

Achieving My Dream of Learning English

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Defying conservative customs to continue studying.

I tried for a long time to persuade my parents to let me study English.

But the community in which I lived still clung to conservative ideals. It was customary for girls to study for only a limited time, after which they would join their mothers at home and learn how to cook until they get married. Then, after marriage, a woman was expected to do housework, please her husband and teach her children.

My attempts to change my reality came to nothing. I wanted to register at a college specialising in languages, but my parents refused to allow me to do so because of social tradition. Sometimes they also said that the fees they would need to pay were too high.

Then, after the war began, education became even more expensive. No one could afford to pay the fees of the top institutions, although the midlevel institutions were a little more reasonable.

I refused to give up or lose hope and stop trying to change their minds. One day, I happened to pass by an institute that offered educational and accounting courses at affordable prices.

But most importantly, the college taught languages, including English which I was eager to learn to help me find a job and communicate better. I also thought it would be the most challenging course. I wanted to go on to teach English to students who couldn't afford to take lessons or pay private tuition fees.

I inquired about the institute and the teachers and found it particularly suitable because it also adhered to the community's restrictions: it wasn't mixed but was only for women. Classes were offered at various levels for different ages and at reasonable prices.

After several more pleas and attempts at persuasion – my family finally agreed to let me learn English.

To pay for the lessons, I tried to borrow money off friends and family members. I was so thankful to those who helped me, but even after I gathered together all my savings it still was not enough to pay the fees and I began to lose hope.

Then I received a call from my aunt who told me that she had found the money to pay the institute. She had borrowed the money from a friend at work on condition that I would return it on a specific date. I was overjoyed and began crying and laughing all at the same time.

I rushed to thank my aunt's colleague for her support and pick up the remainder of the tuition fees. Afterwards, I went straight to the institute and joyfully registered for classes.

I began my studies in late October 2017. At first, I found it very difficult to deal with new people, the other girls who I had never met before and a teacher who was also strange to me. But I worked on myself and studied hard to be one of the top students and prove that I was doing my best.

Then came the exams. I struggled initially but decided to devote an hour every day to study. My teacher encouraged me more and more. Every day we had another exam and I had a bigger goal to achieve. I began repaying the debt I borrowed for the tuition and saving up for a new course at a higher level.

My reading and writing improved and I set myself more challenging goals. I became one of the best students in class thanks to the encouragement and help of my teacher. I now have many friends amongst my classmates and my days are filled with education, enjoyment and laughter.

I would like to thank everyone who supported me, lent me money and helped me achieve some of my dreams. I truly hope that my wonderful educational journey never ends and I hope that people abandon outdated customs and traditions that stand in the way of women achieving their goals.

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