

The flag begins to move from the bottom of the flagstaff and slowly rises. It seems that I, too, have started from the bottom, with no cultural affiliation with America when I first began living in this country in 5th grade. In fact, my first few years in America were filled with incidents that said in one way or another that I did not belong here, that I was an outsider. I think I only began to feel some sense of attachment to this country after entering military school in 7th grade. I am aware that military schools like the one I attend are known for having "trouble kids." Yet it was these kids that provided me room to breathe and grow. Yes, we are each flawed or damaged, and I will be the first one to admit that. But we are also deeply accepting of one another and sometime incredibly generous, bound together by something ineffable that transcends our individual lives.