

Crossing the Line

Taking Steps to Communicate

Asuka Kondo

BEFORE YOU READ: What steps have you taken to communicate with others?

An Imaginary Line that I Could Not Cross



I remember how nervous I was when I attended an event in my son’s class for the first time. It was almost nine years ago. I could not speak English, and so I could not communicate with

others. No one spoke to me. I felt alone. It is hard to join a new community.

When I remember that time, I don’t think people were avoiding me. If I spoke to someone, they probably would have welcomed me. But it felt like there was an imaginary line between me and other people, and I could not cross that line. I did not know how to communicate in English, and so I hesitated to take the first step forward to cross the line.

Time to Move Forward

As my children grew up, I started asking myself, “I wonder if I will spend my life here and not communicate with others.” I realized that if I did not take steps to connect with others, nothing would happen. I decided it was time to move forward.



I decided to take an English class at Project Learn three times a week. I have made new friends from other countries in the class. I am



enjoying learning English with classmates and learning about their backgrounds.

I took another big step when I joined a book club with my neighbors. I cannot say that I always understand what they are talking about, but being a member of this book club is meaningful for me.

I decided to take these steps to start communicating. I am crossing the lines to connect with my community. I am not waiting for people on the other side of the line to come to me.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. In this essay, the writer uses the metaphor of “crossing a line.” What is the line she cannot cross at first? What steps does she take to cross the line?
2. What is a “line” you have had a hard time crossing? What did you do about it?

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