Waking up one day with the power to understand why everyone acts the way they do. That’s what Lindsay dreamed of. And on the night of her 23th birthday, that is the gift she received.

When she woke up that morning she saw her roommate crying as she cooked scrambled eggs. Without even thinking, Lindsay said, “I’m sorry for the loss of your Aunt.” Now although Lindsay was pretty close to Shelby, her roommate, she did not know her family history. Shelby’s aunt had actually past away when she was 10 years old. Lindsay suddenly knew that Shelby and her aunt used to have a Sunday breakfast twice a year for Christmas and 4th of July, something that mattered a lot to Shelby. Having this compassion, Lindsay was able to help Shelby feel better, though Shelby still did not understand where Lindsay’s knowledge came from.

Later that day, Lindsay went into work. She again heard her coworker Josh hitting on yet another new intern. Before, Lindsay used to avoid Josh out of disgust, but today she felt compelled to approach him. It all hit her at that moment. Josh was bullied in middle school and high school, and when college came around, finally girls started noticing him. To keep up his shell, he would sleep with girls and then leave them, or hit on every woman he met. Lindsay used this knowledge to buy Josh a coffee in the morning, and say “If you ever need a friend or someone to talk to, I’m here.” Which for Josh was unexpected but nice, and he didn’t feel the need to hit on any new interns that day.

It was almost like that along with this knowledge of “why people are who they are”, Lindsay also received the power of having compassion, which really stuck with people. She felt happy inside, which she had not felt for quite a long time. It was then at her cubical that she began to dig deeper into herself.

She had never really thought that the way she lived was “wrong” and sometimes Lindsay had thought that it was other people’s fault that she ended up like this. She had been depressed for months and lost all sense of caring about herself and of others. Then she saw into herself. She was hiding from the world. She remembered her childhood where she hid under blankets from when her parents were screaming. She remembered hiding the note from her parents that she needed glasses, so she would not have to wear them at school. She remembered hiding her report card, afraid that she would be punished for the bad grades she earned. In all the instances, everyone else was the problem, Lindsay thought. Hiding is normal for a kid, especially with traumatic family fights or the issue of getting in trouble looming in her head.

But as she popped her head out of her cubical, she realized that maybe it is normal as a kid, but not when you are 23. So when she had asked “why does everyone act the way they do?”, she had not been searching for the answers that her roommate missed her aunt or that her coworker used to be bullied. She needed to see those answers to relate to others. The question was really for herself. And after that day, Lindsay began to come out of her cubical more often, talk to her friends, and try to become a more open self.