

My culture and background

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I was born and raised in Southeast Asia, Philippines. It consists of 7, 107 islands and each one of them has each own dialect and tribes that lives in rural part of the area. My mom is a Spanish Filipino and my dad is a Chinese. I embraced two cultures with no problems. Both cultures molded me strongly with values, ethics, religion and economics. It plays a vital role of who I am now. Let me begin by telling you that in my country, the Spanish colony conquered the Philippines in 1621. Magellan named the archipelago in the honor of King Phillip of Portugal at that time.

My great -great grandfathers were baptized as a Catholics and was given Spanish names by them. Until now, this still exist. We adapted their dialect and even have Spanish alphabets too. I and my siblings grew up in a very strict Catholic way and Dad would approved of it even though he is not a Catholic but a Buddhist. Very conflicting, right? At early age, we were trained through various tasks. I learned how to slaughter a chicken at the age of 9. Then, I and my siblings lived in dormitory where our school has one at that time. From preschool until my high school yrs, that's where I considered my second home.

I studied in Chinese school and all of us were taught in a communist way. Example is we are not allowed to wear jewelries and the only thing that was allowed at that time is a watch. Then the hair shouldn't be longer than the collar of the white blouse uniform. The allowance was given by the matron . Then our time was being scheduled every day. It was hard because we were trained like soldiers. It was a very rigid training for us. I was trained not to be late on any appointment. I was used to it until now. I and my siblings studied in a Chinese school. From Pre-K to high school.

It is to educate us about Chinese language so that when we go to visit our Chinese relatives, we know how to communicate and understand. (If you don't know the Chinese dialect, you will feel outcast from the family). For the most part, Chinese and Filipino customs are similar to each other. Regarding the family values, it is a very strict custom that we should always take care of our elders. Also, we are not allowed to talk back to them and if you say something when they are talking to you or reprimanding you, this is showing to them that you are disrespecting them.

Also, we don't have divorce in our country. Marriage is sacred there. We still have a courtship, engagement and a dowry. This goes for a bride's price. I am a cultural diversity. It came a big surprise for me too when I came here in United States. I thought there is only one or two cultures mixed together but I was wrong. The culture here is totally very much different or opposite rather than what I grew up with. It was a culture shock for me. People here don't hold or guard their tongue when they talk to you, rude by any means or praising you.

They don't care about how you feel. They also have racial discrimination. This is totally a big conflict to what I am. For me, I was taught not to say any bad or disrespectful or even words that will hurt somebody's feeling. Then, how people handle their relationship here, it's like nobody cares to save the marriage anymore. Couples fight in terms of money, child custody and infidelity. We worked hard to keep our marriage intact for the sake of our family and kids. The vows for us is sacred. Our families don't like broken marriage, it is shameful to the family if there is one.

And the most important of all, kids or younger generation don't know how to respect the elders anymore. They would call you with your first name even if you are related to them. It's like both of you are of the same age. These are all very disturbing for me. But somehow, I adjusted and respect it somehow. Accepting the way things or circumstances and blending with other culture and learning from it is a good way to learn more. But I won't depart from what I was taught and I am happy and contented the way I am.