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The preceding 5 weeks in Camasca, Honduras were a striking period of self-growth. In the absence of running water, reliable electricity, and robust infrastructure, I developed an eminent passion for the Honduran people and their content to live in blissful humility. My research in women's mental health and self-esteem, consisting of interviews and workshops to identify factors contributing to low self-esteem in rural Honduras, as well as my English teaching position in an elementary school were my most lucid windows into their simple manner of living – and they demonstrated that perhaps it is not so simple at all.

I arrived in Honduras eager to become part of the community. While I was not sure what the community was, how it functioned, or if I may even like this community, I wanted to be a part of *something* different from the United States. I planned to delve into my research with passion and enthusiasm to form genuine relationships with my participants, to attend Catholic church to understand the perspective of my own faith in a different setting, and to practice Spanish as much as I possibly could in any given day.

Although my initial priorities were simply improving my Spanish and successfully conducting my research, teaching became an unexpected, essential part of my happiness in Honduras. It was not part of the plan I had made on the plane – research, community events, Spanish – yet it transformed into the most wonderful aspect of my trip. It did not contribute to my research, but something greater: my friendship. As we rotated as English teachers from 1st through 7th grade, I befriended the troublemakers, the quiet kids, the teacher's pets, and the bullies, and in each of them, I found a piece I loved. Teaching from 7:30-9:00 AM immediately became my safe haven to have fun, to work with who had now become my friends, and to teach these kids the English some students so desperately sought to understand. Afternoons became filled with my students yelling, "Hello, how are you?" from their small, colorful houses, and night dances were enlivened by circles of students jumping joyfully around me. I truly became a teacher and a best friend to all my students, and they taught me so much more about my patience, my Spanish ability, and my compassion than any field research ever could.

That being said, it was convenient that some of my research was with adolescents, as focus groups and workshops were far more comfortable and interactive when my students were the participants. They raised their hands often and excitedly, and they had no hesitation in sharing thoughts about their own self-esteem. In contrast, the students from other schools were more reluctant. Sharing their visceral sentiments made them nervous, and conversation was nearly non-existent. To overcome this, I implemented an anonymous method of submitting answers. Students could write their answers on paper, crumble the paper, and throw the paper ball into the middle. I would read all of the answers aloud, then open the room for discussion, and the girls were significantly more open after hearing that other girls were experiencing similar thoughts.

I received so much more than I asked for. I did not become part of just *something*. By August 11, I was part of a *family*, a *school*, a *country*. My transformation from isolated gringo to Honduran friend, teacher, and daughter was unexpected, yet perhaps the most transformative, wonderful experience of my life. I sincerely hope I may return to Honduras someday not only as friend, teacher, and daughter, but as a doctor, as well.