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Cerny: Take a page out of Rowling's book and make good friends

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Posted: Tuesday, September 17, 2013 12:00 am

By Tasha Cerny



TWITTER

I'm sure that anyone who has read "Harry Potter" has admitted at some point in their lives that their 11th birthday was the most disappointing moment in their childhood. I was one of the many devastated when I didn't receive my Hogwarts acceptance letter. Honestly, who wouldn't want to spend their childhood flying, communicating with animals and learning how to wave a stick to make all of their desires reality?

However, being magical wasn't my main motivation for wanting Hogwarts to be real. What I really wanted was the chance to have a friendship like that shared between Harry, Ron and Hermione.- Unconditional friendship like that is something unfortunately rare and idealized in literature and film. Thus, Harry, Ron and Hermione were a few of my role models growing up because they shared something I felt I might never be able to possess (and I'm not just referring to magic).

Now, I'm not saying I didn't have friends growing up, but they were often limited by social and familial values and tended to fizzle out after it would become clear that our attitudes and expectations were not the same. That's why (beyond the obvious reason of earning my degree) coming to college - particularly a larger school like Kansas - was so important to me.- College is about individuality, a time to learn about your own self beyond the boundaries of family culture and the environment you grew up in, and the perfect place to find others who share those same values of individuality. College, in a way, is like Hogwarts.

Something I've learned over my four years here, however, is that making those lasting connections and friendships is about more than living with your peers, meeting new people or even finding a community where you feel at home (though that last one helps significantly).- Making those Rowling-approved friendships first and foremost involves being a good friend yourself.

Obviously no two people are exactly alike, and simply because you share some interests, viewpoints, or habits in common with another person does not mean that the two of you will automatically be the best of friends.- Harry, Ron and Hermione have almost nothing in common other than being from Gryffindor House, yet they are (for the most part) fiercely loyal to each other, inclusive and understanding of each other's limitations (has anyone ever tried estimating the number of hours Hermione spends helping Harry and Ron finish



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their homework?).

Practicing the Golden Rule and being open-minded towards others and their ideas is vital to being a good friend. Being a part of such a large campus, you are bound to run into some pretty strange people, including those who make Luna Lovegood seem normal. But instead of judging, try listening. Like Luna, you might just find that they aren't strange at all - their perspective is just genuinely different from your own.

The people you meet in college and the experiences you share with them will be some of the most significant aspects of your time spent here, so making the most of each interaction and forging positive relationships with the people around you is vital to finding those friendships that you'll take with you long after you graduate. Kansas may not offer transfiguration or charms class (though you can still play Quidditch!), but you don't have to own a functioning wand to be a wizard at making friends.

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