

Different people help(ed) me.

If I just associated with people like myself life would be boring!

When I first read the title I didn't even know where to begin, but the more I thought about it the more I realised how many different types of people I am lucky to have in my life! I grew up in a little town called Carnforth just south of the Lake District (it sounds posh, it isn't!) in a working class family. My dad was a printer and my mum worked 3 jobs. They are both retired now, deservedly so, as they have worked their fingers to the bone for my brother and me!

As a musician I have been fortunate enough to work with a wide range of people throughout my life. Since the age of 10 I have played in brass bands, mixing with adults from all walks of life. Brass bands weren't typically very multicultural organisations at the time but I did spend a lot of time with people of different ages. It was such a strange experience being surrounded by adults and being thrown into a situation where I had to communicate with them on a weekly basis. This was definitely unusual for someone of that age. My friends were going to each other's houses for tea and playing out and I was going to band practise; I was definitely listening to a wider variety of music than they were too (something I am always asking you to do!). This part of my life had such a huge impact on me. It helped to shape me as a musician and more importantly, a person. It helped me to become confident and independent and for that I am so thankful; being a performer you have to have the confidence to present yourself in public! Many of you are part of organisations out of school (dance groups, cheerleading, theatre groups, sports teams etc.) and you too will experience adults and people from different walks of life and you must embrace this and learn from it!

I moved to Manchester to study at Music College when I turned 18. I lived in the city centre, which after growing up in a small Lancashire town, was a bit of a shock to the system! Many different people from different religions, cultures and backgrounds suddenly surrounded me in a city where nearly 200 different languages are spoken. This was reflected at the college; meeting people of many social backgrounds, such as people who had been to private school and already lived away from home. There were students from all over the world who I performed and shared learning with on a daily basis. The teaching staff were extremely culturally diverse and I got to experience this every day. I was from a very different social background to the majority of people I met yet never faced any judgement for this. Every single person I met in this community contributed something to my career and my life and they were all so different. I was invited to join one of the most famous brass bands in the world, which led me to travel across the world, performing and meeting people functioning within their own cultures, abiding by their social rules and cuisines. If we were all the same would I have learnt as much? I doubt it!

As a teacher I am incredibly fortunate to be surrounded by so many different people on a daily basis. I get to see my students thrive and show their individuality as performers, and as human beings. You are all amazing so you must embrace your individuality and embrace being different from your friends; it is what makes you interesting! My days would be really boring if you were all the same!

- Miss Backhouse

A Multicultural Society - Task

Task: For this task I would like you to take some time to connect with your family and friends and discuss the following:

1. What are the similarities and differences between you? You can then write these down.
2. Create a song playlist to represent you and your family and friends to show your similarities and differences.

Extension: Explain why you have chosen each song.