

Kelsey Ortega

Framptinez

Socratic XII

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Just add Tajin

As a white-washed Mexican growing up in Utah, you can find me next to any meal with a bottle of Tajin. Many of you probably don't know what Tajin is, so I'll let you in on the Rachel-Ray approved secret. Tajin (not TAY-JEN) is a chili-lime-salt powder that adds flavor and “zing” to anything and everything. Watermelon? Yes, Steak? Yes, Popcorn? Yes, Smoothies? *Yes*. The same way that a Utah mom needs Swig, or a middle schooler needs axe body spray, I need Tajin. Like many things, Tajin takes time to acclimate to. The first few tastes result in multiple sneezes, closed eyes, and a scrunched up nose. To have it become the much needed essential in your life, Tajin requires consistent sampling in exponential doses.

I am embarrassed to admit that my Maeser career has not consisted of much sampling. My introduction for 7th grade get to know you games was: “Hello my name is Kelsey, last name, Ortega.” The need to share intimate information about oneself to become part of a class seemed grossly bizarre to me. Why did my classmates have to know my favorite color or weird fears if we were supposed to be learning about the pythagorean theorem? My distaste for vulnerability followed me through highschool and created meals full of unseasoned relationships with my mentors and peers.

By avoiding opportunities of growth, at the risk of sounding foolish or displeasing, I became my own solvent, dissolving all of my chances at creating deeper connections. These are friendships that I can't get a second chance with, I can only add more flavor to what is there now.

With graduation comes the need to re-introduce oneself to a new, sophisticated, well-seasoned world. So let's try this again. Hello, My name is Kelsey Ortega, I have a tremendous fear of ceiling fans, my favorite color is orange, I've liked the same boy for five years, I hate how my legs look in pants, and I never wear belts because in the third grade I peed my pants in a bathroom stall while trying to undo a broken belt.

Don't miss out on opportunities to create these deeper relationships with people you will spend multiple lunches, flex Fridays, and fire drills with. Take Mz.'s eye experiment seriously, don't write your best scar essay about a minor scratch, let yourself tear up while reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and answer truthfully when playing paranoia with your classmates.

Tajin is not an FDA requirement, but it turns food into memorable meals. Vulnerability is not a relationship essential but it turns humans into people, and classmates into unforgettable friends. There is power in vulnerability which is also now available in a low sodium option. Seek the chance to expand your seasoning choices, and sprinkle vulnerability to your relationships and Tajin to your chicken, because time flies faster than a seventh grader late to class, carrying our unperceptive fears with it.