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Where am I from?

“Where do you live?”

“I live in India.”

“No, where are you from? I mean, where were you born?”

“I was born in Abu Dhabi.”

The reaction is confused looks and more questions.

“Where are you from then?”

That is a complicated question.

Being a Foreign Service child has allowed me to grow up around the world and has offered me many different perspectives.

While in Romania I was quite disturbed by the fact that my mother and I were the only women wearing tops at the waterpark. This was a huge culture shock to seven-year-old-me. Having to change slippers depending upon which room of the house I was in required a cultural understanding on my part. Romania taught me acceptance of different cultural norms.

Indonesia has this great atmosphere; easy going and calm. Jakarta was highly polluted and congested; yet it still had a lively feeling. If things went wrong, there was a solution, no need to stress. At times this was wonderful at others it was frustrating. I would be trying to get home, beat the traffic, and start my homework before swim practice, and all the buses would be late. Neither the drivers nor the school saw this as an issue, just a typical occurrence. I had to learn to let go of what I could not control and come to terms with the “rubber-time” attitude. Indonesia taught me patience.

The majority of Jordan’s population is Muslim, because of this Jordan is very conservative. It was hard for me to adjust. I had to cover my legs and shoulders and stomach. Walking around alone was not allowed. Talking about politics or negatively of the King was forbidden. Losing some of my independence was a struggle. I had to learn to respect the culture even when I did not agree with it. Once I got past this I could appreciate Jordan. The history and culture are rich, the architecture is amazing, and the food, oh the food is to die for. After swim practice I would buy swarvas for three dollars on the side of the street. Jordan taught me respect.

India is the most unique place I have lived. There are wild monkeys that destroy our garden once a week. I have been stuck in traffic behind an elephant and next to a cow. I have seen people using the sidewalk as a bathroom. This is all unheard of in the States, but here it’s daily life. The poverty is heart wrenching. India’s wealth comes from its culture. Despite the poverty many live in, they are very resilient. India has an incredible atmosphere because its people strive to make things work. It is humbling to see. India taught me humility.

This lifestyle gave me the opportunity to develop as a global person. Each place has contributed to who I am. I could not give up a place without giving up a part of myself. So, where am I from? I guess I'm from everywhere.