

Change and challenge

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Is it possible to change who you are? I'm usually a quiet person. It's hard for me to stand out. I'm not athletic, and I prefer to spend my days off relaxing in my house. I've never been the center of attention. But recently, I had the opportunity to change myself.

Last year, in P.E. class, we had a dance unit. We broke into groups, and each group chose a theme for their dance. My group decided on "*Otagai*" as our theme. "*Otagai*" is a type of dance that fans do at concerts to cheer on idols. I was worried, thinking, "This is so embarrassing. I have no confidence." But despite my reservations, we started practicing for our performance. We watched videos of the dance to learn the movements and practiced many times. The choreography was unique and difficult, and at first I struggled with it and got depressed. I thought, "Doing something like this is impossible for me." And I wanted to give up. But as we kept practicing, I gained the confidence to share my opinions on how we could improve, and realized that we were getting better and better. Although I hated it at first, I started to enjoy dancing, and looked forward to P.E. classes.

Finally, it was time to actually perform. The principal and teachers came to watch. My thoughts were racing, "Will we be able to dance well? What will people think? My heart was beating out of my chest. At last, the song began. The gym lights dimmed, and I started dancing. I lost myself in the moment, swinging the light sticks and illuminating the gym. The teachers and my friends could hardly believe it. The figure they saw dancing was completely different from the person they knew from class. After the performance, they told me, "It was so exciting!" and "Your dancing was awesome!" I felt really satisfied that I gave it my all.

People grow and change every day. But usually, that change is accompanied by fear. In my case, I was afraid that my friends would think I was weird for dancing "*Otagai*". However, although it's scary, there is a lot to be gained from changing oneself. The first reason to change is for self growth. Change leads to the courage and confidence to face new challenges head on. The second reason is to connect with people. Many teachers and students complimented me after my dance. By changing myself, I improved my relationships with my friends, and expanded my friend group. By changing my actions and way of thinking, I improved my communication skills, and built deeper, trusting relationships. But it's not easy to change oneself. We need to challenge ourselves to forget about the possibility of failure and to overcome adversity. I'm gong to face my fears and strive to keep changing and improving.

So everyone, let's move forward, one step at a time, towards a new, better version of ourselves.