



Running Toward Hope

I applied to teach at the Muckleshoot Tribal School because they had the highest pay in the land, and by coaching all three high school seasons, running summer sport camps and moonlighting as a personal trainer, I'd be able to afford keeping my wife home while my minis were in the "poo and coo" phase. My knowledge of the Muckleshoot Community, or any tribal community at all was at absolute zero. I was hired to teach weight training, coach baseball, football and wrestling, and got trained in archery, tracking and land survival.

When I teamed to begin an after school Elementary Sport and Fitness Program, there was a component called "Cultural Connections". At that time, I knew nothing about my "across-the-pond" cultural origins, but "where I come from" was a father and grandfathers that are Veterans of Foreign Wars. My enlistment attempt was DQ'd.

As a line not to be crossed in teaching culture is teaching the culture of another, a tribal member led the Cultural Connections component. Her daughter Rosalie transferred to the high school, at she was at a low, low, point. Her words of the low point are best told by her, in a [TED Talk](#) she later gave. Rosalie assisted her mother with this group, where lessons of perseverance and teamwork were taught from traditional teachings and methods, part of the daily component of this after school program, where components of physical movement and sport-specific skills were also intertwined.

I knew little about Rosalie's story, but the weight of the world and her low, low point seemed to be coming out of her pores, except in the moments I saw the opposite. It was almost like a light-switch. When Rosalie sat with the youth of her tribe, assisting with traditional lessons of healing and strength, life flowed through her. I'd never seen anything like it, honestly. The purpose of connecting to her culture to carry those teachings to the youth were the moments where she had a reprieve from hopelessness, it seemed. As soon as she was done, and the youth left, the hope coming out of her appeared to fade. However, it seemed to take longer to fade with each and every day she was working with the youth of her people.

Over the next few years, she ran. And, ran. And, ran. She trained in the weight room, ran in any conditions, researched and applied the best training and nutrition possible, and was disciplined in her academics. Of course, the ember of hope through the strength of her culture was intertwined with everything she did, and by her senior year that ember had grown into a bon fire. She won multiple state medals, with “MMIW” on her leg and a red handprint on her face, as she was running for “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women”, dedicating each race to a missing, including her Auntie. By 2022, Rosalie became the first UW athlete to win the national Truman Award.

Each youth that comes from trauma that becomes fully-healed has a unique healing prescription. They are a blessing to our world, as a unique instance of human innovation. I’d never considered culture as a mechanism of healing until I saw it, and more importantly, felt it. For humans, there is the tendency to become an advocate against the trauma faced if full-healing is reached. The ripple-effect of flourishing hope that came through Rosalie was rooted in her culture, but the sensation I perceived was through the lens of how I perceive my own culture.

I don’t have the words to properly honor the strength of the feeling. I just started understanding it about five years ago. But, in those five years, the hope of healing through *remembering where you come from* has been an absolute blessing for me, as a father, as the significance of understanding our family lineage across the pond gives context for “why” or nation was created, and additional context of appreciation of my veteran lineage. As I see a treasure in our American people that I’d never seen before, it also gives me hope in the realization of our untapped potential as a symbiotic America, and the value of what our future could hold, and how beautiful that future could look for our children, of all of our cultures and heritages.



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