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Who Am I?

I chose a drop of water creating a ripple in the middle of a lake to represent my life and the systems that surround it. A ripple is an example of a fractal. Briggs and Peat (1999) describe fractals as patterns repeating themselves in different sizes within a whole. I believe our actions can reach other people and affect larger systems. My ripple takes place in a large lake that represents the country I now call home. There are rivers that feed water in and move water out of the lake; these rivers represent the connections to faraway places, where some family members and important friends live. They also represent other places I dream to visit, so that a system of interconnected lakes for me represents the world. The ocean they will eventually reach represents the Universe.

The drop at the center of the ripple represents my closest relationship. My husband Stephan and I got married 11 years ago. My family includes two daughters and two granddaughters; they are the first ring in the ripple. My brother lives close by and our families get together often. The rest of my family is in Mexico. These people are in the second ring. When my mother passed away, I knew I had to find a way to keep in touch with everybody. It is important for me to maintain communication with all my siblings and keep my family system together. My mother taught me from a young age to help those less fortunate and to be active in the community. My siblings encouraged me to be responsible and to be tolerant. They opened my mind and helped me adapt to different situations and people.

Volunteering since I was younger gave my life a sense of purpose; this is the third ring in the ripple. Associations like the International Red Cross influenced my life and made me realize that becoming a helper felt right. My job as a caregiver teaches me new things every day, from seeing aging processes up close and how different minds work, to the power a smile has on another human being. I have a network of coworkers who help me vent on bad days and celebrate the good days. They support me and cheer me on; this is the fourth ring in the ripple. Being in school keeps me energized. My classmates and instructors genuinely want to make a positive difference in the world. Their passion and empathy is contagious. EvCC and Western are a very important fifth ring in the ripple. My future career in human services is something I am hoping will bring me more life lessons and satisfaction. I am excited to join a field of professionals empowering people to take charge of their lives; this is an essential sixth ring in the ripple. I want to work with the elderly; the community I will serve is another important system that will become a big part of my life. Eventually I want to venture into other countries (lakes) and learn from their social structures and their people, find out how they approach social justice and bring ideas home.

Life is a wonderful journey; I am a traveling drop of water making connections with family, friends and many other people and places. I am working to help the vulnerable, and learning efficient ways to empower others to pick themselves up. I am a dreamer and a productive member of my community. I am a part of the universe as a whole. I am a unique individual and a human being who wants the best for others.

Reference

Briggs, J., & Peat, D. (1999). *Seven life lessons of chaos: Spiritual wisdom from the science of change.* New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers.