

## *To Be Créole: A Basket That Holds Everything*

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To be Créole begins in a basket that holds everything. In this basket is the vessel of passing from generation to generation, where we all seek and give, where each of our personal crusaders finds us, nurtures us and moves us toward our paths of life. It is within this basket that we find wisdom, integrity, dignity and compassion. From within this basket, we find what it is to be Créole.

To be Créole is to focus on family.

To be Créole is to always be near and offer a wing when it rains.

To be Créole is a careful loving eye and heart dedicated to the child.

To be Créole is to provide a sense of self, a sense of place, a sense of pride and unspoken expectations for the child.

To be Créole is to guide the child, for with the child we have the future.

To be Créole is to be a devoted role model.

To be Créole is to consider family in every decision made.

To be Créole is the matriarchal strength of innate intelligence, nurturing, love, mentoring, and crusading for those close to her.

To be Créole is the gentility of capable patriarchs devoted to family.

To be Créole is to extend family across borders.

To be Créole is the teachings of the past with the baton to carry the legacy.

To be Créole is to perpetuate the continuum of love through giving back.

To be Créole is to live with dignity, pride and mutual respect of others.

To be Créole is to live a life of celebration, appreciation, and devotion.

To be Créole is to respect and model the directions of our paternal and maternal elders.

To be Créole is to be humble and reverent.

To be Créole is our unique culture, traditions, language, cuisine and *joie de vivre!*

To be Créole is to honor our ancestors. It is from them for who and what we are, and what we will become. It is with them we visualize and realize our dreams, because our dreams are their dreams. It is from them we carry forward in the passing generation. It is through them we live each day with a sense of warmth and embrace from the large circle of family. It is with their foundation we live honor and truth each day. To be Créole begins in a basket that holds everything.