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Common Differences

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October 2, 2017

Common Differences

Interviewing my friend Beth, I asked her what she thought of a typical American and British person. She saw Americans as very extroverted and loud and British people as quieter and reserved. She also saw British people as very sensible and up to date on news and politics whereas Americans were more go with the flow and voiced opinions without the basis of knowledge. Even though she saw a “typical” British person as being different than the “average” American, she recognized us as still being very similar in how we live our lives. After asking her this question, we laughed about how we have stereotypes of American and British people that don’t actually match up to the reality of the range of diverse people we live and interact with on a daily basis.

Beth was born and raised in Wolverhampton; she describes it as a smaller industrial city but also close to the country. Beth is close to her immediate and extended family as they all live very close to each other. They enjoy spending time together going on walks and watching movies. She is the oldest sibling, with two younger brothers and a younger sister. They enjoy a typical meal of chicken and veggies with gravy. And yes, they do love a good cup of tea. Beth described it as a comfort and that it is enjoyed many times throughout the day. Beth and I share things in common such as having 3 siblings and enjoying family time. We both describe the areas we are from in similar ways, but being from a suburb 30 minutes from Seattle is much different than living in the city of Wolverhampton. We discussed the smaller differences between our cultures such as the size of cups and fashion trends. We

both have similar outlooks on life such as wanting to have a positive impact in our communities and having families of our own one day.

Although we have these stereotypes of each other's countries, we don't actually view one another as these stereotypes. Many of Beth's views of America come from the media and movies. Beth recognizes the diversity of the United States and that each state has its own different cultures and subcultures. I also have come to recognize more of the diversity of people represented in the United Kingdom. This is very present in the different accents from each area of the country. Even within our hall, we both recognize the diversity of students that have come together from around the U.K. and the world. From this, we are able to learn from each other and see different points of views on problems and topics of debate that we wouldn't have seen otherwise. At the end of the day, we recognize these differences between us but see that we are still people looking to have a community of friends and family and find meaning in our lives.