



WHO AM I?

The teacher bustled into the classroom as the sound of the final bell ended; this meant that students had taken their seats and the lesson was about to commence. The teacher began, “Good morning class, as previously discussed, today we are going to talk about who you are, the essence of you! Let’s start first with the basics.” Her voice trailed off as paper flew around the room to ensure everyone had received one. I looked over the sheet, checking for sections I could easily answer. I began slowly but steadily to answer each of the questions.

“**WHO AM I?**” “**WHO AM I...?**” I paused and pondered for a moment, unsure of where to begin. The prompts were easy, so I began to answer the lightened sections of the worksheet.

Full Name: Tauila Tavita Ausage

Background: Samoan

Date of Birth: 02/17/2002, in Samoa’s Main Hospital - Tupua Tamasese Meuole Hospital at Matootua, Apia, Upolu

Hobbies and Interests: Sport

I was then asked to include additional information that may interest the reader.

Role at home: I am responsible for cooking food for the family, and I hardly go to school because I need to work to support my family.

Write a story about a time you did something you enjoyed, and potentially expresses the essence of you!

My name is Tauila Tavita Ausage. I was born in Samoa and raised there for 12 years. I moved to Australia when I was only 12 years old and left without my biological parents, to move in with my adopted ones. My life in Australia was very different to the life I had led back home. The similarities between home and Australia, was religion, culture and dance.

The only time I believe I was truly happy, was when I danced. When I dance! There is something so ancient and traditionally familiar as I gently move my feet. My hips sway to the rhythm of the music as my hands take on a life of their own. My daydream had taken me back, back into a time where my passion expressed more than what my words ever could.

Standing in front of the theatre, I was ready. I was next in line to perform with my sister. I could already hear the cheering exploding from the audience. As they continued to roar, they began to drown out the sound of the music. We had now taken our positions on stage. I paused, in a pose ready to move to the beat of the drums. The patea, (drum) repeated through the hall. The sounds of cheer Wohoo!!, Cheehoo!! Continued to explode in sections of the hall.

At that moment, everything else faded into the background. It was me and the song. All I could do was focus on my moves. Every action had a meaning, either to explain the song or the idea in the song.

I was performing a Siva Samoa (dance) with a welcoming song, "Talofa Samoa." Every movement we made in unison felt so good. Screams of encouragement came from the audience, their way of saying they supported us. Performing for me was a big thing because it was a way that I became comfortable to tell my story. It was the only time I could feel the mana (power) as I move to express laughter and the joy. I am so blessed to have this gift.

I suddenly realise that this IS my essence, the power of dance and knowledge of my culture. Power that only I can share with those like me who dance and appreciate what we have.