

Moving and Fitting In

When my mother was young, she, with her many siblings and parents moved the country Laos to the united states of America. I had always known this, but I never really bothered to dig deeper in about the settlement and the impact it had on her childhood. Now, I have put together this interview to do just that. Now, here is my interview with my mom.

Q : When you first found out that you were going to move to America, were you with or against the decision?

A : I didn't have an opinion, I was only five years old.

Q : When you first arrived, what was your experience in settling in?

A : I remember that we stayed in a motel in California and were all very hungry. My dad put a \$20 bill into a vending machine, but nothing came out. We were all very disappointed and desperately hungry. No one helped us out. Luckily, my mother had packed a small bag of rice and fed us with it until dinner time.

I also remember seeing television for the very first time. The motel lady turned the tv on for us. It was Bert and Ernie on Sesame Street. Of course, we didn't know then. My siblings and I sat on the bed admiring how this magic came to be. He waved, "hello". We waved back. Then, we went behind the tv to find that there was no one behind there. It was the coolest experience ever.

Q : What problems arose when you were first settling in?

A : We did not speak English, so just EVERYTHING was difficult. One problem in particular happened. I remember in kindergarten we were singing "Ring Around the Rosie" and I wet myself because I did not know how to ask to use the bathroom. My parents were delightfully shocked to see that I was given new clothes to wear home.

Q: In the following year, how well did you fit in with other kids your age?

A: I assumed I fit in well during my primary years. It wasn't until the seventh grade when I transitioned from an urban public school to a suburban school that I realized our social/ economic status was different from the other kids. That was when kids started torturing me. Kids can be cruel.

Q : How would you summarize the changes you had to go through in order to really fit in?

A : I think there were many periods of acceptance, denial, isolation, trying to find out your place in life, happiness, and then realizing that all of that just doesn't matter in the end. I think you just have to find friends that are similar to you instead of trying to fit into something and keep doing the things you love (that will pay the bills).

Q: In all, what kind of journey did you go through?

A : I don't know really. When I think about my parents, I think their journey was perilous and mine... pale and trivial in comparison. I don't feel that anyone's journey is complete until you are well in the afterlife. In my youth, it was a little wild and crazy, and I hope that you have a little wild, and a little crazy journey yourself...be safe always. I took risks and hope that you take calculated risks when you are able to.

Through my mother's words, I have learned about the journey she had in childhood, and more importantly, the magic of the journey of life itself. I learned a lot from my mother today, and I hope you did to. If you find yourself having the same experiences, I can't blame blame you, for I have too. I hope you liked my interview with my mother.