

Lots of Americans, One America

Maryam Khaled Labib

It is a dangerous thing to live your life without the presence of a hero. With no one to glorify, you are lacking a motivation to do better. That being said, it is likely to have multiple heroes. They could be anyone, anything, even anyplace that can make you a better human being. Heroes are powerful leaders, though not necessarily rich or famous. Heroes are not only heroes for others, but also heroic for their own selves.

I was unsure who to write about. I wrote a list of those I hold in great esteem, waiting for someone amazing to pop out. That never happened, but I realized that every candidate on my list was an American hero. That doesn't mean they were all born and raised in America (Jesus probably wasn't American), but they all lived by American values. And America, with its diversity and tolerance, has gathered into its arms a beautiful set of qualities that no one person has alone. So I picked an American hero. I selected America.

America has its pros and cons, but there is not any bad in America which cannot be corrected by the good in America, and that makes it a good hero. I highly regard the American people: the presidents and workers, the law enforcers and librarians, the professors that teach and the loyal friends. Americans are motivated people, who would wake up at 4 and 5 in the morning to walk a dog or go to work. America is diverse; I wish I could be that diverse. America is a white man and a black woman (together). America is a green forest neighboring a yellow desert. America is acceptance, and getting back up, dusting off those pants, and continuing the race. America is about never saying never.

Americans have changed, but their excellence is always upheld. A century ago, they were the best settlers, farmers, and family people, while today, they have a 50% divorce rate, no longer farm, and have settled almost everywhere. But now America has the best educators, engineers, and leaders in green energy and solar power, and is among the wealthiest nations. Even when some qualities are lost, they are replaced by new strengths. Not all heroes are like that ☺.

Mostly, America gives me hope. It taught me that even when someone does the worst possible deed, he can make it so that a positive change follows. At one time, America was the land of slavery and servitude, but today it floats on the principles of

rights and freedoms. For a long black period of American history, Native Americans were treated like animals and rounded up on reservations. Today, children in the United States are taught about their history, culture, and the cruelty they endured. At one point, more than 60% of women in San Francisco were registered prostitutes, while today only Nevada considers it legal. When at one point African Americans were lynched in public, an African American resides in the White House today. And the list can and will go on.

Not any country that a person is born in will be his/her hero. Some people have seen only destruction, injustice, and corruption in their homelands. These are the people that flee to America. I think of how God has blessed me so much by allowing for me to be born and raised in a country so advantaged, so exceptional. Oftentimes, Americans, the ones with the highest stress, obesity, high blood pressure rates, fail to realize that as a nation, we are too blessed to be stressed.

America has inspired me to live 'America' anywhere and everywhere. I want to introduce recycling to countries that waste their non-renewable resources. I look forward to voting, driving safely, being honest in my work, and being loyal to my law enforcers by reporting crimes. For now, I will remind myself that the reason this country is so wonderful is because of dedicated people who built the foundation first and then made their way up. It couldn't have happened if our founding fathers were drug addicts, smokers, and abusers. If we want America to get better, we have to keep making the right decisions. Abraham Lincoln summed it up nicely, "I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him." God willing, I'm going to make America proud of me.