

was full of foreigners -- people very different and inaccessible. You can't reach much of a meeting of the minds with "foreigners" because they are foreign, right?

But because of my experiences using Esperanto, I discovered that this image was very wrong. The world is full, not of foreigners, but of people just like me and my family. And, more, a great number of those people want to be my friends, if they have the chance to meet me and get to know me. So they are not foreigners, but friends or future friends.

What a difference! Now I feel myself linked in reality to people throughout the world. And I no longer feel myself tied to only one part of the world, to only one language, only one culture. I am free to interact with people throughout the world, because there are friendly people everywhere, and because Esperanto gives me the means of easily speaking with them.

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Why does an American Use Esperanto?

by Joel Brozovsky

New acquaintances at times express surprise when they learn that I, an American, use Esperanto instead of English in Japan. Sometimes they don't even believe that I am really an American, because they have only heard me speak Esperanto.

Well, it's true that the majority of Americans prefer to use English. Many Americans are of the opinion that English is enough, and that everybody in the world ought to learn it. Why, then, do I prefer to use Esperanto to communicate with non-Americans? Here are a few reasons:

- **Friendship.** On long trips I have noticed that the majority of people who speak to me in English are not interested in me as a person, nor in my culture. They are primarily interested in money. Either they want

to learn English from me, to be able to receive a better education and a better-salaried position, or something else. By contrast, a large percentage of the people with whom I speak in Esperanto are interested in me as a person, or in my culture. Many of them want to become friends, and in fact many of them do become friends.

- **Equality.** If I speak English with a Japanese or someone else whose native language is not English, I always, without fail, have the position of an expert in the language, and, it doesn't matter how much that other person has studied English, he or she must necessarily speak from a lower position, as pupil to teacher or subordinate to master. If instead we talk in the language of the other person, for example Japanese, the situation would be the same but in the opposite direction. Such inequality is a great hindrance to friendship.

- **Opening doors.** During my long global journey, Esperanto opened a huge number of doors for me, both figuratively and literally.

I passed the night in 150 homes as the guest of Esperantists during the three-year journey, and paid for a hotel only once! Through Esperanto and Esperantists I was able to enjoy a very rich culture, meet many different people and intimately get to know their lives, cultures, homes, thoughts, etc.

Some of my good friends, after years of friendship, have admitted to me that, before meeting me, they disliked Americans. So if I had used English I would certainly not have been able to become friends with these people, who are now very dear friends. Esperanto has indeed opened the door to them.

- **Helping the world.** When working to spread Esperanto, I have the feeling that I am doing something useful for the world. If people throughout the world can communicate freely as equals, and become friends through Esperanto, the world will certainly become better, more just, more likeable. I don't imagine that Esperanto alone will solve all the world's problems, but it *can* help people devise solutions.

- **Creativity.** I love to use Esperanto, because it leads to further creativity. Because of the language's great flexibility, I feel freedom when writing or speaking in Esperanto by comparison with English, whose structure and vocabulary are relatively fixed. The possibilities for creating new expressions in Esperanto are almost unlimited; it's a great pleasure to explore them and find striking expressions by using already existing units.

- **Valuable experiences and self-confidence.** When passing through the doors that Esperanto has opened, I have gained many valuable life-experiences which I could not easily have had without Esperanto. Such rich experiences have contributed greatly to my self-confidence, and prepared me to act more competently in the world.

- **A new world-view.** Perhaps the most important profit I've gained from my use of Esperanto is a drastic change in my world-view. Previously, I imagined that the world