

**Topic:** My mother and her struggles as an immigrant

**Abstract:** My mother was born in Juan Aldama Zacatecas, Mexico. She lived a typical life as a humble small town Mexican girl until she immigrated to the United States. Clueless about what was really out there, she decided to join my father and start their journey to the U.S. for a better living. Conscientious that they needed more money and she did not speak English, my mother started to clean houses. Not knowing that knocking from door to door would make her the successful mother she is today.

**Key Words:** language, hard work, living conditions, family, relationships, humbleness, working conditions, self made,

My mother's life has been very difficult ever since she lost her father when she was 15. She married when she was 16 and immigrated to the U.S. that same year. All of that cost her a full education and huge conflicts between my mother and fathers' family. Finding no alternate solution, moving to the U.S. for a while and returning when things were settled sounded relieving and adventuresome. Though most of her experiences were anything but reliving, and adventuresome had a completely different meaning as her new life became unfolding. Facing tough decisions like marrying at a young age and moving to the U.S. were only the beginning of her astounding life.

Things ran quite smoothly when my mother was a child. Her father (my grandfather) owned a successful restaurant in town and also made good money on his hobbies which were cockfighting and betting on horse races (which he owned his own roosters and horses). I bet you are probably wondering why I am talking about my grandfather; well to understand my mother's story there is brief information to know about my grandfather first. Anyways, my grandfather is what you would call a thick skinned or cold blooded for his aggressive actions; he was semi wealthy for the towns

people but he was also very daring and aggressive especially because he always carried his gun. My grandfather was a true symbol of manliness and never backed down from anything; he was brave and was feared by many. Though he also had various serious problems going on in his life that I won't get into any detail except that he pretty much had a price on his head. One night there was a shooting in town right in front of my mother's house and the person who got shot three times was my grandfather. He passed away leaving behind everything that he worked for...his family. At that time my mother was fifteen and the whole family suffered from his absence. A little after that and my mother met my father at a dance.

They had dated for a while and when my mother turned sixteen my father decided that they were going to get married. Now there was a lot of tension going around because my mother's family disliked my father and his family. My mother seemed confused and just thought about what sounded good at the time so she married my father without my grandmother's consent therefore she did not attend the wedding. I believe better yet I know that if my grandfather was still alive at that time he would have never allowed my mother to marry at sixteen. They decided that moving to the U.S. was a great idea to avoid the family problems back home and it sounded like fun, mostly because many people did that at the time.

Their journey together commenced in Kansas, February 1985. They quickly found a job at a slaughter house for cows and were living in a small apartment. Instead of my mother staying at home like a house wife she was doing mans work and skinning cows with a machete. They did that for several months and returned to Mexico but only for a brief time before they went back to Kansas. My mother being 6 months pregnant still

worked in the same place doing the same job for a while. Later on they moved to California where they lived in a small trailer with two other families (our relatives). Living conditions were harsh for my mother because she pretty much cooked, cleaned, washed clothes for everyone in the trailer. On top of that she was working in the fields with my dad trying to make what money they could to move out. My father later on got a part time job working for a man on his farm where he did a lot of labor work as well. My mother having two children now (my 4 year old brother and 1 year old sister.) decided that they needed more money and started knocking from door to door asking random people if they wanted their house cleaned. Keep in mind that she barely knew any English and she had two children along side with her.

The first customer she had was the man whom my father worked for part time. But one house was not enough for her even when she was discriminated against and many people shut the door on her efforts to make a little money. A little after that my parents moved to Kansas again because one of my uncles living over there had told them that there was better jobs over there. On that trip my mother was 9 months pregnant with me and that's how I was born in Kansas. They quickly returned to California because jobs over there weren't as pleasant as they were told. My mom continued looking for and cleaning houses. As her business started to increase and she received more money, my parents moved to an apartment in Gilroy where they lived next door to my aunt (my moms sister). My mother seemed happy at times but since there was family problems my aunt and my father did not get along therefore, my father tried to restrict my mother from spending time with her own sister. So when my father's family came over to visit, it was not a good time for my aunt or my mother. As my dad got a better job as a welder for a

company, my mother's house cleaning business got larger and larger and they could finally afford a house and Hollister had numerous houses on sale for a cheap price.

Our first real home was in Hollister and that's when the big problems started. This whole time my mother was working really hard and easily doubled my dad's salary by cleaning houses but surprisingly she would just give it all to my father because he was the head of the house and he suppose ably knew how to manage the money. My mother was clueless about all that and did not know if she was making enough so she worked even harder. At the same time there was various family problems escalating at a fast rate but I did not understand since I was only 7. I cant really expand upon the family problems but it came to the point where my mother, sister, brother, and I all went to live in a hotel for a couple of days. My parents were about to divorce and my poor mother started to seek help from a lawyer. Things ended up clearing up from there but only for a while before other problems started to develop.

One thing that my mother has recently been very passionate about is our religion. She is very catholic and is a member of church group program. She is called upon to give talks to other women about her life and experiences. She finally got herself together; she keeps her own money now. No longer is she the weak person being stepped on by everyone. She handles her own business and is very successful with people working for her and collecting the earnings. She is still a hard worker and works a lot more than she needs to She is also very friendly and is very loved by everyone she makes contact with.

When you look at my mother you see an angel face with the best personality that is difficult not to like. I was extremely lenient on what I said about her struggles; there was a lot more to say but its way too personal to be shared openly. My mother deserves a

lot more than what she has. She sacrificed so much and was humbled countless times and her problems are not exactly over but her climb to where she is now is very far from the beginning. If u look at the spot she is in right now you would say she isn't living life and she's not but remember she is still building up.