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How can I explain twenty seven months of living in a small Incan village in the mountains of Peru? How can I explain how much I tried to teach and failed? How can I explain the changes that took place inside me? How can I explain how nice Margarita was to me when all I wanted to do was cry? How can I explain what global warming will do to this mountain community when the glaciers that I looked up to will melt? How can I explain how honored I feel one year later to be invited back for the wedding of my closest friend? How can I explain how good it is to know that someone that was supposed to have no future at all is now attending a university? How can I explain the power that 5,000 people with no phone have? How can I explain what it feels like to have those 5,000 watching you dance the traditional Huayno dance, in the traditional Vicosino clothes chanting your nickname over and over again (Sapra, Sapra, Sapra...)? How can I explain how hard it was to say goodbye to the people it was so hard to get to know?

All I did was spend time with people, talking and listening. I lived with them. I shared and brainstormed. I tried over and over again.

My Peace Corps experience is something I hold very close. I keep it guarded. It is difficult to explain to people that have not volunteered like this before. I find it very difficult to explain. I know I accomplished more than I can put down on paper because what is on the paper is so very futile, but it took so long and so many efforts to get to these little successes. Fourteen months to find out that the business was losing money. Then, it took three more months to change that. Teaching business to the people of Peru was one of the greatest experiences. There was no such thing as a typical day and nothing was off limits to learn. Whether it was teaching people to add and subtract their revenues and expenses or if it was going to the local leaders begging for the financing of an informational publication that would subsidize the cost and benefit the entire community, everyday kept me wondering how it would all turn out.

But in the end it was the friendships I made. I cannot wait to attend the wedding of two other volunteers with whom I worked. And someday if I am lucky enough my kids will have the chance to meet the Mesa Sanchez Family of Vicos, Peru.

I look back on those days just a few months after my return and wonder if there will ever be a better job than that one I had during my early twenties. Or is it something I will have to experience again in my late seventies.

Please excuse me for my inability to convey what my experience was, but let me reassure you that yours will be completely different. No two Peace Corps experiences are the same. Some may have wireless internet and others will not even have running water. It is just something you will have to experience. Go into everyday with a smile and the attitude that you are where you should be and the rhythm of the day will take care of the rest. If you care for and truly love the people you live with, the people you are meant to serve, you will be successful. They will show you the path to help them the most.

Peace and Good Luck.