

English Message to Filipino Parents from a Filipina-American Parent
(for The Asian Pride Project 2012)

We Filipinos are loving towards our children, our fellowmen, and with all people. We were raised with these four interpersonal traits. These four Filipino traits are:

- 1: Reciprocal obligation
- 2: Humility
- 3: Honor, reputation, dignity
- 4: Cooperativeness, comradeship

The family is important to all of us; the family we were born into, our children, and also including our extended families, or our relatives. We are a collective and egalitarian society that exhibits mutuality, service to others, and we rely heavily on our kinship system.

For us Filipinos who are immigrants here in America, whether you are a newcomer, or that you have been here for a long time and are now U.S. citizens, you are the key element in being a First Generation parent.

We Filipinos have long fought for our freedom, for our place in our own nation, the Philippines, and also for our own ethnic identity, as Asians here in America.

Our children are what is most sacred to us and we sacrifice for them always. They are the new generation of Filipino-Americans. As a Filipina parent, I understand you because I have been through your hardship, your struggle in living here in America, with regards to working, and always compromising with others who do not understand us because they view us as different. But, we are all the same as they are. The only difference is the color of our skin. Our hearts and our hopes are colorless.

What if you had a child who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender? Their struggle is doubled as they discover who they are as an individual. They have no role models outside of the home, at schools, among their friends, what the sermons are in church, and also in your own home.

Our family should be a safe haven, a safe home for everyone. "Home is where you are most understood." Think about that. Think about where your children feel most understood; where they can be who they are; honestly, authentically. Is it with you? With their friends? Or are they alone? How about you? Are you alone, too?

Think about and recall when you first bore your child and you cradled them; he or she looked into your eyes; when you first looked at each other; that first gaze...

I always remember that first gaze I shared with my children, like it was yesterday. And, I am always reminded of my vow as a parent; that I would keep them safe, happy, so loved, and so confident. I always hold dearly that hope that they would always feel free to be who they are.

I am imploring you to show your child that you are proud of them and of who they are. Know that they are not alone and you are not alone here in America, because, after all, we Filipinos are a caring and loving people.