

Joe Peck



“Being an international student impacts the way you interact with others & the way they interact with you. When you first come here, everything is so new, you're learning so much about America & everyone has an accent different to your own. Then you realize it affects the way people see you, for better or for worse. Some people treat you as something special, while others assume things about you that simply aren't true. The classics are that every international student comes from a wealthy household, and if I'm ever asked to repeat the word “tomato” again I might cry.

Thankfully, as people get to know you, superficial things like accents become decreasingly important. At the beginning of freshman year, my accent was commented on probably once an hour. Now, it happens only once or twice a week. I feel myself fitting in & adjusting to life here. The weirdest thing about that though is you kind of lose your sense of identity. When I go home & speak to my friends, I use American slang which I'm not even aware is American. When I come here, I use British slang which people similarly don't understand. There are very few people that can relate to your experience. People here have no idea what my hometown is like & people from home have no idea what Yale is like. I'm losing any idea of who I am, what I want to be & who I identify as. It's exciting in one sense, but in another it's extremely conflicting.

The months following spring break of my first year was a trying time for me. Things were changing at home, which made me feel as though I was trapped 4000 miles away, with no power to help those I was close to. There were just so many personal things going on that I wanted nothing more than to break out & go home. I finished my exams on May 7th & was home by May 8th. I was that desperate to get out of here. In comparison, this May, I had

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no desire to go home. The weather was getting nice, I was starting new relationships that I was really excited about & I was just very happy to be here with my job, having a good time, reading & relaxing; I felt I was making something of myself. 1 year has changed everything

Overall, my time at Yale has really been characterized by not knowing what I want to do with myself, which can be a great thing & if you're going to be thinking the way I have been, Yale's the perfect place to do it. 10 years from now I know I want to make a difference in someone's life somewhere. I want to be happy. Find a good family life. Have good relationships with people. Have good friends that can support me. And hopefully be doing something good during the day & have good people to talk to at night. 3 years ago I didn't know I was going to study in America, so who knows what 10 years will bring."

- Joe Peck, Yale College '21 #humansofoiss

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