

When you experience an “aha” moment, you gain a new lens. A lens through which you see things a little differently in regards to both yourself, and your surroundings. Now, the wonderful asset of these lenses is that you are not confined to one, or two, or three. Rather, you can compile a whole collection of lenses from thousands of small moments throughout your lifetime. Imagine every lens, every small frame of tinted glass in different shapes and sizes, making up a whole mosaic. This mosaic essentially serves as your overall perspective of our world.

I've begun collecting my own array of lenses especially within these past years of the seemingly defining times of high school.

If we rewind to my freshman year and anyone asked me what I wanted to do when I grow up, I would have responded, without hesitation, that I would become the chief merchandiser for J. Crew in their high story manhattan office. In fact, I wrote an entire research paper about exactly how I intended to fulfill said career for my freshman English teacher, Mrs. Vemuri.

But then came sophomore year.

This year, I took an advanced biology course in which I was exposed to a whole new realm of education. One day, I stepped foot into my classroom second period and in front of me lay a winding configuration of desks covered with various shapes, and 3D figures, and color codes, and plastic vehicles, and pool noodles, and more. Here, my teacher, Ms. Pintavalle,

transformed our classroom into a large-scale, interactive model of a eukaryotic cell in effort to literally demonstrate the complex processes of photosynthesis and cellular respiration.

Throughout this course, I often found myself fascinated by the lectures, eager to learn and understand more. For the first time in my academic career, my mind was continuously stimulated as I attempted to wrap my senses around the fact that there is an unfathomable amount of knowledge and information available with which people can apply to vital causes. In reflecting on my profound passion for this science, I soon found myself stepping down an unfamiliar path. I had gained a new lens.

By my junior year, if anyone asked me what I wanted to do when I grow up, I no longer had a definite answer. I was pivoting between my earlier roots and my latest exposure to the exciting possibilities of medicine.

Finally, when I traveled to the Dominican Republic last July alongside my South Church family on the Arm2Arm trip, I probably collected a hundred or so new lenses. While my experience assisting the amazing Bostonian Nurses and Haitian doctors strengthened my desire to pursue a medical career, there was one particular moment, I'll never forget it, that flipped a switch in both my mind and my heart. I was at the village of Batey Bonisita, working on home improvements. I approached a woman standing beside her house to ask what color paint she desired for her front door. In the midst of our conversation, the woman suddenly silenced. Her eyes lost focus. Her muscles tensed. The woman was seizing. And I was frozen. As her neighbors gathered to help her regain consciousness and soothe her baby, I stood still.

After this moment, I realized that I felt not only a wish, but a need, to have the ability to aid someone in such a situation.

Today, I feel more than confident to be attending college this fall as a declared Nursing student, where I can avidly expand my understanding of biological and chemical concepts, and moreover learn to never again feel helpless in the face of need.

Because of these 'aha' moments in my life, I was able to widen my perspective and further discover myself.

Though as I said earlier, these moments of realization do not cease to arise.

In today's world where the majority of our pressing issues are heavily rooted in a crippling plague of ignorance, I challenge every one of you to be more attentive and more active.

Because in listening to an unprecedented voice, in learning something foreign, you may stumble across moments that cause you to think differently, moments that will expand your mosaic, regardless of your stage in life, for there is no limit to your progression.