

I'd like to start my speech with my self-introduction. My name is Watanabe Taiyo. Usually, we students have our own number in our class. My number is 39 because there are 39 students in my class. Yes. My number has always been the last because my family name starts with "WA." To be the last is not so bad because it's easy for me to remember my number. My first name, Taiyo means the sun. It's really nice for me that everybody understands what my name means without any explanation. I have to thank my mom, who named me. Almost everybody calls me not "Watanabe-kun" but "Taiyo," — my friends, neighbors, teachers, and even doctors at hospitals. Thanks to this, everybody attends to me in a very friendly way. I'm proud of my first name.

My regular dentist also calls me Taiyo. He calls other patients by their first names, too, because his patients are all children. I feel the dentist is friendly, and I'm sure his other patients think so, too. This is the power of using first names.

One day, I had a fever and went to a big hospital near my house. When I was waiting, a nurse called me. "Number 28, please come in." She didn't call me by name. "Why?" I wondered. I searched for the reason on the Internet. I found the answer soon. "To protect my privacy." I thought and thought about privacy and what it means.

These days, more and more people are becoming very aware of "privacy" or "personal information." I am, too, and of course I think it's a very important problem. We might hear the following exchanges.

"Excuse me. Can we take a picture together?"

"Sorry, I don't want to be in a photo to protect my privacy."

"Can you tell me your e-mail address?"

"Sorry, it's private."

"May I ask your name?"

"It's private. Please call me... Mr. X."

These show that, in this modern society, we are too nervous about privacy. We often hesitate to ask others about themselves. Some people don't even know the names of their neighbors. It leads to lack of communication. To call someone by name is the first step for meaningful communication. For example, many children have a teddy bear, and some of them give a name to the bear. I did. When we get it, it's just a teddy bear. However, by giving a name to the bear, we feel the bear is very special and essential to us like our friends. It becomes meaningful. To call someone by name is to recognize his or her existence.

Do you know the song titled "Beautiful Name"? I like these phrases from it. "Every child has a beautiful name. A beautiful name, a beautiful name." Not only children but also adults have beautiful names. We should value, treasure and respect our names.

Teachers, please do not call me "Number 39." I want to be called "Taiyo."