

2021 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – 2nd Prize]

THE UNIQUE PIECES IN OUR MOSAICS

(Original)

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When I was ten, I once heard a young woman talk to her friends about what life meant to her. Surprisingly, I still remember her, like it all happened yesterday. It was near an ice cream stand, and the woman had chestnut hair. She talked with fascination, narrating every detail to her friends, completely oblivious to the fact that there was a ten-year-old cautiously listening to her tale. She was talking about her awakening, how she saw everything in a new perspective, how she now knew the purpose of her presence on Earth. Being young, I didn't quite understand what she meant, but her words stayed with me, always followed by an impression of confusion.

Years later, that very moment jumped into my head. Now being able to understand what she was talking about, I disagreed with the woman. Life, our life, is not a still line that we follow blindly, waiting to be elevated to a higher level of consciousness. Life isn't a line, it is a chaotic, complicated, jumble of routes that could have been taken, that should have been taken, that were the wrong or the right choice. Every decision we make has an influence on these roads that form our path. Awakenings or realizations don't happen overnight, they take series of small, almost unnoticeable changes that we barely acknowledge. Every time we read, we draw, we listen, we see, but most importantly, every time we cross someone's path, we awaken.

To me, life is a mess we are all trying to make a sense of. There is no way to tell if we are going in the right direction, making the right choice or even chasing the right ending. To all the people I asked what life meant, some told me to do whatever makes me happy, without caring about others or what they think, because we only live once. I disagree with that idea, we may only have one life, but we should use it to make things better for the people after us.

I often wonder why we lead our life thinking about what people perceive us as. After all, we see them for such little time and eventually forget them. Why should we bother to wonder what they think of us? Maybe it's because we are somehow aware we all have an impact on each other. We live our life, not only walking on our complicated road, but we also intertwine with people's path. Everyone on this planet has admired, imitated or thought like the ones they met, even if it was only for a few seconds. We take after our parents, our friends, the people we see through our screens or even a chestnut-haired woman near an ice cream stand. We do our beds in the morning because our parents taught us to, we cook with our grandparent's recipes because they told us it was the best, we tell the jokes we heard from our friends, we smile when we see others do it too. We all have an impact on people, whether we want to or not. Since we are young, we are always told we are our own person, unique, with flaws and talents, but we are so much more than that, we are a mosaic of every person we ever met. Life does not only belong to ourselves, life is shared with whoever we come across or even think about. We do not only exist for ourselves, we exist to support each other, to love, to make our world better.

One day, we will all be forgotten. The memories others had of us will have faded away just like our life did. Memories may not be permanent, but to me, life is about leaving an impression onto someone, our own unique piece in their mosaic. That is the reason I try to stay kind, the reason I study and work hard for a better future, the reason I am writing these words now. The memory that we once existed will certainly fade with time, but the impact we had on the world, on other people, that will never be forgotten.