

EXEMPLIFY, INVEST, AND RECIPROCATE

By: Pearl Ivory Q. Laude

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Pearl Ivory wants other children to appreciate the fact that their parents are not working abroad and are there to guide them all the time. She wants to challenge them to do even better than those whose parents are away and could not guide them and or be with them every day. Both ways, finishing school will be the best way children can repay their parents sacrifices.

It was such a decisive moment when my mother chose to gamble outside the country and barter her role as our mother with her yearning to give us the finest of everything. The situation brought the whole family in the crossroads, not knowing what might lie ahead, and the only thing certain was that – it would be vague. There was this doubt if that decision might just be a detour or a dreadful dead-end. Her choice was akin to a food being offered which we found very hard to swallow. We didn't have idea that it would taste that bad. We had a series of bad meals when our eldest brother, and then our father, both tagged along with the thought of working far from us. We were left behind with no option but to take those bad-tasting meals. In the first place, it was never good to waste food.

Families, as the basic entities of a society, should be productive in their own way. This would mean having all of its members together and children having regular parental supervision. The role of families is most likely flawed brought about by rampant overseas employments. Global deployment of both land-based and sea-based OFWs increased to 14 percent around the world and means 3,303 OFWs leave the country everyday, according to POEA. A parent or both settle to leave their children in the Philippines to seek for better pay as professionals, skilled-workers, entertainers, and domestic helpers.

Nation building, according to an online encyclopedia, is structuring a nation using the power of the state and unifying the people for a country to remain viable in the long run. Further, nation-building involves use of development to foster harmony and economic growth. With these pressing problems of families lacking in-flesh guidance of parents, the necessary materials in building a nation would be weak.

As a limb of this country, it is crucial to have a role in building the nation's framework. Like in any infrastructures, even a bit of gravel or a minute screw is very vital to craft a brawny finish. There are no big and small roles. What matters is how this every part performs its role and in the way they collaborate to maintain a durable building, strong enough to surpass all the whips and pulls. I prefer to be the tiny screw that joins the hinges together than just to be a nuisance ornament. I will utilize the

riveting and lubricating done by my parent's hard work to become a vital aggregate for building a stronger nation.

Being a child of an overseas Filipino worker, my role is not to outright address the concern for nation-building. The least that I can have as a role in nation-building is to dispense efforts to be an exemplary student and child for the youth to be inspired with. Also, to be resilient enough as a family, to put into best use what my parents have invested and toiled for, and to reach out for those who are less fortunate in ways I can.

Broken family ties, domestic violence, substance abuse and the like-these are only some of the ill-effects associated with the children of OFW. These children are more problematic because their biological parents are not present in their every triumph and more importantly during their downhearted moments. They tend to seek for refuge from other people who are not all the time real. Some friends would push them to rebellion.

Starting with my own self and my family is a better foundation to work-out this societal dilemma. Instead of considering my parents' absence as an escape to mess up, I even strive harder to reciprocate their compromise. There is a reason for their every goodbyes and the only consolation that they could expect from my siblings and me is to do good in our studies. If faring well in school is a consolation, I can say that I have given my parents the grand prizes. I haven't missed to take home distinctions for being at the top of the class in the elementary and high school. Now that I'm in college, I still show them that their sacrifices have worked out well. Their absence made me strive more with the thought in mind that if I would fare best, there could be greater chances for them to come home and for us to savor the triumph together. That would be playing the role of a reuniting factor.

I deem on the idea that the achievements that I had could instigate some adolescents my age to also excel. I can serve as an inspiration for them. Participating in this search for outstanding expat Pinoy children will let me help in making the people, especially the youth, conscious that OFW children can get along satisfactorily with all the emotional torture. I will show them that I learned to dream, embraced sacrifices, and managed to be an achiever at the expense of my parents' absence. It will stir their hearts to comprehend that they are even more capable of excelling because their parents are constantly there to guide them and nurture their every need. They should find advantage in the parental supervision that they have. I further believe that I can also inspire the students who are on the same situation as mine. I will keep on illustrating the manner of not surrendering because our parents haven't given up too. Children ought to realize that their parents left hoping for the best bargain, thus it is desirable to start helping their parents craft the optimum thing their hoping for. They say that hard work and sacrifice make great pay. As children of OFWs, finishing our education will be the greatest and sweetest reimbursement for our parents.

Family resiliency is important in building a nation because of the fact that families comprise the very soul of it. As what the definition of nation-building stipulates, there is a need for unity and harmony amongst the people in order for a nation to be viable in the long-run. The said unity and harmony is expected to journey from the families. I portray this role simply though sticking with my siblings since

they are the ones I'm left with, same thing as I am to them. As their sister, I will remain to be an inspiration and encouragement. When they long for the support that can make them stronger in front of the challenges that try to make them weak, I will be there. In our weaknesses, we will all find the seed of strength to keep on with life. I will use this resiliency to exemplify the value of keeping the ties close even if a fraction of the family is away. Having close relations with my family is like putting together the pieces of the country's puzzle in one small corner. That spot will facilitate other puzzle pieces to fit adjacently for the formation of a clearer and more distinct picture of the entire nation.

Lastly, my role is to utilize effectively what I receive and enjoy, and be able to extend help for the needy. Department of Labor and Employment Secretary Marianito Roque said that remittances reached \$4 billion this first quarter of 2008, a big increase from \$1.4 billion during the same period last year. This may demonstrate the development that is necessary to foster economic growth, as what the definition of nation-building referred. But not all fat economies are healthy. They may be bloated but not beefy enough. The children of OFWs are the end-users of these remittances. Efficient spending is then crucial to put that large amount of money into best ventures. On my part, the best investment is my education. With learning, rest assured that money sent to me is never wasted. Just in a race; the starting line is my parent's provision, the race track is learning, the end line is being successful in the application of what I have learned in concrete life situations, and hoping for the prize of a better nation through my exerted efforts. I also believe on the worth of saving because I understand that everyday is not sunny.

Being in the University of the Philippines, we are made aware of certain issues and encouraged to take actions on matters that affect the tax payers who partly sends us to school. I join civic organizations which facilitates programs to help the less privileged. I selflessly contribute my spare time and money, old clothes and even talent in exchange of the fulfilling feeling of being productive. It makes me thankful of having and enjoying some things I have in excess.

This might be a country of sacrifices, bitterness, frustrations, and pressures, yet as what our parents have honed us to be; we become who we are today – yes, as persons capable of being productive in unique ways, and always thankful to be able to give back.

