

This experience heightened my curiosity in the world and people around me. It's one thing to know that everyone around you has their own story and life, but it's another to ask and listen. You cannot truly grasp this idea until you step out of your comfort zone and ask the more hard-hitting questions. Learning about other people, though it seems small in scale to the entire globe, ultimately allows you to better understand yourself and the world. This experience led me to asking these questions and learn about someone I may have never gotten to know. I also would never normally approach someone, so it gave me that incentive to do it, and now that it is over I want to continue establishing connections with others. Taking a step beyond small talk when it comes to strangers will open your eyes to ideas you may not have considered before. Even if these interactions amount to nothing, you can still say you learned something at the end of the day and you could have impacted the person more than you realize.

Going forward, aside from my personal growth with meeting strangers, it is important to look at this from a teaching lens. Teachers who make an effort to get to know their students prove to be much more successful than those who do not in several ways, notably in how students feel more inclined to participate and interact when they feel understood. Students should never feel a stranger to their teachers and vice versa as this inevitably leads to miscommunication and upset. Students need to be heard to find power in their individual selves and stories, as they will take this confidence with them in their whole lives. Icebreakers can seem silly, but this is one way to give students a voice and not only connect with them, but allow them to connect with their peers on a personal level.