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SOC147 Our America

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Racial Autobiography

Race is a socially constructed human classification system that is used to distinguish between groups of people that have similar phenotypic traits. I think that we can all say that race is something that we at a young age do not realize the differences that societies put us through. My earliest memory of race would be when I first went on a trip to play volleyball in the U.S. I immediately asked myself why some people on that tournament were treating me and my teammates differently. I am from Puerto Rico, and I was part of a volleyball club that every summer went to Orlando, FL to play in tournaments. At first, I didn't realize the difference on how they looked at us and how they directed themselves towards us. They looked at us like we were weird, like we didn't have the talent enough to compete at that level just because we looked different and talked another language that they weren't used to. I didn't realize this until my other teammates talked about it.

I have never had any negative experiences associated with race. Thanks to the way that I was raised by my mom, she taught me to be confident about myself and my beliefs. I would say I became racially conscious at the age of 14, after that tournament because I started asking questions on why they looked and treated us differently. As I kept growing up and building up my maturity, I started learning in hearing about different stories about race and I was really interested on knowing why people automatically decided to treat people by their race. Just

because they didn't have the same race, does not give anyone the right to treat them as if they were an object that does not have feelings.

The stages of racial development in some cases can be categorized by race. In this case I have an understanding of it being categorized by white or black people; conformity, dissonance and appreciating, resistance and immersion, introspection, and integrative inspection, is one category of the stages. The other stages of racial development are pre-contact, disintegration, and reintegration. These stages can be used to have more knowledge and awareness when interacting with others. I feel like, thanks on the way that I have been raised like I said before, it helped me not to have any concerns about my racial past. I have been taught to always be real to myself.

What encourages me the most about my racial past is that I can help others by inspiring them on believing that they are human beings no matter what other people say, and that they have feelings and that they have the same rights that we all have as well. I feel like people who are confident with their race should not feel like they have an authority over others just because they are more confident, on the contrary, I think that they should be an example to others so that they can learn that they should embrace their race. My purpose for racial justice is that I would love to encourage many more people on feeling like they "fit in", to feel and believe that they are human and not objects that people can judge like if they were "different" when they are not. We all have feelings and have the right to show them, no matter in what way.