


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## Yesterday's Memories and Tomorrow's Hope

Reading *Saving Dr. Warren... "A True Patriot"* by Jeffrey McKenna and writing this essay has made me spend time thinking about what I do and have done to be considered a true patriot. To me, it boils down to three main themes, remembering those who paved the way yesterday, embracing all that is good today, and being willing to do what we can for the betterment of our country tomorrow. Steve and Grace, who were the teenage main characters in the book, also went through this journey of discovering what a true patriot looks like. We live in a country that warrants our love, respect, and admiration, and we demonstrate these things by showing respect to our nation's symbols, honoring our shared history, and showing appreciation for those who have sacrificed so much.

My mother takes pride in our country's greatness, and she has a worldwide perspective that helps her to embrace all that is good about it. She is an immigrant, born and raised in Brazil, spending one year of high school as an exchange student in Europe before returning back to Brazil for her undergraduate studies, and ultimately moving to the US to pursue a graduate degree at the University of Pennsylvania. She seized the opportunity to experience living in the US, and although it is hard to believe that someone from a different country could love this country as much as we do, she does. She spent ten years living here before applying for citizenship, and when she was called in for the tests, she spent hours learning about US history, memorizing the pledge of allegiance, and all of her hard work paid off. I remember the day when



she took the oath of allegiance, my whole family got dressed up, drove a few hours, and we were not prepared for the moment we were about to witness. With teary eyes, I watched her say the pledge. Even today, when she looks at the flag, I see her eyes sparkle. It is important to know that a patriot does not have to be a native-born American, but simply someone who loves their country. She was not born here and was not even in a position that forced her to come here. She chose to live in the United States because she loves this country, and the people in it.

One of the people she loves is my father, and he comes from a family with generations of people who have served in the armed forces. Although I had heard of these family members and what they have done for our country, I never realized the scope of how they served until I did the research for this paper. As I learn about them, I have a newfound appreciation for those who paved the way for our country, and the tremendous sacrifices they were and are willing to make. My grandfather, Charles A. Self III, was in the Army twice. My first cousins, Erin Hall and Blake Howton, were in the Navy. My Great Grandfathers, Charles Self Jr. (Army) and J.D. Hopkins (Marine Corps), served during WWII. My uncle, Jeff Parsons, retired from the Navy. My great uncle, Daniel Hopkins, retired from the Army. My great great uncle, Jack Tidwell, was killed in action on the USS Indianapolis at the end of WWII. He was only nineteen. As eloquently said by Andrew Jackson, "Every good citizen makes his country's honor his own, and cherishes it not only as precious but as sacred. He is willing to risk his life in its defense and is conscious that he gains protection while he gives it" ("Andrew Jackson Quotes"). I wish to be as selfless and patriotic as my relatives who have so often answered the call of their nation. It's important to show our appreciation for veterans. Because they are the ones who have fought, died, and made tremendous sacrifices for our community and for us. By remembering and honoring their actions from the past, we see hope for the future and can be inspired to do the

same. They acted upon their love for the United States, and chose the harder path. I admire them for shedding blood and tears so that we could be free, the ones who spent days fighting for a reward of freedom earned, not just for them, but for generations of Americans to come. Dr. Joseph Warren did the same, and was a model and inspiration to Steve throughout the book.

After looking at what my mom and dad have both taught me about patriotism, I think to the future, and how I can be a true patriot and inspiration for future generations. We need to maintain and even improve our great country. This starts with willingness to step forward and aid our community in times of need. We look at those who served and those who are serving now with fondness and appreciation, but we also need to be vigilant in finding ways to improve our country and the standing of every American. This requires us to be willing to stand in the gap with our presence, our voices, and our personal blood, sweat, and tears. We all should try to do our work not just for the betterment of ourselves, but also for our communities and country. This starts with having a heartfelt love, and then acting on it.

Loving our country, we are able to remember and appreciate the sacrifices patriots have made in the past, recognize how truly great it is, and reach higher for a better tomorrow. Steve loved America, and when he travelled back to the 18th century, he was able to see the day-to-day sacrifices his ancestors made, and gained a newfound appreciation for those who served. He and Grace also looked for ways to improve their community by spreading the love they had for the United States. We can all strive to be patriots like them by not overlooking those who paved the way, holding onto the greatness of our country, and working to improve our already amazing home.