

It is hard to believe that the 5-year-mark of my graduation from Boca Prep is just a few short months away. All throughout high school and college, students are consistently asked that thought-provoking (and sometimes dreaded) question: “Where do you see yourself in five years?” As a high school senior I can’t say that I was giving much thought to where I wanted to be five years down the road other than the fact that I wanted to be following a path I was passionate about.

Needless to say, I never could have predicted that I would be where I am today: a recent Cornell graduate working as a legal assistant in the transportation finance department of a law firm in New York City. During college, when it came to making important life decisions such as deciding which major I wanted to pursue, which extracurricular groups to join to enhance my overall college experience and whether I wanted to pursue an advanced degree directly after graduation vs getting a job first; I always came back to key skills I learned during high school.

Most notably, two traits of the IB Learner Profile stuck with me until today. The first is Reflective. The ability to look deep within our minds and speak candidly with ourselves about *who we are* is one that is, in my opinion, often disregarded. Without a sense of self-awareness, which is accomplished through keen reflection, how are we to make those crucial and inevitable decisions that life is characterized by? I find that reflection has helped me learn so much about myself; why I do the things that I do and how I hope to grow as a person.

Secondly, I have always valued Open-Mindedness. I am someone who appreciates learning about the respectable and interesting elements of different world-views, cultures and perspectives. The connections I have made as a result of being open-minded have truly taught me about the world and have undoubtedly shaped my goals towards sparking meaningful social change. Open-mindedness also extends past promoting tolerance, admiration and respect. It allows us to work in collaboration with our reflective selves to not get frustrated as we change our minds, but instead show us the beauty of being open to a multitude of wonderful possibilities.

I am very appreciative of the knowledge I gained as a student at Boca Prep. As I “live and learn,” I am grateful for the lessons which have followed me throughout some of my most challenging moments and encouraged me to push my boundaries and reach places I never would have thought I could reach five years ago.