



BEING AUSTRALIAN IS NOT AN EASY JOURNEY

Peter Adamis Abalinx 12 January 2017

Recently two minor incidents made me realise how vulnerable I am still at this age. That despite my pride in my past and my passion for two distant and dissimilar cultures, I could not but feel residual anger followed by a sense of hopelessness at being misrepresented and misunderstood. Although I am conscious of my own dignity, the

feeling of helplessness was able to penetrate years of hardening myself against such verbal onslaughts from such close quarters that I reacted with ancestral anger that reminiscent of my youth.

The first was being referred to as an alien to this country we call home - Australia - and the second incident was that I felt I was being devalued, which meant that no matter what one did in life, the past cannot be changed or altered. The past can only be used as a tool of understanding that we must do what we must do in order to survive in environments we find ourselves in. Whether through life style decisions or perhaps fate, life's challenges cannot be avoided if we continue to react badly to unforeseen circumstances. I must confess that I react badly to negativity.

Having stated the above, I am of the belief that in Australia there is there is no taxonomic study of our diverse cultures to define who is and when an individual considered is an Australian. The Naturalisation certificate is devalued if we do not accept those who take the allegiance to Australia seriously and accept them for who they are, no matter their origins. I am not stating that as Australians we do not have the right to decide who is to live amongst us, but rather to come to an understanding of what is right.

If we find that our New Australians are not integrating into our society and embracing our laws and institutions as well as other cultures, should we close the door on future migration. That is a question that the ordinary man and women in the street is asking themselves on a daily basis. You will find examples of the two incidents in every workplace, environment, suburb, transport hubs, organisations, and gatherings and in the congregation of peoples. I dont have the answer, other than to demonstrate respect to individuals whose culture, mannerisms and life style differ greatly to that of my own. In doing so I would also be educating myself and distilling any fear that I may have remove doubts and biases that have somehow infiltrated my mind.

As a youngster I struggled to come to terms who I was, where I belonged, what was expected of me and whether I had the skills, capability, emotional maturity and education to understand the complexities of my environment at any given time? I confess that I failed on all accounts and as such fear ruled my very being and as fear was my driver, it led me to finding solutions using violent methods. Although it would take some 50 years to overcome those fears, the residual after effects are still felt whenever the trigger is pulled. Those triggers could be based on the unknown, rejection, humiliation, neglect, words, gestures and outright aggression.

Therefor it should not come as a surprise that after a lifetime of self-learning, overcoming challenges, mentoring, personal development, re-education and accumulation of life skills that I managed to overcome 99% of my fears. Coming from an agricultural rural background, I am proud of my achievements. Although I find satisfaction in my ability to come to this point in life, the 1% remains a thorn in my side. I guess on reflection that is my Achilles heel that can be used effectively against me. An Achilles heel that unfortunately leads me to using aggressive behaviour when all else has failed.

If all of the above is said to be true; when do who are considered to be Australians (with due respect to our First Australians, our indigenous peoples), accept others under the umbrella of our diverse society. When is the day we accept them, what is the exact month, and/or year of acceptance, and don't tell me it's the day of Naturalisation as it does not was well with me. What does a New Australian have to do to prove that he or she is an Australian? Do they have to have a degree, do they have to join a paramilitary organisation, become captains of industry, join the Australian defence Force, become law enforcement officers, become good citizens; forget their past and their culture. I am seeking a definite answer on this because I have yet to find the solution after 62 years in this country.

During my research into Australians of Greek heritage being members of the Australian Defence Force so many years ago, I came across numerous stories of heroism by the se Aussie Greeks and yet so little had been written about them. One story was about a bloke who was an Aussie of Greek background who stood up in a canoe off the coast of Papua New Guinea and blasted at the Japanese soldiers with his Bren gun, giving his mates addling in the water time to escape the clutches of the Japanese. This bloke was shot in the head by a Japanese sniper and his mates slowly slid his body into the sea. It was they said the Australian way. His mates owed their lives to him and when they returned they made sure his memory was not forgotten. Yes he was accepted as an Aussie, but he was dead.

I therefore go back to my question again and ask, when does one become an Australian? When does feel or made to feel that he or she is truly an Australian. When will we be ready to accept others without fearing that we will be overwhelmed by our own fears of the unknown? It's a tough life and each generation must make decisions based on their own experiences that will bring about the harmony within our society whatever that may be. I would rather live next to a neighbour that respects my values, traditions, lifestyle that live next to someone who is of the opinion that I am still an alien or an outcast who just does not fit in. We all must contribute to the economic security and longevity of this nation, no matter who we are, how long we have been here and where we may have come from. Such is the journey expected of an Australian; so give it your best shot when embracing an Australian culture. .

I therefore come to the end of my discussion and point the finger at those New Australians and Australians whose origins are not of this nation. There is a considerable number of individuals and groups that "proudly" label themselves with names which are alien to Australian and even to their own cultural origin; and in doing so alienate themselves from the mainstream society. In my eyes, these groups and/or individuals are just as much to blame for the racial hatreds that still exist this day. Once an individual takes the oath of allegiance to this nation and/or was born here, they are Australians and should act like one. We as a nation cannot afford to be divided and catalogued according to race, culture, status, faith and education, but that we must all be treated as equals no matter what our station in life may be. Let us not allow such taxonomic identities to define us as Australians and dont expect life to be handed to you on a plate for the journey is not an easy one. You must earn it.

As always, apologies to purists for my poor grammar and savagery of the English language. I wish you all well and hope that this article does not cause ambiguity in the minds of those who read it.



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