

Opportunities



As the plane ascended, she stared out the window one last time as the image of the Island she loved so much, began to shrink out of view. She and her sister were going to a “new paradise”, a land full of food and prospects. Although her excitement of travelling on a plane for the first time was appealing, fear and uncertainty gripped her as she realised that this was the first time she and her sister had ever been away from their parents and that time away could possibly extend into years rather than two or three days. They would be away, gone from the life they had known with family, friends, and everyone they had ever known. They were with the new family now, ones that had been living in the new place that many say was “flowing with milk and honey.” My new family wanted to share that opportunity now, with their Island family.

Settling into the new world was hard. People spoke a different English to what I was used to. At school, I tried to dress like them, look like them, talk like them but I was never allowed to “act” like them. Being a student in my new school was often challenging. My teachers cared but would never, and could never understand the intricacies of this new world I lived in. They lived in clean white boxes with opportunities as far as the eye could see. I lived in my two boxes, church and family.

As I sat with my peers enjoying the sandwich saved from snack. I reminisced about the life I had before. Life on the Island was simple but there was always a harsh reality about this paradise. Each person had a role to play. It was always about survival. Where our next meal came from, if there was enough money to buy food. Do I have the skills needed to acquire work? I miss living at home but grateful for the choices I now have, to expand my horizons.

My story is one that has been told by many others who like me, came to Australia to find “a future.” Some have had good experiences with their homes and others not so much. I often think about home, and what my new family has done for me.

A song suddenly plays, and I lay there crying, thinking about the words

“Alo ia ou faiva ia Manuia” this was the message my parents left me with before I left my home in Samoa.

This song I now dedicate to all the young people who ever needed guidance and support. There is a time when we get frustrated and question how we can survive learning a new culture and challenging situations but through dedication and perseverance, you can succeed in your own way. I’ve always believed that nothing is impossible as long as you are committed and keen to learn and understand new things.

This song reflects the advice my dad gave to teach me the way I should walk to please God. You also need to be confident, believe in yourself and you can overcome anything. This song shows the heart-break when leaving home to seek these prospects, there will be times when you don’t succeed and sometimes fall. Have faith, for you will never know what you can achieve. He raised me to glorify God and I have adopted these teachings and it is my secret to falling and standing again today. For me to appreciate these gifts, I will not squander all that I have been afforded.