

115

What Being Canadian Means To Me

When people ask me what I want to be when I get older, I say I want to be like Canada.

I want to be giving and welcoming like Canada is to refugees who can't have a good quality of life in their own country so they immigrate to one that can provide them with all their needs like Canada. Canada has welcomed and continues to welcome refugees from all over the world in times of need while providing them with resources and acting as a platform in which refugees can share their stories.

I want to accept my failures and embrace learning from them like Canada did by apologizing to First Nations for all that they suffered and went through. Canada is educating the citizens especially the young generation of Canada about the traditions, values and culture of the First Nations in order to raise awareness about things like Residential schools and prevent history from repeating itself. Practices of the First Nations are being integrated into society and our daily lives as we always remember to acknowledge the lands of the First Nations as we can't take back what happened in the past but we can surely take action to prevent it from happening in the future.

I want to empower and embrace being different and unique like Canada does by allowing Canadians from all backgrounds to actively and freely practice values and beliefs important to their own individual identities. Canada can not be defined by just one culture as it is composed of so many diverse ethnicities, races and cultures. We as Canadians celebrate multiculturalism and our differences as a nation. Canada treasures the cultures that reside here and empower all the individual along with collective identities within our nation.

I want to be perseverant like Canadians who suffer through the chilly, harsh winters of Canada every year. Canadians optimistically bear the cold by not letting it bring them down and instead celebrate and participate in all the enriching recreational activities it allows such as tobogganing and snowshoeing.

I want to be equitable and fair like Canada is when it comes to taking action and looking beyond someone's race, gender, sexual orientation, background, etc. Canada allows for all citizens to vote along with many other things regardless of anything that has to do with what they look like, where they come from, what they support, etc.

I want to stay CANADIAN and help others find the path to a destination like mine in which they can truly live life how its meant to be lived. I moved here when I was 6 years old from Pakistan; a country deprived of progress and basic needs for citizens to Canada; a country that welcomed me with open arms and showered me with endless opportunities. Here I am, 10 years later growing, celebrating, learning, loving, living, forgiving and doing just about anything in a country

that empowers and embraces our differences and similarities as a collective nation while allowing us to feel like we belong. Living in Canada is like having a passport to a successful and prosperous life, a passport you really need if you don't have it already.

- Izza Babar

Below is a short poem I wrote on the topic of being Canadian.....

“WE ARE”

We are a strong community, that stands and works together,
We are the glorious and free,
We are the firework that brightens the night sky,
We are the wavin flag that flows with pride,
We are a family like a colony of ants,
We are those who don't give up,
We are those who have a voice,
We are a candle's flame in a dark corridor,
We are powerful and always will be,
We are those who have compassion for every little thing,
We conquer hate and fill with love,
We are the true,north,strong and free,
We are those who dream big.
We are the kind hearted souls,
We are those who are confident and beautiful,
We are Canada.

-Izza Babar