

Celebrate, 'Ohana¹

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It's just like hearing an echo. There is an 'ohana that lives next to us in Wahiaw . Their house is really close to ours. We can hear everything coming from the house Everything. At times, it actually sounds like they are in our house. I'm sure they hear everything that's going on in our house too.

Their lives, according to what we hear, are eerily similar to ours the joking, the laughter, the singing, the dramas, the "wife bossing around the husband". When we hear them, it seems like we are listening to our voices, and our lives, echoing off their house. We've grown accustomed to hearing our neighbours' lives playing out. In some ways, it is comforting to hear them because they remind us that we are not as odd as we think we are. I wonder what they make of the banter coming from our house?

Tonight, the 'ohana next door is quieter than normal. But I can hear them softly singing. Real soft. "*Happy birthday to You, Happy birthday to you...*"

It is the little boy's birthday. He's a good boy, that one. In my mind, I imagine the family huddled around the boy and a birthday cake with his name on it. The glow from the birthday candles is illuminating his smiling face. Everyone is smiling. Everyone is softly singing. Mom and Dad softly sing to him that they wish they could give him everything beautiful in the world. Brother and sister softly sing to him while they anticipate the time when they, too, will be celebrated, on their birthdays. And the boy softly sings to himself a song that tells his soul that Mom, Dad, Brother, and Sister are his world. Happy Birthday, Boy.

Amidst the struggles that all families experience, amidst the weight of our spiritual journeys that often sends our emotions to the extremes, we sometimes forget that the people that need to be celebrated are the ones that are closest to us. They bear the brunt of the storms that our spiritual journeys cause.

Happy Birthday, Everybody

"Celebrate, Aunties and Uncles"
 To lighten the weight of your spiritual journeys
 "Celebrate, Aunties and Uncles"
 Because we see ourselves in you
 "Celebrate, Aunties and Uncles"
 Because we want to celebrate too
 "Celebrate, Aunties and Uncles"
 Because we love you all

“Celebrate, Aunties and Uncles”
the ones that are closest to you

Celebrate, Everybody

Notes

'Ohana – Family, Relative, kin group; related. (Elbert & Pukui, 1986)

References

Elbert, S. H., & Pukui, M. K. (1986). *Hawaiian dictionary*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.