

November 15, 2022

## Sages and Seekers Tribute

Some say that you learn new things about yourself everyday, and I honestly thought this was untrue. I thought I already knew everything I needed to know, and that's the way it was. I joined this program thinking it would simply be "nice," and I was really nervous to talk to someone who isn't within my age range. I find myself being shy when I'm with elders, and I thought that's what this program was going to be, weeks of uncomfortable conversations because I'm too shy to get out there, but it was nothing like that. Speaking with my sage Ruth has been one of the best experiences that I'll never forget. I thought that I could never have an ongoing conversation with someone without awkwardly checking my phone and pretending I'm texting someone, I thought I would never be able to casually speak to someone without knowing them well. Before Ruth could open up to me about her life stories, she made me feel comfortable with mine. Ruth was a model and a vice president of a company, but what stood out to me the most was the many things we have alike. Many of our conversations consisted of bonding over our dogs, she'd tell me stories about hers, and I told stories about mine. When she asked me about what college I wanted to attend, I told her Berkeley, and as a result, she attended school there as well. The coolest thing I found was that she has a relative with the same name as mine, spelled differently, but it's the same name. When I told Ruth about my consistent shyness, she told me that she wouldn't have thought that of me because she thought I was easy to approach, I kept thinking about that when I got home. I realized that I wanted to be exactly that, I wanted to be someone who is easily approachable and not at all shy. Instead of talking about heavy things every time I would come in, we talked about the rats in New York and movies at cemeteries. Instead of making me talk about everything that's bothering me, Ruth would make me forget it all. For an hour, I would forget about that assignment that was due two days ago, I would forget about the grade that has been stressing me out for the last week, I would just have a light hearted conversation with someone who was willing to listen. I didn't have to think about anything that

wasn't about what I wanted to say after we finished the conversation we were having at that moment. I didn't need someone to express my problems to, I didn't need someone to listen to every problem that I've ever experienced, I realized that I just needed someone to share a laugh with. The few times I did talk to her about small things that were bothering me, like school grades, she focused on the things I was *good* at. Small gestures like those meant a lot to me and taught me that maybe everything I thought was the end of the world really wasn't, that even if I wasn't good at one particular thing, I was good at another.

Joining Sages and Seekers was something that I was afraid of because I feared that I would bore someone with my awkward conversation, but that was untrue the moment I spoke to Ruth. She talked to me before "speed dating" started, asking me why I joined. When I talked to her, I just kept going and going, it wasn't awkward at all, and when I showed up again during "speed dating," she was happy to see me. Ruth not only taught me how to be a better person for others but especially myself. Sages and Seekers has been an amazing experience because of her influence and many interesting stories. I will forever have an appreciation for her and this program.