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The Power of Hello

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The Power of Hello

I believe in the power of hello. I think it's incredible that a single word can break through the immense mass that is silence. Silence can be a thing of beauty when it's sought after, but when it's unwillingly bestowed; it can be the greatest disadvantage. I love it when I walk down the street and people who I have never seen before take a moment to greet me and wish me a good day. It makes me feel as if somehow these people care, that somehow humanity still exists.

It was my first day at a new school, in a new state, and the only people I knew didn't like what I wore or my funny Texas accent. My mom dropped me off and I wandered towards the large gathering of students who were all waiting for the unveiling of the new library. I managed to find the few girls I knew, but soon they vanished, and I was left surrounded by unfamiliar faces. I felt lonely and scared as I stared up at the large library building, which I had been told was where I would find my French class. As they opened the doors, I walked slowly into the extensive space while everyone around me shuffled by buzzing with excitement about seeing their friends. I walked downstairs and found my French classroom almost immediately. I stood in the empty hallway looking at my French classroom paralyzed. All the sudden, a girl came out of a classroom down the hall and stopped when she saw me. She had long, dark hair, dyed blue at the tips and a vibrant, welcoming smile. She immediately walked over to me and said, "Hey, you must be new! I'm Tas. I think you're in my grade!" We talked for a little while and she told me that the school was great and I would see her at lunch. My hands stopped shaking and my heartbeat calmed. You are going to be fine, I thought to myself. And the rest of the day was a breeze because of a girl who rescued me from my own insecurity.

I think back to that day and wonder if I would have made it through my first day without the simple hello from a girl named Tas. She and I became close, and even now, almost 6 years later, I still think of her as my first and closest friend because she took the step that day that so many other people didn't. I also wonder what I would have done, had seen my eighth grade self, and whether I would have stepped out of my comfort zone and introduced myself. I don't think I would have, but now I make it a point to say hello to people on the street or someone sitting by themselves at lunch. It may sound silly, but I like to think that maybe my simple hello is saving them from their loneliness and perhaps, for a short while, letting them know someone cares. This I believe.