



Rebeca Ruiz's American Dream

This oral history interview was conducted on February 20th, 2023 in Downey, California. We discussed her thoughts on the American Dream. I interviewed my mother Rebeca Ruiz, a small business owner who are up in the city of Commerce California. Commerce is a medium sized city in Los Angeles county which is the home of many industrial areas and the home of the popular Citadel Outlets. Rebeca Ruiz lived here in the early 90's and watched the small city evolve slowly.

Demi Estrada: This is an interview I'm conducting for my American Studies Class. The first thing I'd like to do is get your permission to tape this interview and use the quotes as part of an Oral History Assignment . Did you read the Informed Consent document, and will you give me this permission?

Rebeca Ruiz: “Yes I read and signed it. You have my permission to record and publish this interview.”

Warm up questions:

DE: Where did you grow up?

RR: “I grew up in the city of commerce, CA”

DE: What was it like to grow up there?

RR: “It was very industrial, quiet neighborhoods, and there was old couples living on my block there was not many children only about four families who had children in their home”

DE: What did you think about America when you were young?

RR: “I didn’t really think about this when I was younger. It was not until my late teens where I realized my brothers and I were so blessed to have been born and raised in America.”

American Dream Questions:

DE: What do you think is a good definition of the American Dream?

RR: “I think working hard and saving money to purchase a home is the American Dream”

DE: Do you have your own definition of the Dream that differs from the more popular idea circulated today?

RR: “No, I believe I share a similar definition to the idea circulated these days.”

DE: Where did you first learn about the American Dream?

RR: “ I think through my father, He spoke highly of working hard and owning a home for his family.”

DE: When you were growing up, do you think your parents or grandparents generation thought of it the same way?

RR: “Yes, they always spoke about owning a home America being able to raise their children there.”

DE: How do you think your upbringing impacted your interpretation of the American Dream?

RR: “Seeing my father being a hardworking provider to his family encouraged me to work hard for my family as well.”

DE: Do you think you are living the American Dream today?

RR: “Yes, I have accomplished many of my goals that I was hoping to as an adult and a provider to my children.”

DE: Can you think of a time when you weren't sure you'd be successful?

RR: “ Yes, there was point when I stopped going to school and I was working odd jobs and I thought to myself that I would not be able to afford a home.”

DE: Do you think that if a person works hard, that the American Dream is available to them no matter their circumstances?

RR: “YEs, if you work hard and know how to manage your money.”

DE: Do you think the American Dream is good for America?

RR: “Yes, because we are working in the American society and buying in American which means we are helping the American economy.”

DE: Do you have any advice for people pursuing the American Dream today?

RR: “I believe working hard and managing your money will help you achieve the American Dream, keep pushing through and don’t give up.”

Concluding Questions:

DE: Do you have anything else you'd like to add?

RR: “I also feel that in the times we are living in today I feel that two incomes would be more beneficial than one income when trying to purchase a home and living the American Dream.”