

PODCAST



PODCAST 1 - SEEING THROUGH DIFFERENT LENSES: VALUES, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY

“MY FIRST EXPERIENCE IN A NEW CLASS”

Have you ever walked into a room and felt like everyone else already knew the rules - except you? That’s how my first day in a new class felt.

When I entered the classroom, the bell had just rung. Students were chatting, laughing, and moving between desks like they’d known each other forever. I stood in the doorway for a moment too long, holding my backpack a little tighter than usual.

- I didn’t know where to sit.
- I didn’t know who to talk to.
- I didn’t know what kind of jokes they found funny.

It felt like every move I made was being watched - or at least that’s how it felt to me. Changing schools wasn’t my choice. My parents had moved to another city because of work, and suddenly I was dropped into a completely new environment halfway through the school year.

Everyone already had their routines. Their best friends. Their group chats. I had... Google Maps, a new address, and a lot of questions.

At first, I tried to blend in. I listened more than I spoke. I nodded during conversations, even when I didn't fully understand what people were talking about. I thought that if I stayed quiet enough, people would eventually accept me. But I learned something important. Silence doesn't make you invisible. It makes you isolated.

One day, during a history lesson, the teacher asked for volunteers to present a topic. My instinct was to avoid attention. But something inside me - maybe boredom, maybe curiosity - made me raise my hand. I had always been good at storytelling, and history was one of my favourite subjects. So I spoke. I told a story about how a small decision by one person had changed the course of events. And to my surprise... classmates listened. They even asked questions afterward.

Looking back now, that moment changed everything. For the first time, I felt that I had something to offer - a small but meaningful piece of myself.

After that day, small changes began to happen. During breaks, a few students started asking me about my previous school. About my hobbies. About the music, I liked. It wasn't instant friendship. But it was a connection. And it felt real.

One moment stayed with me more than the others. During lunch, a classmate offered to sit next to me. We talked about nothing special - food, classes, and the upcoming holidays. But for me, that conversation meant belonging. It reminded me that what helps us adapt isn't usually significant events. It's small acts of kindness.

That experience made me reflect on who I was. I realised that diversity doesn't always start with different nationalities or languages. Sometimes, it begins with being new. With different experiences. By seeing the world from another angle.



We all carry our own cultures - from our families, our neighbourhoods, our values, and our ways of thinking. By getting to know myself - my strengths, my sensitivity, my curiosity - I learned how to connect with others without losing who I am. I started speaking up. Asking questions and showing interest in others, rather than waiting for them to notice me. And I became more attentive to new people joining our school. Now, when I see someone standing awkwardly in the doorway, I smile or wave because I know how powerful that small gesture can be.

Moving to a new class taught me more than I expected. It wasn't just about adapting to new subjects or teachers. It was about understanding myself - my resilience, my fears, and my ability to start again. I've learned that intercultural readiness begins with self-awareness.

Knowing what makes me me, and how I can bring that into a group in a way that creates connection instead of distance.

When I think about it today, I'm grateful for that uncomfortable first day. It taught me that feeling "different" isn't a weakness - it's a doorway. And behind that doorway are empathy, courage, and the discovery that we are all newcomers somewhere - at least once in our lives.

Reflective Questions

1. When have you felt "different" or new in a group - and what helped you feel accepted?
2. What small action could you take next time to help someone else feel welcome or included?
3. Who around you might need a smile, a wave, or an invitation today?



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