

Textbook

I'm positive that there's a textbook definition of what it means to be human. That's the point of a textbook, isn't it? Holding answers and definitions that don't have a reason to be anywhere else. I'm sure there's a definition, but I don't see the point of looking it up. Everyone is human and no one is the same as any other and all are living human lives in human ways, and how can you define that?

The only consistent thing about being human is just that, that someone is a human. But does being part of a species even mean anything? It feels so empty, to live without meaning. No one lives to be part of a species. They live to be human. And being human means more.

Maybe being human means loving the people you surround yourself with. Maybe it means humming your favorite tune. The finding of something new. The burning hunger in your stomach and the promise of a large meal soon to come. Maybe it means laughter late at night, in a smoke-filled basement with a TV running in the background. Maybe being human means creation. Writing and painting and singing and crafting while you still can, desperate to make it as someone, anyone at all, scrambling to leave a mark on the world before it forgets you all together. Racing to leave some sort of a smear, a legacy, a way you won't be forgotten after you're gone, a way to still be seen when your eyes will see no more.

Or maybe it's a combination of everything a human can do. The more you do, the more human you become. The more you speak and the more you know. The more places you've been the more they add up. The more you see the bigger you become. You widen the edges of your world, tumbling outwards and outwards, cascading as what you know drags you along, Human invention, human sights, human wants, human dreams, human innovation, human thought, human interaction, human, human, human. Every textbook you read adds just that little bit of humanity to you, learning about the world in a book, but every sight you see and every action you take will add so much more. We have so little humanity when we live in a pattern, but breaking it, leaving, finding more, it can give us so much more of ourselves. How human can you be if you live your life in one spot, in one language and culture? There are so very many ways to live a life, so much more life to live beyond your walls. There's always room to be more human than this.

What if we set out to become more human? What if we left everything behind to go find something new, collect more fragments of humanity? Live in another place, with new sights and new sounds. Speak a new language, new words in new ways means more poetry to write and more songs to sing. More legacy to leave and more humanity to have. We live such a small fraction of what there is for us. Living in another place and in another continent and another culture is living a different humanity. The textbooks we read can try and teach us what it means to be human. They have a definition and everything. But they will never give us a more human life. To truly be human you have to go everywhere possible, do everything you can. And if you aren't living a life to be human, why are you living at all?

So what does it mean, to live internationally? It means the same thing as it means to be human. And no matter how many textbooks try, that still won't ever be defined. The best that we can ever do is try to be as human as we can.