

Topic: Family Secrets

Abstract: Growing up I always thought I had the perfect family. My cousins and I were more than cousins: we were best friends. Being so young, I would have never thought that my family could carry such dark secrets. These were secrets that would and did effect and change everyone's lives forever. Well, unfortunately they did. Andrea was one of the cousins who went and spilled our biggest secret and many more, and it set off the downfall of Celina's life.

Ethnic Designation: Mexican- American

Cultural Category: Social Practice: Informal Information Exchange

My Family

I don't know if it is just my family or all Mexican families, but we tend to live our life as if we were in a soap opera. We used to not be this way. I remember as a young girl, how we all would get together at the same aunts house and we would barbeque and listen to music and just have the best time of our lives. There was a river in front of her apartment that separated a different set of apartment. The river was about a foot deep and two feet wide, but to us it seemed like the greatest challenge to jump across. And most of us would end up falling in it anyways.

It was always the same group of five cousins around the same age group. Now there are other cousins because, like I said, we are Mexican and there are about 40 of us not including the ones who have not been born yet: this is just my mother's side. Well anyways, we all had sleep overs and watch movies and argue about what Cheetah Girl we wanted to be (did not always work out since there was only four Cheetah Girls. We would stay up watching movies and eating junk food until three in the morning or until my aunt realized we were up still.

One of them lived in a YMCA camp and we would all go and do the activities with the kids who would go camping. We used to take over the stage and put on our little dance shows

and presentations. There was also a hammock connected by two large trees in which we would get on and swing until it flipped over. We would explore the woods together and run home whenever we saw a deer or a raccoon because we were scared of being attacked by them.

I guess being so young you never quite realize how many problems everyone has, but at least most of the family went through the trouble of pretending that things were alright. Then as we got older things got out of control. The secrets were no longer kept a secret and they became larger secrets and they began to involve us even though we were still just kids. It all started with curiosity. We decided to try weed and Andrea, one of the girls, decided to tell her parents about it. My parents were the only ones not told because even the grown-ups knew they would get extremely mad, but I did not escape the I'm-here-for-you-when-you-feel-the-need-to-use-drugs talk. But we were just experimenting and none of us did it consistently and eventually stopped using it and we never went beyond experimenting with any other drug. Well Andrea began to lose credibility within the group and suddenly we couldn't trust her because she had told Celina's mom not only about this incident, but other secrets as well, and we never understood why she had done this.

Well one thing led to another and slowly Celina's life turned upside down and suddenly she found out her parents had at some point cheated on one another, and her dad was now doing meth and alcohol addict. Shortly after, her parents got a divorce and everyone turned on her family. When her mother cheated it had been with a close known family friend who was married with a baby on the way. His wife lost the baby after finding out the news. We all had our own problems and my parents moved even further away from the family as to not be part of it.

Celina calls her dad at the Arizona State Prison, and Andrea finds every reason to hate Celina. And to make things clear, this was not because of that secret that Andrea decided to tell

the grown-ups, but it did lead to much gossip and it was just before Celina's parent's secrets came out. I guess what we were all expecting was that we would still be there for each other the way other so called Mexican families and best friends do. We were supposed to be there for Celina when everything in her life began to fall, but one little secret got out and it broke us apart.

We occasionally pretend to be a normal family and have parties with each other but the atmosphere is not as it once was. I only ask for days off work during Christmas and New Year and we laugh and have awkward moments of silence.

Moral of the story: children and parents should not get into each other's problems. Although we are all between the ages of sixteen and nineteen and going on adulthood, we still should not be concerned with the grown-ups problems.

Andrea and Celina pretend now that they are okay around each other's company although we both know this is not true. However, there is a silver lining to all this because we often talk about how in our adult years once we are all settled with kids, we will never become part of their problems and they will never know about ours.

I think this gives us all something to strive for because we want to be better than our parents. We don't want to make the same mistake they did and we all have the same dream for our futures. We try hard because we want to give our children what we never had and we want them to risk their lives by jumping over two feet long rivers and feel that great sense of accomplishment when they finally do it by helping each other.

I think every family, whether your Mexican or not, goes through something that is life changing. It gives you character to go through things this way. But from all this I get that every family is as fixable as it is breakable as long as everyone wants to fix it.