

Greta Reich

Stanford, CA · (650) 683-5638 · greta30@stanford.edu

www.linkedin.com/in/greta-reich

Essay response:

On the first day of my first ever journalism internship, my editor sent me out to cover a free skateboarding lesson happening at the local park for International Skate Day. Equipped with my brand new reporter's notebook, my iPhone camera and the confidence of an employed 19-year-old, I drove myself to the park with excitement. The newsroom's only photographer followed behind.

The first skaters I saw were a pair of brothers, diligently following around an instructor. A woman — their mother — was watching anxiously from the top of the park. As Anna, the photographer, started snapping some shots of the action, I introduced myself to the woman and began my first interview.

She answered my questions politely, telling me about her sons' love of skateboarding and how they usually play soccer but skating is more fun for them. It was going well, but I could tell she was a bit hesitant to share too much information. As I was getting ready to wrap up the interview, Anna walked over and asked an incredibly simple question: "What are your sons' names?"

The woman smiled proudly and shared that her sons were Renri and Yuito. Immediately the conversation shifted into something more substantial, more personal. She shared that they were originally from Tokyo and had moved to the Bay Area just two years prior. Skating, she continued, was a way for her sons to be exposed to English in a fun, non-judgemental environment. It was also uniquely American, she said, and it was important to her for her sons to get accustomed to American culture in these sorts of low-stress environments.

I cannot thank Anna enough for showing me the power that simple, ordinary questions hold. In the interviews I've conducted since that one, I've found that the best answers often come from ordinary questions given to ordinary people.

Whether it was reporting on rock music in Iran or bank loans in Bangladesh, Daniel Pearl knew this fact throughout his career. When I got back to campus in the fall after my first internship and learned about the Daniel Pearl Memorial Journalism Internship opportunity, I did a deep dive into his past reporting, reading every Wall Street Journal selected article of his I could find.

His stories largely influenced my desire to focus on political reporting. That year, I covered campus protests that followed the Oct. 7 attacks. The next summer, I used those on-the-ground reporting skills as an intern for SFGATE, writing about historic local businesses and budget