

## “What Do YOU Want?”

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“What do *YOU* want,” my homeroom teacher asked me. I always cared about what other people thought about me. I always put my feelings aside, trying not to hurt other people. I always tried to meet the expectations of people around me. So, I was completely stressed out. I went to my teacher for advice. The moment she asked me, I froze. “What do *I* want?” Nobody had asked me that question before! I was at a loss. I couldn’t answer her question. Looking at my confused expression, my teacher smiled. She expected this. “Why don’t you read this story,” she said and handed me a book. The story helped me reflect on my way of thinking.

The book was titled Moomins. The story was about a girl, Ninni, who was a friend of the Moomin family. Ninni lived with her aunt. Her aunt was very mean and harassed Ninni. Ninni felt hurt but never talked back. She never showed her will or desire. Her face and body started to disappear until she finally became invisible. She literally lost herself. When I read this part, I felt a little scared. Then Ninni went to Moomin’s house and started to live with the family. They treated Ninni as their daughter. Thanks to their warm hospitality, Ninni gradually got her body back. However, her face was still missing.

This story opened my eyes. “Ninni was just like me,” I thought. Ninni’s body and face became invisible because she hid her will, feelings and desires. And I did, too. Although my body *was* visible, I totally lost myself. That’s why I was not able to answer my teacher’s question, “What do *YOU* want?”

When I think back, I always tried to be a nice person to everybody, not showing my true feelings. I was reluctant to say no to my friends because I was afraid they were going to hate me. How people judged me was everything to me. I put other people’s wills, feelings and desires before mine. I was not living my life and I was frustrated.

Life is too short to only follow other people or to only care about what

other people think about you. You are the one who will make your life extraordinary. You are the one who will make a story of your own life. You have to listen to your inner voice and express your true feelings and desires. It's OK to say no to people. It's OK for other people to say no to you, too. It may be scary at first but don't worry. Your life will be much better in that way. Now I feel happier and more satisfied with my life.

So, I have a question for you. "What do YOU want?"

Thank you.