“Be somebody who makes everybody feel like somebody.” I found this quote in high school and it has stuck with me ever since. It is something I repeat in my head when interacting with new people, no matter their background. This quote has followed me through each job, especially while working in a hotel that had coworkers from all across the globe. When keeping this quote in mind, I can remember that we have more similarities than differences. I have been able to build relationships when keeping the understanding that everyone is a human and although they have grown-up in a place 2,000 miles away it doesn’t diminish that fact that they have their own identity that can be similar to mine. A Russian friend of mine gave me insight as to why he was drawn to me; he stated that ‘even though my English is not very good, you take the time to understand what I am trying to say, instead of dismissing it or getting frustrated.’ Although a language may be different, there are facial tells and body languages that are similar to Americans that can bring us closer with other cultures without taking too much effort, just listening and observing.

I have thought of myself as very open to learning about other cultures, but I still have the prejudice- knots; however small I may think they are, they are still there. It would be ignorant to believe I didn’t have any. It may be my Italian catholic up bringing of speak only when talked to, which has led me to not speak out of turn or say something without having thought about it. Although I may not be outwardly speaking on these knots, they are there and prevalent, maybe subconscious but it does affect the way I speak and interact with people. Having a Cultural Intelligence assists in more than the workplace. Practicing the concept of CQ allows relationships to build with honesty and genuine conversation. Understanding this concept allows for self-humility.

In the work setting, the concept of CQ allows for growth within building relationships of who I am working with. The world has grown to a global community. With the technology that is available, it is easy to communicate and work with people across thousands of miles, and in different time zones. Although it is easy to get in touch with others in different continents, it doesn’t mean that we can communicate and understand who we are working with.

Because CQ is not based on numerical analytics, I really need to dive into how I am making someone feel and show them I am wanting to experience more than what they are telling me. I need to have an understanding of why they are displaying things a certain way or how they communicate.

CQ is more than just communicating and understanding what an individual is saying, it is about building a bridge that allows individuals to comingle based on an interaction with me. CQ in the workplace means removing the idea that I need to have the best ideas, and I can do all the work myself.

Working in the Zoom culture that has sparked because of the pandemic has created a new way for cultures to intermingle and allow for me to dive into intercultural competence and global and cultural literacy.

I have needed to learn how to express my ideas and thoughts without showing disrespect towards a superior. At the beginning of working at Eventbuzz360, I thought I would be able to understand what Nicole was wanting without having to ask- this was not the case.

A startup has a lot of small projects happening at the same time and Nicole has a lot of ideas wanting to be instilled without having the knowledge of how it will happen on the developer and design side of the build of the site. This was a learning curve for me, I thought I would be getting clear guidance as to what she wanted, and I would do it. I had a two-hour meeting with her to get a clearer understanding of what she wanted me to do where I also explained to her how I communicate, and she responded with her communication styles. This was a huge break through as we were able to understand how we can work together to accomplish the goals she has put in place for the company.

The conversation I had with Nicole led to reflection on my work ethic and how I will do my best to meld to her communication style and work with the team. I researched how to best work with people of her communication style and have found great resources. My best solution was to ask for a zoom meeting instead of over email or WhatsApp. This has assisted me in being able to specifically show what I am working on and get real time feedback.

A cultural difference with Australia and the US is the idea of egalitarianism. Australians tend to believe in the idea that one person is not better than another. I truly believe in this idea, as we are all just humans trying to do our best. With having this understanding, it shows that Nicole will have a basic respect for me as a human rather than someone who works for her. It allows me to create an open dialogue without feeling like I am stepping over the hierarchy.

Something that Nicole and I have been able to bond over just work has been the weather. I am living in cold Chicago, with temps -7° C, while she is having temps at 30°C. Although the temperature may be drastically different, it allows us to have something other than work. She also virtually showed me around Sydney that gave me an insight as to what her life is like in another hemisphere.

It is hard to put myself in the shoes of how someone sees me. America has been in turmoil with the Former President Trump, leading to a divided nation. The pure extremes have been uncovered during this past election. I believe that Nicole had a good first impression of me as I was friendly in email exchanges and was early for our first ‘interview.’ I dress professionally and present myself in a clean manner.

When I first meet anyone, I am reserved and quiet, observant. I want to have an understanding of how the other person is acting before I start opening up, almost mirroring them. Again, this could be coming from an Italian American family that instilled a respectful and hush tone towards new people, especially elder. Nicole has traveled to the United States many times for work and pleasure, so she has been immersed into the culture of the US, granted she has mostly been to California and New York, these give a broad representation of the US.

I believe Nicole thought I was respectful and reserved. I don’t think this is a bad thing to be remembered as- better than loud and obnoxious.

Once I have started to open up to someone, I am snarky and a comedian. I am not this way with anyone, unless I have had some sort of stimulant to break down the walls that I have put up. It can be frustrating to others; however, these are the coping mechanisms that I have had for myself.

In the quote that I mentioned at the beginning, I believe is allows me to follow the ethnorelative stages. I am able to see that someone is a human first, and then as I have always done observe the social cues that another is signaling and allow me to adapt to their culture.