

Topic: A Single Mother's Struggle

Abstract: My mother came to the United States from El Salvador, thirty years ago looking for a better future. When she arrived she saw it wasn't easy to find a job especially if you have a language barrier. When she finally got a job, she could help but too remember all the poverty that she lived as a child back in her native country. She fell in love and suffered domestic violence. She was able to free herself and live in peace far away from my father. I admire my mother she is my role model and a true warrior in my eyes, because she always keeps on fighting and never gives up.

Keywords: New Country equals New Beginning, Language Barrier, Rough Childhood, Love and Domestic Violence, Freedom and Living in peace, my mother a Warrior.

A Single Mother's Struggle

My mother migrated to the United States from her home country El Salvador. It is a beautiful country which is located in Central America. She came to the United States, thirty years ago, looking for a better future. She was very blessed because just six months before a civil war broke out, she left El Salvador. Her journey to the United States was not easy she had to cross several countries to get here. When she finally arrived she found the "United States" wasn't what she had imagined. Once she was here she faced a lot of struggles, she didn't know English, and she had trouble communicating with potential employers, she had no money and no where to stay, she only had the name and number of a friend she was supposed to locate once she was in the United States.

Fortunately for her she was able to locate her and then had a place to live. Although she now had a place to live not everything went so smooth, she had trouble finding work, It took her about a good three months to find a job, all the jobs she applied for required for her to speak English, She was discriminated against because she didn't

speaking the language, but she couldn't do anything because she was afraid she would get caught and then be deported to her country.

Once she had found a job, she felt relief because she now knew she would be able to take care of herself and not just depend on the charity of others. She had a sense that everything would be okay. It's like in her heart she knew that all the sacrifice she had done back in her country to try to save that money to pay her way to come over to come to the United States, the fact that she left her family and friends, to come to a country where she knew no one, where even her language was a barrier for her. She did all these sacrifices so that she could live a better life and not live in poverty for the rest of her life. She felt that it would be worth it, it's like she was giving herself that chance that no one else got in El Salvador.

My mother's first job in the United States was as a babysitter, she took this job because, well she needed the money and she was allowed to be a "live in babysitter", she had shelter, food and she got a paycheck every week. She worked for a doctor and she recalls that both the doctor and his wife were very kind to her. She was eager to start making some money to be able to send to my grandparents over in El Salvador. Once she was working in that job and making some money, she says that she recalls her poverty days back in El Salvador. She wasn't allowed to go to school past sixth grade because she was forced to work in order for the family to make ends meet, also keep in mind that public schools in El Salvador are not free like they are here in the United States. My grandparents not only did they have to pay a tuition but they also had to buy uniforms and certain kind of shoes. My mother also recalls that she didn't have an actual pair of

“Real” shoes until she was age ten; up to then she had shoes that were made by my grandma from *maiz*.

But like they say, “All good things come to and end”. She worked with this couple for 4 years but then she met my father and she fell deeply in love, He promised her; the moon and the stars but boy was she in for a surprise! After they had moved in together she got pregnant with my older sister. She felt happy because she was in love and she was going to have her own family, but her happiness didn’t last too long, shortly after that she found out that my father was cheating on her and as if that wasn’t enough she also started to notice he had a drug and alcohol problem. He would get home and get physically abusive with her for no reason, my mother says he wasn’t always like this; He would turn into a whole different person but only when he was under the influence of a substance.

She lived in a household with domestic violence for two years hoping and wishing for things with my father to change but as time went by things just got worst and worst. She wanted to try to make it work because, she loved him and by this time I was already on the way. He became more abusive and very controlling to the point that she was not allowed to go anywhere outside the house without him and beatings were a regular thing. The straw that broke the camels back was when one day my mother was cooking dinner and my father got home and was under a substance. She served him dinner, well he didn’t like it and he beat her up and left her bleeding on the kitchen floor, he kicked her and broke two of her fingers in her left hand and all this while she was five

months pregnant with me. It was then when my mother realized she had to leave or she might not live long enough to tell her story.

She waited a few days to heal and one morning when my father left the house for work, she put my sister in a stroller and took with her only a diaper bag which she put a couple of pictures she had of herself my father and my sister and her wallet, in which she had only a couple of dollars for bus fair. Both my sister and my mother were dressed in sandals and dresses so if my father happened to see my mother outside the house, my mother would tell him they were only going for a walk in the park. My mother made it safely to a friend's house who gave just enough money for her to take a bus from Los Angeles to San Francisco to an abused women's shelter home. This is one of the reasons why I have never actually met my father in person and frankly don't know that I ever want to.

Their my mother lived for the next three months and from their she was transferred to another home in Santa Clara, California, which is where I was born. She then looked for a job and established herself in Gilroy where she was a care taker for and elderly couple. They were very good to us, they let my mother live in their home with both my sister and I and they would buy clothes and diapers for us and even Christmas presents. We lived a very peaceful life there until the elder man passed away, his wife was then taken to a rest home. My mother was out in the street again, she moved to Hollister where she found a job at the tomato cannery. This job allowed her to go back to school and obtain her GED which is equal to a high school diploma, she was also able to

take English classes which allowed her to learn English and better herself. In this cannery is where after being alone for almost five years, she met my younger brother's father.

Once again she fell in love and shortly after is when my brother came along. She says she remembers thinking the first time she saw him that he was the most precious thing she had ever seen. I remember both my sister and I would get on the bed and try to see over into the crib where he was lying, we thought he was the cutest baby ever.

Unfortunately my brother's father was also an alcoholic and their relationship didn't work out. My mother says that everything she went through was worth it because she received three blessings from God which was us, her three children. She now works as an assembler for a local company here in Hollister but she works long hours and is tired of all the gossip that goes on there, but my mother in my eyes is a true warrior she is currently working and taking night classes to become a pre-school teacher. She is a warrior to me because she has always fought for a better life for herself and for us. She never gives up. She has a true heart of a warrior. I don't believe I could ever have gotten a better role model in my life. My mother has been our everything to my brother, sister and me. I saw her stay up late, work night shifts for us at the cannery. She truly has been an inspiration to me, it's because of her that I decided to go back to school and get my Bachelors degree.

I think of my mother's story and say to myself; if she that was illegal, abused and has raised three children on her own, if she has done it, what couldn't I do? If I put my mind to it. I think that sometimes us "children" of illegal immigrants that were born here in the United States, we forget to appreciate what we have life is way to easy and we take

things for granted, we get this attitude that we deserve everything we have and more and
If it wasn't for what are parents have sacrificed for us we would even live in the United
States. I have learn to really appreciated my mother for what she has done and given to
me and hope that someday my children love me and appreciate what I do for them.