

Many students  
expand their view of  
the world during

[Profession](#), [Student](#)



There was a time when the world we live in was in a somewhat peaceful mode. There was existing discord among countries and there were political and social misunderstandings being resolved but overall, there was a semblance of a fragile peace and tolerant understanding of each others problems, race, and gender. That all changed overnight after the events of September 11.

Overnight, the tolerance and fragile peace existing between our country and those of the Middle East, Europe, and Asia was thrown into a dizzying tailspin. Everything that we thought we knew about our middle-eastern neighbors was thrown out the window and they suddenly became an almost persecuted race worldwide. This loss of tolerance and understand towards the Middle Eastern nationals saddens me no end. Perhaps it is because, even though I was born and raised as an American, myfamily's roots are deeply entrenched in the Middle East.

I lived eleven years of my life as a citizen of the Middle East. I am one of them. Therefore, I understand thecultureand religion even though I am now more influenced by my westernized upbringing. Even though my parents tried hard to instill some of our Old World value into me, it was a struggle for me to identify with the traditions and ways they wanted me to follow.

No one else in my social circle had to follow the same norms as set by their family that I did. Eventually, the western ways won out and I forgot what it was like to be a Mid Easterner. This is whyI believethat the person or classmate who will have a tremendous impact on my life while in college will

be someone who is an exchange student or foreign national enrollee from any part of the Middle East.

The reason I believe this is because; I have slowly come to realize that the people from the Middle East have been suffering from prejudice since the events of 9/11. The race has been judged collectively and branded by the world as terrorists. All member countries of that eastern block have been judged by the decisions and acts of a few misguided people from their area of the world. It is time for us to stop the prejudice. It is time to stop the war. It is time for us, as the free leader of the world, to stop, analyze and think about what we are doing to those people. It could be an act of veiled of revenge already on our part. That understanding can start small and trickle down. It can start with me.

I would expect that this potential classmate of mine to help me understand where the prejudice comes from. Why do we see them in such bad light? How do they view us as a nation? I believe that a fellow Middle Easterner student and I will be able to relate and have many things in common. He may not be from the country my parents come from. But, he will at least share the same beliefs and traditions as my parents and maybe, just maybe, I can learn even more from him about my roots and traditional heritage. Those things and lessons will be fun for me to encounter because I missed out on those things when my family moved to the United States.

Since he will be like a mentor to me, I also expect to learn other things from him. I expect to learn more about tolerance for others who may not understand from him. He can show me how to deal with the situations he

faces everyday. I have been known to have a short attention span so dedication and effort are not really very strong points in me as a student and person. I am hoping that he will be able to teach me that since Middle Easterners are known for their tolerance and patience in the face of adversity.

Aside from those specific things, I know that I will learn a lot in terms of life lessons from him or her simply by observing the person as his or her daily life unfolds. Everyday is a learning experience for everyone, he or she can be my out of class mentor, friend, and ally if need be.