

Cherish Happiness Next to You

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“Remember; spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever. Remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart, and it doesn’t cost a cent. Remember to say, “I love you” to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all, mean it!!”

This quotation was written by an American pastor, Dr. Bob Moorehead. It was part of a sermon that he once gave at his church. It was about the importance of cherishing others in the modern age.

What made me find this sermon and inspired me to present this speech to you was my grandmother’s hospitalization. I have lived with my grandmother for eighteen years, since I was born. She never had any serious illnesses in the past, and she was very healthy and full of energy. However, last October, she was hospitalized for malignant cancer. Everyone in my family was very shocked. Most of the time during her hospitalization, she was not at home with us. Her absence made me realize how important a role she had in my life. I had taken it for granted that she would be by my side all the time, and sometimes I even said harsh words to her. Why did I say such things? I should have cherished every moment with her. The more I thought about her, the more I regret it. My grandmother did everything she could to care for me. She always knew exactly what I wanted and needed. I felt so ashamed after my grandmother’s hospitalization, that I have noticed a lot of things she had done for me for many years. Now my grandmother is out of the hospital and living with us again, I’ve never been happier.

Have you ever thought hard about love before? Many scriptures teaching about love are written in the Bible. In Japan, many people imagine love to be romantic love between men and women, but love has many shapes. Since I started attending Nijima Gakuen High School three years ago, and started

reading the Bible, I have come to understand the meanings of the word love. One day, I found an article which was written about the definition of love. It said, love is “praying for the happiness of your partner at any time.” When I read it, I realized that my grandmother is always praying for my happiness, and that is why she cherishes me so much. I realized that having someone by your side shouldn’t be taken for granted, but it should be treasured moments.

All of us, for sure, have felt loved by someone, and have cherished others. Look around, and we will find some people who are at our side. During my short stay in the US four years ago, I spent time with a host family. They expressed their feelings by putting them into words and in their actions which surprised me. When it was time to return to Japan, my host family hugged me and said, “we love you.” I still remember feeling happy at that moment. Of course, nobody can hate being liked by someone, right? As Dr. Moorehead said, saying “I love you” to others is not an easy thing for us, even if the feeling is true. Japanese people have a hard time putting their feelings into words, and hugging each other is not part of our culture. However, even if it’s embarrassing, it’s important to express our feelings that we take for granted to those around us.

Think about your loved ones right now. If you knew you were never going to see them again after tomorrow, how would you feel? What would you do? Would you have regrets if you weren’t able to let them know how you felt about them through your words and your actions? I want to say, “Thank you, and I love you” to my grandmother from now on.

Thank you.