

Disconnection story



Culture Shock: Disconnection in New York City Traveling is something I see importance in my life. Saint Augustine said " The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page" and I couldn't agree more. I never pass up the chance to go for a holiday, so when my Mum asked me if I wanted to come along with her for her business trip in New York City, excitement abounds me. I was sitting on the bed of W Hotel 2 days later after my Mum asked me along, that I realized I left my bag of mobile devices back in Singapore.

She had whole weeks' of meeting to attend to and I was left alone to explore the streets of New York without technology in my hands. It was a culture shock, disconnection from my devices. Everything I had planned, the lists I have created on the places to visit and the food to eat was all in my phone. It was a painful separation from technology, as it is now that I needed it more than I ever did, and it was only the first day of my trip.

The first day was the toughest, learning to get around without the help of my Google Maps, having to eat without the help of food APS to show me the reviews of the eateries and the toughest of all, having to interact with foreign people to learn how to get around and the mode of transport to take. I found myself doing something I never do when I travel - being sociable. It was as if, knowing I'd be unplugged from the world I'm most comfortable with, I wanted to find a new belonging in this foreign ground. It might sound dramatic, but it changed how the world feels without the use of mobile devices.

I remembered finding myself in an alfresco dining restaurant recommended by a local, the food was great but what really caught my attention was the immense amount of people passing by and being so engaged on their mobile devices. At that moment, I had a realization that technology had become a culture and I was stuck in an unexpected culture shock. People don't stop to look at the colors and sounds around them anymore and it was then that I decided not possessing any form of technology might be a good thing and I had to make the best of my trip instead of moping around without it.

After my meal I turned to the table beside me for recommendations on desserts and drinks. They started telling me of the countless places I can go and what to expect there, and after a few exchanges of lines, they warmed up to me through my anecdotes from personal life, they came over to sit at my table to extend their friendliness and to get to know me better, something I would never see myself doing for foreigners. I started finding myself being engaged in their conversation and stepping out of my comfort zone to make friends in a foreign world. Once again, it was something I did not expect from myself in my own country.

And it paid off, they invited me to join them at a bar where they were going to meet more friends and it turned out to be one of the best nights Vive had. In my subsequent days, this group of new found friends brought me around to various areas of New York City, like East village, SoHo, Dumb and the famous Grand Central Park. It was better than what I had planned, I learned about things I could not find on the internet, or the personal stories they shared with me. In truth; technology can never replace human interaction. Being

unplugged and plugged back into a different kind of connection was a culture shock to me.

Maybe not in the way Vive always valley culture smock, out In my own personal way AT Deluge Electrolytes Witt technology in a foreign land. Our lives circles around such devices, it's like gravity, and I can't say that I'm not one that ties myself to such devices. But this trip taught me an invaluable experience, that by disconnecting myself from my very own culture and plugging myself into another, it amplifies your senses, it makes your time spent feel more worthwhile and it actually changes how one views a foreign land. I might have started bad on my first day in New York, but I ended greatly.

It took me awhile adjusting to not having convenience at the palm of my hands and having a device to keep me company when I felt alone. But it forced me to get into the New York culture, got me out of my comfort zone and I have to say, I did not regret it. It might not be a culture shock like visiting Ireland or Thailand but it was the most impact to me. Now whenever I travel, I do not rely on my personal devices so much, yes some research is needed but that's all, I rather allow the places I visit to shock me with their culture, pleasantly of course.