

My life before and my life now and living in two worlds.

When I was little and I lived with my parents, we were poor. We lived in a village far outside the city. My father was thirty-two years old and my mother was twenty-nine. I had three brothers and three sisters. I am the youngest in the family. All my siblings are older than fifteen. I was barely eight. We didn't have much money like other people.

We had to work to bring in food. The pay they gave us was only enough for one day's food. My sisters were always looking for work washing clothes to have a little money. My brothers were looking for work every morning in agriculture. Whenever they got work, they would bring food and my mother stayed home to take care of everyone.

She had three chickens and two roosters. When the chickens laid eggs, we were happy because there was food for the day. She also planted some plants to harvest their fruit. There weren't many, but sometimes we only ate the vegetables. She had a little cornfield, tomatoes, onions, and cilantro. My dad works as a bricklayer. Sometimes he makes money and sometimes he doesn't. He works all day but sometimes there is no work for him.

I saw how my family struggled every day to bring us food. My brothers always told me "little brother keep studying, put in the effort, that will help you later in your life. We don't want you to end up like us. We have to look for work

every day to have something to eat, but you will have a steady job and you will earn a lot of money. You will see you just have to study and do your homework”.

What he doesn't know is that at school they made fun of me for my clothes, the shoes I wore, and the used notebooks I brought. It hurt me a lot that the children made fun of me. I wish they knew how difficult it is to earn a daily bread, but they will never understand.

With the passage of time, we continued like this every day. Sometimes we had to ask my grandparents for borrowed money because they had a little more. They no longer had children to support and it was just the two of them. They invited me to eat every month and I was very happy because when we went to eat with them there was always a delicious dish on the table.

When I finished sixth grade I had to decide if I should continue with my studies or leave school and start working. My brothers and sisters were telling me not to stop, to continue my education in order to have a better future. I was offered a scholarship at a school they said that I should take advantage of because they couldn't have the help and the support that I have now because they had to help with the expenses of the house and the money did not reach.

I decided that they were right. I signed up to go to the first grade of another school to continue with my studies. My parents also told me to continue. I started my first day of school eager to learn new things. My new teachers congratulated

me for having good grades and they she told me, "I hope you continue with those grades". I told her I hope because I am going to give it a lot of effort.

One day leaving my new school I went home and suddenly I saw a puppy in the street. I adopted him. That day I was very happy for my new pet and I called him Rocky. Rocky accompanied me every day to go to school when I entered school he returned home. At the time of departure, he arrives at the school door and we returned home

My father told me that it was better to let him go because that would be another mouth to feed and that it was barely enough for us. I told him that I could share my portion so he would eat well. My dad got mad at me but the next day he was fine. Every day that I left school I trained my dog to be an educated dog and not a stray dog. I managed to train him very well. My father told me "son your dog is very good dog, today I accidentally left a letter at the entrance of our house and when I sat down Rocky came and left it with me my dad said" and I said, "dad, what does the letter say?. My dad just ignored me and changed the subject. I didn't ask him anymore and I went to play with my dog.

One day me and my dog went to buy a watermelon because my dad got a tip at work and he sent me to buy a watermelon. We went to the market where they sell everything: clothes, food, vegetables and fruits. I took a big watermelon so that there would be enough for all of us in the family. When we left the market

there was a person who was drunk on the street I ran past because drunks with us become very aggressive when they are under the influence of alcohol. That person saw us and started chasing us. I was about to cross a main street in which if you cross there you have to look both ways because of the traffic to avoid an accident, we crossed when there was no car nearby and suddenly the drunk crossed the main street he was in the middle of the road when a truck loaded with firewood approached very quickly. He was hit immediately. People came to see how he was really hurt. The truck ran over his stomach and unfortunately he died right there.

I ran home to tell my parents what happened. They told me not to worry and to forget about it. When I crossed that road to be very careful since that day my life changed. Whenever I passed by there I always felt a really strange feeling. It's like thinking that one day the same thing is going to happen to me. I still kept going with everything

I kept going to school. I had good grades, the teachers always congratulated me every semester for my good behavior. Two years went by and I continued with my studies. When graduation day came, my parents and my brothers looked for a way to make me a small meal. We would invite my grandparents, uncles and aunts with all my cousins. They weren't as poor as us because their parents had a steady job but mine didn't even so I feel very proud of them because every day they work harder and harder.

My dad told me it was time, son. I was very excited and happy for my graduation, the time came when they called me, "David Herrera Mauricio" and everyone applauded. I walked very happily. They gave me my diploma and they called me the best student of the year. I saw my family from the stage and I could see in my parents eyes the great pride they had in me because I achieved what very few in our village could achieve. When the graduation ended the school principal called my father to his office along with me. My dad said to me: "do you know what happened?", I told him "I don't know", but I was nervous.

We arrived at the principal's office and he said, "take a seat". We sat down, a little worried, because we didn't know the reason why they called us. The principal said, "Don't worry, it's not bad at all. On the contrary, it's something very good. He said "we managed to get the request accepted for a scholarship for David to continue his studies in another country. If he wants to continue he will go on an exchange to Argentina. We will find him a family and when the school year is over he will come back. Don't worry about the money, the scholarship will cover all the expenses. We would just need your permission so that he can go. He has to fill out some documents and sign them when he finishes". My dad was very happy to hear that. Me too but, at that same moment I started to think that if I go I would be separated from my family for a long time.

Despite all that, I decided to fight for a better future. I told my dad “yes dad, I'm going. I hope you support me.” My dad said okay son if that's what you want we will support you. The director gave all the documents to my dad to fill out. We took the documents home. When my dad and I arrived, he told my mom and my siblings about the opportunity that I have. They were very happy, but at the same time sad because we separated. They told me "David if that's what you want we will support you. No distance matters, fight for a better future.”

They told me I was traveling next week. I started gathering my documents to leave. I gave my dog Rocky to my mom to take care of. She told me: “Don't worry, son. Your dog will be well taken care of, and you also trained him very well. He is a very well-behaved animal. I will take care of him.” Last week, my parents and brothers came to drop me off and said, “See you soon, David.” “Take care of yourself.” “And with your good notes, we are very proud of you.”

From the moment I set foot in Argentina, I felt like my world was splitting in two. My family and my culture were somewhere else. Here my future was my dreams. But even so, I continued with my studies. Every day I went out for a walk, I saw people walking with their families happily. I always remembered my family who stayed in my country, thinking about what they were doing. Would they have eaten? They always called me, or I called them every afternoon to say hello, but sometimes they didn't have time because they were working.

I continued. That year was the last year that I had to study and after graduating. The following year I could go to the university. If I continue with good grades. They will grant me a scholarship to continue forward. My dream is to be an architect and create bridges and buildings that made me forget the sadness that I felt for the absence of my parents. Although the family where I was staying treated me very well. They would take me out for walks after school. But it didn't feel like going out for a walk with my family laughing at crazy things. The idea that I could change my future hyped me up to keep going no matter what.

One of my teachers from Argentina told me, "hey David you are very brave for having dared to leave your family in your country to follow your dreams and make them happen" I told her, "thank you very much, teacher, it is very difficult to be away from them but when I think that, I will help them a lot when I finish my career. Now I have to concentrate on getting good grades to have the scholarship next year coming up for my university."

Christmas day arrived and I was far from my family. I just felt depressed, sad, like I couldn't breathe with a lump in my throat. Having them far away was very difficult for me. Becoming familiar with the cultures of Argentina was very difficult for me because I remembered the cultures of Colombia. It was very difficult to live with that because living in two worlds at the same time is not easy for my mind and my heart to be separated in two different parts.

There was only one month left to finish the school year there in Argentina. The family I was with was helping me enroll in the university of Colombia that was close to my parents. They were very anxious for me to finish my school year and see them again.

Without realizing it, the year ended. I received an email saying, “Congratulations, you were accepted to enter the university. I was very happy because now my future depends on me. I will not worry about money because the scholarship will cover everything. I said goodbye to the family where I was, I returned to my family, I arrived at the house and they prepared my favorite food. We sat at the table. We started to tell stories when we got together. My heart was filled with joy for being with my family and not having to be apart. I only had one month of vacation.

I was already eighteen years old. I looked for a temporary job to help my family with the household expenses and when I started university instead of working. I dedicated myself full time to my studies. I finished my architecture degree after 5 years at university. I met a very pretty woman named Renata and we were boyfriend and girlfriend for two years and when I graduated and she graduated as a nurse we got married.

We started to work when we completed a year of marriage and we bought a house together. I bought a house for my parents and brothers so they could live in

better conditions than before. I gave them a monthly payment so they wouldn't suffer too much for money. They were so proud of me that they moved into their new house and were very happy. My wife, Renata, and I had three children, a girl and two boys. From that moment on, I no longer worried about money. He also worked for me in the construction industry. I heard he recommended a job that wasn't so hard. My children grew up quickly, they started going to school, and we continued to be happy. The End.