

# American Identity

## Oral History

We have talked a lot about perspectives and being open to diverse perspectives to help guide us through continual development with our own perspective. One of the most influential perspectives in our lives is the perspective in our homes (or close family Grandparents, Aunts, and Uncles). You are to interview one Elder (preferably 35 years old or older), and as you ask the questions please try to make it as comfortable as possible for them so that they can share their true perspective.

- Let them know that you will not share their name with us.
- Let them know that concepts shared are more important than the details.
- Let them know that it will help you analyze other perspectives.
- As an interviewer please do not respond in a way (verbal/physical) that the interviewee would misinterpret as a negative/positive reaction.
- Try to draw deeper answers than a fragment (there should not be any answers less than a few sentences).

If the interviewee does not want to answer the questions or gives incomplete answers, after you have finished, thank them for their time and perspective, then try to find another Elder and get all of the answers with depth. This is the last assignment of the 1<sup>st</sup> unit "American Identity". Please submit your refined and revised answers on a google doc and drop it the submit box.

To help us break away from the computer screen for a little while, you need to conduct the interview with a pencil/pen and paper. When taking interview notes it is ok to not write every single word a person says. Just write down the concepts, maybe some names or places used as examples. Then when you convert the handwritten notes to a digital set of notes you can fill in the holes so that their answers will read like complete sentences.

- 1) How would you describe the "American Identity" (past and present)? Another way to describe this is to think of "What values/characteristics make up America(ns)"?
- 2) How would you describe "American Myths" if they do not match up with reality?
- 3) What was your perspective on "America's" response to the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001?
- 4) How did the response match/conflict with your perspective on the "American Identity"? Why?
- 5) Did this event change/or not your perspective on the "American Identity"? Why?