

When someone says “My dream is to become a pilot.”, whose voice do you hear? A Man or a Woman? Or when someone sends you a message stating “My child has a fever, so please let me take a paid leave.” which voice do you hear? A working Mom or a single Dad?

Those messages came from this commercial I saw on TV last summer, and it left a strong impact on me! When I saw it for the first time, I had this initial reaction that it was a man who wished to be a pilot and a working Mom who asked for a day off to take care of her child. It came to my mind instantly and naturally. You might think that there was nothing special about this commercial. In fact, I also thought the same. But the commercial was not only about it. It ended with a message questioning my unconscious bias!

Indeed, when I heard the word "pilot", I imagined a man right away, and when I saw this text of a parent asking for a paid leave to take care of a sick child, I imagined a working Mother right away! This is what makes the commercial interesting to me! It made me conscious of my unconscious biases!

Growing up, I wanted to be an active person in society and yet I was never exempted from gender discrimination. At the same time, both of my parents are full-time employees. Although they are in different industries, I think they both find their work very rewarding. Most of the time, I believe that mothers are responsible for their children's illnesses and school. I haven't thought about it deeply until now, but is this a form of gender discrimination? I decided to observe more about my parents.

My Mom often teleworks while my Dad works under a team, so he doesn't work from home. Therefore, it is hard for him to take time off work due to a child's illness or school events. When my mother works on weekends, my father does all the housework. On weekdays, my father runs the dishwasher and the washing machine when he comes home at night, but in the morning, my mother gets up earlier puts the dishes in the dishwasher, and puts away the laundry in the dryer. My mother tells me that they equally share the responsibilities. I am glad that my parents are acting as good role models for me. In my household, that's the right answer. But this could be a different story for someone else.

Japanese folk tales often begin with "Grandpa went to the mountains to mow the lawn, and Grandma went to the river to do the laundry." I think there will be a reverse pattern in the future. It's okay if grandfathers do the laundry and grandmothers mow the lawn. There should be no judgment when a man does the housework and the woman leaves for work! It's important to do what we like and what we're good at. Society should be built from mutual help. You don't have to decide things based on gender! You don't have to be a woman to do the housework and childcare alone and a man to desire to be a pilot. Any man and woman should freely express their desire to be a pilot! Any working Mom and Dad should have a paid leave to take care of their sick child!

Rather than sticking to traditional values, I hope that we will reach a point where there is no prejudice or gender discrimination. Where people are respected and valued for their thoughts, decisions, and preferences among others!

May I be this person!

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