

**"How to Let Other People's Words Pass Through
(Working English title; also translatable as The Skill of
Not Taking Words Personally)" (Forest Publishing,
2022) Sample Translation – Excerpts for Publishers**

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Introduction(Full Translation)

When you hear the words “others” or “other people’s words,” what kind of feelings arise within you?

If you feel “pleasant,” “a sense of closeness,” or “I’d like to hear what they have to say,” that is wonderful. But perhaps you sometimes feel “bothersome,” “complicated,” “troublesome,” or even “fearful.”

How to face and deal with others, and with their words, is not at all simple.

In truth, we have hardly ever been taught how to handle other people (human beings) or their words. It is said that people form their sense of self through relationships with “others,” but many of us struggle because we do not know how to relate to them.

The way we learn to handle others and their words is something we implicitly acquire during the process of growth, based on attachment. But if the home or school environment is stressful, the opportunity to learn this properly is lost. Before long, we become adults, and that lack shows up as a sense of hardship in life. Moreover, the failure to acquire such skills is often blamed on “yourself.”

The phenomenon of being “tossed around by other people’s words” arises out of such circumstances.

There are “explicit systems” and “implicit systems” in the world. The “explicit system” is verbalized, while the “implicit system” is hard to put into words and is often only understood by those who already know it.

Indeed, the “explicit system” is something we have been repeatedly taught. When it comes to “words,” we are told, “You must listen to others,” and “Other people’s words are important.” However, in most cases, such teachings do not help at all. We have all been tossed about by words precisely because we followed those teachings.

What is even more troublesome is that the substitutes circulating in place of the “implicit system” may themselves end up throwing us off balance.

For example, even in the field of counseling, psychology, and related areas—which is my profession—“words are important” is often emphasized. People who wish to solve their problems may read self-help books, absorb such discourses, and ironically find it even harder to let words pass through them.

Because of the influence of the “explicit system” and its substitutes, the value of words becomes inflated beyond their actual worth. For those tossed around by words, it even

feels as if a kind of inflation of meaning has occurred. Some people feel a vague fear that other people's words will define them against their will or have harmful effects. This, too, can be said to result from not knowing the "implicit system," and being tossed around instead by the "explicit system" or by various substitutes we relied on.

In recent years, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work has spread rapidly, and much work is now done via online tools like Zoom. In face-to-face interactions, communication could be achieved through atmosphere, subtle vibes, or a passing nod. But in remote work, these are difficult, and situations in which we are easily tossed around by words have increased.

Serious people, kind people, "good" people, are often the most faithful to the "explicit system." As a result, they are more easily affected by changes in circumstance, and they suffer more hardship. This pattern is seen not only with words but in many areas of life.

Counselors assist not only in tending to past wounds, but also in helping clients to internalize their own version of the "implicit system" and thereby regain their place in the world.

Is listening to others, as the "explicit system" teaches, really so important? Do words truly hold a value great enough to justify our being tossed around by them? To address our struggles, isn't it necessary to reexamine the reality of "human beings (others)" and "words," and how to handle them? Such questions are among the motives that led me to write this book.

What this book deals with—ways of not being tossed around by words, the skill of letting other people's words pass through (surū skills)—is precisely the "implicit system." This necessarily involves asking: What are "words"? How should we understand "human beings (others)"? It is not simply about communication techniques or tricks.

Therefore, in this book, I have made a particular effort to ensure you can truly acquire surū skills. That effort is not just to convey know-how, but to verbalize and explain as much as possible of the "implicit system." A significant portion of this book is devoted to that.

To acquire surū skills, we must first dismantle the illusions and constraints about

“words” and “human beings” that were produced by the “explicit system,” and regain sovereignty over language on our own side. This book approaches the reality of human beings and words not only from clinical psychology but also from a social perspective. That is the theme of Chapter 3.

Next, I will address the problems that underlie our being tossed around—attachment anxieties, trauma, and so on. “Knowing oneself” is essential for acquiring surū skills. This is the theme of Chapter 4.

Then I will clarify the “mechanism of sūrū.” “Sūrū” is not a trick or gimmick; it is indispensable for words and human relationships to function. This will be explored in Chapter 5, where I will also touch on how letting words pass through relates to human agency and creativity.

Finally, I will share surū skills you can put into practice in daily life—from ways of thinking to concrete methods. This is Chapter 6. Understanding the reality of human beings and words not only enables surū skills, but also lays a foundation for resolving other problems and hardships in life. That, too, is one of my aims.

If these attempts succeed, by the time you finish this book you will no longer fear others or their words. Instead, you will be able to handle words on your own terms and find ways to relate to others.

I hope this book will provide an opportunity for as many people as possible to live better lives.

Chapter 2(Full Translation)

Why the Value of Words Weighs So Heavily

Is Listening to Others So Important? Are Words Something Wonderful?

“Listen carefully to what others say,” “Pay attention to people’s words”—these are things everyone has been taught. Before entering elementary school, parents say: “Make sure to listen carefully to the teacher.” Each time we move up a grade or school level, we are told again: “Listen to the teacher.” Conversely, not listening is almost synonymous with being a bad child.

At school, too, in Japanese language classes, we are taught about the wonder of words. Through the works of Japan's representative writers and poets, we learn the importance of words and of reading.

During summer vacation, we even had to read assigned books and write awkward book reports. We were thoroughly taught the lesson that "words must be treated with care."

When we hurt a friend by calling them names and made them cry, teachers scolded us. At that time, we were taught that words can be tools that wound people, and that therefore words must be treated with even greater care. Thus, we came to feel more strongly than ever the importance of words so as not to hurt others.

As we entered junior high and high school, we tackled more difficult texts in modern Japanese. I, too, failed when I misunderstood the meaning of test questions or overlooked important parts of assigned texts. I came to realize that my own ability to understand and interpret words was more unreliable than I thought.

If that was true even for printed words, how much more so for words that enter through the ear! We are forced to realize how often we overlook things, or understand them in a self-centered way.

When we become adults and join a company, we are again told: listen carefully to what your boss and seniors say. In sales or customer service, listening carefully to the customer is regarded as most important. You must hear every word of the customer, report it inside the company, and respond to their requests. This is quite difficult, but we are taught to listen carefully.

To "not listen to others" or "not pay attention" is also used to describe a selfish, narrow-minded person.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump is often taken as a representative example of someone who "doesn't listen." Even when reporters say something correct, he won't listen. Subordinates who disagree are dismissed. Many of us feel strongly, "I definitely don't want to become like that."

Kotodama? "In the Beginning Was the Word"?

We sometimes hear the word *kotodama* (word-spirit). I cannot recall when I first heard

it, but I found myself knowing the word.

Looking it up, I found it first appears in the *Manyōshū*, meaning that words are imbued with a power that influences reality. A famous example is the tanka of Hitomaro Kakinomoto, who sang that the land of Yamato is blessed with the spiritual power of words. We can see that Japanese people since ancient times revered the power of words and treated them with care.

For us modern people, it is generally taken to mean words imbued with spirit, will, or feeling.

In foreign religions as well, such as Christianity, we encounter the phrase: “In the beginning was the Word” (*The Gospel of John*, New Interconfessional Translation of the Bible). Words are said to have created the world. In Indian and Greek classics too, it is said that words created the world.

Across cultures, words are regarded as extremely important.

Looking at these examples, the high value of words seems undeniable.

Do Words Create Reality?

In Japan too, during the boom of self-development and wish-fulfillment movements—not often mentioned these days—it was widely proclaimed that “words create reality.” The claim was that by verbalizing something, it becomes an image, that image influences one’s habitual thoughts and actions through the subconscious, and thus it becomes reality.

I recall that entrepreneurs published books claiming that if you write your dreams and goals in a planner, they will come true.

Perhaps you too have tried writing down your wishes on paper?

Most people give up when nothing comes true, but many are left with the idea that “words create reality” or “words have power” still lingering in their minds.

The Power of Listening? Is Counseling and Coaching Important?

Books with titles like *The Power of Listening* seem to have increased.

In a maturing society, one-sidedly talking, persuading, instructing, or giving orders is no longer regarded as desirable. What is valued is how to draw out the other person’s

strength while listening.

Perhaps as a result of such social demands, coaching and counseling have become more familiar. School counselors are assigned to schools, and workplaces often have systems that allow employees to consult affiliated counselors.

Even store clerks now sometimes have the title “○○ Counselor,” which no longer feels strange. Their job seems to be to listen to customer needs and provide products accordingly. (When I first heard the term “counseling cosmetics,” I was surprised and wondered, “What on earth does that mean?”)

Many people even pay money to study coaching or counseling, or attend training programs.

“How to listen to the words and requests of others?” “How to pay attention?”—these things are emphasized now more than ever.

As we have seen, we have been told, to the point of exhaustion, about the “importance of words” and the “importance of listening to others.” Being able to listen to others and to value words seems almost like a mark of human maturity. The importance of listening seems beyond doubt.

Is It Impossible for Ordinary People to Let Others' Words Pass Through?

If “words are important” and “listening to others is important,” then “letting others' words pass through” seems outrageous. We should carefully listen, take in even the harsh or unpleasant words, and simply develop the mental strength not to be shaken.

But is such a superhuman feat really possible for us?

If only iron-willed people can do this, does that mean ordinary people can never achieve the peaceful state of not being tossed around by others' words?

Questioning the “Premise”

Here, we must pause and think carefully.

When something seems impossible between a “premise” and “practice,” or when practice seems unachievable, it is often the case that the “premise” itself is mistaken—or, more precisely, that the way we grasp the premise is mistaken.

The famous “egg of Columbus” story illustrates this. At first, the premise looks like something extremely difficult. But once the premise is reframed, anyone can make an egg stand upright.

Magic tricks or detective novels are similar. They strengthen the premise to make something seem unsolvable. But in fact, the premise contains a trick, and the action turns out to be possible.

Even in the world of work, when strain arises between “premise” and “practice,” it is often because the premise is flawed. The founder’s policy may have become the “premise,” or industry customs, or a preconception that “it can’t be done.” But when an outsider gets involved, the problem may suddenly be solved.

It seems that in order for us not to be tossed around by others, and to acquire surū skills, we need to reconsider such premises. We must cast a fresh, unencumbered gaze on what looks like an unquestionable premise—“listening to others is important”—and clarify its reality.

In the next chapter, we will see how unstable and unreliable human beings and words actually are.

Why These Works Matter (Revised)

Redefining the Power of Words

In an era where counseling and coaching often emphasize the importance of listening and empathy, this book offers a fresh counterpoint: words should not be overvalued as absolute truths. By reframing how we interpret language, it empowers readers to protect themselves from unnecessary psychological harm in everyday life.

Beyond Simple Techniques

Unlike many self-help titles that offer quick fixes, this book addresses the underlying structures that make words so impactful. Drawing not only from counseling practice but also from social science and the humanities, it situates everyday struggles within broader cultural and interpersonal contexts.

A Unique Theoretical Contribution

Central to the book is the author's original Public-Private Environment Hypothesis, a new framework that explains how family, workplace, and social environments amplify or mitigate the impact of language. This contribution has drawn strong interest from both practitioners and general readers.

Philosophical and Practical Depth

The work bridges the gap between lived experience and theory, echoing intellectual traditions that emphasize context and meaning-making. At the same time, it remains accessible, using vivid case examples to help readers recognize their own struggles and discover practical ways to regain balance.

Proven Reader Resonance

Praised on platforms like Amazon Japan, the book has resonated strongly with readers who struggle with excessive sensitivity to others' words. They report that the book

offers not only reassurance but also a concrete shift in perspective—transforming what once felt like a personal weakness into something understandable and manageable.

Proven Market Traction

Over 40,000 copies sold across the author's titles (Approximately 20,000 copies of each), with two complementary bestsellers from major Japanese houses:

- *Developmental Trauma: The Real Cause of "Ikizurasa"* (Japanese term meaning "chronic distress" or "difficulty in living") (Discover Twenty One, 2023)
- *How to Let Other People's Words Pass Through* (Working English title; also translatable as *The Skill of Not Taking Words Personally*) (Forest Publishing, 2022)

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For inquiries regarding translation rights, please contact the publishers directly:

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- Ichitaro Miki https://www.brieftherapy-counseling.com/contact.html#contact_mail

Author Profile

Ichitaro Miki, Certified Public Psychologist

Graduated from Osaka University (B.A. in Western History, Faculty of Letters).

Completed Master's Program in Cultural Morphology, Graduate School of Letters, Osaka University.

Certified Public Psychologist (National License, Japan).

Member of the Japanese Psychological Association, the Japanese Society of Stuttering and Other Fluency Disorders, and the Japanese Association of Brief Psychotherapy.

Completed BDI Rebalancing program; LAB Profile Practitioner.

Professional Career

Miki began counseling during his university years. After completing graduate school, he worked at NEC Corporation, then at the Institute of Applied Social Psychology and the Osaka Psychological Education Center.

Later, he founded the Brief Therapy Counseling Center (B.C.C.), where he specializes in trauma care, attachment disorders, harassment, and stuttering.

He has over 20 years of clinical experience, drawing on both traditional counseling approaches (such as Rogers' counseling) and bodywork/brief therapy.

Media and Publications

Miki has appeared frequently in media (TV, magazines, newspapers, online). He has also served as a medical supervisor for TV drama productions.

His authored books have sold approximately over 40,000 copies in total.

Key titles include:

Developmental Trauma: The Real Cause of 'Ikizurasa' (Discover 21, 2023)

How to Let Other People's Words Pass Through (Forest Publishing, 2022)