

Student Voices: Freddy Ochoa and Corina Torres

Freddy Ochoa interviews his aunt, Corina Torres.

Author

Freddy Ochoa and Corina Torres

Freddy Ochoa: My name is Freddy Ochoa. I'm doing an interview on my aunt, Corina Torres. I'm doing an interview about her, because she had a big impact on my life and I want to know her better.

Right now I'm going to be asking her the following questions.

So, are you the first generation of our family?

Corina Torres: Yes. I am.

Freddy Ochoa: How does it feel to be the first generation?

Corina Torres: It comes with a big responsibility. So you always feel like you have a lot to prove. You always want to do better and be better. Especially because you know your parents sacrificed so much to be in this country, that in my mentality I was like, I have to do something with my life. I have to achieve more than maybe my parents would have, or any other American is in this country.

Freddy Ochoa: What are the pros and cons of being a first generation in your family?

Corina Torres: The pros is that you get to have maybe more of a, how do I explain it? You get to have more of a life than you would have back in Mexico, because there's more, a better lifestyle, when it comes to lifestyle here versus in Mexico. I know that the reasons my parents decided to emigrate to this country was because they were in search of a better life, meaning that back in Mexico, the opportunities for them to be successful were very few. So that's a pro.

A con is that, in America, you're never quite American and you're not quite Mexican. So there's a different identity for Mexican Americans in the U.S., because you're not fully Mexican and you come to this country with traditions. And then you have to mix them with American traditions. That maybe they don't go very well with your parents, but you're a different generation.

Freddy Ochoa: So did you pass high school?

Corina Torres: Yes. I was the first one in my family actually to graduate high school and actually get accepted to universities and the first one to graduate from a university.

Freddy Ochoa: How does it feel?

Corina Torres: To be the first one to graduate?

Freddy Ochoa: Yeah.

Corina Torres: It feels really good. It feels like, you feel very accomplished, because no one else had in our family. Some cousins had, but not in my immediate family. I have two older brothers and they didn't graduate. They took a different route. But for me, it was like a sort of, "Here Mom. I did it. I did it for you. Your sacrifices haven't been in vain." You know. Plus it's always rewarding to be educated and not just be one of the more lesser educated people in the world.

Freddy Ochoa: What did you strive for? Success, education?

Corina Torres: Both. When I was growing up and I was a kid and I would see my mom struggle so much, I always wanted to have that safety net that we call it, that it's like being financially secure enough. Be successful means, it comes with financial security. And I knew that the only way to achieve that was through education. Because I wasn't like a sports person, I can't sing or dance. I knew that education was the way to actually do better, be better. And be able to provide, even more for my kids at one point, provide more for my mom and for just my family in general.

Freddy Ochoa: Why are you the only child in your family that graduated?

Corina Torres: That's a hard one. I have two older brothers. And they decided to go a different route. They got into the wrong crowds with the wrong people. And I think it has to do a lot with the fact that, you're fighting being American and you're fighting being Mexican. And then, coming from a broken home, they went a different route and they just went to not wanting to finish school or do anything productive with their life.

So, that's another thing that pushed me to be successful. Because my mom had struggled so much. And I had seen her struggle so much with my older brothers that I didn't want her to do that with me.

Freddy Ochoa: Did your brothers have a negative effect in your life? Or beneficial?

Corina Torres: Both. They were kind of like the "what not to do" in my life. It's like, if I saw that they did certain things when I was little, it was like, I chose to remove myself from certain situations and [not] follow that pattern that they had done. And based on that, it gave me success, because if I went the other route that they didn't, it got me to where I am now. So they were, in a way, an inspiration of what not to do in my life, because I learned from their mistakes. I was able to see what they were experiencing and what not to do, because I didn't want to end up like that, or I didn't want to end up in juvenile hall. I didn't want to end up in jail. I didn't want that for my life.

So they were negative and positives to having older brothers that were not doing so well.

Freddy Ochoa: How would you describe your culture?

Corina Torres: We are loud. We are funny. Probably most cultures can say the same thing about their culture, but we're very family oriented. We love our gatherings and it's all surrounded and it all involves food. You have the older aunts that always try to tell you what's wrong, how to do things. And then you have the younger generation always trying to challenge that norm. It's a culture of old and new mixing together. So it's always interesting. But it's fun.

Source

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