

My favorite memory from the past year

[Experience](#), [Memories](#)



“ If it scares you, it might be a good thing to try,” said Seth Godin. In February of the past year, my classmates and I traveled to Kitulgala, Sri Lanka, a riverside village surrounded by an abundant forest. Being so far away from my home and my family was challenging and a little frightening at times, but thinking about it today, I realize that this journey i went on with my favorite people is my most precious memory, that I will forever hold in my heart.

First of all, the location of the camp we stayed in was splendid and, the activities they had planned for us were entertaining and enriching. I was impressed by the breathtaking sights, the beauty of nature, the strength of the river current. We were surrounded by lush greenery and colorful fructiferous trees. This scenery has an instinctive calming effect on human souls, a scenery before which I stood with captivation. We were free from all of our responsibilities and daily duties. They were no rules except staying away from the river during the night and at dawn because the river current can be alarmingly strong at times and can easily carry us away. We spent three days switching from an activity to another; from abseiling to rafting, hiking, swimming and cliff diving. Some of the activities were terrifying at the beginning, but they were not as hard as I thought they would be, they were surprisingly very amusing.

This trip was not only for fun and tourism, but it was also for volunteerism. Just a month before traveling, we organized a bake sale to raise funds, and when we got there, we visited a public school that needed financial help and moral support. The students welcomed us with an exceptional performance that we truly cherished. They offered us food and tried to talk to us.

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Unfortunately, they did not speak English, but we equally did not understand Sinhalese. We had learned a few basic words but of course, it was not enough to have a conversation. We often exchanged smiles with the students because it was our only way of showing our gratitude for their warm welcoming. I figured out that smiling is part of a universal language. A simple smile can permeate language, cultural or other barriers and can relay the message that WE CARE. These encounters were meaningful to me. I realized that we live in a world where everyone is so caught up in his own life that we tend to forget what really matters. This trip taught me the importance of gratitude and care and that changed my life for the better.

As I reminisce this memory, I can't help but feel warmly nostalgic for the euphoric state that bursts from within that memory. The value of the time I spent there made me realize that we only fear what we don't know. Now that I do know, I can't stop recalling the moments and I am sure there is a lot more to unravel. I am excited for what lies ahead.