

Anonymous

English 1121

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Unit 1 Peer Review

Where are you from?

When you go to a nail salon what do you automatically think? Oh, these poor immigrants must work all day scrubbing feet and doing nails. They must be so tired. “Where are you from?” This is something I hear once a day as I polish my customer’s nails. Why is that the first thing they ask when they want to start a conversation with me? Why couldn’t they word it differently as they ask me this? Many people come into the salon thinking most of the technicians are Vietnamese because of the stereotypes, that all nail salons are owned by Vietnamese people and everyone working there is Vietnamese. I happen to work in a Vietnamese nail shop, but we have many girls with diverse backgrounds.

Every day, I am asked “Where are you from?” once or twice a day. When I am asked where I’m from. I always say the same thing. “I’m from California” because that is where I am originally from and have always resided there besides Minnesota. I know why they are constantly asking me where I am from because I’m in a nail salon with other Asian technicians. I must not be from America but from Asia, just like the other nail technicians. When I answer these questions, it seems like they are not satisfied with where I am from. “Well, where are your parents from?” They are both from California, that’s all I can say. A lady once asked me, “What

nationality are you?" I looked at her and said, "I am an American. I was born and raised here." Unsatisfied, she asked me "Where are your parents from?" "Long Beach, California." It saddened me at times when I am asked this because this question is so common in the salon. I have never been asked "Where are you from?" from anywhere but the nail salon. It's not that it's a big problem being asked that, it's the way they are putting their words together then it leads having them tell us that they are insecure when they hear native language speaking in the salon, which will be talk about in my next subject.

When going to the nail salon, you may hear the technician speaking their native language. The language barrier is not a problem for me, but some of my colleagues, especially advanced technician, have problems. Which leads the client to disrespect the nail technician. There are numerous times when I will overhear my coworkers get disrespected by clients for their slow or broken English. This is not because they don't speak English. They speak and understand English well, but these are women in their 40s, and their first language is Vietnamese. I am not Vietnamese nor do I speak Vietnamese and I can have a proper conversation with them. I can understand them, and I have the patience for them to finish their sentences. This can lead to the customer being in a bad mood or taking advantage of the nail technician by snapping and being mean to every nail technician. There are times where a technician does not understand a big word, my bilingual boss will sometimes interfere to translate what the client is requesting because that is their first language because they will understand it better than in English. This makes some clients feel like they are talking bad about them. They are helping both you and the nail technician, there is nothing to worry about. I personally do not enjoy having someone getting loud in the salon or talk over a nail technician when they are trying to explain to their client as she is doing the client's nails. There are many times where I have people choose to talk

to me over the person who is doing their nails. It must be because I am younger, I have no accent and probably because I can respond faster. My parents speak perfect English as for my grandparents, they know basic English but aren't familiar with big words. This would lead me to want to translate for them whenever we go out with them when i was younger. There were some interactions, I remembered where I did the talking and somehow it seemed like they didn't want to speak to me. Was it because I was a child but I speak perfect English.

Many people who see people of color working in a not-so-professional job, automatically think that they have no education, and they are stuck doing what they must do to make money. I had a man who started a conversation with me as I did his pedicure. It was more like he talked about himself, half the time he was there. Before he left, he had asked me, "Why would you work like this? Why do you want to do nails for the rest of your life?" I felt anger inside me, the way his tone sounded, and the way he just judged me without getting to know me. Does he think I have no college experience? As I had mentioned, he talked about himself the whole time. He does not dare ask me anything about myself. I educated him about how I am not doing this my whole life; I am a pharmacy technician who is in school going to get my LPN. Nevertheless, I enjoy making women and men feel good after their pedicures and manicures, especially people who are unable to reach their feet. I enjoy making little girls and teenagers feel good about how pretty their nails look for a special occasion.

Stereotypes can come from anywhere and everywhere. Many believe that everyone who works in the nail salon has no education. Which saddens me quite a bit. I am in school taking my time to get my LPN. Both my bosses have business degrees to be able to open this nail salon to the public. In general, do not assume that all people of color working in a certain field are not

from the United States. Not all Asians are "Chinese" and not all nail salon workers are "Vietnamese". The USA is full of diversity, and we should never assume a person is a specific race or ethnicity. There is no shame in asking where that person is originally from, it's the way you are approaching the conversation. Furthermore, resuming from the first paragraph, do not assume this is the only job that a person can get. That person could have a business degree but choose to do nails because it is something they enjoy doing. Just because they are touching feet and hands all day, does not mean that all they can settle for, this could be a side job. Lastly, that elderly lady who is working on your nails, her first language is Vietnamese, but she still goes out of her way to speak to you in English. There is no need to be impatient or annoyed that it is hard to communicate with them. That woman is a mother, daughter, and a human being. You would not want to be treated like this when you are older nor would you want your elderly to be disrespected. They are doing their best to make your experience the best for you. You should always put yourself in someone's shoes to understand.