



Eating Egg ...

Going by the list of email addresses signed up for the weekly notifications for A Story A Week, it seems like the readership is split pretty much half-and-half between Japanese and overseas visitors. So in honour of the Japanese contingent, let's have a mini language lesson - giving an example of how one particular traditional English idiom might be used.

Today, Dave has egg on his face. And boy does he ever.

It's not today actually, it's from last week. Last week's story. (If you didn't read [the story last week](#), you should perhaps go back and do it now, because this is a continuation of that one ...)

I wrote about doing my year-end bookkeeping, and of how the numbers had come out quite nicely, showing me that I had made a good turnaround in my business, recovering from a few very weak years to reach a comfortable level of profitability. I then proceeded to speculate about my daughters' fashion business (just completing its second year), and how long it would be before they reached my level of annual sales.

Well, since then I have had a few email exchanges with daughter Fumi, and I learned that the question has already been answered. And not just answered, but rendered pretty much completely irrelevant.

My own gross sales for the year were about 7.2 million yen (which for the benefit of overseas readers, is about \$88,000 US). And Fumi's? She doubled me.

At the end of their second full year of business, having started from absolute zero, with no seed capital, no outside investment, using an old borrowed sewing machine, and working on the kitchen table, my two little girls have basically blown me out of the water, by coming up with a steady stream of their own designs and marketing them well, reaching a sales volume just about exactly double that of mine - built up over more than 20 years. And ... they are profitable; it has not just been 'give away' sales to build volume.

I was at first going to say something like 'I report this with mixed feelings ...', but after a bit of reflection I changed my mind. There is nothing 'mixed' about this news at all; I think this is a wonderful achievement.

In recent years we sometimes read stories in the media about 'dot com millionaires' - often a young teenager who has used the internet in some novel way to create a company which he then sells for a huge sum. The business being created by my daughters is nothing like that. They are building it the old-fashioned way - coming up with ideas for products that people will use, doing the hard work necessary to build them and get them out into the marketplace, and then following up with a level of service that leaves the customers breathless with praise. (One of the websites on which they sell their products has a ['feedback' section](#), which - at time of writing - contains more than 600 'love letters' from satisfied customers.)

When your kids are little, you of course sometimes look at them and wonder how they will 'turn out'. I have never been overly worried about that, because I have known all along that these two are 'good people' who will be assets to their society. And I'm also fully aware that satisfaction and contentment in life is not measured by how many purses (or prints!) one sells in any given year.

But as any parent will certainly testify, there is no such thing as too much confirmation that your kids are 'winners'!

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