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Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well." Going in to my first ever trip to Guatemala I was not necessarily in the best place in my life. I was forced to withdraw from college four months prior for personal reasons and to be completely honest, viewed the world as a terrible place. I felt sorry for myself. I needed something, anything, that would allow me to feel some sort of happiness again. It truly is amazing how mysteriously God works, how he puts you in certain situations, and gives you certain challenges right before he drastically changes you for the better. The mission trip to Guatemala in March of 2018 was one of those certain situations for me.

Servant leadership has such an arbitrary definition, simply because there are so many different types and styles of servant leadership. Upon arriving in Guatemala City I was nervous, I had no idea what to expect, and I was completely out of my element. That changed pretty quick. If any of you know Kathy Price, you probably already know that she has such an unbelievably welcoming presence. She constantly goes out of her way to make sure everyone feels comfortable and is happy before herself. She will never judge you or make you feel anything less than appreciated. She is the closest illustration to what servant leadership is, and what it should be.

Throughout my week in Guatemala, I was trying to embody some of the ideals and qualities that I saw in Kathy. I remember carrying 20 pound bags of corn that were given to feed hundreds of families. In that moment, I was not thinking about complaining about the strenuous work, but I was thinking about how I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to help those in need. When helping the families in Guatemala, it was never about me. It was about giving families the resources they so desperately needed. Not only did I help the families get the food that they needed, but I was also able to build relationships with some of the Guatemalan children. I remember being at an orphanage that was run by nuns. I felt a huge connection with some of the little boys from the orphanage, as they did not have any male figures in their life. While I was playing with them, I could tell how excited they were to have my father and I there with them. Spending time with these children is where I felt most present on this trip. I felt truly happy being there with them, and that was a feeling I had not felt in a very long time.

This trip was one that I will remember and talk about for many years to come, as it served

as a turning point in my life. I left Guatemala with an entirely new perspective and the people around me. When bad things happen, it is so easy to think the absolute worst, and get stuck in this cloud of negativity. The perspective I gained from this trip now allows me to take a step back to see the bigger picture. I am now able to live a more grateful life, a more present life, and a more meaningful life. For this trip and opportunity, I am forever changed and forever grateful. For anyone thinking about going on a mission trip like this, I can assure that you will not regret it. I am so thankful for Kathy and the Mission of Love Organization for allowing me to join them on this absolutely life-changing trip to Guatemala. ~ Joey Pavlou