

# Personal Picture Method for Self Design

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## **Abstract**

In this paper, we present a method to self-design your life with your own hands by applying the Personal Culture Patterns, a pattern language for a life with continuous self-fulfillments, to the Personal Picture Method. We will introduce an example of a workshop using Personal Picture Method named the Self Travel Cafe and analyze its results. Through the Personal Culture Patterns and Personal Picture Method, each individual will be able to reflect about and design their life on their own.

## **1. Introduction**

The complexity and diversity of today's society is causing changes to emerge in people's life and ways of living. Due to globalization and development of Internet technology, usual life courses that many people have relied on are no longer in function. Thereby issues that conventional and existing systems cannot solve have emerged, and uncertainty about the future has strengthened. On the other hand, with materialistic wealth and an environment for creating new frameworks and materials, we are able to choose a life with our individual style, leading to various choices in styles of living. That is life was simple and more deterministic in the past, but today you have more freedom to make your own choices. As a result, each is required to choose, think about, and design a personal way of living.

By naming the practice of designing your own life style *Self Design*, we now describe how to implement the Personal Picture Method to support the process of Self Design using the Personal Culture Patterns. These patterns form a tool to support youth in creating a life with continuous self-fulfillments. The Personal Culture Patterns were presented at the 18<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Pattern Language of Programs, hosted in Germany, July 2013.

## **2. Self Design**

We name the practice of designing your own lifestyle Self Design in this paper. Though the term “design” is in the domain of physical objects such as architecture and the non-physicals such as software, we would like to focus on human action. In human action, since the subject and object are identical each individual will design their personal lifestyle.

## **3. The Personal Culture Patterns**

In a society where people design their own lifestyle, many are in the pursuit of self-actualization. However, it is difficult to define and specify one’s individuality before creating a way of life. Such certain individuality is hard to perceive as one condition because many perceive only the fragments rather than the accumulated totality. Although individuality is gradually shaped through personal growth such as new encounters and various experiences, many people lack the understanding of this idea of formation through socialization [1]. People struggle to see their personalities and are unable to live their unique life, due to the misjudgment of the fluid concept of personality as a fixed one.

With this regard, a new perspective of identifying one’s quality is presented as Personal Culture. This idea describes one’s individuality as a totality of experiences and values developed through chains of little steps of self-fulfillment. Like culture, it can be considered as a multiplex integration consisting of small processes of creations [2]. The Personal Culture Patterns is a tool to support the individual to recognize and grow one’s personal culture, leading each to grasp its wholeness without decomposition. Personal Culture Patterns is consisted of 27 patterns, and categorized into 6 groups: *Confident*,

*Adventurous, Enthusiastic, Evolving, Authentic, and World Visionary.* The patterns in each category will help people to nurture their own Personal Culture (Figure 1). Those patterns are common tips that were extracted through interviews with individuals who are authentically living with aliveness. Up to this day, people had to design their own lives based on their past experiences. However, sharing the clues of feeling alive through Personal Culture Patterns will enable users to unfold their potential to design their own lives. In short, Personal Culture Patterns support the process of Self Design.

It is also true that some have trouble apply their inspirations and interceptions to daily life, only through reading the patterns. Especially, it is hard to support the individuals below the middle-class with low eagerness to create a better life. Hereupon, the workshop using patterns will help their understandings. In the next chapter, we present a way to conduct Personal Picture Method using Personal Culture Patterns as a method to help people’s process of Self Design.

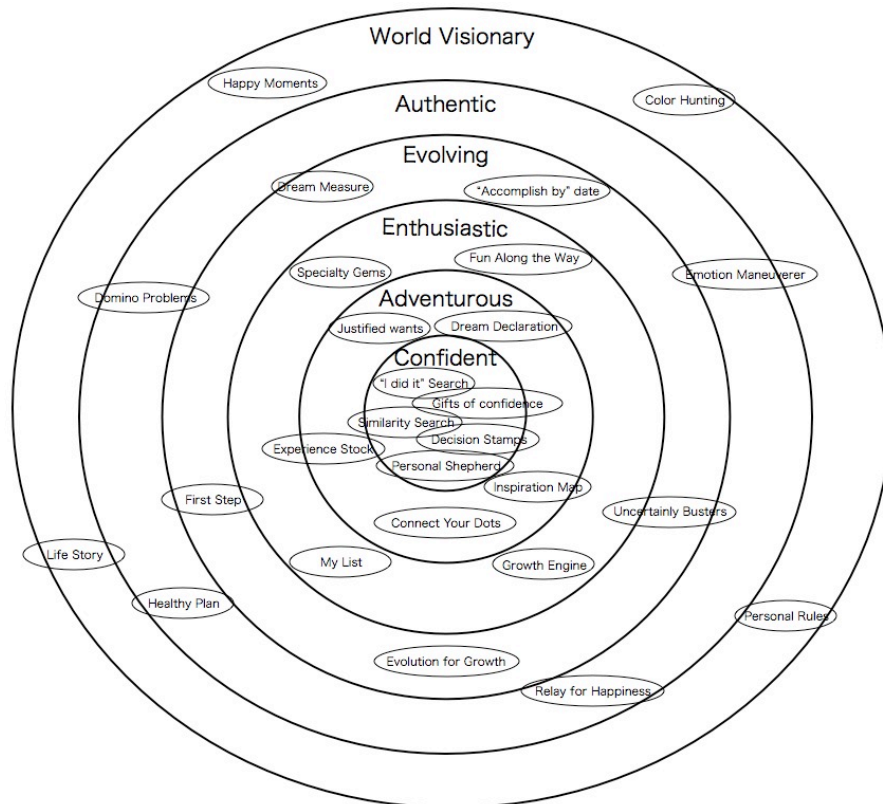


Figure 1: The whole of Personal Culture Patterns

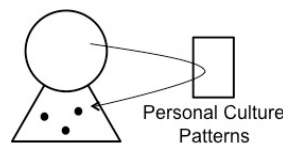
#### 4. Personal Picture Method

Personal Picture Method is a way to re-organize one's visual representation of values and experiences that exist in oneself. This was derived from the concept of Pattern Language 3.0, a type of pattern language for human action (Iba, 2013). Highlighting and reconstructing the unconsciously assembled past experiences and values, one will be able to comprehend one's personal elements and values that are essential to him/her.

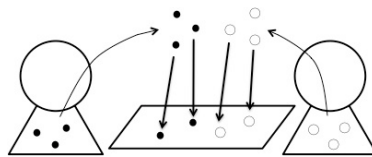
Personal Picture Method consists of 4 steps that create the Personal Picture (Figure 2).

The first step is to read the patterns and to keep in mind the thoughts and feelings which have emerged accordingly. Next, a group of a few people is formed to conduct a dialogue. During the interaction with the participants, each writes down his/her thoughts, experiences, and feelings that were recalled on sticky notes or on paper. Third, based on the keywords that have remained in one's mind, each writes phrases or words that are genuine and important to oneself on a circle-shaped paper. Lastly, drawing some illustrations if needed, each will reorganize the circle-shaped paper on a rectangle paper, freely expressing one's Personal Picture. To support Self Design, the main chapter will describe how to implement the Personal Picture Method, using the Personal Culture Patterns. As an example of the making process, we present the workshop using the Personal Picture Method held for university students in Tokyo on July 19th, 2014.

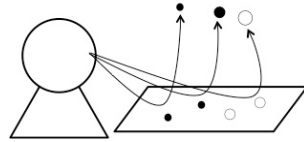
Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4

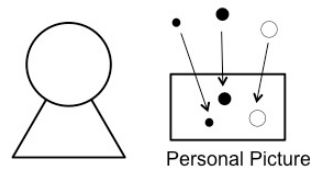


Figure 2: 4 Steps of Personal Culture Method

#### 4-1. Reflection

Reading the Personal Culture Patterns plays an essential role in creating one's Personal Picture. Each pattern helps us to recall temporarily forgotten experience, feelings, and thoughts that were coherent to or meant to exist in oneself. Interpreting the patterns enable the readers to recognize one's personal culture, a collectivity that were involuntarily aggregated from past experiences and values. By choosing some patterns out of the collection of 27 Personal Culture Patterns, one's important values and experiences are easier to pull out, which are needed to create one's Personal Picture. You can adjust the number and types of patterns depending on the size and time slot of the workshop. At our workshop, we used 5 of the Personal Culture Patterns: *Similarity Search*, *Decision Stamps*, *My List*, *Growth Engine*, *Personal Rules* (Figure 3). We have arranged 25 participants into 5 groups and had them read each pattern for 2 minutes.

## Similarity Search

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When you look around and sometimes feel jealous about others, you tend to lose self-confidence by comparing yourself with others.

Even if you think they are out of your league, you have the same trait as them because you admire them.

It might be frustrating for having a similar sense, perspective, and thought process, but also exciting.

Cherish those thrilling feelings.

Listen to your heart trembling like an motor-engine. If you hear that sound, it will become your energy to become like them someday.



## Decision Stamps

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When you are reaching for your goal, there are people who give you advice, and many information.

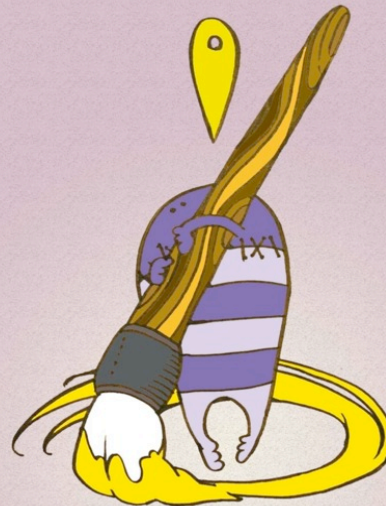
Though that environment is grateful, you unintentionally rely too much on their opinions due to insecurity.

Then you find yourself lost on the way to your dream.

It is important to decide by yourself.

Be honest to your feelings and emotions and express them.

Once you accept the struggles and contradictions, and set your heat on your path, you can keep on walking forward. Just don't forget that symbolic stamp.



## My List

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When you see someone moving forward or spending a fulfilling life, you feel left out and lose confidence.

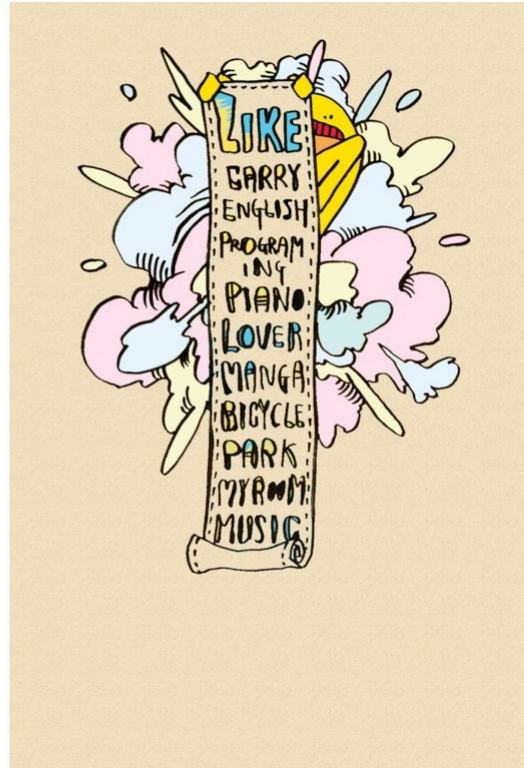
Whenever you compare yourself with your other people, try listing up your favorites.

Your favorite place, favorite food, and favorite book... etc.

While you think about what you like, you will understand what you care about.

Soon your agitation and fear will be relieved.

If you sometimes look into where your heart is, you will feel a little stronger with your "favorite" shield.



## Growth Engine

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Once you have achieved your goal, you might become confused with the reason behind it.

To avoid making the method more important than its purpose, look beyond.

What kind of life do you want?  
What is your future vision?

Think about and draw upon your future with a creative mindset.

If you think about your exciting future, to an extent you cannot stop, your next goal will emerge.

Spread your own world, with no intervention.



## Personal Rules

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There are many talented and amazing people in the world.

If you wish for one of their talents, start from finding out your obsession.

The words you often use, what you usually wear, places you often visit.

There are common traits that you are unconscious of in your daily routine.

If you find them, help it grow so that others enjoy it as your attractive charm.



Figure 3: Personal Culture Patterns using in the workshop

### 4-2. Dialogue

The next step is a dialogue with patterns. Making groups of a few people, members talk about their thoughts and feelings, which emerged through reflection. During this dialogue, it is important to take notes on the topics or keywords that remained in their minds. By marking the words or keywords that one treasures, participants can keep such authentic elements in themselves without forgetting them. Furthermore, it is possible to discover new insights though experiencing a dialogue. In this situation, participants should have a dialogue on the patterns and bring out as many keywords or topics as possible.

For 15 minutes, the participants freely exchanged their thoughts and feelings that were brought up soon after reading each pattern. Repeating such



dialogical routine for all 5 patterns, the students take note on the words or phrases that touched their heart or that they think is important to themselves, on the paper spread on the table. Figure 4 is a photo of the paper used in one of the groups, on which the participants scribbled their meaningful and important words or phrases. As you can see, the paper is full of words and phrases of the participants' feelings and experiences.

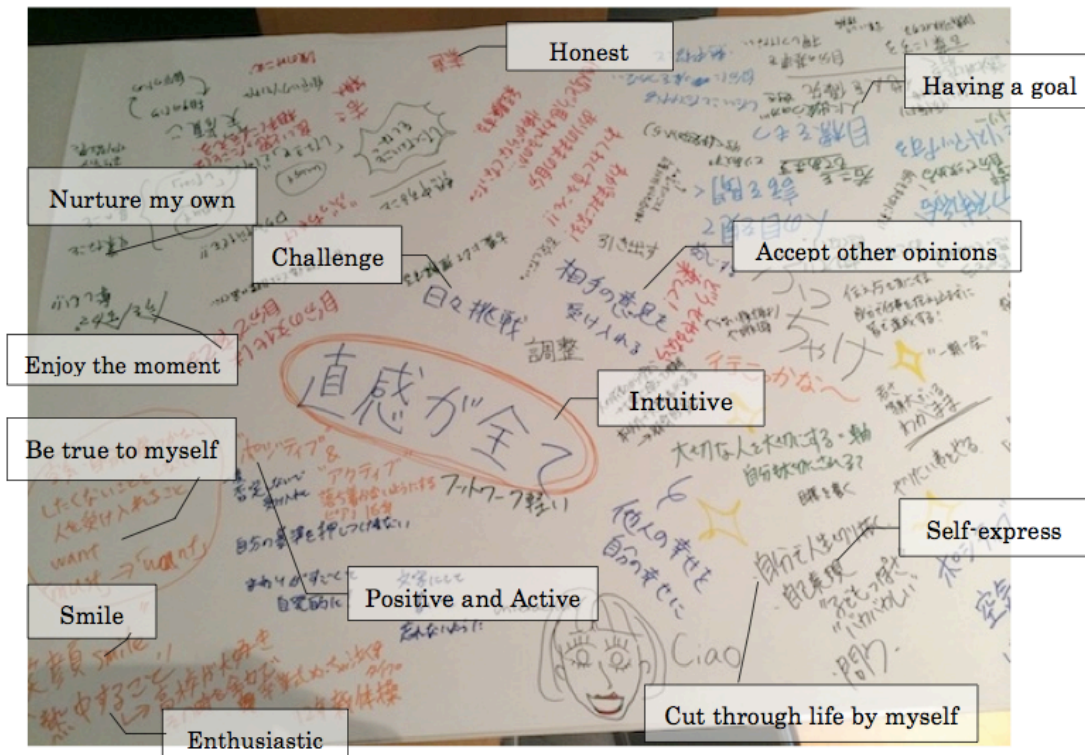


Figure 4: The memo of participants

### 4-3. Element Collecting

Referring to the notes that were written during the dialogue, one describes his/her quality or words that are touching on a little circle-shaped paper. This is the act of collecting each individual's elements that constitutes his/her Personal Culture. In selecting the small circle-shaped paper out of diverse choices, identify the size and color depending on the importance and degree of your elements. While selecting and writing the key phrases on the

circle-shaped paper, think about their scale and degree that composes your aliveness. For example, choose a relatively small circle-shaped paper to represent a keyword that you somehow weigh value on, and a big one for the most important keyword.

During the workshop, the students were provided with a set of circle-shaped paper with various color and sizes. Reviewing the words and phrases on the paper, they write their own elements of individuality on the circle-shaped paper. In this process, the students are to intuitively select the words or phrases that touch their heart or that they think are important to them. Furthermore, they are suggested to release the stereotypical mindset and collect their values and thoughts which emerged from the process of reflection and dialogue. (Figure5)

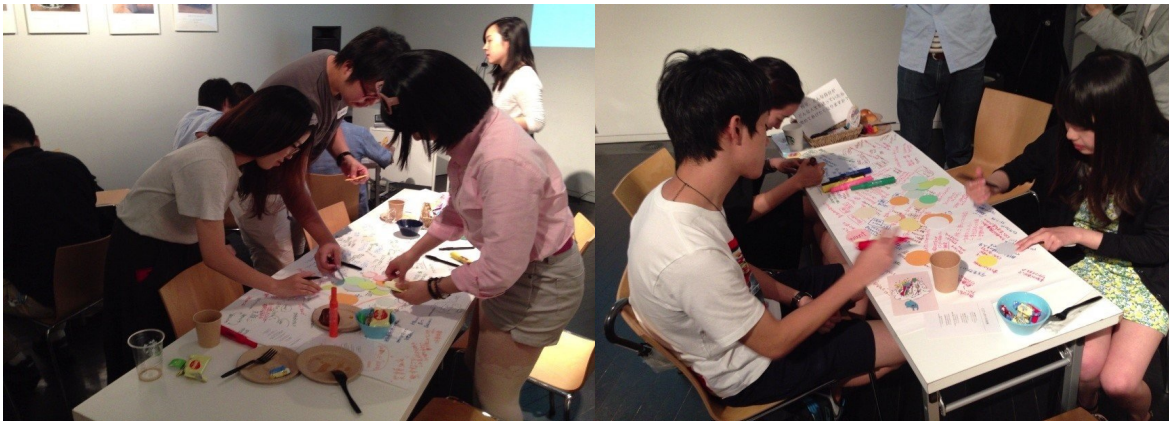


Figure 5: Element Collecting

#### 4-4. Creating Personal Picture

In this step, participants arrange the elements of the Personal Picture.

Gathering the set of various circle-shaped paper, glue them on rectangular sheet of paper, in a form of Personal Picture that shows your elements and wholeness of your aliveness. Being aware of the strength and degree of each element, which touches your heart, arrange the circles that best suits its position. Allowing to freely express one's Personal Culture with uniqueness, each can also include illustration accordingly. Relying on their natural senses, participants can perceive and express the positions of their elements

depending on the degree, through collecting and arranging them. In addition, since the Personal Picture expresses one's important value, elements, and qualities, each can look back on one's authentic self.

Figure 6 shows an example of the participant's Personal Picture that was created at the workshop. Though the participant's thoughts and emotions were juxtaposed all over the paper, they are neatly organized in Personal Picture, which expresses her individuality in a form of Personal Culture.

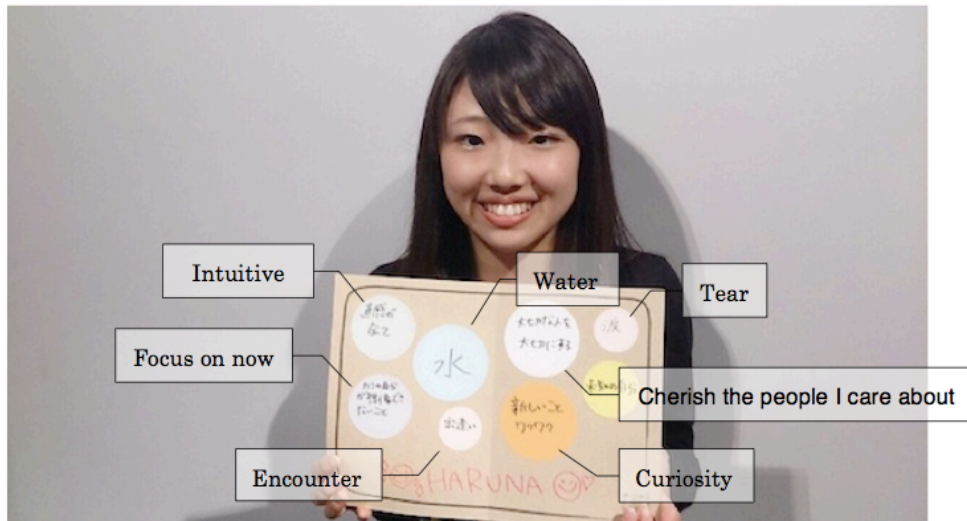


Figure 6: Personal Picture of participants of our workshop

## 5. Practice and Analysis on Self Travel Cafe

In the process of developing the Personal Picture Method using Personal Culture Pattern, we have held several workshops named, Self Travel Cafe. Starting from February 2013 and up to July 2014, we have organized Self Travel Cafe 5 times targeting high school students and university students, with approximately 280 participants in total (Figure 7 and 8).

In the Self Travel Cafe, as an additional process, a dialogue with the Personal Picture is added at the end of the usual Personal Picture Method. By including this step, participants are able to deepen their understanding about themselves through explaining and describing their Personal Picture to others.

We present some examples of Personal Pictures that participants have created (Figure 9 and 10).



Figure 7: Self Travel Cafe at Higashi Yamato Minami High School

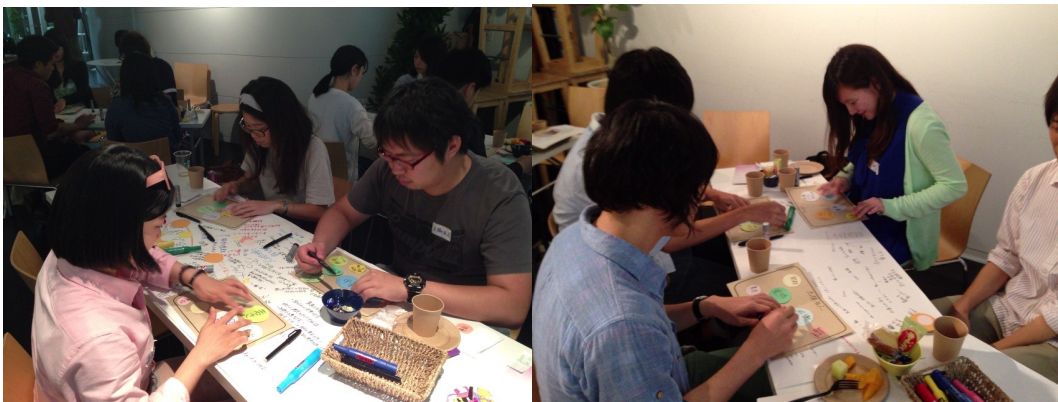
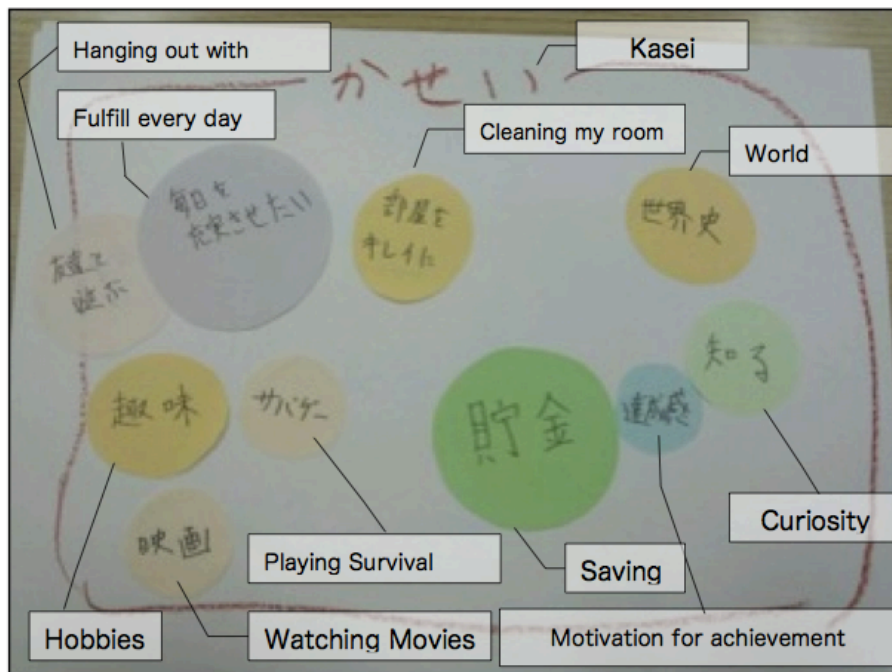
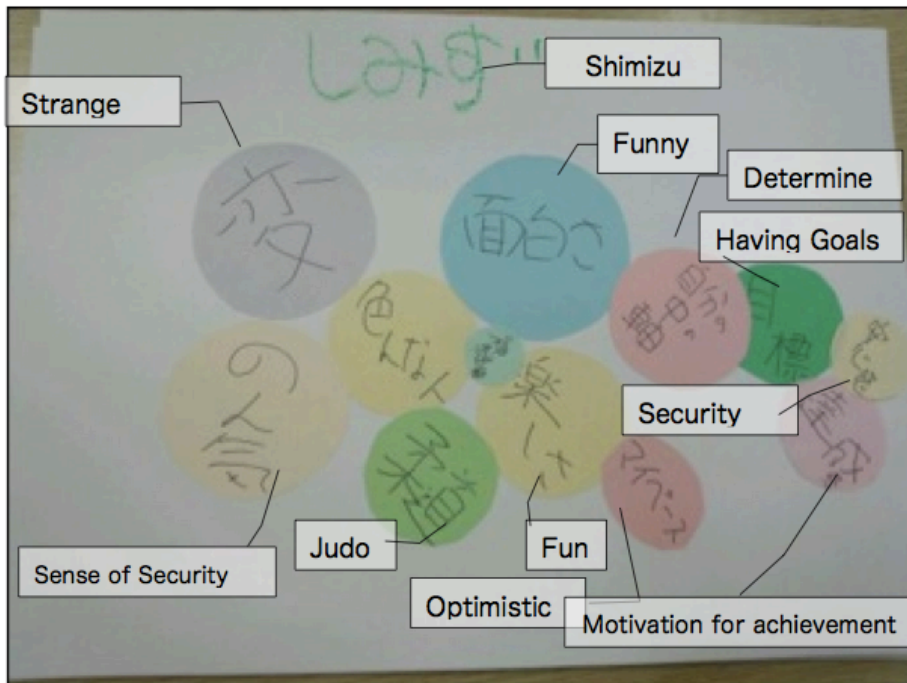


Figure 8: Self Travel Cafe at amu, a multipurpose creative space



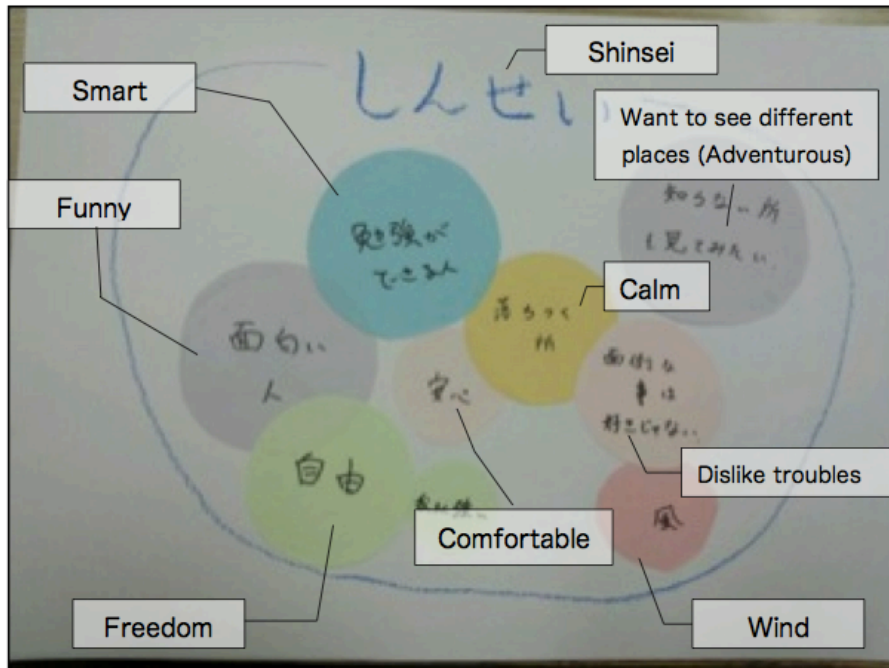
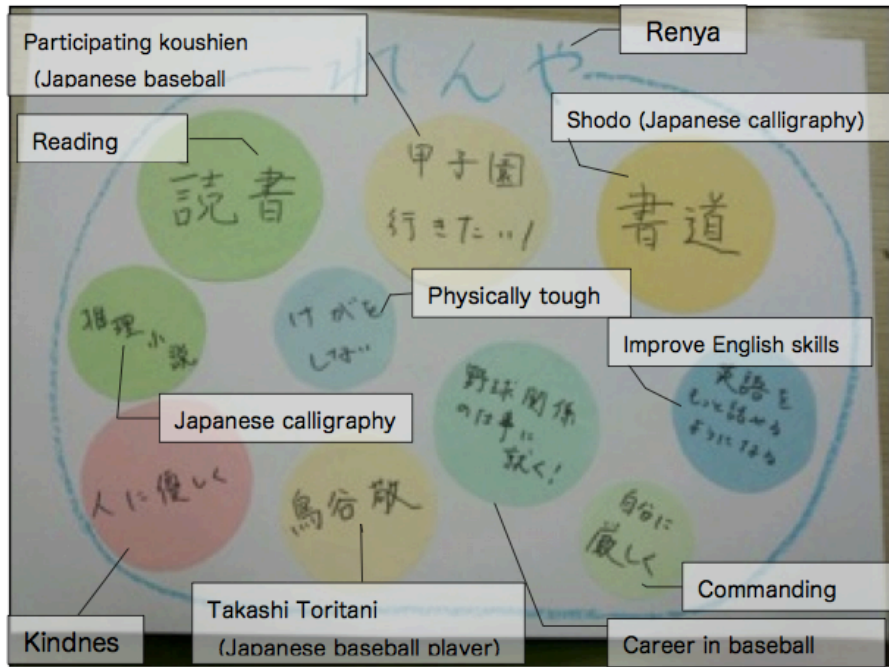
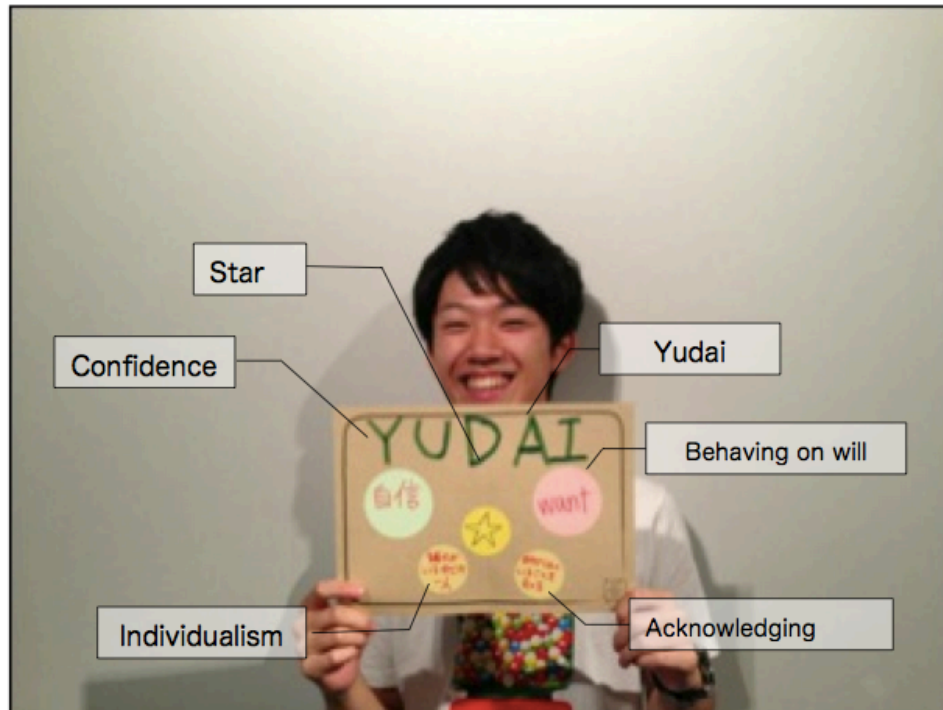


Figure 9: Personal Picture of students at Higashi Yamato Minami High School



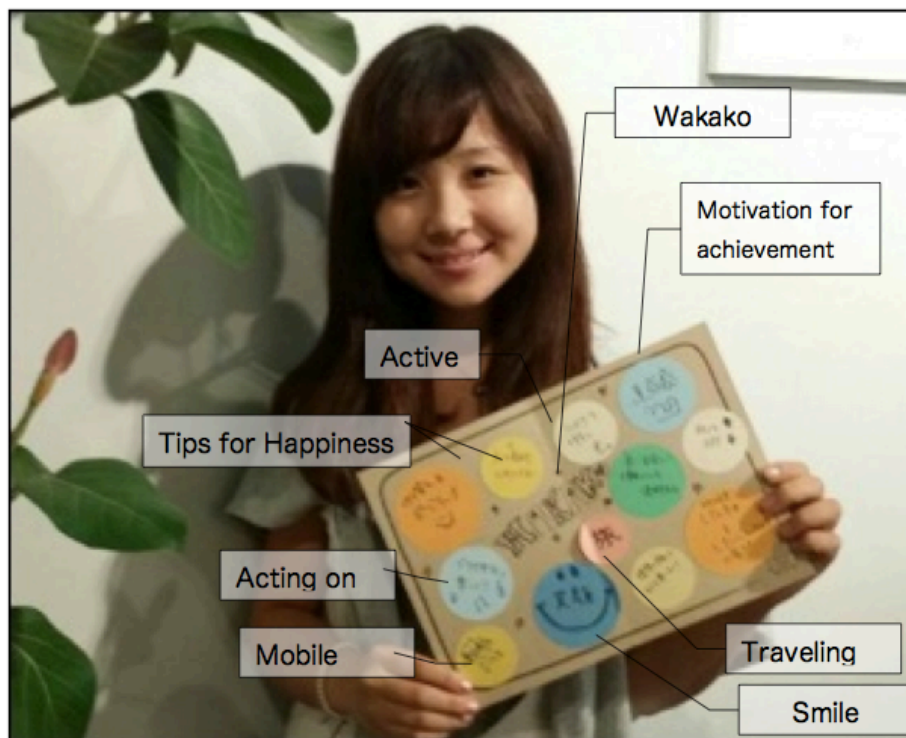
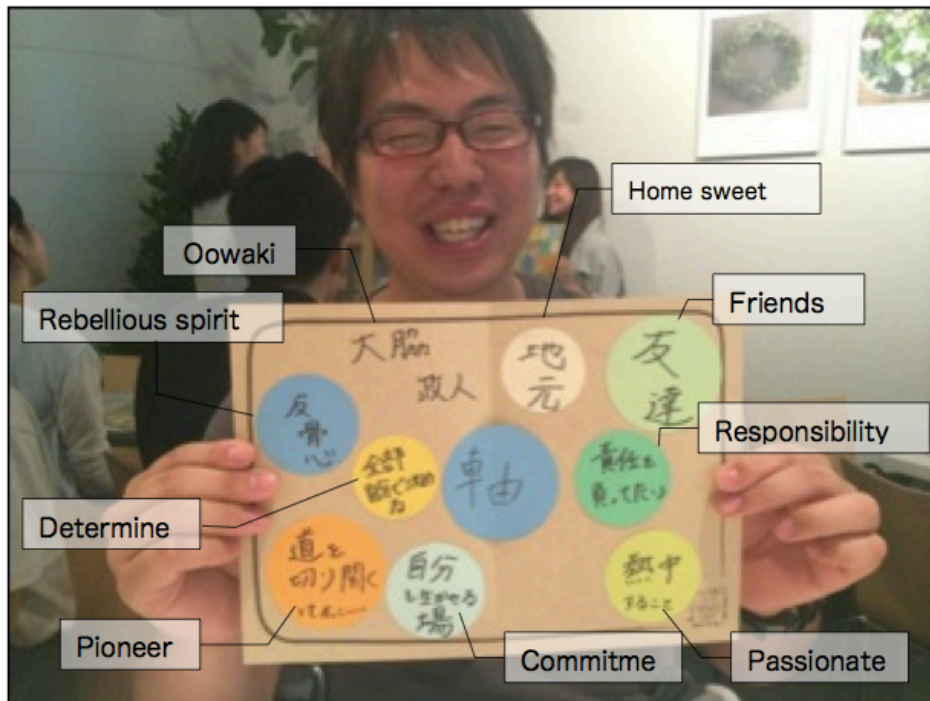


Figure 10: Participants holding their Personal Picture after Self Travel Cafe at amu



Looking through some of the remarks and thoughts of the participants after the workshop, we would like to examine the effects and results using Personal Picture Method.

### Good Opportunity

Participants having the opportunity to think deeply about themselves, which they don't usually have in their daily lives.

- Since I have been busy everyday, I was not sure if I should come to the workshop but I am glad that I came today. Rather, it was great being able to leave the hectic days and take time on facing myself. I though this workshop is perfect for those who are having a busy life.
- I think today was a rare opportunity.
- Usually we hardly have this kind of opportunity to think about ourselves so it was a good experience.
- Today was useful for me because I don't usually take time to think about myself.
- Since I don't often have this kind of opportunity, this was a valuable experience for me.
- I enjoyed today because I think it is rare to write about our personality and characteristics.
- It was a great experience because I have never thought about my thoughts and aims.
- It was a great opportunity to know myself.
- I really enjoy today's workshop. It was my first time to think about myself after being a high school student. So I had fun thinking a lot through this opportunity and listening to other participants' stories.

### Development of Awareness on Personality

Participants discovering a new aspect of their characteristics.

- I was able to discover my personality by writing about myself.
- I was able understand my personality.

- By talking to other about myself, I was able to know about my quality and strengths that I was not aware of.
- I discovered a new aspect of my characteristic.

### Power of Words

Participants thinking about themselves objectively by writing.

- The workshop motivated me to take action by putting my subconscious feeling into words.
- I was able to recognize things that I haven't known by writing my personality on a paper.

### Further Understanding about Self

Participants deepening their understandings about themselves through dialogues.

- I was able to comprehend which experiences in consist of, and how these experiences have influenced me.
- By talking with others, I was able to understand more about myself.
- I think I was able to understand my pursuits and interests.
- I was able to discover myself.
- I was able to have a new understanding of the moments that I cherish.

### Discovery of Goals

Participants clarifying their goals more clearly through the workshop.

- I would like to make effort in becoming my ideal person.
- I would like to bridge the gap between who I am know and my clearer ideal self.
- An ideal image of myself became more clearly.
- I found my future goal by getting deeper understandings of my personality.
- I was able to know my current characteristics and create a goal for my future
- Starting today, I would like to appreciate every single day.

### Enjoyment

Participants enjoying the workshop.

- I had a great time.
- It was more excited than expected.
- I was anxious before the workshop, but I enjoyed it very much.

Observing some examples from above: “I was able to recognize things that I haven’t known by writing my personality on a paper,” “I think I was able to understand my pursuits and interests,” this workshop was able to support the participants to recognize their personalities and important values and things. Additionally, “I would like to bridge the gap between who I am know and my clearer ideal self,” “I was able to know my current characteristics and create a goal for my future,” implies that the workshop can infuse some participants to think about their next step to be a better person based on their sense of values. By creating Personal Picture, people not only realize new aspect of their characteristics that they haven’t been aware of, or deepen their understandings about themselves, but also discover their prospects for growth. This method is applicable to other domains as each individual try to design his/her life. As above, the Personal Picture Method is expected to make use of the method for self-reflection or self-learning.

## **6. Conclusion**

In this paper, to support one's Self Design, we have introduced the Self Travel Café as an example to practice the Personal Picture Method applying the Personal Culture Patterns. Starting with introducing the Personal Culture Patterns for each individual to Self Design his/her own life with aliveness, there is also a possibility to apply the same method to other human action related pattern language such as Learning Patterns [4] to Self Design one’s own way of learning, and Presentation Patterns [5] to Self Design one’s own way of Presentation. For future work, we would like to further investigate possible applications of the Personal Picture Method.

## **Acknowledgments**

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