

Who tells your story?

I was born in Juarez. I love it there because I was born in such a beautiful country and it makes me who I am today. I love everything about my country and the way of living in it.

Something I didn't really enjoy was how there weren't many job opportunities. My childhood was small and we didn't have a lot but I still felt happy living my childhood. When I would go to school and play with my friends, we would always share games and do stuff manually like running, doing homework. We would play jump rope, hide and seek, freeze tag with the ball.



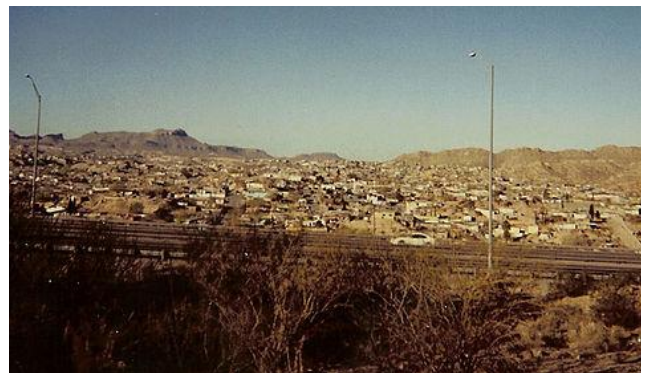
I really liked running in the mountains with my siblings. We would shower in a place where water comes to water the plants, and people would go there in the summer and we would shower there everyday. It was similar to a pool but it was very fun.

When I would wake up in the morning I would hear the sounds of small planes throwing poison to kill the pests of the melon and watermelon that people planted. I loved hearing the small planes.

In my school there were only about 500-600 students and we all knew each other, we were like a family. It was a very small school. We only had first grade to sixth grade and it was the only school

there. I loved going to school because of the different things that I would learn and I always loved learning something new. More than having friends, I would go to school to learn and pay attention. I wanted to learn everything and everything fast. In school I never had a least favorite class except gym because we had to wear shorts and I was very thin which as a woman makes us feel sorry and uncomfortable when they see our little legs.

My dream was to always study and work in any place, but the only one that I would learn was to do social work. **That was always my dream because in the community where I lived as a kid, people would go to help poor communities and would go and show the people to do a lot of different things like embroidery, knitting, cooking. There was so much, the list was endless. They would show a lot of stuff to the other people, and every time I saw them I would always think to myself, "Yo quiero ser como ellos cuando yo crezca."**



In our house then, people suffered because we didn't have a car or transportation we had to walk. When it was very cold or during the time when the time changed it was very dark and we got up very early and left, sometimes without eating, but that's what made me say. "I'm going to make it," and I did.

My parents always supported me in what I wanted. My dad came to the United States when I was 12 years old, and my mom stayed to take care of all of us. Me and my siblings were six in total. I always respected my parents a lot, I always did what they told me to do. I spent a lot of time with my parents but with my dad it was different because he had to go to work.

When I was 12 he came to the United States and stayed there for about 3-4 years and would come back, but I still see him and have good communication with him. I also got along with my mom. I've never had bad memories with my parents I always respected and loved them,

I am the oldest out of six siblings, one sister and four brothers. I was closest with my younger brother. He was special to me because I took care of him. I helped my mom a lot before going to school and doing my homework, and now I would be in charge of him. He was born when I was 9 years old and I have taken care of him ever since. I would shower him, feed him, change him, the whole afternoon I would always take care of him till he started calling me mom and it was special to me. He was always with me. He would chase me a lot when I left for school to go to college. He cried a lot for me because he wanted to go with me. When I got married he also wanted to go with me, he wanted to live with me.

Me and my siblings never fought a lot. There were barely any fights and if there were, they weren't chaotic. But I would avoid fighting my siblings. It never got to my attention fighting with anyone, especially my siblings. I would always support them and I had to be the more mature sibling since I was the oldest. I tried. If any of them didn't want to go to school I would tell them, "Ándale vámonos a la escuela." I would help them do their homework, shower them. It was my turn to make and give them food when coming back home from school. When I was old enough to be able to cook on the stove, I would help my mom a lot. I did a lot of things for my siblings. My dad was not with us most of the time because of his job, and my mom

was but she was always busy with the six of us and she had a lot of work. I liked helping my mom but I also liked playing, and we had a special spot to play which was at school. I think I had a good family and got along well with my siblings and I always protected them. I think I was a good sister supporting them in what they needed. I still support them.

When I was 27 I traveled to the United States and I was very excited because I knew I would reunite with my parents and siblings who were already here. While traveling I liked everything about it. I heard people speaking English and I wanted to learn the language.

The only things I took with me while traveling to the U.S. was what I had on. We came without having a visa and had to come without suitcases. The trip took us about 20 hours and we had to eat or use the bathroom. It took us more hours to arrive. I don't regret traveling here, only that I left close friends and family, but I'm happy because I can visit them when I can and when I want because I now can.

I traveled with my ex husband, my daughter's dad, when she was 2 years old. I traveled here to the United States mainly because my family was already here and I wanted to see them and live with them. Traveling was a bit difficult. We had to walk across the Rio Bravo. We crossed and they drove us, but we were scared that the police were going to stop us and they would deport us and take us to Mexico again. The weather was hot, and after traveling in the river our cousin picked us up in his car and we now arrived in the United States and it was very pretty. I really liked it.



I faced racism and I think I'll still face racism because that will always exist in certain ways, but sometimes we don't pay attention to that. Here in America there are a lot of jobs. I don't want to say that here is prettier, there are other beautiful places. I have the qualifications for a job they can get if they want. That's what I liked about it here, there's a lot of opportunities here.

I'm used to being here for many years, living here, but there's a lot of stuff that made me get used to being here. I don't like the weather that much but I do like the city, and now I have my family and kids. I'm happy here.

When I came here I wanted to learn the language, but it was a bit difficult, so I decided to go to school. I started in a school, and since I liked going to school and learning I put so much effort and attention to it.

When I came here I had to apply to have my permanent residence, and I would work where they would take care of kids. When I applied for my residence here in the United States, I took my papers from Mexico and sent them to Washington D.C. They took my studies and converted me into the degrees here, and I believe that then I was able to work. It didn't take me so long. But besides work and the jobs I had to apply for, I'm happy here, living in the United States. I'm going to stay here now.

When I came here to America I was scared that I wouldn't be able to learn the language. I didn't understand what people were saying. I was also worried that they would find us and take us back to Mexico. Here there's a lot of jobs and work, better ways to live and earn more money and buy better things, while in Mexico there are barely any jobs.

When I arrived here I first went to the mountains because it was always my favorite spot ever since I was a little girl, and I always felt relaxed and always looked so beautiful. I looked at all the trees and felt the warm breeze pass me, which always reminded me of Mexico.

I've always loved Mexico more. I can't lie about that or even make it up. I can't say the food is better here, it's one of many things I miss over there. I cook from what I have learned there. I don't wanna say the food is not good here, but it's very different. There are a lot of different people from other countries and it's a bit difficult but I think that I've tried to adapt myself and change, and it's been going well for me.

I've learned a lot from the community here. I was treated with disrespect and racism towards me from others, but I never let it affect me in any way and tried to get out of those thoughts.

Getting used to America was hard but eventually I did get used to it. It was difficult learning the language itself even at school but I still keep learning it everyday, and I don't think I have the time anymore to learn a new language but now I'm happy here reuniting with my family and I'm happy where I am today.

I met my Husband from my siblings because they were friends with him. We were in school and when I saw him I liked him at first sight. He invited me over and I felt so glad that he asked me out and we went to eat together and get to know each other. I met his family and they were really good people who treated me well, and we talked. They would always be nice to me when I was with them. Half a year later when we were together before he proposed, he asked me "Te quieres casar conmigo?" and I said, "Si."

We had a small wedding but I loved it. The year when we got married, I came out pregnant and had my first daughter. I only wanted one, especially a girl. I didn't want a lot of kids. I knew myself from the beginning that I didn't want a lot of kids like my mom. It's not that I didn't like my siblings, it's because **I wanted to study and I didn't want to get married young because I wanted to learn a lot of things and see a lot of different places.**

When I noticed that I was pregnant, I went crazy and felt happy. I told my husband and his expression on his face made me cry. He was so happy and thrilled, like he was waiting to hear those words out my mouth. The first time I hugged my daughter, it was such a beautiful moment for me, the feeling of holding your first child when they were born. I chose the name for both my daughter and son. I'm not sure what their names mean, but there was a book that I read and saw a whole bunch of names and they were both American names and said "Así se va llamar mi hija."

I had 2 kids, twins, in between my oldest and youngest. When my oldest was 7, they were born, but I had problems with the pregnancy and they both couldn't survive. They were born premature. My first twin daughter passed away when she was born, and the second twin lasted 2 years. I was depressed when both my daughters passed. I still miss them till this day. I have pictures of them and I've kept their toys and blankets.

I don't really miss Mexico. I miss my family and friends there, but staying there I don't miss it and don't regret leaving because I'm happy and free here. I'm proud that I have a job and a family, and I am proud of myself for what I've done and for making it here.

Before an immigrant comes to America I would like them to be good at what they have to do in America so they won't have any problems. The immigrants aren't bad, but a lot of people think they are. They cannot generalize and think that. **There will always be good and bad people everywhere in the world.**

My dream as a kid was to study because I never really experienced or learned anything because there was not much that I had back then, but here in America I have everything to study. I have my family, my kids, and a job and I'm happy for what I have.

story told by: Gigi