

“What the American Flag Means to Me”

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What does the American flag mean to me? The American flag represents the opportunity for new beginnings and the chance to live the American dream. As a daughter of two parents who moved to America to escape from communism so they could start a new, improved, and easier life, the American flag to me is a symbol of being able to live a life making the decisions that one wants to make.

To me personally, the flag represents freedom for my family. Both my parents grew up in Poland during the era of communism. Ever since I was a little girl, my mom would always sit down with me as I was doing history homework, and she would tell me how lucky my family and I are to be citizens of this wonderful, free country. She informed me that when she was a child, her family had these cards that limited what they could purchase and the amount of it. She would also indicate how the residents in her small town would trade these cards. If one family needed more carrots for example because they didn't grow any in their garden, and another family grew carrots and had no need for purchasing them, then they would trade their carrot card for a card with another item, for instance flour. My mom also said that everything was very expensive, and that with a family of seven, two parents and five kids, they couldn't afford much. All the kids had just two pairs of shoes each, one pair for school and everyday wear, the other for church or special events. If one looks at the students around my school, the majority of them have at least eight pairs of shoes. When my mom was just twenty years old, she left her parents and siblings behind and moved to America. She wasn't just doing what was best for her, but

what was best for her family. When my mother moved and became a citizen of this country, it was a new beginning for her.

My dad, as a child living during the time of communism in Poland, did not have it easy either. My grandpa was constantly working hard to support the family. When my dad was just fourteen, his mother got sick with cancer. With the conditions of the government at the time, my grandpa could not do much to help his wife get healthy, and she ended up passing away. A few years after my grandmother passed away, my grandpa and dad moved to the United States and became citizens. Both my grandpa and dad started working for the same company. A few years later, my dad met my mom, and they soon got married. Five years later, my parents welcomed my older sister, and four years later, they had me. Now, my family lives in a polite community, near a homey, small town where I am attending my last year of high school. My family and I have more than anything one could wish for, and not one day goes by that my family doesn't realize that we are living the American dream. My dad is always telling me that there is nothing that he would do to change the way that we are living now.

Many people may state that the American flag represents freedom, equality, and justice, and, yes, while for many people that is what it symbolizes, to me it indicates something else. For me, the American flag represents the privilege of being able to start a new life and being able to live the American dream. Both my parents constantly tell me how lucky I am to be raised here, and how I should always respect the flag and everything it represents. It is the symbol of everything my family has gained and now cherish so dearly.