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9th grade
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The Way Life Goes

If I learned anything in my entire fifteen years of living it's that the most difficult times of your life make you grow the most. As a hard field worker with no papers my dad was deported, taken away from my family and I. However, it has made me a stronger person.

My dad is a very hardworking man. A very kind person and he hated showing his emotions so he always and I mean always had a serious face. Since he always worked in the fields to provide for us his hands were rough and dirty, so my hands could be soft and clean. He often wore ripped shirts, dirty pants, worn out boots, and he owned a small dirty white truck. You couldn't even roll up the windows of the car because they didn't work and I admit, I would be embarrassed when he would pick me up from school in his dirty car and I know my dad knew. He had nothing so I can have everything.

Fourth grade was when my dad first started attending court with all of my family behind him and cheering him up. I was young and I had no clue what was going on. I asked my dad, "Why are you dressed so nicely?" I remember asking because I never saw him with decent clothes, "I'll be back and we can go get ice cream after I pick you up from school okay? Everything is fine okay? be good in school " is the only response I would get.

Sixth grade I knew exactly why my dad was going to court since I heard a conversation between him and my mom late at night. The only word I remember hearing exactly, deportation. That word sunk inside me and I felt cold if I heard it coming out of someone's mouth. My dad didn't want me to know that he was fighting for the last two years so he wouldn't be deported, he didn't know I knew. One day my dad wanted to go get fast food after work and he asked if I could help him order since he didn't really speak any english. Of course I helped him but it was my time to talk about this situation. As we were driving back home I was looking out the car window tearing up because I didn't want to talk about it but I had to. My dad saw me wiping my face "What's wrong?" he said looking at the road and back at me, "Who broke your heart?" he said jokingly but I couldn't laugh. I choked on my words, "Why didn't you tell me that they're taking you back to Mexico" his smile faded so quickly and he stopped on an almond field. He was still looking straight and took a deep breath which shook a little, "I'm going to be honest with you, I'm fighting so hard Alondra, And I will tell you this one thing, everything will be okay and whatever happens you're going to do great in school right?" He hugged me so tight. I stayed hopeful so he wouldn't have to worry about my emotions.

Court went on for another year and when I would come back from school my family would arrive from court. There were days when they would come hopeful and excited after court and then there were days when they often came worried and silent. The silence broke in February in seventh grade. I was happily doing my homework and listening to my music in my room when then I realized my aunt standing in the doorway with this expression on her face I couldn't describe. She slowly walks towards me and sits on my bed and she remains silent, "What's wrong?" I hugged her back since she looked sad "Alondra we need to talk love" she couldn't even speak until the words spit out of her mouth, "You're dad's getting deported" I froze and I couldn't move. I stopped hugging her and got up. These words didn't process through my head and I didn't know what that meant in that split second, I slowly fell to the ground. It took me a minute to process it. I felt this sharp pain in my chest, I cried hard covering my mouth so my little brother wouldn't hear me. My aunt picked me up and hugged me crying as well but softly, "All of your uncles and I will come visit you guys every week so we can-" her words faded. The only thing I was thinking about was my dad.

February 20th the last day I would get to see my dad after they would take him away to send him away to who knows. School that day was so hard but I acted like I was happy so no one would worry about anything. After school I waited on the couch nervously waiting for my dad to come so I could say my last good-bye to him. After 30 minutes of waiting he showed up, as he opened the door I ran into his arms and there he stood with no color in his face but kept trying to have a serious face. He breathed heavily and looked up at the ceiling and that moment an idea came up I jumped up, "I can go to Mexico with you and we can work to get a house and I can visit my mom and we can go visit my grandpa and grandma and-" he looked at me with tears starting to come out of his eyes and interrupted me, "Alondra, I love you but I came to America to give you an education, a life so you won't be working in the fields. Stay here and don't let this affect you in school keep on being smart and promise me you won't fall back." He was crying and his shattered voice broke me. All my family gave him a good-bye but it was time for him to go. I grabbed his arm "I love you so much dad" he hugged me one last time "I love you too". He walked away so they could take him, he looked back as they drove off. That was the first time I saw my dad cry.

Ever since my dad left I felt so empty, I started feeling insecure, I hated myself, I didn't have enough energy to do anything, and I spent my days locked up in my room in my bed just thinking. If mom asked what I was doing in my room all day "I have tons of homework" and "I'm cleaning my room." Probably just teenager stuff I thought to myself. All my emotions were bottled up and I let them all out when I came back from school in my room, my family had enough to deal with so I tried to be happy in front of them. As I went to school I attended therapy to help me with everything that was happening in my life. It felt great to talk to someone and I felt better, but I wasn't completely hopeful for a future without my dad. Weeks passed by and I was doing track, I absolutely loved it. It took my mind off everything and I felt so happy every time I won an event. A feeling I missed for so long, but it was one particular meet that changed my whole entire life out of nowhere. That day I was thinking an awful lot about my life. The 400 meter, I remember running and while running I had flashbacks of my dad and I and then it just hit me so hard and randomly it scared me. Since all of this has happened to me it's only up to me if I want to change because the only person holding me back was myself. I was my worst enemy. I didn't want to live like this any more and I knew for sure crying myself to sleep every

night wasn't going to bring my dad back to America. I won the race without even knowing I was zoned out the whole time. A miracle.

Weeks after my dad's deportation I took many responsibilities at home. After my dad left my mom worked even more to provide for my two siblings and I. I made my sister and brother breakfast before we would go to school, my sister and I would clean the house so mom could come home in peace after a long day at work, she had enough on her shoulders. What hurt me most was when my younger brother, 8 years old asked me, "When is dad coming back from vacation?" I told him he went on vacation for work because I didn't want to worry him, "Dad is staying at my grandparent's house in Mexico because he misses them but we'll go visit him in the summer!" I told him and I tried so hard to make him happy because I wanted to protect him. Since my dad wasn't here to take care of the crops I couldn't possibly let the crops die. After school I go to my dad's field of crops and helped raised them with the help of my uncles. "Jeez dad I can barely take two hours of this heat and you do this endless hours everyday and still coming home with a smile" I thought as I worked but I remembered why he did it, "These fields are going to get you to college" He would tell me every time we passed it.

Charels Swindoll once said, "Life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it." And you may wonder "Why out of all the things did she choose to speak about this situation?" Well to be honest, this essay gave me a voice I never had. Since I never speak about it, all my emotions were poured out into this and I'm truly grateful about that. This quote spoke to me once I read it, it's so much more than a beautiful quote. It relates to my whole entire life and I take it by heart. To put it more simply, the quote says whenever a contemptible event happens in your lifetime it only depends on you, your future is all on how you react to a certain situation. So life happens and you take action.

This event in my life did hurt, but don't feel bad for me. I have become a greater person and it changed me so much but I let it change me in the best way possible. It took work to get where I am now and maybe I might sound a bit pathetic and like I'm over reacting to this situation but when I was in the moment the pain felt real. However this situation gave me determination, responsibility, and a new outlook on life. It changed how I see the world around me. I get up grateful for each day I can get and look for new opportunities, why? Because this is how I choose to react in life because life's going to happen, and I want to be a great leader, I want to help people, and I want to be successful so I grasp on to my dreams that will later be goals to later be goals achieved. Bad things are going to happen in life and that's the cold truth that's the way life goes. Through these dark times you will make it, nothing is impossible if only you don't think it's impossible. I will never put myself in that dark place again. So get up and live up to 100% because the world is only yours for a small amount of time, too little time to not live fully and to live only 50%.