

## INTRODUCTION

Eager to talk to a fellow Filipino during my stay in Boston, USA, I asked, “Ey p’re, are you Pinoy?” He gave me a quick stare, said “no” and continued talking with his polished American accent. Instinctively, I knew he was Pinoy, but well he refused to admit it. I guess he does not want to be Pinoy in some way. Staying in America will somehow sharpen your Pinoy radar – the ability to decipher a Pinoy despite the accent, sans designer clothes and shoes, whether they are “bagong salta” (just new) or “beterano na” (in the US for a long time).

I’ve had several of this kind of experience in my stay outside the Philippines. Since America comprises people of different cultures and ethnicities, it is not uncommon to begin a small talk with one’s origin. And quite a few times, when you ask Pinoys, a few would vehemently deny being a Filipino as though the Philippines was struck by a plague that they don’t want to be associated with. At other times, they would just keep on speaking in English even if you start talking to them in Filipino.

Technically, they may no longer be Filipinos because they are already citizens of the United States. Some would admit that they are of Filipino ancestry but would quickly add that they have left the Philippines a long time ago. They would often say they have very little memory of the Philippines. Others would usually give you a litany of why they do not like to go back – pollution, traffic, poor roads, poverty etc. And more would narrate how life in the US is so much better than life back in their home country or the country of their forebears. I guess they want to really distance themselves from their roots.

And so the pondering began. While relaxing on a Sunday morning with a couple of my Pinoy friends in the States, we started talking about what could be the reason why Pinoys deny being Filipinos. We concurred that people usually deny or lie about something if they are not proud of it. In line with this thought, we surmised that could it be that they are not proud of being Filipinos themselves? However, looking at the other side of the coin, there are many Filipinos in the Philippines and in other parts of the world who are fairly proud of their origin. So what spells the difference? Is the latter just an aberration, or is there an alarming reason why it is happening?

If you’re a Filipino reading this, ask yourself this question – Are you proud being a Filipino? More importantly, if you are, ask yourself – Why? Personally, I had difficulty giving a quick answer to the second question the first time I thought about it. So I asked others - they pointed out that Filipinos tend to be regionalistic. We are prouder of our province/region than our nation because socializing and inculcating pride in one’s provincial, regional or ethnolinguistic heritage is stronger and more persistent than the pride and patrimony we have for our country. There is even a joke in Hawaii that when you ask if one is a Filipino, s/he would answer, “No, I’m Ilocano”.

There are many things we can be proud of as a nation. But do we know them? I am particularly guilty of not knowing much. Pride is a feeling and before you can feel it, you have to know it. And we don’t even have an appropriate Filipino word for Pride. Or none that I and the countless people I’ve talked to know of. If there is such, we should start using it so it becomes part of our mainstream vocabulary. One friend suggested to just coin a word and an example given was TANOKAKA – short for Taas Noo Kahit Kanino (Head High to Anyone).

So maybe, if we put together a list of things we can be proud of as Filipinos, this may help. If there are commonalities we all know as Filipinos, commonalities that we can be proud of, then maybe this can fuel our pride for our country. Having Filipino Pride is very important – indeed a key element in nation building. Building a nation is more than building bridges and infrastructure; it's about nurturing our self esteem, our pride and love for our homeland.

If there is pride, we will not be indifferent to the plight of our country and our fellow countrymen. Instead, we would instinctively take care of our country. Rather than put our country perpetually in a bad light by incessantly talking about crimes, poverty, and corruption, which is neither endemic to the country nor the most rampant in the world, we will promote what's good, beautiful, and interesting about our land and our people.

Simply put, it's about changing mindsets. We have to start seeing things differently and positively so we can start developing creative, practical and doable solutions to the country's problems. We should refrain from just waiting for the government to address these issues on our behalf. There is so much dignity in the Filipino people, but it is yet to be recognized as we only relate dignity with affluence, power, influence and social position. As long as we treat people and ourselves with respect, our intentions good, doing decent works to provide for our families, it doesn't matter what our status are in life. Our wealth comes from our pride and dignity. If we start being conscious about these, then everything else will just follow. This is the purpose of Filipino Matters! of which the Filipino Pride book project is an integral part. For more details on Filipino Matters!, please visit [www.FilipinoMatters.org](http://www.FilipinoMatters.org).

This book serves as a daily devotional of knowledge that can further our pride to our country. It has eight categories – Business | History | Literature | Sports | Music & Performing Arts | Science & Industry | Visual Arts | People, Culture, Values. There are eight articles on each category giving us sixty four reasons why we should be proud of being Pinoys. One can read one entry per day and hopefully improve one's sense of pride in a couple of months.

Please note that the selected topics here are not based on any order of chronology or significance. The volunteer writers were just given the liberty to contribute articles on the topics that most strike or inspire them. Other subjects not covered by this seminal volume can be included in the next volumes.

Articles were submitted on a voluntary basis with no remuneration. Inspired by the Open Source business model in the IT world where one can just contribute to an open platform, we employed the same system in completing the first chapter of this book project. We opened our doors to everyone who is interested in contributing to the cause of nation building and changing mindsets. And those who heeded the call were professors, graduate students, employees, journalists, employees. among others.

We don't claim that this book is a solution to our Filipino Pride dilemma. We leave that to our social scientists to inquire and study on. Neither do we proclaim that we are heroes and heroines crusading to advance the national spirit. Instead, we remain the average Pinoys and Pinays who just wish to contribute our humble efforts in communicating the so many things, feats, achievements, values and character that we all Filipinos can be proud of. We believe that Filipinos will rise again. This is a product of pure love. Because we choose to be Pinoy!

*Dale Dennis M. David*