

I Want to Keep Learning and Achieve Further Growth, So That We Can All Share a Sense of Accomplishment.

Marugame Kyogijo-Mae Restaurant (Kagawa) GEL (Guest Experience Leader) Takeru Akiyama-san

Akiyama-san started working at the Marugame Kyogijo-Mae restaurant in the spring of his first year of high school. He has taken on the challenge of serving customers with his natural smile and warm personality and is now leading the hospitality aspect of the restaurant as GEL.

Energizing the Restaurant with Just One Greeting

“Ohayo Gozaimasu!” Akiyama-san’s simple greeting can help make his colleagues feel more and more energetic. He is now called the “Positive Leader” of the restaurant, but when he first joined the team, he seemed rather shy, according to the manager, Motoki-san. “At first, he was shy, quiet, and quite reserved in his greetings and replies. You may find it difficult to imagine that when you see him cheerfully leading his colleagues today.”

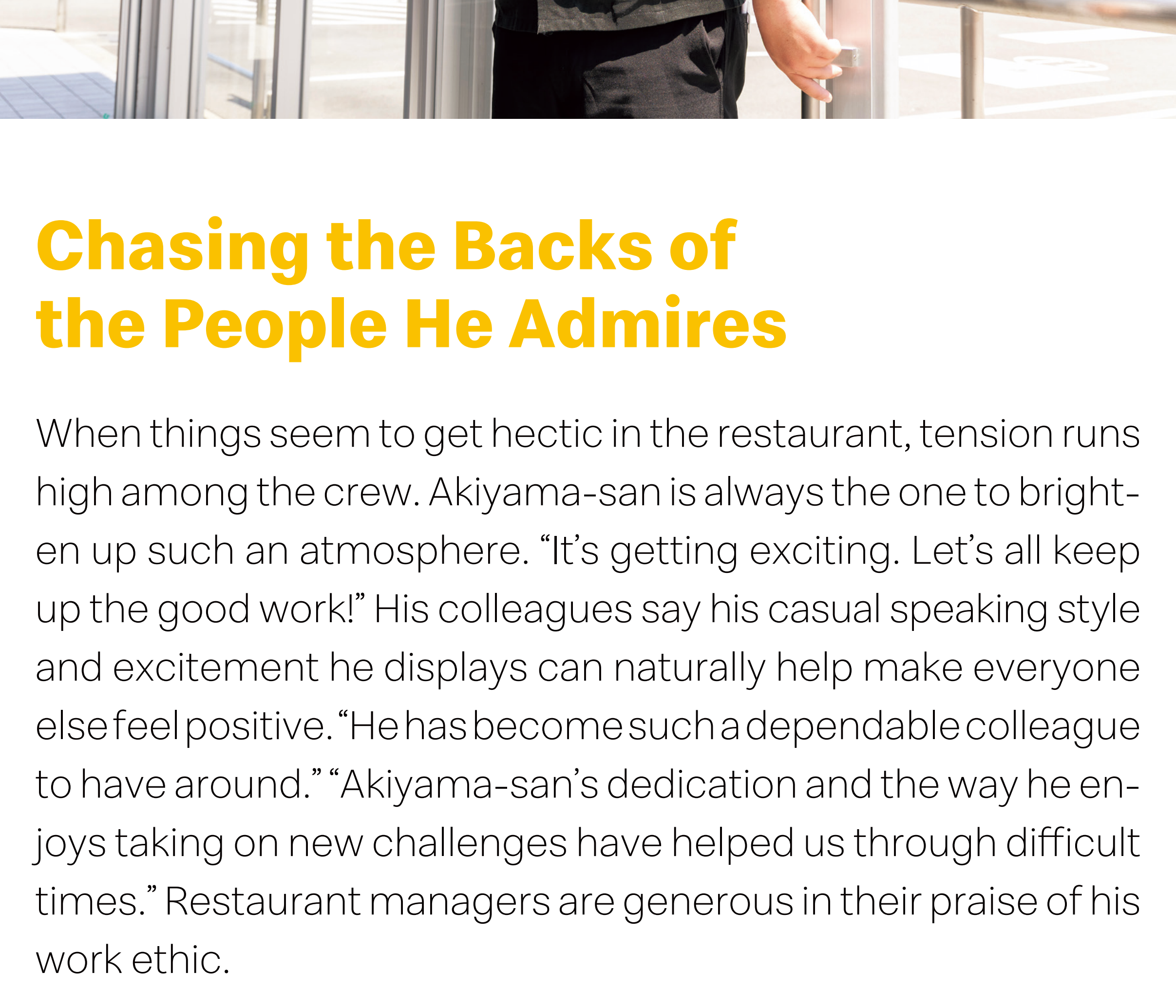
However, Akiyama-san’s journey to date has not always been smooth. He is where he is today because of his steady efforts to accumulate “failures,” “realizations,” and “learnings.”

Being Positive and Dedicated, Going One Step at a Time

Akiyama-san was only 15 when he got started with his first part-time job at McDonald’s. He learned skills one by one, such as serving customers at the counter, assembling products, and cooking in the kitchen. There was a lot to learn, but it meant that he came to acquire the knowledge and ability to do as much. As he learned skills and received praise from his trainers, Akiyama-san began to enjoy himself and grew in confidence. He wanted to take on more new challenge – and that was when a restaurant manager approached him, asking, “Would you like to give GEL a try?” Akiyama-san’s reply was, of course, “YES.”

However, the job of GEL, which involves understanding the needs of individual customers, thinking for oneself and providing the best possible service, has presented a different kind of challenge. “What can I do to please our customers...?” Although he had a hard time passing the test to get promoted to GEL and had many frustrating days, Akiyama-san nevertheless kept moving forward. “I work with so many senpai (seniors) whom I admire in this restaurant. Every day, I got to learn as I watched them work, and I actively asked them for advice on things I didn’t understand.” Absorbing with an open mind and continuing to move forward with dedication – that has been the source of Akiyama-san’s growth. the RGM says: “I’ve never seen him talk negatively about anything. He can be enthusiastic about facing and overcoming challenges with integrity. That’s why he has managed to keep growing, I think.” Seeing issues as challenges and enjoying those challenges – that kind of mindset has been his great strength.

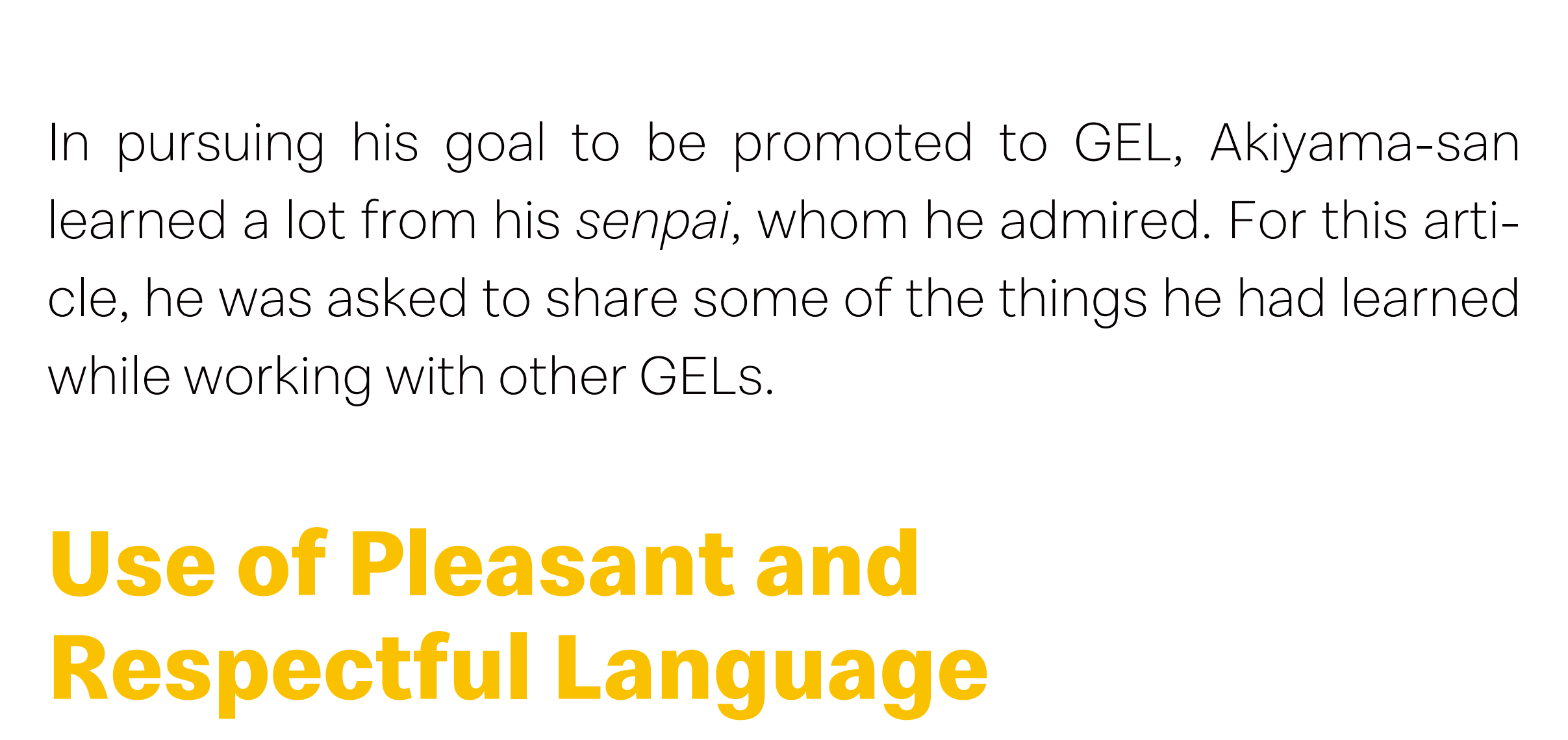
After about 10 months of training, Akiyama-san had his long-awaited promotion to GEL. Today, he continues to pursue the highest level of hospitality by staying close to his customers and accommodating their needs.



Chasing the Backs of the People He Admires

When things seem to get hectic in the restaurant, tension runs high among the crew. Akiyama-san is always the one to brighten up such an atmosphere. “It’s getting exciting. Let’s all keep up the good work!” His colleagues say his casual speaking style and excitement he displays can naturally help make everyone else feel positive. “He has become such a dependable colleague to have around.” “Akiyama-san’s dedication and the way he enjoys taking on new challenges have helped us through difficult times.” Restaurant managers are generous in their praise of his work ethic.

On the other hand, Akiyama-san says he hopes to follow in the footsteps of his *senpai*. “I would like to be a manager who can lead the restaurant by giving recognition to my colleagues like the RGM and other Restaurant managers do, so that we get to achieve many goals together.” We can be certain that this Positive Leader will continue to enjoy his challenges.



**Things I Learned
from My Senpai
to Make Our Customers Smile!**

In pursuing his goal to be promoted to GEL, Akiyama-san learned a lot from his *senpai*, whom he admired. For this article, he was asked to share some of the things he had learned while working with other GELs.

Use of Pleasant and Respectful Language

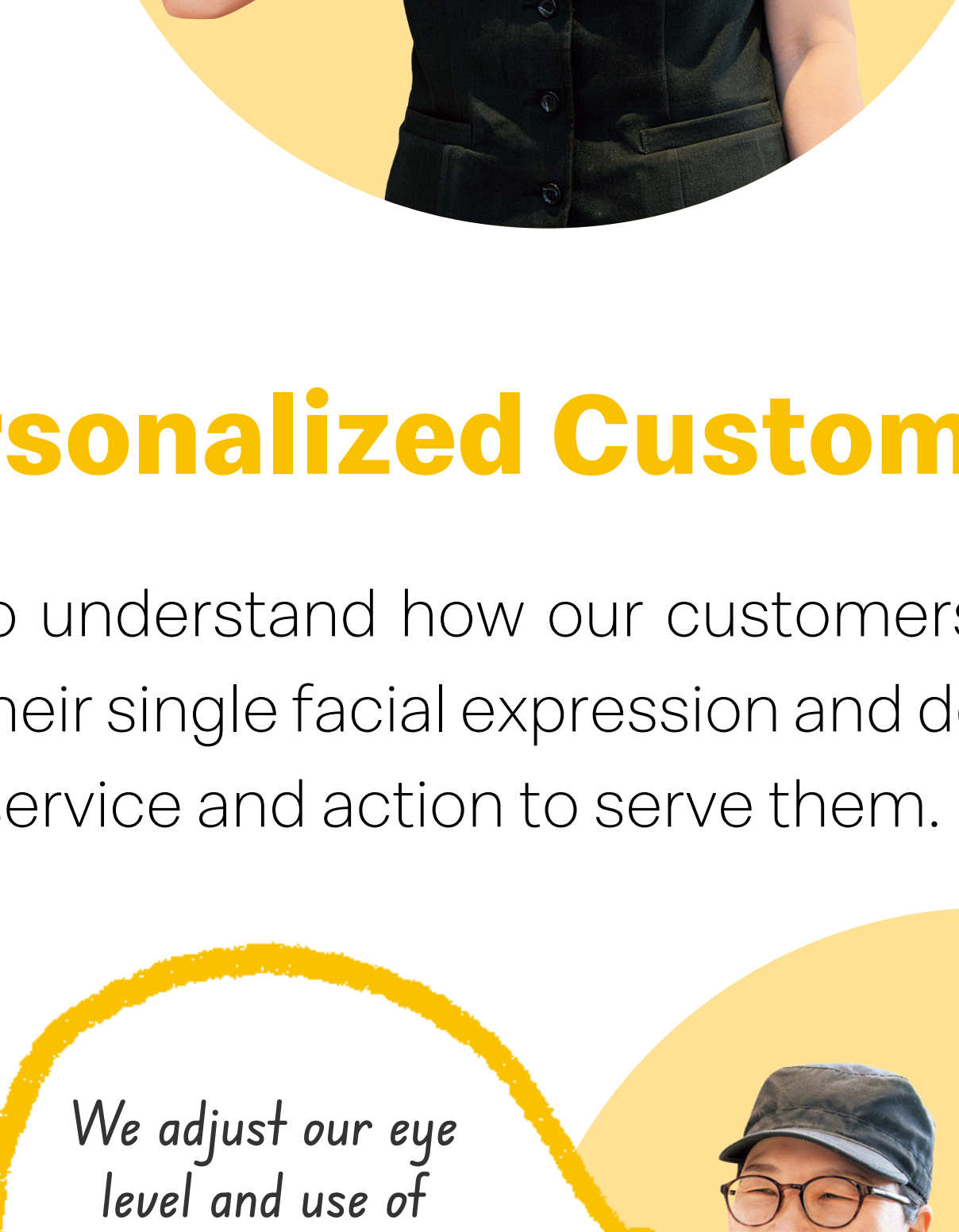
The first thing that impressed me when I saw fellow GELs working was their polite language. Everyone was talking to customers in a natural way, and I am still learning by listening carefully to what they are saying while I work! I also get the impression that they work with confidence, which is very cool.

In addition to the use of language, I am also conscious of the speed and tone of my speech.



Observe the Inside of the Restaurant and Its Customers Carefully

They are really observant of each and every customer, as well as every nook and cranny of the restaurant. They are also keeping a close watch over the cleanliness inside the restaurant, and they are committed to creating a safe and comfortable space for our customers.

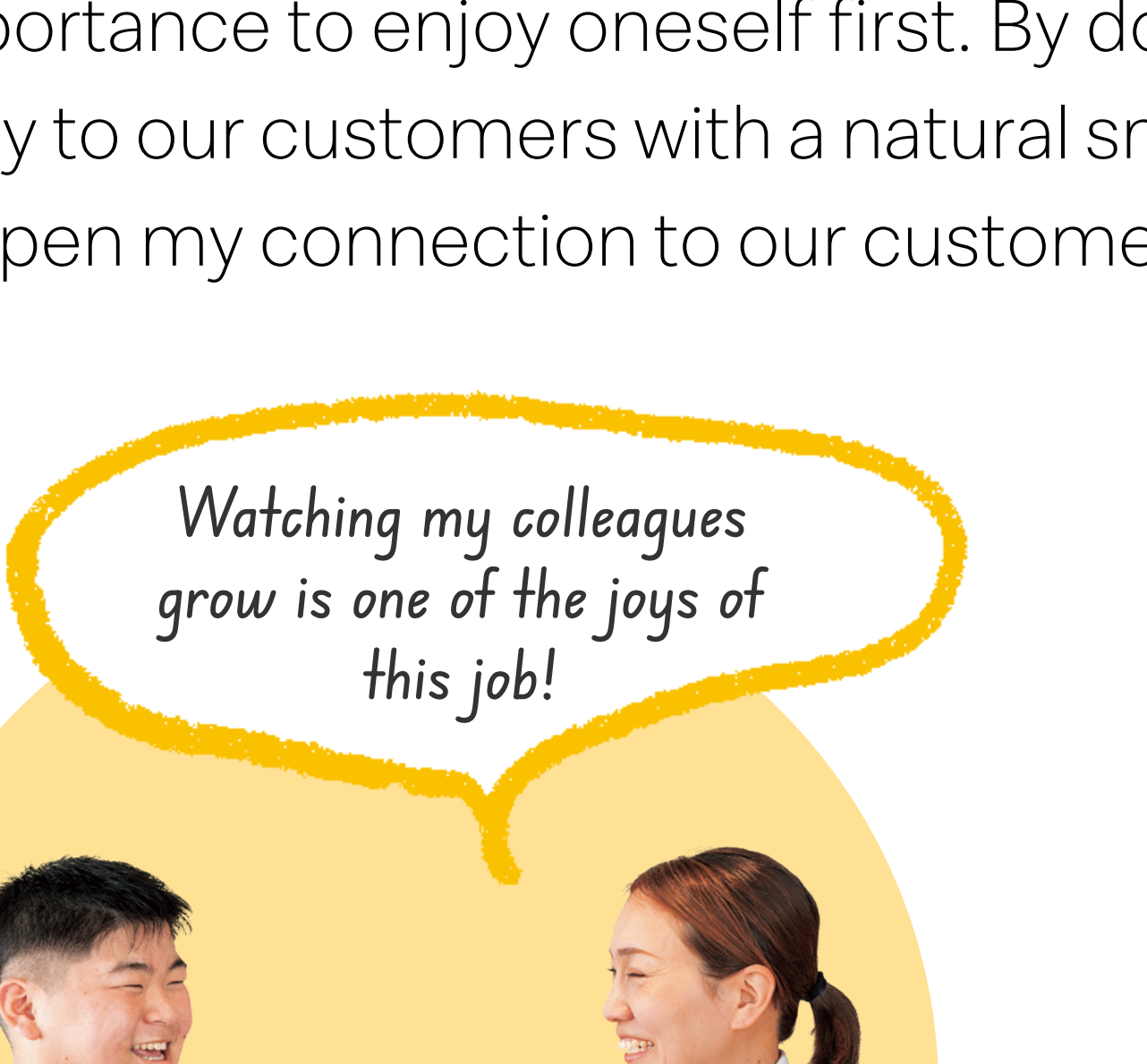


We are observing customers to be able to grasp their expressions and moods!

Personalized Customer Service

I try to understand how our customers are feeling right now with their single facial expression and determine the best possible service and action to serve them.

We adjust our eye level and use of language according to the age and mood of individual customers!



Enjoying Oneself!

They always seem to really enjoy their work, which makes me appreciate the importance to enjoy oneself first. By doing so, I can offer hospitality to our customers with a natural smile, and it also helps to deepen my connection to our customers in the community.

Watching my colleagues grow is one of the joys of this job!

