

Topic: My mother's struggles growing up with the responsibilities of an adult.

Abstract: My mother grew up to become the strongest woman I know. Although she endured many struggles and hardships, she overcame every single one of them. Losing her education to work in order to support her family made her a strong and responsible woman. Living the life she lived in the family she grew up in has given her the opportunity to challenge herself and make things different now that she is a mother. Everything she was and has become has shaped me and given me my own identity.

Key Words: Identity, Mother, Hardships, Courageous, Abusive Father, Alcoholic, Journey

The one person in my life that has really made an impact on me finding and to shape my identity would have to be my mother. If someone were to ask me who I thought was the strongest woman my answer would without a doubt be my mother. She has gone through so much good and bad in her life. No doubt that through all the hardship my mother has been through, it has helped her to become a very strong and courageous person today.

During my mother's childhood, she experienced many difficulties in her household. She was the eldest child out of eight. They lived in a little ranchito called Los Leones in Guanajuato. It was about two hours away from the city of Irapuato. Growing up my mother had to be the most responsible one out of all the children since she was the oldest. She had to look after her brothers and sisters and also help maintain the house. Such as helping to cook dinner, cleaning up, and making sure her siblings did not act up.

She grew up in a very tough situation at home. Her father, who has now passed away, was a very abusive and careless father. He abused my mother and her siblings frequently and often. He was an alcoholic and a lot of the time he would abuse my grandmother and waste a lot of the money he would make on alcohol instead of providing a good life for his family. And my mom basically accepted it in her childhood. She had to balance with all that going on at home

with also going to school. Unfortunately, she only went up to the sixth grade. She had no choice but to stop going to school and work to help support her family.

She worked at helping to take care of some cattle that her father owned. She had to watch over them, take them to the river so they could drink water, and also help clean up and maintain them. When she would get home, she would have to help make dinner for the entire family and clean up the mess that her brothers and sisters would make. When her father would get home she had to obey everything he would demand or he would abuse her or her siblings. When she would refuse, he would slap her, knock her down, or even get like a stick and he would strike her with that. On some nights she had to witness him beating her mother violently and she wasn't able to do anything.

They lived in a rather small house with a total of ten family members. They had very little to eat because their father would spend all the money on alcohol, gambling, and even affairs. The ranchito that they lived in was also rather poor. They didn't have an opportunity to go to school and further educate themselves. They just had the responsibility of working to help provide for their families. And my mother was no exception. When she reached the age of 18, her parents told her that the family would be leaving to the United States in search of a better life.

They would have to cross the border illegally. They would have to cross the Rio Grande and some desert to get here. The person that would help them cross illegally told them that it would be a long and tough journey to get there. My mom was very excited to get the opportunity to better her life and the lives of her brothers. They made the trip across Mexico with no problems. When they got to the border, they met up with the person that would help them cross.

They crossed the river and my mom had to carry her youngest brother, who was 9 years old, on her shoulders to cross without any problems. After they crossed the river, they had to cross some desert. After that they got to a very small town called Sonora in Texas. After that they had to hitch a ride with a trucker to get to Los Angeles.

When they were in L.A. they lived in a very tiny room in a Mexican neighborhood. They were provided the room thanks to family that they had living there. My mom was overwhelmed with joy having finally reached the U.S. Once in L.A. she went to work in a Mexican restaurant and she very much enjoyed it. With the money she was earning, she was able to buy much better food and clothes than she would've been able to purchase back in Mexico. After a few weeks of staying there, she was told that they would go up California to live in a small, developing city called Hollister. Their relatives told them about the small city and they were all aboard with the idea. So they drove up state in a car that the father purchased while in L.A.

Once they got there, they had to stay with relatives. And my mom found harder work in the fields. Her father found work in a factory and her mother found work in a cannery. After working in the fields for 12 hours a day, she would go home and help clean up the house and make dinner for the family. Much like what she had to do back in Mexico. She didn't have the opportunity to go to school again since she had to provide for the family. After quite a while, they were able to purchase a house for the family to live in. My mom helped support her mother through very tough times that her husband would put her through. She would do this by always keeping the house clean, always having dinner ready, and by not letting her brothers and sisters get too crazy. Also by giving up half her money she makes to pay for the house.

Her entire life she would work very hard to maintain the family she lived in. She didn't get an opportunity to further educate herself to live a much better life. She did what she had to do for her family to be able to survive and get by. She didn't question any of it, she took on that huge responsibility of basically keeping the family together. At this point, all of what she has experienced made her a strong, hard-working, and very responsible person.

Her life has influenced me so much that I want to be like her. She is the person I most admire and wish I could be more like.