

Who tells your story?

Grandpa: I was born in Mexico.

Grandma: I was born in Mexico also.

Grandpa: I'm from the border of El Paso Texas, the city's Chihuahua.

Grandma: I am from the center of the country, the state of Zacatecas.

Grandpa: For me as a child my favorite memory was playing with my brothers and sisters and going to school. I had to work as a child. It was insanity for me in my family because we didn't have that much money. I was very happy being with my grandma. I was very, very happy. My favorite memory is playing with my brother, playing with my family, going to school, and trying to do good in school. I would always challenge my brother and sisters to see who could get better grades or just do better in general. Those were good memories for me, playing with them, doing stuff we weren't supposed to do like every kid. We lived in a tiny little room, about a 10x10 room. We were really poor, but we enjoyed being poor, so whoever says money is everything in life, they are lying, because we never had money and we enjoyed life. As grown-ups right now we share things that we did when we were kids, and memories come back to us and you know it was good. I can count it as a really good life. We enjoyed what God gave us at that time. I think every family should enjoy life, with or without money, because all you gotta do is try your best. If you have a little or a lot, you have to enjoy every moment with your family and just try to thank God for what you have.

Grandma: My family has 3 sisters, 5 brothers, 2 deceased and I met up with my brothers and sisters in the United States.



Grandma: I was very happy with my grandma. I lived by myself with my grandma. I can't really remember my brothers because I had lived with my grandma for a long time. I was pretty happy because I was the only one. I worked with my grandma. My grandma used to go to the border and buy clothes and we would go to the little towns in Mexico and sell the clothing. I would help my grandma wash the clothes, iron them and then we would go on a bus to a little town and we would stay there all day selling the clothes to make money.

Grandpa: Learning English was complicated but it was interesting. There were a lot of people that would laugh at me when they heard me try to speak English. I tried to ignore them. A few times people have made me feel bad, and I take it too personally, but by the end of the day, I have to take what I've learned and what I have accomplished and be proud of it. Right now if someone heard me speaking English they would say I speak really good English. It's because of the effort I put into trying and my effort to ignore people who make fun of me and talk bad about me.

Grandma: I didn't like when I got to America. I couldn't understand English. People scared me, I was afraid to go outside. My mom always told me to not look out the window, especially when my mom went to work, and I had to stay in the house till I had to go to school. It was very difficult and very hard. When I first went to school trying to learn English it was so hard. I felt lost and dumb. I felt like people were bullying me. I could not defend myself. It was a horrible feeling. I was very frustrated and mad. I felt little because I couldn't defend myself, especially when I started growing up and I had to work on the laundromat. I kept burning myself and I was so exhausted and tired, so I told myself "I really have to learn English," and I put all my effort to learn and become a better person in the United States. I tried very hard to learn English, and that's where I'm at now and I'm very thankful.

Grandpa: When coming to America I was looking forward to better opportunities, a better life, and more freedom. Not whatever you want because that's wrong, but the freedom to do things that you can't do in Mexico, like working

anywhere you want and buying anything you want. I think everyone can have that opportunity, but what pushed me to come to America is that I knew I could do better here than what I was doing in Mexico. I was doing ok in Mexico because I'm the person who thanks God for good jobs. I made good money in Mexico. I got really good positions in my job, but I knew I could do better here than there. For what I accomplished here in the United States with the freedom they give me here to grow, I think I made my goal.

Grandpa: In Mexico, I started working when I was a kid. I used to sell sandwiches and I never forgot that my mom used to make pineapple juice from original pineapples. We used to have old wood boxes where they carry vegetables. We sold sandwiches, which in Mexico they call tortas, and we used to provide for my mom with that money. We helped my mom because my dad never lived with me, so I have worked since I was a kid. I used to polish shoes, I used to carry in groceries for people from the grocery stores to the buses. Whatever they gave me, that's what I would accept. I used to sell matches and sell our oranges with salt and chili powder. I enjoyed my life and I cannot say I didn't succeed because I was always a hard worker and that made me create what I have right now.

Grandma: In Mexico where I lived we really didn't have to have money because we had all different types of animals, so we would survive off of everything we grew. We really never had money until I started growing up. My mom and I went to go sell clothes and I helped but I didn't really pay attention to the money.

Grandma: I never decided to leave Mexico because I was very happy where I was, but my mother needed me in the United States. She wanted to join all her children and I felt like I was blindfolded because I wasn't sure where I was going. I felt like I was just going to go for a couple of weeks and then go back to Mexico. I was 13 and I thought it was going to be fun coming to the United States, but I just felt very lonely when I came here. My mom requested for me to come. We were in the process of getting a resident card, and my mom could not cross the border, so she sent a friend of hers to pick me up and drive into the United States with my mom's friend. I came to America by car. I felt betrayed because I thought we were going on a vacation for a couple of weeks, and going back I didn't think I was going to stay here my whole life so I didn't prepare at all.



Grandpa: In Mexico, there are a lot of people. They've switched streets from two ways to one way. I noticed the people are more aggressive, more intense. When they see you and see who you are, and what you're wearing, they try to take advantage of you. I hear good and bad things. They say there is a lot of vandalism. There are a lot of people who kill each other for drugs or do things like that, but I hear that as long as you're not involved with things like that and you just go

to visit your family and you respect people, you will be ok. You can talk to people, just be careful who you talk to.

Grandpa: I was about 16 or 17 years old when I came to the US. and it was an invitation that my cousin gave me. She said she could help me out and everything, and since I had been telling myself in my head that I was going to do better, when that opportunity came I decided to come. No one came with me, I came by myself. I only had my passport to pass to the United States. When I decided to come to Colorado it wasn't as hard as it is right now to cross. My cousin tried several times to cross me, and every time we got close to the immigrant checkpoint immigration was right there, so he had to return his card. We went to my uncle's house and we stayed there for just a couple of days and my cousin told me "Let's just try the airplane," and when I tried it was very easy, but before that, it was very intense and scary. It was my first time in an airplane, and I was so scared, but that's how I made it to Colorado. I stayed with my auntie, my mom's sister, and she opened the door for me and she helped me out a lot. I've been here since and I think I made the right choice. The difference between Mexico and America is that there is more freedom and more peace in America. In Mexico, I got a really good job opportunity, but it was once in a lifetime that you can get that opportunity in Mexico. In the United States, if you set up your goal that you want to be something or be somebody, you can accomplish whatever you want as long as you put it in your head. In Mexico, if you try your hardest it will still be very hard to grow because you don't have freedom or peace. You always have to watch your back because it is hard to live in Mexico, but in the United States I say there's freedom,

opportunities to grow, and you can do what you want as long as it's on the right path.

Grandma: I was very poor in Mexico versus the United States. In Mexico there is a lot of freedom in the little town, versus here in the United States I feel like we're just stuck in the house and at work, but there are a lot of luxuries in the United States.

Grandpa: Money was difficult where I grew up because I didn't know the value of money. All of the money my sisters and brother got we gave to are mom so for me money was not difficult because I never knew the value I just gave it to my mom and yes now I know the value of money but like I mentioned we were happy with everything we had and that's one thing you have to learn in life you have to be happy with what you have not what you want and like I said it was hard it was difficult but not because it depends how you see.



Grandma: I always wanted to go back to Mexico. I love the ranch-style. I like their life, but now going back is lonely. Everyone is in the United States now. Only at events do we see everyone. But besides that, in Mexico, it's quieter. It feels lonely, but the main thing you feel is free in the town.

Grandpa: I always worked since I came to the United States. My cousin already had a job for me and she knows a lot of people and I always been independent to myself until I met my wife then we depended on each other but all my life I have been working and I can't complain about it because I have days off and I make time for my family and we always look for time to be with the family and everyone but yeah.

Grandma: In the United States I started working at 14 years old in a car wash. I remember I got my first check and it was \$33. I was so happy that ever since then I always wanted to work.

Grandpa: I always faced racism here in the United States, from the moment that I came until now. It still exists, but of course, back in those years, it was more noticeable. You can see it, you can feel it. When someone looks at you wrong you already know you're not welcome here and they don't like you. I was scared because I couldn't defend myself, and if they told me something I would have to stay quiet. They never did, but if they punched me or spit on me or bit me, the stuff they used to do, I would have to just walk away. I was afraid afraid because I already knew I was in a country that didn't belong to me, a country that I wasn't born in. Right now I feel racism sometimes, but not as bad as when I first got here. But now I'm in a position where I can protect

myself and talk back if I need to. God made us all the same, and we are all equal, and no one can tell me that how I look is bad, how I talk is bad. I know what's right or wrong because I follow God.

Grandma: I did face racism, especially in school. I was very scared when I went to school. There were some African-American girls that used to climb on the stalls and look at me when I tried to use the bathroom. I couldn't speak so I didn't know what to say. Another time is when I was going home with my brothers and some guy said stuff and beat up my brother, until one day when I was 13 I had enough of that and I went back and beat a guy up. Ever since he never picked on me again. I had to stand up for me and my brother and sisters.

Grandma: When I arrived my mom and father both worked and they would both get a weekly check, and I felt uncomfortable asking for money because I didn't live with them, but they would give me money. It just felt uncomfortable because I didn't live with them.

Grandpa: The first job I had here was in a greenhouse because my cousin got the job for me, but when I decided to move from job to job it was my choice. No one helped me, but I'm the type of person that I always say "Do the best you can. Do it right the first time." Since I got a good reputation with people they always recommend me. They say I'm a hard worker who puts his all into his work every day.

Grandpa: I used to go to St. Catherine's, and my wife used to go to Annunciation, but in one of those special events that they have in different communities, there was a St. Catherine-

Annunciation prayer group in Brighton and other locations. We used to get together to perform an event about Jesus Christ, and that's where I met my wife. We started talking and everything. I got her phone number in a prayer group at Annunciation. I decided to start going to Annunciation. I was interested in her because of the way she looked, the way she acted in front of people, and how independent she was. Like every guy who is interested in a person, I went close to her. I started talking with her and I noticed she was interested in me too. I asked her if we could exchange phone numbers so we could see each other later on and she accepted.

Grandma: He asked me at one point to dinner and I said yes, so he took me to this restaurant called The Broker.

Grandpa: Later, we got married and started a family. When we had our first baby, it was super amazing. That's one of the reasons I started getting closer and closer to God, after seeing how amazing he is and how powerful he is to give us a miracle like a baby. He can create life, a person, a little baby, and to see it grow up and see who they are, for all my kids... it's super amazing. It's like holding a miracle from God.

Grandma: The baby just felt very delicate, very fragile, and I was so happy. I couldn't believe it was something that I had created inside me, knowing that I would have that child for the rest of my life.

Grandpa: My family and kids now are grown-ups. My youngest is going to be 21 on May 24. and my oldest son is 39. They are already independent like every kid. Every family member always comes and

asks for advice or suggestions. They come to help us as a family. We are always being really helpful in the house and everything, but they are already grown-ups. They are out of my house already aside for my youngest who's still in college. But other than that they are really independent, pretty grown-up people, and pretty smart.

Grandma: I am very proud of my kids. We have 3 girls, two boys, and 10 grandchildren. They are so caring and they are very helpful, and I am very proud of having this big family. It's a blessing, having grandchildren and children. It makes me happy to know that my grandchildren count on us for any advice. They don't hesitate, they know that we will help them no matter what, and I feel like that's what grandparents are for. We give them all of our life.

Grandpa: I see my family as an accomplishment for me. It was a big responsibility that God gave me, to make the family that I have now. I think they are well-advised on how life works, how God is, and how they have to take care of each other. Most of my children come to talk to me. They exchange information and share good and bad moments. They ask for advice, and most of all, when I see my family I feel happy. I feel like I did what I was supposed to do, and I feel like I guided my grandchildren on the right path to God.

Grandma: After trying so hard, from working at a car wash to a tortilla factory to a laundromat I decided to continue school. I was the only one in my entire family that graduated from high school and that had a certificate from college. After being the last one to come to the United States from Mexico and being on my own after 17, I decided I was going to continue school, which I did, and I

tried different careers until I found one that I liked. Now there's over 60 people that are under me and I run the legal construction company.

Grandpa: One thing I have learned throughout my life is that life is not easy, but if you put God in front of you and you put your heart into things you want to do, you will make it. I'm a really big example of that for what I've achieved in my life; the family that I have and the things I own. But if I need to give advice to somebody it's to learn to always be positive, always follow God's path and always be honest with others, and in life and you will make it.



Grandma: Something I have also learned in life is being appreciative about being in the United States. Being in the United States you want to be someone professional, someone, with a better life. It's up to you how high you want to fly here in the United States.

Grandpa: My life changed a lot. I was a person that was poor, a person that grew up like I grew up, and I came to the United States and started making good money, and bought my own house. My life changed because you have to pass through certain things in life to appreciate and learn who

you are and who you want to be. I don't feel like the best person in life to give advice, but I do have a lot of knowledge.

Grandma: My life has changed a lot. I have worked very hard to better myself every day, every week, every year, not only for me but the entire family. I always wanted to become someone professional, and I have accomplished that dream.

story told by: Arturo Dosal-Casias III