

Devan Roper
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Love.

It's such a broad word. Love can be so many different things. It can be complex, simple, something shared with friends or shared in a marriage.

I argue it also can be a purpose, because I believe it is mine.

From the streets of New York City, to the soccer fields of El Salvador. One thing that has been a constant motivator and drive for me is my love for others. Through my experiences in New York, I have learned that poverty is everywhere. I am a privileged individual and blessed with the resources that I have been given. On my commute to school, I see at least one homeless person every day. It is humbling and also upsetting. Seeing them everyday has led me to question how I should go about loving other people. How do I best help people who are struggling and how do I do it in a respectable and careful way?

Through my experiences in El Salvador, I learned that we do not really need a lot of the things that are considered "needs" in America. We may want the coolest clothes and the latest cell phone, but there is more to life than objects that give temporary satisfaction. Love can give you more joy than material objects and I saw that first-hand in El Salvador. The people of El Salvador had less material things than I do in America, but they had more love than I have ever seen or received in America. They also had a delicate care and appreciation of the environment around them. Since most of the people I met were farmers, I heard a lot about how the land provides for them and how important it is to respect the earth. Hearing their stories sparked a passion in me. A passion for Latin America, a passion for sustainable living and care of the environment, and a passion to help others in anyway possible, anywhere I am.

My experiences have grown my passions and love for other people. My goal for the future is to combine these passions in the pursuit of my believed purpose - to love. To combine these, I plan to major in International Studies with a concentration in International Development. Through this major, I hope to be able to include independent studies on sustainable living in Latin American communities. I also plan to double major in Spanish so I can learn more about the language and the culture and appropriate customs that Latin American countries hold. Through my experiences doing missions in El Salvador, I have learned that how you approach helping others with a different culture than yourself is extremely important. You must help with respect and the awareness that you are not saving these people, but instead trying to work with them to help them. It is never about changing a community, but instead aiding a community so it can thrive independently. In order for me to achieve this goal, I must gain the appropriate knowledge that will enable me to respectfully go into these communities that are struggling to survive.

Higher education can provide this knowledge. College will grant me the chance to learn more about sustainability and Latin America. It will give me opportunities to immerse myself in the culture through study abroad programs. I am pursuing a college degree so I can help others with the most efficiency and care that the people of struggling communities deserve.

The future is unpredictable, but I have set goals and I plan to achieve them.

My purpose is to love.

My passions direct me where to love.

My experiences show me how to love.