

My Story by Patricia Higuera April 04



I was a pregnant teenager at 16. A few readers will cringe at that thought, but those who know me will nod approvingly. Are they nodding at my teenage pregnancy? Of course not. They are nodding at the choices I've made throughout my life and are amazed by the struggles I have overcome.

I was a pregnant teenager at 16, but today I am a law student with a job at a major law firm, a mother of two, a soccer mom, a leader, and a community activist. It is with great pride and humility that I share my story with you.

My name is Patricia Higuera (*Picture above*). I am a first generation Mexican American born in Torrance, California. My mother is from Leon, Guanajuato and my father is from El Palme, Sonora. I am the only girl and youngest of my siblings by 5 minutes (I have a fraternal twin brother who was absolutely my best friend growing up). (*Pictured on the right*)

In addition to my twin brother, I have two older brothers. All four of us were latchkey kids. We came from a humble home with parents who worked day and night shifts in order to provide us with the best.

I for one never felt that we had less than anyone else. Sure, I didn't have the Barbie branded dolls that some of my friends had, but the substitutes were good enough for me. I had my parents' love and support and they gave me what time they could spare. For instance, my mother didn't get home until 2:00 a.m. at times from working at the factory but my father would honor my requests to be awakened at about 1:30 a.m. so that I could join him on his trip to pick her up. I loved those early morning trips. I loved when she acted surprised every time I popped out from the backseat. I loved seeing her come home.



Both my parents worked very hard and served as perfect examples for me on how to live my own life. They both migrated to the United States (before meeting each other) to make a life for their respective families. My mother was the oldest of her siblings so she felt it was her responsibility to find work and send money back home. My father started off as a car washer and now owns his own Real Estate company called "Sonora Realty".

Hard work wasn't the only thing they taught me. They also took the time to tell me about the love that God has for me. Although everyone enjoys learning that others love them, there was more than joy that I took away from those teachings.

There was strength. That strength carried me through the toughest times of my life, including my teenage pregnancy.

In high school, I was a scholar. I was an honor student enrolled in advance placement courses and I was a member of several organizations including the National Honor Society and the California Scholarship Federation. I had a very bright future ahead of me, but as I said before, I was also a pregnant teenager by the time I was sixteen.

After crying my eyes out for several nights, I literally got down on my knees, cried some more, and asked God to be with me. Since I knew of the love that God has for me, I recognized that there was nothing that I would be allowed to endure if He didn't think I was strong enough to endure it. So I mustered up the courage and strength that I realized was already tucked away somewhere inside of me. I dried my tears and began thinking not only about my future, but that of my child. I decided it was going to be brighter than anyone had ever imagined. At the age of eight months, my baby boy joined me at my high school graduation where I graduated at the top 3% of my class, earning special honors as Summa Cumme Laude.

Later that year, I realized I needed to continue achieving my goals. I faced a roadblock at first. I remember being ecstatic over those plump envelopes that came through the mail. My acceptance to the University of Southern California (USC) and the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) were overwhelming but the costs to attend and the insufficient financial aid that I received were heart breaking (I had my heart set on USC, the more expensive of the two). I took the news like a big girl and enrolled in what I could afford, Santa Monica City College. Little did I know that the school was famed for having the number one transfer rate to UCLA and USC. I realized that the light was still bright at the end of the tunnel and that I would transfer to USC if I stayed the course. I also realized how much money I was saving and that was indeed encouraging since I was paying my own way.

Too make a long story short, I stayed the course, transferred to and graduated from USC earning a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. During my career in Marketing, I mentioned to a co-worker that I was playing with the idea of going to law school. He said, "That's a bit too ambitious, don't you think?" Of course, as any typical Latina will attest to, there is nothing 'a bit too ambitious' for us. I thereafter applied and was accepted.

Today, I am the president of the Latino Law Students Association at my law school and I have been the recipient of several scholarships given to me primarily for my leadership ability and community involvement. I have been given the opportunity to talk to teenagers at different schools and I have been able to provide holiday gifts to nearly a thousand underprivileged children in LA. I continue to be a very happy mother with a very blissful life.

Reason for Sharing My Story -- It is not in my nature to boast about myself. As a Mexicana, I was taught to be modest and subordinate to my brothers. However, I attended a Luncheon recently where they honored Dr. Mae Jemison the first

woman of color to go into outer space. I cannot quote her exactly, but she said something to the effect: **'No one comes out a winner when we hide in the shadows and little ourselves. Everyone is a winner when we permit ourselves to be proud of our accomplishments and allow others to share in our light.'** So I shared.

Mija Magazine would like to thank Patricia Higuera for sharing her story to all of us Mijas out there. If you have a story to share, or have comments about this story please email them to rrosa@mijamagazine.com

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