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What does it mean to be an American?

Lytiek Gethers

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What does it mean to be American?

The terminology “American” is absurd. The United States of America is a multicultural nation. People from all over the world fight to get here. Migrants makes America great when they bring their customs over. Multiculturalism is great because we are sharing ideas. This is good because if our country accepts many cultures, that improves the country's social atmosphere. To call ourselves American, we will need homogeneity. Homogeneity means “the quality or state of being of a similar kind or of having a uniform structure or composition throughout” (Merriam-Webster, 2019). The United States has never been a homogeneous country from its establishment. We always had diverse religions, cultures, and ethnicities. Our constitution borrowed some ideas from the Iroquois Confederacy (Poltifact.com, 2014). This is beautiful because some countries are close minded. Our country has come a long way because we are open to different ideas.

We should not call ourselves “American” for nationalism. Nationalism means “the belief that your own country is better than all others” (Vocabulary.com, 2019). Calling ourselves American connects to nationalism because we are trying to fit ourselves into a imaginary common identity. If some people are nationalistic, they can turn their patriotism into xenophobia. Xenophobia means “fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign” ((Merriam-Webster, 2019). This is dangerous because innocent people can be victims of hate crimes if they are not homogenous. When we call ourselves American, we are being discriminatory because we will decide who is American and who’s not. Our founding fathers said “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights.” Even though our founders had their

bias on race and gender, their quote is advocating unity and it is used presently to ensure equality for everyone. When we are nationalistic, we are creating division and contradicting our founding fathers' values.

Because the United States is a multicultural nation, being American is not a priority. If you abide by the U.S. Constitution, and the laws, you have liberty. We have some natural-born citizens who practice their ancestors' cultural customs. The first and fourteenth amendments in the bill of rights give people the right to religion, and equal protection under the law. This shows that America has always been a diverse nation and that title "American" has no true meaning.

There are many perspectives on what it means being an American. Some Americans think being an American is: unlimited opportunity, patriotism, diversity, integrity, tolerance, etc. Others think you have to be homogeneous. Being an American citizen means nothing to me personally. I am not forced by the government to be patriotic to the president, our military veterans, or serve in the military. All I do as an American citizen is: go to school, pay taxes, work, and volunteer in my free time. What does being an American mean to you?

