

## Broad Horizons

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Do you know the real meaning of the rainbow flag which you use on SNS sites such as Twitter or Instagram? I don't mind that you use cute emoji, but I hope you have an understanding of the icon. This is a symbol of LGBT. Have you ever heard that? LGBT stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. These days it has become an important issue throughout the world and there are many problems we need to solve. By learning about this topic, I realized how narrow minded I have been and how serious of a problem discrimination is. Especially, Japan is out of touch with LGBT issues I think. There are many more people than we think in distress because they can't come out. What should we do for them?

A recent survey shows 7.6 percent of people are in the sexual minority. It is only natural that we have friends or relatives who are suffering alone. It might imply we force them into a difficult situation because our society makes it so hard to come out. I think the Media shows us that Japanese people do not care about the problem. These days we can see many celebrities who have publically announced that they are sexual minorities or that they are transgender. If you get asked to mention them, many might be able to name a few. They have bright personalities and are often very funny. However, don't you think it is only something they show on TV? Those who are in show business not only encourage people to live life in their own way, but they also lead people to see LGBT people as a stereotype. We should know they aren't a novelty for our entertainment.

I know a person who came out recently. He said, "I was scared to tell the truth, and afraid my friends will dislike me. I was afraid of being alone because I really like you all." They are suffering from the conflict of whether to say their true feeling. All we can do is to notice their pain and listen to them. They are human, the same as me. They have feelings, the same as you. Everyone has a right to love someone. It doesn't matter who that is. We have

to remember we all have different interests, personalities and ways of thinking. There is no normal.

We need to change our mindset and think of sex and gender as a spectrum. We are standing on a scatter diagram which shows the relationship between sexual orientation and gender identity. Imagine a girl who never wears skirts and likes to play baseball and has short hair. Is she strange? No, she isn't. What about a boy who likes pink and plays the piano? Who determines what our interests are? The same can be said about who we love. What I want to say is it depends on the person.

My goal is to "Broaden my horizons." I think it is really important for today's global world. I need to keep my eyes wide open and accept who the world that is changing rapidly. Now, some countries have introduced same-sex marriage. And also Japan announced certification of partnership for same sex couples in a few urban areas. In this way, LGBT rights are advancing little by little. But it is not enough. I think treasuring every encounter with others will make your life more meaningful. Love your character and respect each other, because everyone is special.