

What Patriotism Means to Me

Patriotism is defined as the love, support, and defense of one's country. Our patriotism is what brings us together as a country and it is this unifying power that makes us the United States of America.

As a teenager, I understand the importance of patriotism and I believe there are various ways to show my love and support for this country. I can thank a service member, fly the American flag, know my American history, and stand with my hand over my heart during the national anthem. These simple gestures carry so much weight and, to me, they symbolize respect and appreciation of our nation.

Today, patriotism is under fire as people have begun to think it's acceptable to sit during the national anthem or burn the American flag. It seems that we have forgotten the struggles that our founding fathers endured to form our country. Just in my lifetime, our level of patriotism has decreased significantly as a nation. In kindergarten, every single student in my class would stand up and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Now, as a high school senior, I am disappointed when nearly half of my class remains sitting when it comes time for the morning pledge.

I try to be a role model and encourage my peers to demonstrate patriotism every chance they get. I may only be one person, but all great changes begin with one person. After all, that is how we became a sovereign nation...with a chosen few who encouraged the many to join in the fight to establish our amazing country.

When we demonstrate our patriotism, we become one-one country, one people-truly united. Regardless of religion, gender or ethnicity, our love for this country crosses all boundaries and unites us in an undeniable way. It's why we get choked up when service members come home, when the flag is raised, and when several thousand people sing the national anthem in unison. There is no greater feeling of unity, power, and invincibility. For one brief moment, we are all united in our love for our country. THAT is patriotism!