

important it is to connect with students and understand our culture.”

Regarding myself, my mother has probably been the biggest role model for me throughout my childhood and one of my many teachers for this. For eighteen years now I have been naturally picking up her morals and ethics. The way she moves. The way she acts. All of these have been instilled in my subconscious. My mother has been my main source of ‘Greekness’ apart from the rest of my family, school and the community. I have been exposed to the language, the way of thinking and the rest of its cultural aspects.

Although my mother was born here in Australia to Greek migrants, she grew up in Greece. She is more Greek than Australian in a way. Over the years, this has become more evident as she shares her experiences with me. Her anecdotes. Her pastimes. All her favourite memories are from Greece. The reason behind why my identity is so infused with Greek culture is through the communication and passing of knowledge and past occurrences from my mother to me. Interaction is the key component to being able to successfully transfer aspects of culture from one party to another and teach the ways of such developments.

Culture is not necessarily expressed by book and neither does it operate in this way. By saying this, I mean that it is a mixture of qualities that can be passed down orally. By word of mouth and from generation to generation. Not just by what is written down. Culture itself adapts to the changing times and is useless in terms of practicality if it solely sticks to its traditional values and purposes. Those act as the foundation. It is the essence that is significant and that can be passed on.

In fact, an age ago, when writing was not readily practiced, folklore was transmitted through dance and song. This on its own proves that each culture is not just a set of unchanging attributes. There are a few aspects of tradition that cannot be understood by the concepts themselves. Can dance and song be entirely expressed through just words on a paper? Can everything by word of mouth remain unaltered for many generations to come? Language on its own develops constantly.

Even fashion depends on cultural trends that take place each period. This is natural. It is an example of evolution.

Just because one grows up with the ways of a certain culture, it does not mean that they have to mimic them completely. The mind of a person has developed over the centuries. Humans are now able to have their own opinion and judgement. If I take the example of my mum and I, I am now at an age where I can discern whether I find my mum’s habits to be right or wrong for me. I can always adapt my style to something that suits me.

I have lived my life here in Australia and have therefore grown up amongst not only Australians, but with people of different ethnicities and religions. In this way, I am not only affected by my Greek culture, but also by those I am surrounded by. As previously mentioned, culture does not have to be solely about the tradition that is passed down from generation to generation. It is the exposure to history, language, cuisine and so much more. As you make your way around Sydney for instance, there are cuisines of a wide variety. Nepali. Japanese. Italian. Whatever you can possibly think of.

Apart from food... food... food... (yum).

You also have your friends, coworkers and peers. Or even just random people on the street that you have been observing. From these people alone, one is influenced. Having such a multiplicity at your feet, you can always choose to swap or even discard any part of your cultural manners or “reasons” of behaving when there is something that is more appealing out there and more your style. If you, for example, have grown up with your typical Greek grandmother that loves to push others out of the way when you are lined up, you may have some negative feelings for this action. Especially when they start screaming at the top of their lungs to get attention. “EXKIUUUUSEEE MIIIII !!!” Or when it causes a scene. You may feel as if it is not the correct thing to do. That the right thing to do is to wait patiently for your turn. The next day, say, you are at a bank and a lady from South Korea appears. You are once again lined up awaiting your service. You see that instead of