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Cecilio's Journey

My dad always pushes me to work harder when I work for him; I always find it stressful, but every time he does, it reminds me of the stories and experiences he went through just to get an opportunity for a much better life him and his family here in this country in which I was born. So, I think of that at moments where I feel I want to give up, and I try to honor his work ethic and the sacrifices he made for us and his family.

Cecilio was born on a ranch in Rio Verde, San Luis Potosi, Mexico, which is in the central part of Mexico, the region is hot and dry with very little rain. He grew up poor with a family of ten and lived in a broken-down house with little to no roof over their head; he and his family were not in a great position, nor did they have the things I have today. He told me about his experiences: his family only ate beans and rice because they were too poor to afford tortillas and meat. It was hard, but Cecilio was determined and hardworking; he wanted to make his family happy. Because he was the oldest, he knew he had to be a role model, setting an example for his siblings. They looked up to him for guidance and reassurance.

Often, he and his family had to hustle for money. They watched their neighbors' kids, washed dishes, sold refreshments like fruit, potato chips, and popcorn like street vendors today with their little cart of snacks. Cecilio, his siblings, and father knew that they could not sit around

all day, do nothing, and beg people for money. They had to work for it, and eventually, their challenging work paid off. Their hustle with their father while their mother stayed home to watch the house and their younger siblings turned into more food, furniture, clothes, school materials, and even a new house and all the necessities their family needed. Everyone in the family was thankful for Cecilio for convincing, motivating, and improving their family's future by his determination and work ethic.

But Cecilio was ambitious. He wanted more. He was 18 years old and coming into his manhood. He not only wanted a better life for himself but also his family. The thought of Cecilio and his older siblings immigrating to the United States for a better opportunity persisted in his mind. After some thorough thinking, he shared the idea with his family and came up to the conclusion to make it a reality. They packed their belongings and jugs of water; then they said their sad, final goodbyes to their mother, father, siblings, friends, neighbors, and everyone who wanted to see them succeed. Finally, after saying their goodbyes to everyone, they went to the nearest bus stop and took the bus to Laredo, near the border of the United States. It took them two days to get there, and once they arrived; they had no idea they needed documentation to get across the borders. Cecilio and his siblings decided to cross the Rio Grande at night and take a bus to San Antonio. They took immeasurable chances, and their lives changed forever.

Today, Cecilio has been self-employed for the past two decades; he hires other immigrants who remind him where he was years ago. On the weekends, he takes me to work with him to show me how having an excellent work ethic pays off; he reminds me of the sacrifices he has made to get here and tells me it was worth all the blood, sweat, and tears.

If I had not inherited his work ethic, I do not think I would be as work driven as I am today. So, I thank him deeply for telling me about his experiences and the sacrifices he made on his journey to becoming a successful, hardworking Dad.