



## Stanford eCorner

### Sense of Being a Global Citizen

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/226/Sense-of-Being-a-Global-Citizen>

Ramdas's father was in the military, and her mother was a social activist. The family was a middle-class Indian family, yet privileged to be in such a position. As a result of her upbringing, Ramdas has a combination of seeking structure/order and an urge to constantly question authority. The family moved often, and she developed a strong sense of what it meant to be a global citizen.



#### Transcript

I come from a very unusual family. My father was in the military in India and I grew up in a naval family but my mother was always a rebel and a social activist. So I think I have this strange combination of a certain kind of structure and order on the one hand and a constant questioning of authority on the other. I think in the context of our experience growing up in India, we had a nontraditional experience in the sense that we were middle-class Indians in a family where my mother kept pointing out to us that we were incredibly privileged to be middle class. Where I spent my 18th year after having had a wonderful visit in Europe I came back and was just sort of very full of myself and my mother said, you have no idea what living in India means, and then I promptly was sent off and spent a summer in Bihar which is one of the poorest states in India living with a family there was came back quite humble and chastened as to what it was I thought I could do. So I think that early experience was a very significant one for me personally. Also seeing my mother modeling it, I mean she was and is an incredible role model for me. I think the other piece to that I think I would say is because my father was in the navy, we move a lot and we lived in many different places, not just in India but also outside. We lived in Burma for two years and we lived in Germany, we lived in England. I think by the time I was 17 or 18, I had a very strong sense of what it means to be a global citizen.

I'm very proud to be Indian but I don't see myself defined by national boundaries. I think that, for me, looking at questions of international development were more about trying to understand what it is that we have in common rather than what is it that makes us so different. So I think those are some of the reasons.