

Personal Statement

The early singing of the rooster played, telling me another journey was about to be written. I was only three years old when I was hand carried into the United States. I was forced to sleep to avoid any questions by the law. Silence became my temporary survival. In my three-year old mind I relied on nothing more than hope and faith to meet my parents once again.

Given to strangers and hoping not to be kidnapped, raped, used to traffic drugs and thousand other things that came to mind, the only thing I wanted was to be with my parents. Meanwhile my parents crossed through the desert trying to avoid being caught by the law. Walking for two days and not having food or water, only being fed by the desire to search for a better lifestyle and encountering me was what drove them forward.

Waking up to my parents caused large amount of joy I had no words to describe. The joy I felt to see them once again was powerful. Starting a new chapter in life was the next step, having nothing but only dreams and desire to begin. We had to find a place to live quickly before we were deported back. Luckily my father knew someone in Hollister, California. Entering someone's house can be very challenging: you essentially were living illegally in their place under their rules. At any time they wanted they could have kicked us out of their house, and they could charge what they thought was correct not what you wanted. They were not your family, friends, or enemies; just like everyone else they were in search of better a life.

For the first couple of years life was a living hell: my parents worked long hours under the boiling sun out in the fields. I was being taken care of by someone who only allowed me to sit down, did not allow me to run, walk, watch television or anything. My

childhood was lost when I was being carried to the United States. When my parents picked me up my life brightened for a couple seconds, after that it was going back to a room that felt like prison. We couldn't leave, be in the living room, go to the kitchen, we couldn't really do anything: we were being treated like animals. To a certain point I had lost the sense of being a human. I felt as if I was an animal and imprisonment was my only option. That would change later when I began to attend school.

I found a treasure there, the power to begin a change- I sought education as the key to open many doors. Going to school became my dopamine; my goal had become to help my family out with what I could. What other way than by learning English? At first trying to learn English was harder than breaking the Maya glyphs. Having no clue what was being said, knowing nothing other than my name was the start of something I used as an excuse to work hard, learn, move only forward and help my family.

At first life had thrown me down and made me realize the real world- it was not going to be easy- nothing was given, suffrage was required.

I began to question my purpose in life at a young age. Why did I go to school, why did I follow rules told to me, was there a real purpose. There existed moments I had no clue how to do my homework; my only source of help was my parents. They cried, felt desperate, and stood awake for hours to try and help me finish my homework. After slowly learning English and seeing other kids go through the same thing, I felt I was not alone. I had more similarities than I thought with others around me: they had a similar background, lived in similar or worse conditions, were not fluent English speakers, and their parents worked in the fields long hours to provide an income. The event that changed my life and my perspective on society was being told, "Don't speak Mexican,

“speak English we’re in America.” I was unable to comprehend why I was told not to speak my native tongue, something I was good at. I asked myself in what ways was I harming anyone. Those words felt like someone opening my chest and pulling my heart out to kill me. The only thing I was capable of doing was stop talking and hide in the shadows of fear because I was scared to speak my mind.

I did not see anything wrong with speaking a different language. What did people mean by “don’t speak Mexican” I was unsure, I knew Spanish and not “Mexican” as they claimed that I spoke.

It was not until I became more educated and was fed up with the discrimination, hate, and ignorance, that I began to start saying something back.

My responses were not to bash on those who said I spoke “Mexican” but rather to educate them. I felt liberated to talk back and question them about why I should not speak “Mexican.” What was their problem against someone who spoke a different language? The first step was standing up for myself and then helping those who felt as they were in my place. The next thing I began to do was help my parents: filling out any paper work they had, and becoming the interpreter for them with people who only spoke English.

I had become their leverage- an escape route to not feeling oppressed, targeted, or marginalized all because they did not speak English. I have learned from people like Cesar Chavez, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks and other civil rights leaders that there comes a moment when your fed up with everything and need to start a change. A change, a change, a change I decided to make because I knew I had done nothing wrong only speak what I knew.

We are born into a social classification where some are privileged and others are

marginalized. I learned that I was not as privileged and really helped me view and understand life in a different aspect. I didn't have a computer growing up, family dinner for me was going out to a fast food and getting the cheapest thing on the menu. My parents couldn't afford to buy me school supplies, they did not have a car. I might have not had fancy stuff growing up but I was taught people in other parts of the world cannot afford clothes, food, where to live, nothing. That was an opener to help me understanding that people could not understand what I was living. These types of experience those that even if you explain one thousand time that person would not completely understand what it was like to not being able to afford a pair of shoes, clothes or food.

My road to college has not been the easiest but I am proud to say I am a first generation college student and want to take advantage of education offered, an education which my parents did not have the fortune to obtain. I am thankful because of my parents long hours under the sun, breaking their backs in the fields, those endless nights they did not have an opportunity to sleep and many other things.

My academic aspirations have always been to learn as much as possible and take advantage of what is provided for me. CSUMB has helped me developed skills and I have learned a lot during my time here. Currently I am working and doing my best to obtaining a Spanish major with an emphasis in literature and linguistic, then enter grad school. I want to help people to prevent them from going through what I did. One no, should be discriminated because they do not know a language. I have worked in after school migrant programs and in elementary schools and see myself reflected among many of the children that I've helped. If I can change, help or inspire children to peruse an education no matter the circumstances that will make me happy but most important the

satisfaction of knowing they had someone to help them.

I do not hold a grudge for those that told me to not speak “Mexican” I thank them for igniting the sensation to become someone better in life to appreciate who we are and where we come from. I thank them for giving me the passion to help those who were once in my place. I thank them for helping me become the person I am, for helping me over come that language barrier. There exist different ways to approach problems in society. Education became my tools to fight back. Obtaining those tools was not easy, I have come a long way and nothing is going to stop me.