

# I am only human.

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At the beginning of the semester, we're greeted by a scary syllabus and even scarier icebreakers. The uneasy feeling begins to set in as everyone goes one by one, and to your unfortunate luck, you're going to be next. What am I going to say? What will impress them? Will I be judged for my selected major or will I get judged for my weird fun fact? At last, those treacherous five seconds are over, and you move on like nothing. You repeat this for your other courses and finally move on as a student at Lake Forest College- congratulations. Within the classroom, you're a student with great academic pressures, but there's so much more than that. You are more than just a student. Beyond the classroom, you are so much more in which we don't take the time to appreciate.

I'll dissect myself and who I am in and out of the classroom. I am a junior at Lake Forest College, a double major in Biology and Spanish- this was repeated throughout all the icebreakers at the beginning of the semester. Many may recognize me, and others may simply relate to me as a fellow student on campus. Aside from my academic achievements, I am much more than my grades and lab reports. Beyond the classroom, I am the daughter of a single mother. Beyond the classroom, I am the first to go to college within my family. I am the friend of many in and out of campus. Beyond the four walls that secure me on campus, I am a Spanish medical interpreter at Rosalind Franklin's Interprofessional Community Clinic. To my coworkers within various providing teams, I am their translator. For my wonderful patients at the clinic, I am a friend and someone they can confide in to advocate for their medical needs. On campus, I am a student worker who many may recognize as their fellow barista at the Cyber Café, or the cashier over by the market. Once upon a time, I was the school's baker for the cafeteria and once made your favorite cheesecake. Outside and way beyond the classroom, I am a worker at Costco and spend my weekends working at their bakery as a cake decorator. Many call me crazy but I am a full-time student who works 3 different jobs. I am the partner of someone so kind and sweet. I can proudly add dog-mom as one of my titles. I can go on and share who I am outside and way beyond the classroom, but in short, I'm simply human, and I am me.

For many of us, we're the sons/daughters of proud parents. Others can be caregivers to fellow loved ones. We can be parents with our own families to care for, while others are also partners in intimate relationships. To many, we are friends and best friends. Some could simply be acquaintances. Some are pet owners, and others are employees in 1,2, or 3 jobs. Some are researchers who spend hours in a lab trying to conclude their findings. The list can go on forever if you decide to analyze all your responsibilities and roles in life. Outside of the classroom, you are far more than the students who submitted their formal response that was due at midnight. You're far more valuable than your transcript may reflect. No matter how many hats you wear beyond the classroom or even beyond the parameters of this campus, you are human.

We are all trying to plan our future, and we resort back to our classrooms as a place for resources, but more importantly, we are all learning and balancing a hectic life. The silent agreement of separating home and personal life away from school and work can be misinterpreted, often discouraging. Everyone's progress in school is unique, but we all must consider that there is so much more on our minds than simply a biology lecture or a unit on Roman history. Go easy on yourself and be proud of the progress you make. Beyond the classroom, you hold much greater value, and beyond the classroom, you handle so much more than a formal response or exam. Be kind to yourself and others. You never know what may be going on past these four walls.

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