

Topic: My Father

Abstract: My father is an extremely dedicated man. He was dedicated to achieving a better life for himself by moving into the United States at the age of twenty-one. He's a hard worker who understand the level of dedication to a job required to raise a family here in the States. While my father has worked hard his entire life, sometimes in dangerous environments, I know his love for his family is what drives him to strive to work harder.

Key Words: My father, Mexico, Grandfather, “la Migra”, proud of Mexican heritage, hard work, family,deportation.

My Father

My father was born on November 7, 1961 in a small town called Santa Rita located in Zacatecas, Mexico. He was the second oldest out of seven children and was also the first son in the family. He was born into a poor family that just had enough to feed themselves and get by with everyday expenses. My grandfather rented land from a wealthier family where he farmed corn. He was in charge of getting the land plowed and irrigated. When they harvested, he would keep around sixty percent of the earnings and the other forty percent went to the family that owned the land. My father told me that every one that was able to walk had to help out in whatever was needed. His father would first get a mule and a plow and get the land into furrows. Then my dad and his siblings would go behind him planting the corn. This was the way my grandfather made a live.

But that was not the only thing that my dad had to do. My grandfather had a couple of cows which they used to get milk and also to breed and sell the calves. My dad was in charge of taking out the cows from the corral and taking them to a pasture twice everyday. He had to let them graze the pastures for about an hour while he watched them and made sure that none of them wandered off and got lost. But one time he took them

out when it was dark and when he brought them back he noticed that one cow was missing. His dad told him to go back and look for the cow and not to come back until he found it, and he found it. The reason my grandfather did that was because they couldn't afford to lose a cow not because he was mean.

They lived in Santa Rita until he was around twelve years old when they moved to Ciudad Juarez in the state of Chihuahua. When he was there he worked at his parents small grocery store as a cashier and also did other things like clean the store and unload merchandise. He was there until he was twenty one years old. He saw that many of his friends and relatives were leaving to "el norte" or the north which was referring to the United States. He also noticed that when people came back from the United States they would have money to spend and they would be driving new trucks, so my dad wanted the same kind of life. But what no one saw was the hell those persons had gone through like crossing the border illegally through the desert. Or having to work in the fields for a small amount of pay. Or having to live in fear that "la migra" will deport you back to Mexico and lose everything you have worked for. The only thing people saw was a person that used to be as poor as them and is now driving around town in a nice truck.

So when he was twenty one he made the decision to come to the United States illegally. He moved to Hollister, California and lived there for only around two months but not by choice. He worked in Hollister in the fields picking peppers and that's when he saw that life wasn't as easy as it seemed. He said that one day he was picking peppers when "la migra" arrived. Everyone started running to try to escape from being deported because no one had papers or else they wouldn't be working there in the first place. When my dad saw that everyone that ran got caught he decided to do something smarter. When

la migra arrived, the tractor was passing by my dad so he ran in front of the tractor and went under it. He grabbed on to some parts of the tractor and dragged as it moved so that he wont be seen and get deported. He held on for about five minutes and let go once he heard that all the chaos stopped, but he was wrong. As soon as he stood up he saw that the van turned around but he didn't even run he just let them catch him.

He was deported to Tijuana and didn't know what to do. He could have called his parents to pick him up but when my dad left the last thing his dad told him was that he wasn't going to survive on his own and that he would come back to Mexico so he wanted to prove his father wrong. So he refused to call his dad and prefer to find another way to get back to California. He said that one of the guys that he was working with in the fields was determined to go back to California so my dad asked him if he could go with him since that guy had already crossed many times. So the next day they crossed to the United States but they were still far from California. So for two weeks they were homeless and slept anywhere that would cover them from the cold wind. They had a plan which was to beg for money in the streets until they had enough to buy a bus ticket to California, but whatever they got they had to spend on food. So they went looking for work but no one needed people. They met a very generous man who was a pastor for a church and got everyone from church to contribute money for my dad and his friend. They ended with forty dollars each, which back then was enough to get them to Los Angeles. Once they got there my dad called his uncle to pick him up and asked him if he could borrow twenty dollars which he gave to his friend to get to San Jose.

So my dad stayed in Los Angeles for around nine months working in factory that made clothes for women. He then moved back to Ciudad Juarez to help his parents with

the grocery stores. And that's when my dad met my mother. He told her that if she could wait for him to come back to California to save some money and get married and she said yes. So he came back to Hollister where he worked at a shop where they repaired and made RV's and camping trailers. He worked there for around two years while he kept writing letters to my mom. So after those two years passed they got married in Mexico and brought my mom to the United States and settled here in Gilroy. My dad at that time had two jobs. One was working at another shop where they also repaired RV's. And the other was at a cannery where the main product was tomato. The only reason he had two jobs was because he wanted to save some money so when they had me he could spend more time with me and my mom, and it all worked out fine. Then the cannery closed down so he just stayed with the other job he had but that job was now paying him a decent salary so he was okay like that.

But my dad has always been the most hard working and humble individual I've met so far. My dad still works to this day at Mickey's RV Service and Repair Shop here in Gilroy for about eighteen years now. It was around five years ago when my dad was laid off from his job because there was no work so my so kind of got worried how we were going to make the house payments. Since my dad has always had side jobs ranging from painting cars and doing body work to upholstery, we just had enough to get by. I remember that we went to Staples so my dad could get business cards so we can get more clients. When my dad had his business cards he carried them with him at all times so if he saw a car that needed a paint job or body work he would write on the back of the card how much he would do it for. My dad always told us that the reason that he didn't charge much was so they could want to get their car painted but no matter how cheap my

dad did it for, he always did it the best he could and he is actually good at what he does. So that summer my dad, my brother and me sanded cars almost every day and tried to get the job done fast because we always had someone else waiting for their car to get painted.

Around four years ago my dad left to Riverside California because the economy got really bad and there was no work here. So he went to go work in construction with my uncle but our situation didn't get significantly better. It gets really hot in Riverside and my dad worked sometimes even ten hours a day which only got him around 150 dollars a day. His job wasn't very easy because his crew was in charge of building the roofs on houses that were really tall and were sometimes two stories. When we talked to him on the phone he would tell us what he had to do at his new job. He also told us how it was dangerous because one of his co workers fell from the roof they were building and fractured his ribs because they had to walk on narrow pieces of wood. At that time we were paying the house mortgage so those were not very good times for the whole family.

He was not the only one that was suffering because all my brothers and sisters missed him a lot and there are six of us. I even remember that the day he left I was the only one that cried even though I knew he was only going to be gone for a couple of months but it ended up being nine long months. I remember that once he left I kind of felt I had more liberty because my dad always had something for us to do around the house or some times just things I thought were pointless at that time. I could go to the park with my friends and no one would tell me anything because my dad was the only one that didn't let me at times when he need help sanding cars. But my joy only lasted like one month, after that I actually started to miss him. It wasn't the same without him because now my mom was the only one that was in charge of us. She was the one that had to get

the groceries, cook for us, and take my four sisters to school and my brother and I had to ride our bikes to school everyday rain or shine. I also felt less protected just by knowing that my dad wasn't home and if there was an emergency it would take him around seven hours to get here. But he came back and got his job back and is still working there for twenty-two dollars an hour which isn't much for our family.

I have learned so much from my father, his life experiences and experiences of other immigrants in this country. My dad has showed me that life isn't as easy as it seems in this country especially if you don't know English and if you don't have papers. Even my dad has worked extremely hard, he still thinks that our lives would have been better if he would have had papers since the beginning. My dad always tells me that the only way to succeed in this country is by getting a good education. He constantly reminds me that if I don't try hard in school I will have to work my whole life in a job that I didn't enjoy and get paid a low amount of money, just like him. His experiences has made me appreciate what I have and everything he has done for the whole family. Because if he would have quit when he was deported, I wouldn't be here. He has overall made me a strong, confident, humble and a hard working individual and proud to be of Mexican heritage.