Last year, I stopped going to school because I felt overwhelmed by my reputation, my grades and I lost sight of myself. I felt an enormous amount of stress and pressure, and I couldn't think straight. Every day, my heart felt heavier and heavier as if everything was falling apart around me. I also felt tremendous guilt for causing my parents trouble, and I was afraid of what they thought of me. But my parents respected my feelings and let me be free to do whatever it took to get back on my feet. What's more, my schoolteachers also comforted me with words I never thought they would say. I felt stronger because of this support, and I was able to rest and recover at my own pace.

According to a recent study from 2022, there are almost 300 thousand elementary and junior high school students in Japan who are not going to school. The number seems to be growing as well. Perhaps most parents deal with this situation by forcing their children to go to school despite their feelings. But, is that healthy for students? From my experience, it's not. As you may know, in most cases, forcing them won't make the problem any better. This past year, I learned that rest is the most effective medicine for this. Yet, like most people I was scared that once I slowed down, everything would go wrong. But, as a matter of fact, taking time to rest and recharge changed me for the better.

While taking time to recharge, I learned how to have a healthier relationship with myself and my family. I used to force myself to fit into other people's ideals because I wanted everyone to like me, but I lost sight of my true self. I often got into fights with my parents, and I would get frustrated at everything in my life. Yet, throughout this year of staying at home, I got to focus on how to be truer to myself, and I got to spend more time with my family. Which made me realize just how important they are to me. This all took time, but here I am now, more content and confident than before.

Studying also became an easier task for me. This might sound crazy because not studying for a year should probably have made me rusty. Yet, when the school year started, my motivation increased, and I was able to balance the right amount of studying with the right methods. Recently, I had my first exam of the year and to my surprise I was able to get the highest scores I've ever gotten. The anxiety I used to feel about my grades, seemed to dissipate. Therefore, I believe that taking time to recharge helped me to rethink and improve my studying habits as well.

I believe that I am one of the lucky ones who got the right remedy at the right time for my mental health. We need to make a safe space where students who struggle with their school lives can rest and recharge without any worries. Every student has the right to be treated and cared for in a fair way. I suggest that more parents, teachers and students understand that pausing to slow down for a while is a necessity, not a detriment. Remember, everything we rely on in our lives needs time to recharge every now and then. So do we. Thank you.

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Recharging Is a Powerful Remedy