

## Now I know what beauty is

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Do you like your face? Do you have any parts of your body that you want to change? I was very fat when I was little. So I hated my figure and my blubber face.

I had a flue for the first time in my life at the age of 12. I had such a high fever that I couldn't eat anything. After I recovered and went back to school, my friends said to me, "Wow, you look thinner!" I felt extremely happy and I had decided to lose weight by dieting. In the morning I ate only yoghurt. I always returned half of my school lunch into the container. I ate only soup and salad for dinner. At that time I was a member of the track and field club, so I ran and ran to be thinner. It worked! I succeeded in losing 5kg in only 2 weeks. I continued my diet. The thinner I became, the more confident I was.

Soon the time that I had to leave the track and field club came. I became too weak to keep running. My mother begged me to eat more. She said, "Look at yourself! You have become too skinny. Please eat more. Otherwise you might die!" I didn't listen to her, thinking "She is wrong. I have to be on an even more sever diet to be more beautiful." Yes. I was caught up in an anorexia.

The anorexia was getting worse. It also affected my mental condition. I was always tired, anxious and depressed. Suddenly I started crying in the classroom. I often missed my family at school. Then I wondered whether something might be wrong with me. So I looked up 'anorexia' on the Internet. I was appalled at what I read. Every symptom matched me. I decided to overcome the anorexia, however, it wasn't that easy. Next I had to struggle with bulimia. After I ate a huge amount of food, I felt so guilty. I didn't know what to do. I had lost all my confidence and started wondering why I had to keep living.

One day I confided everything I had in my mind to my best friend. I never forgot what she said to me. "I've never thought that you are nothing. I want you to know how much I respect you. Your grades are good and you excel in sports. On top of that, you are loved by your friends as you always care about them. I know you try hard to diet, but you should value your kindness and gentle heart first. Everyone needs you a lot. Ibuki, you are my precious friend. I really like you." I heard something click in my head. "My friends judge me not by my appearance but by my heart." A year later, I could overcome the anorexia.

I respect Mother Teresea. Do you think her appearance was beautiful? Her face was wrinkled and so were her hands. She was such a tiny old woman, however, she was powerful and full of love. Her beauty was made from her heart, which attracted people from all over the world.

What is beauty to you? I learned a lot from my experience. The value of beauty is not only appearance. Most of the time it is invisible. Like Belle in my favorite movie, 'Beauty and the Beast', I want to be a person who can see the beauty of the heart. And like the Beast, I want to have a beautiful heart for myself and people around me.