

“What’s my happy place?”

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After being in the foster system for so long I have developed a huge craving for African culture - so much that it hurts sometimes. I personally believe that I lack my people’s culture. Yes, I have the last name, the hair, the skin tone, and the accent, but I do not have the meaning or purpose. By that I mean I don’t have a reason to fight next to my people because I don’t have enough knowledge about my country’s history. The culture that I carry inside me is the little that I learned when I was with my parents in the Democratic Republic of Congo. That little culture I have is what burns inside me daily and I cannot wait till I’m old enough to explore it more in depth.

If you didn’t know me and you went through my phone right now, you would come to the conclusion that I’m a very proud African. The majority of my pictures are screenshots of anything that is Africa-related from the clothes to the food. If you go through my music playlist the songs and artists are all some type of African: Ghanaian, Congolese, Nigerian, etc. My happy place, as I have come to realize, is my African music from Afrobeat to Rumba. Afrobeat is basically the hip hop of Africa, while Rumba is one of Congo’s most famous types of music genre. These types of music genre have become like therapy to me: when I’m having a horrible day all I have to do is plug in my headphones and drown myself into the rhythm and words of the songs. Since I’m homesick Rumba is my go-to, when I’m listening to it most of the times there’s tears in my eyes because it hurts that I have not felt at home for years and I’m relying on music to help ease the pain. But then at the same time it fills me up with so much joy and comfort.

My happy place is where I allow myself to let everything that I have built up inside me out without feeling “exposed.” Although when I’m listening to African music I cry, those tears are not meant to make me feel worthless or anything. It does the opposite. It makes me realize how far I have to go and what I’m currently doing to get there. It’s a reminder that I have to stay true to myself and continue to explore my culture and hopes of finding myself in a happier place mentally and physically.