

2025. Nov Yorimichi-Club Insight Report

「How to convey and connect unique value.」

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**This report has been edited using ChatGPT. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, but readers are encouraged to verify information for themselves.*

Executive Summary

On 13 November 2025 a “Yorimichi Club” talk session was held at the Minato City Industrial Promotion Center, followed the next day by a pitch session for the AI herbal tea service **Be By Tea**. Participants discussed the value of diversity and uniqueness, cross-cultural communication, friendship-building and well-being. The events were held in collaboration with Saiseikai Central Hospital. Guests included Takuya Honda (head of planning at Saiseikai Central Hospital), Monica Sadkiewicz (community manager) and Akiko Segawa (PR consultant), with Ken Shibuya acting as the navigator^[1]. The talk session was structured around six steps designed to respect diversity; through dialogue with participants it explored how to discover, convey and link unique values and how to envision the future.

This report distills insights from the talk session and pitch session, organizes them in the light of current research and social trends, and examines future possibilities and challenges. While positive prospects emerged—such as innovation generated by multiple perspectives, improvements in well-being and the promotion of social inclusion—the discussions also highlighted deep-rooted challenges such as long working hours, loneliness, privacy protection and ethical AI. Key elements for opening up the future include creating settings with psychological safety, dialogues imbued with curiosity and playfulness, thorough data governance, fair supply chains and an emphasis on public good. The report argues that the first step toward a sustainable and inclusive society is for individuals and organizations to express their unique value in everyday actions and to continually engage with others^{[2][3]}.

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Main Text

1. Event Overview

The Yorimichi Club talk session held on 13 November 2025 was themed “Differences make things fun! How to convey and connect unique value.” It was organized in collaboration with Saiseikai Central Hospital[1]. The program included an open pitch, a guest session, a closing and networking, held at the large hall of the Minato City Industrial Promotion Center. Admission was free and the event was delivered in a hybrid format, combining a physical venue with online streaming. Approximately 50 people participated.

The guest speakers each brought unique perspectives. **Takuya Honda**, head of planning at Saiseikai Central Hospital, works to connect healthcare with the local community and emphasized the importance of **social health** alongside physical and mental health[4]. **Monica Sadkiewicz**, a community manager originally from Poland with educational experience in Japan, builds bridges across generations and cultures[5]. **Akiko Segawa** specializes in public relations for small and medium-sized enterprises, helping organizations articulate their strengths and cultivate fans both inside and outside[6]. The session was moderated by **Ken Shibuya**, who drew on his experience in strategy, system development and human resource development within open innovation[7].

The talk session comprised six steps. **Step 1** asked “What are diversity and uniqueness?” and confirmed that diversity encompasses differences in gender, nationality, culture, physical ability, values and more, and that individual strengths and experiences affect communities and corporate financial performance. **Step 2** examined “How can we get our message across?” and explored the need for curiosity, respect, an **ethno-relative** mindset and psychological safety. **Step 3** addressed “What is needed to become friends?” sharing that mutual respect, self-esteem, curiosity and playfulness are foundations for friendship. **Step 4** invited participants to imagine what would happen if diverse and unique values were freely connected and highlighted possibilities such as innovation, increased well-being and an inclusive

economy. **Step 5** turned to reality, discussing the need for institutional reform, ethical AI, fair supply chains and stronger public institutions and education. **Step 6** asked “Where should we start?” and underscored daily practices such as embracing uniqueness, engaging in curious dialogue, forming small-group exchanges and improving information literacy. The remainder of this report organizes the opinions expressed during these steps, their underlying structures and approaches to the future.

2. Opinions Expressed

The value of diversity and uniqueness – Participants emphasized that respecting diversity promotes **innovation**. Research shows that diverse leadership correlates with better corporate financial performance and greater impact on communities and the environment[8]. Some participants noted that expressing one’s own characteristics carries risks, but the joy of connecting with sympathetic people outweighs these risks. However, because Japanese society tends not to encourage self-assertion, there was also recognition that cultural and institutional arrangements are needed to help people express themselves.

Communication challenges and how to convey messages – In response to the question “How can we get our message across?”, participants stressed the importance of asking questions with curiosity and learning in advance about the other person’s culture and background. Open University materials explain that an **ethno-relative** mindset—moving away from ethnocentrism and empathizing with others—is essential for cross-cultural communication[9]. Several participants pointed out that Japanese education does not adequately train people to state their opinions, and proposed tools such as anonymous question boxes and facilitation to ensure psychological safety. Regarding Be By Tea’s AI-mediated recommendations, some found it “easy to accept because the recommendation is objective,” while others expressed concerns about privacy and lack of explanation.

Friendship-building and the importance of empathy – Participants reaffirmed that humans have three basic desires: to be seen, to be heard and to feel safe. Akiko Segawa stated that respecting oneself makes it easier to speak up, and Monica Sadkiewicz emphasized that playfulness and joy nurture friendship. A shared view was that childlike curiosity and playfulness allow us to enjoy differences. A column by Phired Up also advocates one-on-one conversations and small routines as effective ways to build meaningful relationships[10]; the participants’ comments reflected similar ideas.

Expectations and criticisms of AI services – Be By Tea combines AI and herbal tea to deliver personalized blends based on users’ moods and concerns. Participants were excited about “how fun it is to talk to AI” and said that “objective

recommendations are easy to accept,” but they also raised concerns about privacy, data use and insufficient scientific explanation. Some criticized the service for offering only temporary relief via herbal tea while deeper problems such as working conditions and social security remain unaddressed.

3. Underlying Structures

Behind the opinions expressed lie structural issues that shape modern society. This section organizes these structures—diversity, communication, friendship and AI use—and incorporates recent research.

Social conditions and educational influence – Globalization and technological advances have lowered barriers of language and culture, yet communication barriers remain due to customs and educational differences. In Japan, the cultural norm of “not disturbing harmony” and school education tend to discourage self-assertion. In contrast, the Open University materials state that developing intercultural competence requires strong self-awareness, curiosity about others, respect and an open mind; it is important to cultivate an ethno-relative perspective[9].

Relationship between diversity and innovation – A McKinsey report shows that leadership diversity strongly correlates with corporate financial performance and social impact. A 2023 analysis found that companies with high gender and ethnic diversity in executive teams are 39 percentage points more likely to achieve top financial results than those with low diversity; companies excelling in both dimensions outperform by an average of 9 percent[11]. Conversely, companies with low diversity in both areas have a 66 percent risk of underperformance[12].

Definition of health and well-being – The World Health Organization defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and **social well-being**, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”[13]. This definition underscores that social well-being is indispensable for health and that friendships and community ties have profound effects on body and mind.

Impact of loneliness and social isolation – A June 2025 WHO report notes that one in six people worldwide face loneliness and that loneliness and social isolation have serious impacts on health and happiness. Loneliness is linked to more than 100 deaths every hour[14]. It increases the risks of stroke, heart disease, diabetes, cognitive decline and early death, and people who feel lonely are twice as likely to develop depression[15]. Conversely, friendships and community connections reduce inflammation and improve physical and mental health, and there is growing recognition of social connection as a public good.

Perspective-taking and storytelling – Researchers in the San Francisco Bay Area emphasize that effective dialogue in the face of disagreement requires understanding the other person’s perspective and empathizing both emotionally and cognitively[16]. Asking “why do you think that?” is the first step toward deeper understanding, and storytelling is an effective way to foster empathy[17]. This aligns with the talk session’s emphasis on “agree to disagree”—recognizing differences while maintaining mutual respect.

Friendship and psychological safety – The participants’ belief that mutual respect, self-esteem, curiosity and playfulness are essential for friendship aligns with psychological research. Phired Up’s column suggests that meaningful relationships are built through one-on-one interactions and small routines, and that talking with people from different backgrounds promotes personal growth[18]. Friendships have been shown to reduce inflammation and lower risk of premature death.

Dialogue across divides — “Bridging” – In today’s polarized world, **bridging** is emerging as a science-based dialogue practice. Research at the University of California, Berkeley explains that bridging focuses on **curiosity** and **deep listening**, finding common ground and telling stories rather than asserting opinions[19]. It draws on family therapy and spiritual values and emphasizes promises to stay in conversation, maintaining respect despite disagreement and uncovering the other person’s deeper fears and aspirations[20]. Experts argue that even when opinions differ greatly, the commitment to sit down and talk is the first step to overcoming divides[21].

AI and data governance – The use of AI requires ethical considerations and robust data governance. A PMI blog lists best practices for data governance in the AI era: clearly define the purpose of data, create a dedicated governance team, manage data quality and security, control access, implement retention and deletion policies, monitor compliance, continuously improve and provide training[3]. Without these measures, bias and privacy breaches can erode trust.

4. Future Possibilities

Imagining a future where diverse and unique values are freely connected reveals many possibilities. This section combines visions shared during the talk session with current research.

An explosion of innovation – When different perspectives and expertise intersect, innovative products and services can emerge. The talk session highlighted Be By Tea’s combination of AI and herbs to create a unique blending experience. Evidence that diverse leadership improves social and environmental impact[8]

suggests that entrepreneurs and organizations from different backgrounds could form new social models.

Improved well-being and community – A future where loneliness and social isolation are reduced and healthy life expectancy lengthens is imaginable. The WHO report shows that strong social connections reduce inflammation, lower the risks of serious disease and early death, and boost community resilience and happiness[22]. When unique values connect freely, local communities become more inclusive and mutual support networks develop.

Inclusive and sustainable economy – When companies prioritize well-being, adopt fair supply chains and embrace ethical AI, economic growth and social justice can coexist. Be By Tea uses 100 percent organic herbs from Myanmar and is committed to environmental care and quality management[23][24]. Ensuring fair remuneration for producers and minimizing environmental impact across the supply chain is key to reliability and sustainability.

Deeper education and learning – If education spreads cross-cultural understanding and skills for bridging differences, it will strengthen the foundation of democracy. Research from the Bay Area suggests that perspective-taking, storytelling and dialogues rooted in respect and curiosity transform conflicts into constructive learning[25]. Teaching these skills in schools and workplaces can foster a rich society where multiple truths coexist.

Integrated platforms combining AI and well-being – Be By Tea plans to expand its range of herbs while accumulating scientific evidence. It may evolve into an integrated platform that links with wearable devices and mental health apps. A future where individual health indicators connect with community well-being offers more personalized health support.

5. Keys to Realization

To make these future visions a reality, several essential elements must be addressed.

Recognizing structural issues and reforming systems – Long working hours, lack of social security and educational biases are root causes of stress and loneliness and cannot be solved by a single welfare service. Companies and governments must pursue work-style reforms and social support, creating systems that balance health and work. WHO positions loneliness and social isolation as public health priorities and calls for action across five areas: policy, research, intervention, measurement and public engagement[26]. Comprehensive policies can drive change on a societal level.

Ethical technology and data governance – With the expansion of AI and data use, protecting privacy and ensuring algorithmic transparency are imperative. According to PMI, fundamental data governance involves defining data purposes and scope, establishing a governance team, managing data quality, implementing security measures, controlling access, setting retention policies, monitoring compliance, continuous improvement and education[3]. Services like Be By Tea must minimize and anonymize data, verify AI algorithms and ensure accountability.

Fair supply chains and environmental considerations – Companies using herbs from Myanmar have a responsibility to guarantee sustainable production and fair working conditions. The Be By Tea website discloses information about the quality and safety of its organic herbs and its suppliers' efforts[23][24]. Transparency builds consumer trust. Fair trade and minimizing environmental impact are prerequisites for spreading well-being across society.

Psychological safety and diverse settings – When culture or fear of harassment suppresses expression, sharing unique values is hindered. The talk session recommended mechanisms such as anonymous questions and facilitation to ensure safety. Educational research also points out that students need norms to distinguish discomfort from danger and to engage in respectful dialogue[27]. Settings that ensure psychological safety are the foundation for drawing out diverse opinions and creativity.

Curiosity and playfulness as bridges – A blog by Nivati says that building bridges across cultures requires curiosity and a readiness to enjoy differences[28]. By openly asking questions about other cultures and disciplines and learning about their traditions and values, we can understand both commonalities and differences and cultivate empathy. The talk session similarly emphasized that curiosity and playfulness underpin friendship and innovation.

Small groups and daily practice – Realizing the principle that “friends are the best” requires daily one-on-one and small-group dialogues. Phired Up's column proposes that meaningful relationships are built through direct one-on-one conversations and small routines[10]. The column also recommends skill-sharing initiatives and candid talk sessions to encourage self-disclosure and empathy[29]. These suggestions resonate with the talk session's call to “start by getting to know each other.”

Public good and strengthening education – Well-being should be treated as a public good and shared in communities and schools. The WHO report proposes investing in social infrastructure (parks, libraries, cafés) and psychological interventions to reduce loneliness and social isolation[30]. Incorporating cross-cultural understanding and bridging skills into educational curricula equips the next generation with dialogue skills and lays the groundwork for an inclusive society[31].

6. Deep-Rooted Problems and Sobering Realities

While the future holds hope, many challenges remain. Without confronting these issues directly, a society where unique values flourish cannot be realized.

Long working hours and lack of social security – In Japan, long working hours and excessive responsibilities create stress and loneliness and hinder community connections. The talk session pointed out that work-style reforms and enhanced social security are needed. For low-income and non-regular workers, the cost of well-being services itself can be a barrier, raising concerns about social inequality.

Loneliness and mental health issues – As the WHO report shows, loneliness and social isolation increase the risks of heart disease and depression and are linked to more than 100 deaths every hour[2]. Digitalization can exacerbate loneliness through excessive online use and negative interactions, harming the mental health of young and elderly people[32].

Privacy and algorithmic bias – As AI services spread, concerns grow about privacy and data bias. If a service like Be By Tea collects data about a person's mood or health without adequate minimization and anonymization, there is risk of personal information being leaked. If an AI algorithm learns from biased data, its recommendations may be skewed and harm certain groups. As PMI advises, clear governance, data quality management, access control and continuous audit are essential[3].

Fair trade and environmental impact – Be By Tea uses organic herbs from Myanmar, but it is important to constantly verify that labour conditions and environmental protection are adequate. Without fair remuneration and protecting producers' rights, the pursuit of well-being is contradictory.

Cultural bias and discrimination – In Japan, stereotypes and exclusion toward foreigners and minorities persist, and language and cultural differences still create barriers. Monica Sadkiewicz stressed that “there is diversity within foreigners; you cannot treat everyone with one model”. Understanding people through stereotypes distorts the essence of diversity and hinders recognition of unique value.

Loneliness at work and declining productivity – A Cigna survey (“Loneliness in America 2025”) found that more than half of American workers feel lonely; lonely employees are more likely to miss work or leave, significantly affecting productivity and costs[33]. The study reported that 74 percent of workers who do not feel lonely say they are willing to work harder for the company's success, compared with only 63 percent of lonely workers[34]. It recommends that managers support work-life balance, foster inclusive culture and build genuine relationships to enhance

employees' vitality and engagement[35]. These findings suggest that workplace loneliness may be overlooked in Japan and that organizations must treat well-being not just as a benefit but as a cultural transformation.

7. Approaches to the Future

Addressing deep-rooted challenges and realizing future possibilities requires a multi-layered approach at the level of individuals, organizations and society.

Individual approaches

- **Embrace and express uniqueness:** Articulate your own values and experiences and share them without fear. Self-disclosure invites empathy and learning and enhances self-esteem.
- **Practice curiosity and questioning:** When encountering different cultures and values, suspend judgment and ask about the other person's background and reasons. As Nivati suggests, curiosity is essential for enjoying differences[28].
- **Cultivate daily interactions:** Make a habit of one-on-one and small-group conversations, seeking encounters that transcend titles and nationalities. Phired Up notes that sharing coffee or a meal deepens relationships[10].
- **Ensure psychological safety:** Foster a family or workplace culture where people can share failures and weaknesses and ask for feedback. Tools such as anonymous question boxes and online forms can also reduce burden.
- **Enhance information literacy:** Proactively learn about the scientific basis and privacy policies of AI services and herbal teas. Checking the ethics and sustainability of services and making informed choices is the first step toward social responsibility[3].
- **Practice dialogue across divides:** In conversation, avoid trying to change the other person's opinion; instead listen with curiosity and deep attention and look for shared points and stories. Berkeley's bridging research shows that storytelling promotes empathy and eases conflict[21]. Individuals who practice this mindset in everyday conversations can contribute to bridging societal divisions.

Organizational and community approaches

- **Design for dialogue:** Use anonymous questions and online forms in events and meetings so that everyone feels able to express opinions. Facilitators should turn conflicts into constructive learning[25].

- **Introduce shared experiences:** Regularly host herbal tea workshops, cultural exchange events and other programs that transcend titles and backgrounds. Themes that stimulate curiosity and playfulness promote dialogue.
- **Implement sustainable well-being measures:** When introducing well-being services as benefits, clearly explain privacy protection and scientific basis and create an environment where employees can use the services with peace of mind. Holding events open to local residents helps reduce health disparities.
- **Embed bridging skills in curricula:** Incorporate cross-cultural understanding and bridging skills into school and corporate training. Berkeley's bridging practice recommends curiosity, deep listening, focusing on common ground and storytelling[21]. Integrating such practices into education helps ease divides.
- **Implement data governance and ethical AI:** When introducing AI, build a data governance framework and clearly define policies for data collection, storage and use[3]. Consider algorithmic audits and explainable AI to reduce bias.
- **Reform management to address loneliness:** As research shows that loneliness significantly affects productivity[33], managers must support work-life balance, foster inclusion and build trust with team members. Employees who are not lonely are more committed to the company's success[36]. Establishing systems to reduce workplace loneliness improves well-being and performance.

Social and policy approaches

- **Loneliness measures and social infrastructure:** Following WHO recommendations, develop policies to reduce loneliness and social isolation and improve social infrastructure such as parks, libraries and community spaces[30].
- **Work-style reform and social security:** Correct long working hours, improve the management of working hours and leave, and strengthen social security to stabilize people's lives. Improving the work environment reduces stress and loneliness at the root.
- **Promote fair trade and environmental regulations:** Introduce regulations requiring fair trade and environmental protection throughout supply chains so that companies engage in sustainable procurement. Consumers must also be informed so they can choose ethical products.
- **Public education and awareness campaigns:** Carry out campaigns highlighting the importance of social connection, privacy protection and

cross-cultural understanding. Initiatives like WHO's "Knot Alone" campaign show that no one should be left lonely[37].

Fusion of technology and practice

- **Use AI to facilitate dialogue:** Use AI chatbots to check mood and health and to trigger human dialogue. However, anonymization of data and algorithm verification are prerequisites to gain user trust.
- **Create hybrid venues:** Hybrid events that combine online and face-to-face interactions make participation easier. In physical venues, participants can connect over drinks and snacks, while online attendees can join via audio only[38].

8. First Steps Toward the Future

Realizing future possibilities begins with small steps starting today. Below are concrete actions individuals, organizations and society can take.

Steps individuals can take

1. **Tell your story** – Share your own background, values and experiences with others and listen to their stories. Storytelling generates empathy and understanding and improves the quality of dialogue[17].
2. **Increase daily conversations** – Even in busy daily life, set aside time to talk one-on-one with family, colleagues or friends and ask questions and listen consciously. Phired Up notes that meeting face-to-face is the foundation of deeper bonds[10].
3. **Try customs from other cultures** – Incorporate cultural practices from other countries, such as food or games. Nivati's example describes how curiosity about other traditions and enjoying long meals bring new joy[39].
4. **Take a digital detox** – Limit the use of smartphones and social media and set aside time to focus on real conversation. The WHO report warns that excessive screen time and negative online interactions heighten feelings of loneliness[32].
5. **Consume ethically** – When purchasing herbal teas or foods, check for organic or fair-trade certifications and examine the company's environmental and labour practices. Supporting services like Be By Tea, which emphasize quality and transparency[23], can shift the market.
6. **Practice dialogue across divides** – In conversation, focus on listening deeply and finding common ground instead of trying to change the other person's opinion. Berkeley's bridging research shows that storytelling fosters empathy

and eases conflict[21]; individuals who adopt this stance contribute to reducing divisions.

Steps organizations can take

1. **Strengthen diversity and inclusion** – Emphasize diversity in hiring and promotion, and create mentoring systems and training to help diverse talent thrive. McKinsey’s data show that diverse leadership improves corporate performance[11].
2. **Introduce ethical AI and transparency** – In developing services, thoroughly protect privacy and implement data governance; clearly explain to users how data is used and how algorithms work[3].
3. **Design spaces for learning and dialogue** – Hold intercultural exchange events and creative workshops inside and outside the organization, and foster a culture where employees can safely express opinions. Tools for anonymous questions and facilitators support this.
4. **Extend well-being to the public** – Open well-being services not only to employees but also to local residents, reducing health disparities. When using services like Be By Tea, ensure fair pricing and transparency along the supply chain.
5. **Provide data literacy education** – Train employees on safe data handling, privacy protection, AI limitations and ethics so that the entire organization shares and manages risks.

Steps society should take

1. **Institutionalize loneliness measures** – Recognize loneliness and social isolation as public health issues and formulate concrete plans across the five areas proposed by WHO: policy, research, intervention, measurement and public engagement[26]. Strengthening community centres, public libraries and mental health support is necessary.
2. **Education reform and civic education** – Develop curricula that teach cross-cultural understanding, critical thinking, dialogue skills and digital literacy. Universities and companies should support lifelong learning so that citizens can respect diversity[31].
3. **Strengthen environmental and social regulations** – Establish laws promoting fair trade and environmental preservation, ensuring that companies operate sustainably. Consumers also need transparent information to choose ethical products.
4. **Public campaigns and awareness** – Conduct campaigns on the importance of social connection, privacy protection and cross-cultural understanding.

Initiatives such as WHO's "Knot Alone" campaign show the importance of creating a society where no one is left lonely[37].

9. Overall Summary

This report organizes discussions on diversity, uniqueness, communication, friendship and well-being based on insights from the Yorimichi Club guest session and the pitch session for the AI herbal tea service **Be By Tea**. The events confirmed that recognizing and expressing unique value without fear yields empathy and learning and is key to enhancing **social well-being**[13].

Research shows that diverse leadership improves corporate financial and social performance and that loneliness has severe impacts on health[11][2]. Yet challenges remain in Japan, including long working hours, difficulty in self-expression and stereotypes. While AI and well-being services hint at new possibilities, trust cannot be gained without ethical foundations such as privacy protection, data governance and fair supply chains[3][23].

To open up the future, individuals must share their stories and engage with curiosity and playfulness. Organizations need to promote diversity and inclusion and provide spaces for psychological safety and learning. Society must enact loneliness measures, reform education and promote fair trade and environmental conservation. These efforts complement each other and create an ecosystem for transforming diversity into strength and building an inclusive society where everyone can live authentically.

As the Yorimichi Club talk session demonstrated, **differences are the source of new possibilities**. Valuing unique attributes and exchanging and connecting them increases people's happiness and community resilience. First steps toward the future begin with small daily actions. By increasing dialogue, nurturing curiosity and making ethical choices, each of us can change the world bit by bit.

The practice of bridging supports these first steps. Approaching others with curiosity, deep listening and storytelling softens divisions and creates hope and a sense of belonging[21]. Addressing workplace and societal loneliness improves employee engagement, corporate sustainability and overall well-being[40]. Learning and reflecting on these insights, and translating them into practice and policy, will lead toward a sustainable and inclusive future.

Finally, the insights from this talk session and pitch session show that the Yorimichi Club is more than an event—it is a microcosm of society. When people from different backgrounds gather and share their experiences and values, hidden challenges surface and new possibilities arise. For example, the unusual combination of AI and herbal tea opens up a junction between technology and nature, science and

sensibility, offering hints for enriching individual well-being. Such attempts can also act as catalysts for DX (digital transformation) and SX (sustainable transformation).

The future is created through small actions in front of us and by people with diverse backgrounds walking together with mutual respect. We hope that readers will rediscover their own unique value, share it with others, and learn from one another's differences. We hope this report will help broaden dialogue and practice toward a better society.

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