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How I Define Home

There is an argument that has been living in my mind for a few years. What exactly is “home”? What does it entail? Is it the people around you? A physical location? There are many answers to these questions, but I often struggle to find an answer that sits right with me. Growing up in a military family exposes you to a multitude of opportunities, people, and experiences. Relocating to a new place every few years wasn’t just a possibility; it was a fundamental part of my lifestyle. While the nomadic nature of military life often presents its challenges, it also became the foundation in which I forged my identity and utilized the skills that would define my journey as a person.

One of the earliest lessons I learned from this lifestyle was adaptability. Life is a process. Suddenly changing everything about the way you live and showing up in a new environment can be frightening, but enduring its challenges allows you to adapt to them. As I moved from state to state, I encountered many people with different perspectives and worldviews. This constant exposure allowed me to be more open minded and taught me to appreciate the richness that diversity brings to our lives. At times, moving to a new place involves a degree of uncertainty. From settling into a new home to navigating a different social environment, adaptability becomes a survival skill. Those who move frequently become skillful at traversing the unknown and embracing a mindset that welcomes change rather than resisting it.

Moving also instilled in me a sense of discipline. Going from one place to another required me to have an organized approach, careful time management, and an ability to handle multiple responsibilities at once. The discipline required for effective planning is essential for navigating some of the challenges that come with moving: sticking to deadlines, staying focused, and maintaining a consistent work ethic. It involves embracing change with a mindset that is both flexible and determined. It often means saying goodbye to friends and saying hello to new ones. Leaving people behind whose relationships took years to build requires a large amount of emotional discipline. Moving not only becomes a physical journey but a disciplined approach to life that shaped me to become someone that is organized and resilient.

Moving taught me the art of embracing change, finding strength in goodbyes, and creating an identity through diverse experiences. However, it also gave me an idea of what the true meaning of “home” is. In the narrative of my life, the definition of “home” extends beyond the boundaries of a physical location. Home is the sum of all the challenges faced, the lessons learned, and the personal growth that occurred. It's the sense of familiarity found in the unpredictable rhythm of life. Beyond the physical and internal aspects, the concept of home also extends to the people who have played major roles in my journey: family, friends, teachers, those who have supported me in times of agitation, celebrated my victories, and shared in the experiences that define my life. Home is the laughter around the dinner table and the stories told of triumphs and adversity. Ultimately, home is a combination of the external and internal, the experiences that shape us, and the relationships that sustain us. Everyone might define “home” a different way, but, as I define "home" through the lens of my own journey, it becomes evident that it is a dynamic concept and a personal reflection of experiences and relationships that transform a space into a sanctuary.

As I begin to navigate life as an adult, the skills learned during life as a kid travelling to different places continue to serve me well. Adaptability, resilience, and an appreciation for diversity are not just artifacts of my past but tools that empower me to face what the future has in store for me. While not everyone experiences the demanding lifestyle of a military family, the unique challenges and opportunities that moving presents have shaped me into someone that I can genuinely say I am proud to be. To me, the concept of "home" is not something that is confined to a physical space but rather a combination of experiences, relationships, and cherished memories. While everyone may have their own iteration of what "home" means to them, at its core, it's a personal journey of growth and resilience, where the places we've been and the people we've met converge into a unique and meaningful sense of belonging.