

【Series FUKUBITO】 Eiko Akiyama, Expert of Sales

Episode 2: OK, that's where my life started

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After graduating from high school, Akiyama fulfilled her wish and started working as a sales staff for a domestic apparel brand. While enjoying fashion and the job of customer service cheerfully and energetically, she spent her 20s balancing work and part-time job and

devoting herself to work to send her younger brother to college. However, she gradually felt anxious about her future career. So, she decided to change job to imported brands, and joined to "CELINE". ——

Eiko Akiyama, a store management consultant who knows thoroughly the keys of successful sales and serves as Chairman and CEO of BRUSH, looks back on her half-life. **Episode 2 of Series “FUKUBITO” Eiko Akiyama, Expert of Sales.**

【Episode 2】

Life of balancing 3 works in the morning, daytime and night

From my childhood until my late 20s when I joined CELINE, I used to think, almost instinctively, "If I don't protect my brother, who will?" I wanted to send my younger brother to college on my own. That's why I left home after graduating from high school and started working right away.

In the early days of my career, I worked as a salesperson at a store of Japanese apparel brand, while working part-time at a coffee shop in front of the station in the morning and at a restaurant at night. Colleagues of my part-time job also supported me as I worked hard to save money, so I was allowed to eat breakfast and dinner there. For a while, I spent my days like that, but I didn't hate it or suffer from it. My home was not an environment where I

could be rich in my mind even though there was no inconvenience in life, so I was happy to be freed from there. I felt, "Okay, now my life has started."



Image by: FASHIONSNAAP

However, although I was desperately saving money to send my younger brother to college, in the end, my brother told me, "I'm not going to college, because there's no point. I will become a cook." I was so shocked that I slept for about three days. "I've saved so much money, so what?!"

Then, with the money I had saved, I went to a shop in the basement of the Royal Hotel in Osaka, where we could find good things at the time, and bought everything I wanted.

Although I originally liked good things and really wanted products of high brands, I put up with it for a long time without buying anything, so I exploded. That day, I spent all the money I had saved. Now I don't remember what I bought at all, maybe because I did it so impulsively (laughs).

"It's impossible for me." That's why I decided to join to

CELINE

When I was working as a salesperson for a Japanese apparel brand, of course I did my job hard every day. But I just loved clothes and wanted to be surrounded by them. And after work, I went to the disco almost every night. I think now that was joyful days of youth. It was the time when Japan was heading toward a bubble period from the high economic growth.

However, when I was in my late 20s, I thought that I wanted to continue the job of sales for the rest of my life, and clearly felt that if I only sold products for young people, I could not continue this job for a long time. When I got older, there would surely be a gap between younger customers and me. I wanted to be able to handle "things difficult to sell" that adult customers would buy. Therefore, I decided to join to "CELINE" that JCC* was in charge of its business in Japan at that time.

*JCC: A company that has been importing and selling products of CELINE in Japan since 1970. CELINE was acquired by LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton Group in 1996. In 1997, CELINE Japan was established with a 100% stake from the French headquarters of CELINE, and JCC transferred its business.



Image by: FASHIONSAP

Although there were other options to work in different companies, when I went to a store to find out where I wanted to work, I thought, "This is the place." I visited the store on Tor Road in Kobe, and I was overwhelmed at the moment I saw the display. A mannequin was wearing only a navy-blue skirt and a cotton blouse, but it was displayed so well that it looked as if alive. And I thought, "It's impossible for me." That's why I decided to put myself there and take on the challenge.

The person who created this wonderful display was Junko Tennoji, manager of CELINE Kobe Tor Road store at the time, and later she became my long-term mentor. At the new

workplace, her "orthotic cast" just like Miranda Priestley, the editor-in-chief in the movie
The Devil Wears Prada (2006) was waiting for me. — **To be continued in Episode 3**

Text: Erika Sasaki

Planning & Production: FASHIONSAP

【Series FUKUBITO】 7 episodes of “Eiko Akiyama, Expert of Sales”

Episode 1 —” This is the only thing I can do”

Episode 2 —” OK, that's where my life started”

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