

Topic: My adaptation to Mexican American culture and the development of healthy choices while growing up in the United States.

Abstract: My name is Ben and I will be talking about how I developed into my Mexican American Culture with my Family. I will be talking about, health changes that include belonging to a local gym and adapting to new eating habits and foods. My Religion has been a very inspiring and important part of me, as it guides me in some of my values which I believe in. One of my best hobbies is copying and editing music for my everyday life functions. I will also be talking about how not knowing Spanish has affected my life and me culturally.

Keywords: Development into my Mexican American Culture, The effects of not knowing Spanish, Healthy positive changes, my values inspired by Religion and editing cultural music.

My Adaptation to Mexican American Culture

My adaptation to Mexican American culture with my family wasn't easy. I was not raised by my natural mother until I was seven years old, so the Spanish language I would have been taught was not. I was raised only knowing the English language which at the time was okay. My Mom had gone to Mexico to take care of some private business. I was left with my Aunt who was white. So my aunt raised me until I was seven. When my mom managed to come back and get us back, I was 10 years old. I was raised in my step-father's household where we spoke only English. His nationality was Arab American. He had a long and hard military history. That made him harsh and we felt it. In spite of his strict personality, he was a good person to look up to. We owned five homes and we spent most of the time renting them out and fixing them. My Mexican culture was not so much a factor then. The only time I would hear my mother speak Spanish was when my

relatives came to visit. This all changed Thanks to my Families close ties and commitment to going to church.

When I was about sixteen, we all were frequently going to church. The church I went to was bilingual, which turned out to be a good thing. All through my childhood my cousins would make fun of us and tell us “you po-choe’s gavachos” or white washed. I always had this thought with me. My Mexican cousins did not accept us much. We were bonded more to our white cousins. The church life gave me a good feel of the Mexican lifestyle; we would eat tamales, munutho, and pesole. This is how we would talk, especially my sister’s, “oh-look at that! Try that” “Not me! I replied.” We really thought our life styles were better for not knowing the Hispanic Culture. We all had this sentiment handed down to us because of our history. I grew up without really relating to the culture. Our American Mexican English was even better than what we thought.

I just so happened to meet a church friend who changed all that for me. He had much energy and he was set on doing many things. He had a beautiful real down to earth Mexican family from Watsonville, who were from the old country mejhico. They would let live chickens run through the house. They would have live bulls out in the back yard. I was so excited and willing to go visit, at any chance I could. They were so different, they would stone ground torttias, and these torrtias are something you would have to go to México to get, so good in taste. If you only knew how close you can be to nature. This

family had, truly the experience. They were good hearted and down to earth folk. This experience made me feel proud of being a Mexican. I also felt robbed of all the culture I hadn't known. This shattered my Mexican American to good feeling, I felt misguided and my thought wondered. Only then I felt for the need to search out my Hispanic culture.

My not knowing Spanish surely has an impact on me and my life. The friends and the event that I have missed because of not knowing Spanish sure were felt. I believe that I should learn Spanish this will allow me to adapt to my Mexican culture to the fullest. When I get time, I listen to Spanish programs and to try and learn some Spanish words. It is known that one would live longer if they actively use two languages. On the job one would be worth more being bilingual. There are lots of positives to knowing Spanish. I really think that this is a major key in my quest to understanding and learning about my Culture. My need for change and adapting to the more positives of my culture has to do much with Music Especially. The Latin salsas, cumbias, melenge, mari-achie, Are a positive force in showing who we are and displaying our pride.

My need for music had always been there, but now it had taken different meaning. Like Selena, Carlos Santana, Free style. This music helped me blend in my culture with my gym workouts and helped me ease threw my routines. I realized the importance of mixing cultural Mexican or Hispanic music with my everyday life. I found myself with moods and with these moods came music. When I was up in my room doing chores I needed music mostly slow meaningful music, like Gloria Estefan light rock, or even oldies, Richie Valens. Music gives me a relaxing feeling. To create the right atmosphere I

needed the right cultural music blend. This in a good way has helped me to regain what was lost in my cultural experience.

Health changes have helped my outlook on Hispanic Culture developing. I have recently come out of a shell sense I have dropped so many pounds of weight. This has helped my ego and eagerness to meet and associate with people from my culture. Now I have a new girl friend who is Hispanic and she accepts me for whom I am. She tries and teaches me Spanish which is very helpful and supporting. I can still hear the quick Spanish words she speaks when she doesn't want me to understand her. This is how my mom used to treat me. I feel good now that I am slimmer. My self esteem is at an all time high. I have to fight to keep the weight of and that means not eating some authentic foods that is customary to my culture. I will only eat cheese enchiladas instead of meat ones. No more greasy foods of any kind. My need for guavas and bananas has increased. My new girlfriend's family is much closer to the Hispanic culture than mine is. She had introduced to me, some cultural foods without cholesterol, like chili re-Reno's Pastas whole grain. She has been real good for my Mexican Cultural adaption.

My youth and maturity to adulthood life has changed much. Now that I can understand and evaluate things in a more adult manor, I can process with greater understanding. I am not that young kid fighting with my peers over knowing Spanish and not knowing Spanish. I can see realistically, that I was wrong for being prejudice against the Hispanic language. This is easy to happen to someone of my background. A Chicano, who only knows English, knows no better. This prejudice can actually Rob you from

having pride about your Hispanic Culture. I guess I did not have the support of the Hispanic culture in my life. I had to go somewhere else to even understand some parts of my culture. That is why I say that is we have certain circumstance may happen to us and that the bottom line is we should try and regain are understandings of our heritage cultures.

I think that it is important to have our cultures as a part of our lives, regardless of what they are. We may sometimes lose aspects of our culture, without even understanding what was lost. As life goes on we can identify with what actually was lost. Then we can try and retake what was missing. Even though we may never regain all of what could have been. The Hispanic heritage and rich life, we can try to regain it. Music has helped me to at least see and understand some aspects of what was lost. The cultural tones hymns rhythms these have allowed me to feel and change my identity. Our culture can be disrupted by many factors in life. Obesity in this country is to be very high. In order to regain something you must be up to the challenge that is why I am so health orientated. Our religion and beliefs can mold us into who we are, and who we will become. The base of our true values can be swayed. Sometimes we find ourselves on a quest to find what those may be. From the adolescent childhood, which I had little control of, to now, where I can more than ever control my own plight. I know that I have lost some of my Hispanic Culture through, the Spanish language. I have more than ever been able to learn and adapt to My Mexican American Culture, then at the present. My journey to learn my Hispanic culture will always be a current and growing part of me.