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IN CELEBRATION OF
ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC
ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

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SPOTLIGHTS

Megha Mathur: Reflections On Asian American And Pacific Islander Heritage Month

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I am Indian. But I am also American. Confusing, I know, but this is the confusion I've been struggling with for my entire life. We're called "ABCDs": American Born Confused Desi (Desi from the Sanskrit desh, or country, meaning one from the home country). Confusion between the culture our parents pass down to us and the culture of our peers; confusion between the values and expectations of my family and the values and expectations of the society I live in; confusion between who I am and who I should be. But it's the little things too, like confusion between brushing your teeth before or after breakfast.

I am Indian. I speak Hindi fluently. I have been trained in two forms of classical Indian dance since the age of 4. My Spotify playlist has more Bollywood songs than English. At least one meal a day includes Indian food: the spicier, the better.

I am also American. I enjoy small talk. I love macaroni and cheese. I will always cheer for college football. I get teary eyed during July 4th fireworks and when the National Anthem is sung before the Super Bowl.

Every day is a balancing act between my Indian heritage and my American lifestyle. Each morning I wake up and call my parents. We speak in what I like to call "Hinglish" – half Hindi, half English. I get ready and come to work, where I've become the epitome of the American dream. As the child of immigrant parents, I've officially made it into a successful career as an attorney, pulling my family up "by the bootstraps" with me. And I work in what I might call the most quintessential American role there is: ruled by the intricacies of the American government and influenced by the slightest change in the English language.

And yet, while I work, I listen to Bollywood music to keep me focused. For

dinner, Indian food is a must. And when I sleep, I dream in Hindi and English. I dream of my grandparents and other passed loved ones telling me I've done well. When I wake up the next morning to start my balancing act all over again, I know I can.