

## Lesson 1 For a Satisfying Life

### Life Is a Journey to Be Experienced

Hi, everyone. My name is Minji Song, and I am the editor of an online teen magazine, Teens Today. I am honored to have been asked to give a talk. Many of our high school student subscribers send me messages with concerns about their future. So today, I will talk about the value of experiences in making a better future. For this talk, I asked my old friends to write down stories about what they experienced when they were younger. I would like to start by reading them one by one.

### I was fond of swimming

One summer day, I was watching an Olympic swimming event on TV. The gold medalist looked fantastic, and I wanted to be just like him. I asked my parents if I could learn to swim. They approved and said, "Yes." Swimming was difficult at first, but after a year, I became a good swimmer. I felt tired but happy when I was out of breath after every practice. As I practiced more, my times got better and better. One day, my coach suggested that I enter a competition. He also advised me that for good results I should build muscle strength through weight training. The training was demanding, leaving me exhausted at times. Whenever I felt this way, I told myself, "No pain, no gain."

## **I performed in a play**

I used to be quiet and shy when I was a child. My homeroom teacher told me one day that she was putting on a play for our school festival. She suggested that I take on a small role, saying that being in a play would be a good experience. So, I decided to do it. I was so nervous at the first rehearsal that I could not say my lines at all. However, as I practiced my lines more, I became more and more confident. On the day of the performance, I got anxious and my mind went blank just before I stepped on the stage. My classmates tapped me on the shoulder and encouraged me. Thanks to this, I was able to perform my lines perfectly.

## **I wanted to be a landscape architect**

One day, I saw a poster advertising the city's landscape design contest. The instant I saw it, I got interested. After doing some research on the Internet, I discovered that landscape designing involves arranging and decorating outdoor spaces. I thought a landscape architect's work was impressive because the arrangement of plants and structures can transform a space. This inspired me to think about becoming a landscape architect. I found out that I had to be good at math and science in order to become a landscape architect. This is because landscape architects must calculate the dimensions and slopes of land as well as thoroughly examine environmental factors such as soil, air, and climate. I was not good at either subject at the time, so I decided to put more effort into studying them.

## **I was passionate about writing**

When I was fourteen, I was hospitalized for several weeks. One day, I saw a piece of paper on the table. I was bored, so I picked it up and began writing things down to pass the time. I felt a sense of relief when I wrote what I wanted to do after leaving the hospital. That evening, I asked my mother to buy me a notebook. As I filled page after page, I realized that writing was more than just a way to kill time. As the years passed, my passion for writing grew stronger. So I started writing short stories and sharing them with my friends and family. I felt a sense of accomplishment whenever they told me my stories were good.

Can you guess what my friends do now? Are they a swimmer? An actor? A landscape architect? A novelist? Actually, all four of these people are me! I currently work as a magazine editor. As you can see, my preferences have changed over the years as I was exposed to new experiences. Every time my interest changed, I was worried about what I was going to become in the future. Do you also have similar concerns?

Changes in your interests and preferences are completely natural. Try to accept this process and keep an open mind. Exploring new things can sometimes lead to valuable experiences which will help shape your future. I myself tried many different things before I finally became an editor because I enjoyed writing. Thanks to these many interests, I can write articles about math and science, speak confidently in front of an audience, and relieve my stress by swimming.

Allowing yourself the opportunity to experience a variety of things is not a waste of time. Your school days are a time of self-discovery and personal growth. As you spend each day wisely, you will be able to figure out what kind of person you are and what you enjoy doing. Do not attempt to define yourself in just one way as you undergo this process. Be flexible. Remember that your potential is limitless.

Thank you for your time.