

Document: Javen Corriea's Interview Transcript  
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Aunty Max: Hui....Aloha Javin and thank you for joining me today.

Javen: Aloha!

Aunty Max: So, before I get into my questions. I wanted to give you a chance to share a little bit with us about your journey on relocating and how you have now become a resident of Las Vegas, Nevada.

Javen: Yeah. so back in 2008, I graduated from high school and went to Boulder, Colorado. That's a little change in culture and a little cold atmosphere. But yeah, I went up there. I did skiing and sports. I did two and a half years there. And from there I moved out to California, in Azusa area and to finish up my schooling there. After that, all behind me, the front of the plan was to end up in Vegas. So, after everything was done, after I graduated, I moved over to Vegas.  
Chelsea, my girlfriend, was out in Las Vegas, finishing up her last year in college. So, back in December of 2015, that's when I moved to Vegas. So yeah, from Hawaii, to Colorado, to California, then Vegas. And now going on eight years now in Las Vegas with schooling and then figuring out where I can settle in after that somewhat affordable. And it helped that the wife was in Vegas too.

Aunty Max: Yeah. So yeah, the economy is it's pretty expensive, so it's easier in Vegas, yeah, compared to home here in Hawaii.  
So, is your move meant to be temporary or permanent?

Javen: Yeah, well you know. I guess, or I think partly it was always the kind of go away and get the experience and then maybe eventually make our way back home. But I think now conversations having with Chelsea is more so that will always be home, but I think right now our cost of living and where we are at..... we've come to accept that we can always visit Hawaii and that's kinda how we looked at it. I dunno if for sure we ever fully reside there and stay there? I think more so just visiting, but ideally, maybe just kind of go back and forth and be able to stop in and now with having a baby or newborn, I dunno that might change. Now with baby and trying to surround him with our culture and upbringing of value we'll see. Who knows we just might make Vegas our home away from home.

Aunty Max: Yeah, I understand and congratulations on your beautiful baby boy. He's beautiful. And yes, since you brought up that point about culture, can you share with us some practices that you might be doing culture? Hawaiian

culture, traditions, or values, anything that you guys practice currently and hopefully, you share with your Ohana?

Javen: I would say one of the biggest things is just, you know, the family side of it now. Actually a funny thing, when we looked back I look back from when I first left in 2008 to now. What I learned in the different cultures too while here in the states there was so much learning curve, and just coming from Hawaii I had to adapt to those ways but also instill my culture as well to have that balance.

I think that's one of the biggest things that I been able to understand now by move away from home and look back into our upbringing and how we were raised. It opens up your eyes a little bit and see things that I never noticed. I would say one of the things I always spoke about is the Aloha Spirit and how we carry ourselves and operate with those values that we have within us and our families.

A funny thing I remember growing up I was talking with one of my friends visiting from California and he told me being with my family and seeing how you guys operate is different. I told him what you mean.

And then he goes on to say, "Brah, you guys just cruise, you know." I was thinking the back of his experience and I realized the things that seem normal to us or seemed normal to me may not be normal for somebody else from the outside looking in, it's strong, you know. And his experience was coming to the house, eating food, talking story with the family, having all the family around talking, and then kanekapila after. You know, then everybody play ukulele, sing, hanging out with the family, the kids. Man, something as simple as that he pointed it out. To us that this is normal, but to others, it's like, wow. When I started looking at, at that, it made me realize too, yeah that's true. So being able to raise baby and instill is important to us. And for others who don't experience that we can bring the Aloha Spirit to them, you know. The family vibes, the food, it almost seems like we're always surrounded around by food. My dad always said, food brings us together and it gives us a chance to get closer.

Aunty Max: Yeah, Hawaiians are very family-oriented. We gathered together, and like they say, it takes a village to raise a family, you know, so having them around all the time, especially now with your new baby, it's perfect. Perfect. So a little earlier, you spoke about not moving back to Hawaii. Is it because the economy or is it cause no more family over there, or some other reason? Why? Why don't you think you guys would be moving back?

Javen: It's two things, cost of living and opportunity. Those thing go hand-in-hand and that's the biggest thing for me. Being able to afford it over there isn't easy. It's nice when you have a home that you had for generations and generations,

but at the same time, if you aspire to get your own home one day, shoot. The average real estate is going for a million dollars, and that's something that you gotta fix up or repair over there. And then you need to a job to reverse or supplement the cost. Even get some kind of income from that property to pay the mortgage. It doesn't align with the jobs opportunities out there.

Aunty Max: Yeah, so, so true. The economy, the opportunity it doesn't align. And I know, you and your wife, Chelsea both have college degrees and it's still hard to get good paying jobs back home in Hawaii that can pay for your needs.

I want to share some statistics of what I was able to research on this topic. Based on some of my recent research on this topic. The Native Hawaiian population in Hawaii has decreased tremendously. Native Hawaiians seem to be migrating away from their homeland of Hawaii.

**US Census Report:**

Average amount of Hawaiians & Pacific Islanders				
Location	Hawaii	California	Washington	Nevada
2000	282,667	221,458	42,761	16,234
2010	355,816	286,145	70,322	32,848
2020	157,445	167,263	64,933	25,011
<b>State Current Total</b>	<b>1,455,271</b>	<b>39,538,223</b>	<b>7,705,281</b>	<b>3,104,614</b>
<b>State Total %</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>.4%</b>	<b>.8%</b>	<b>.8%</b>
<b>National Total 331.4 million</b>				

Aunty Max: So I was just wondering, what do you think about those statistics that now we only have 11% back there in Hawaii?

Javen: Wow, that's really sad. I didn't realize it was that low. I just had a conversation with my dad about people moving away then maybe visiting and never really moving back. But then we have people moving there that's not from there but able to make it somehow. Growing up in Waianae it was a huge community of polynesian homes, but when I went back home to visit a few years ago I was actually shock driving around. I told my dad, holy cow, they knocking down homes and building modern looking homes with fences and having tours in there. But for me, there's pros and cons. I always look at it from both perspectives. Dad told me, "Well, everybody moving away." I instantly thought to myself, eh, that's me, I'm on of them. In a way, it's good for me to go and get the experience to see things but it would be cool to go back and bring what I learn back home. It would be really nice to see that but it ain't happening, especially with inflation and what's going on in our economy. It's really sad.

Actually, it seems like more and more, it's starting to move away because of cost of living away from home is doable. Honestly, it is a big part of our people decision to take an alternative option? For the most part, it's like, this is what we have to do because we can't afford Hawaii.

Our people want to be home, but can afford it and got to make sacrifices in order to support the family.

Aunty Max: Yeah. That's pretty much why I chose this topic for this project. I noticed so many of our k̄naka is leaving Hawaii. And, as you know, my son and his wife included. It's like the majority of your generation seemed to have to moved to find better opportunities, especially now that you guys are all starting your own families.

Well, let's turn the tables a little bit as see how is it being a k̄naka living abroad or yourself? Can you share a little bit about about living on the mainland compared to Hawaii?

Javen: I guess I'll start first. When I first moved away from home in my freshman year of college. I think it was a huge learning curve. My biggest challeng was learning to adapt a little bit, but also still instilling that culture ways in me with people. The funniest this was just talking, and having people understand me and understand where I'm coming from. I remember when I had to give my first presentation in class and everyone look at me stone face and no one could understand what I was saying. I guess because my k̄naka language or pidgin words confused them. That's when I learned how to adapt to their ways and culture but also give them a little show of my culture and ways. So, my experience living abroad was being able to adapt and overcome some of those challenges and communicate. That's why I took up communications, so I can learn how to communicate with them better.

Now understanding the different viewpoints people have I still need work on. Cause I would get defensive when I'm trying to understand why people do this or that? I had to realize everybod has different upbringing and different ways of thinking. So I still got my challenges with that. I'm trying to work on patience.

Aunty Max: Well, I know you're doing very well living abroad right now, especially career wise. So, can you share with us a little bit about the career opportunities that you've experienced?

Javen: Yeah, so when I first came to Vegas I knew I needed to get a job. I knew I wanted to go into sales. I figure with my humble beginnings growing up I was always selling something. I sold stuff like Huli huli Chicken tickets or candy outside of Tamura's store in Waianae or even mango from our tree to Chinatown. I was only 12, 13 years old negotiating with buyers and that was some of my memories. So I took that decided to go into sales. The big reason was because the opportunity of not being capped off in my income you can

make enticed me cause your pay is determined base on your work ethics and what you sell. I didn't want to be limited base on my hourly unit. No, I want to make as much as I can for how much I work.

So I got into car sales in Vegas cause base on your negotiation you could make crazy amount of money so I went that direction. So I moved to Vegas in December of 2013 and the first week I hustled my way into the car sales industry and within the second week I was selling cars for a car dealer.

I was doing good and one day I tried to sell a car to the Vice President of the company I'm working at now. Long story short I was able to sell a car to her and when her husband come to fill out the credit app with me and he shared with me his multi-six figure income and I look at him with surprise. Wait, what, how much? So I said, "Wait, what do you do?" He told me he's in HVAC. I asked him what is HVAC. He started laughing and then told me what it was. Next thing I know I was asking him if they was hiring. We both laughed and then I told him, "No, serious, you guys hiring? Let me know."

Believe it or not, four weeks later he calls me and leave me a message. So I call him back, we talk about him growing a branch and building a team and if I'm interested being teachable, willing to learn to and start a career with him, he'll take me under his wings and work with me. So after thinking it over I came on board, but it was a lot of work. I started with a pay cut but I could see the vision to improve and grow. He promised me that it will turn around in minimum five year. I told him I don't have five years and need to do it in three to four years. So I worked hard learning the industry, the product and generating sales. It wasn't easy but after three year I finally saw the shift. And now, eight years later I advanced three levels and now I'm Director of Sales and oversee the leading sales team in the office.

I know it's a blessing and I'm grateful and glad I was at the right place at the right time.

Aunty Max: Wow, congratulation on your accomplishment. It proves that hard work pays off and I'm so happy for you.

So just to wrap up and go out on a good note. I was just wondering if you can share couple of fond memories you might have had living back in Hawaii?

Javen: Wow, I got plenty. One was duing the summertime the family would go out to Makua side and camp for about a month. We just camped on the beach, live off the aina, go diving, fishing, and having all the family around everyday was normal. We use to sleep on the sand, wake up in the morning, go body surfing, swimming and just have fun. We really got to experience things as a family. Those childhood memories of that is priceless.

Another was going hunting with the family. I remember one time going with my dad and brothers catching a boar. Really it's all about being with family and doing things together. I miss that you know. It's been so long since we did any of that, I kind of forgot how to do some of that already. I guess in a way it was our way of disconnecting from the world and just relax.

Aunty Max: Nice, that's awesome.

So before we end, do you have any type of message that you want to share with the community as a kānaka living abroad, especially for people back home that may be facing the decision to relocate too?

Javen: Yeah, I guess for the people back home. Stay positive, stay in it cause there's opportunities and opportunities is what you make of it. I know it's difficult with the limited opportunities but it's an attitude and mindset of what you make of it. Some times you have to make the best of it, especially if it's out of your control. Keep pushing forward and surround yourself with people that make you better and be open to learning from them and growing. Then when you can, give back to others through your knowledge of what you learned. Help lift up others cause that's our culture way, always looking out for others. Weither we are home in the islands or living away we can always pass our values on to others and show our true colors. Continue to push forward.

Aunty Max: I want to commend you Javen for being that brave navigator to seek out new worlds of opportunity and thriving with those experiences. I wish you and your family all the best and convince you will represent Hawaii very well no matter where you reside. Thank you for taking the time out to share your story with us. Mahalo, mahalo, mahalo!

Javen: Your welcome aunty. Thank you for asking me, that was fun. Thank you.