

Discuss a life experience that has most dramatically affected your attitudes.

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Last day of sixth grade, I say goodbye to my life in America as my family plans to build a new one halfway around the world in Ethiopia. As I arrive, I take in the scenes of my new environment; Beneath the beauty lies crippling poverty. As cars stop in traffic, the young and elderly beg with their eyes and hands for a crumb of bread or money through the closed window that separated us.

Still wearing my uniform from school, I go to our little family market on the corner ready to help around the store, when a boy walks in. His uniform is torn around his legs with a few holes in his shirt as he drags his feet up the steps. Rather than looking to buy something, he approaches my mom with big brown eyes and asks, "May I please have one notebook and pencil for school?" He bows his head waiting to hear yet another response of rejection and condemnation. To his surprise, without any hesitation, my mother scoops up several notebooks, and other supplies, and gives it to him free of charge. He hugs the bag and jumps with immense excitement for an item I found insignificant. Nevertheless, his contagious smile warms my heart. Not much separated us, we were just kids, yet our circumstances caused us to live parallel lives.

Having grown up in an American society, I placed considerable value on brand name clothes, phones, and accessories. The bare essentials: the water that we drink or the clothes we wear is simply overlooked. This boy was happy to see a paper and a pencil. He showed me the value of what I already have and not take it for granted.

Watching my mom extend such a small kindness to the boy inspires me to serve underprivileged communities in my home country of Ethiopia. Igniting my determination to give back, through becoming Miss Ethiopia USA 2018-19 and founding the Ethiopian-Eritrean Society, I have donated over two-hundred boxes filled with books, school supplies, clothes, hygiene necessities, medical supplies, and more. Two-hundred boxes filled with love from those who donated, helped pack the boxes and spread the word. Set by my mother's example, I wish to continue to extend my hand to those in need on an even wider scale and motivate others to do the same. It only takes one notebook.