

Some of My Favorite Pilgrims are Indians

Posted on [November 21, 2011](#) by [SeattleCoach](#)

A few years ago I was in London during Thanksgiving. Or as it's known there, Thursday. Having planned ahead, my American friends and I were equipped with a large candle in the shape of a turkey. And we placed it in the center of the table at the Indian restaurant we picked for the big dinner.

Our waiter approached with a smile, and with that lovely, lyrical East Indian accent, looked at our candle and asked, "What is the peacock for?" "It's not a peacock," I think I sounded defensive, "It's a turkey." Unfazed, eyebrows still up, he continued, "What is the turkey for?"

We explained Thanksgiving to him and found an immediate ally who was clearly well-acquainted with the concept, and helped us to create an evening I'll never forget.

Since that Thanksgiving, I have been delighted to cross paths with more and more East Indians, most of whom have come to my homeland as pilgrims. I respect that, like all pilgrims, "they are people journeying in a foreign land." But what I love and am grateful for this Thanksgiving is that each one of these people makes me, and America, better.

What I see in people like Nick and Priya and Astha are some of the virtues and values I admire most: Bravery, sweet humor, ambition, balance, social intelligence, kindness and clarity. (I know there are probably annoying Indians, I just haven't met any yet.)

In other words, having each one of these Indians in my life makes me a better pilgrim too. I loved the further definition of "pilgrim" I've placed below, and I hope it challenges and inspires you too this Thanksgiving Week.

"To journey without being changed is to be a nomad.

To change without journeying is to be a chameleon.

To journey and be transformed by the journey is to be a pilgrim."

Mark Nepo