thought I had come back in time when I saw the dormitory's gate open, yet it was a momentary hope. The next moment, the gate was closed by seniors. I did not make it although my watch said eight fifty-five at that moment. One senior said, "You are late! Come and see me in thirty minutes, and then I will give you the punishment." I did not say anything because they never cared about why I was late, so I had to stand in front of the gate for thirty minutes, depressed. The dormitory superintendent gave me the punishment of cleaning the bathroom at six o'clock in the morning every day for a week.

Cleaning in the early winter mornings was painful, and we had to use cold water to wash the huge bathtub because the matron said, "Hot water costs a lot, so do not use it for cleaning!" After the senior told me the hard punishment, I finally went to Kanbe's room to give her the gloves. She was already in bed because the curtain was shut. I still clearly remember what she told me from behind the curtain, "Put them on the desk and you can leave now." That was it. She did not even say thank you to me. I could not believe my ears! I was so disappointed in her rude attitude, but I restrained my anger with difficulty and went back to my room calmly. I went straight to my bed and shut the curtain. Then I just sobbed with grief all night instead of complaining or getting angry at her.

In short, this unforgettable event taught me to have endurance even toward unfair requests or impolite attitudes and to give consideration to others. At that time, I felt I was in the hardest period in my life; however, looking back on my dormitory experiences, I feel I was in the most precious time of my life even though it was hurtful. I developed both physical and mental strength, and I learned how people are hurt by others. With this experience in mind, I will be able to endure any hard problems that I face, and I will be considerate to anyone I meet, especially my juniors. I hated my seniors, yet now I want to thank them for teaching me the priceless lessons of life.