



TRANSCRIPTS



VOLUME FOUR: EPISODES 10-12 • SPRING 2021





**EPISODE #10 — BLANCA
FROM GUATEMALA**

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**EPISODE #11 — SOE SOE
FROM MYANMAR (BURMA)**

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**EPISODE #12 — ADRIANE
FROM BRAZIL**

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EPISODE #10— BLANCA FROM GUATEMALA

GUEST INTRO/00:39

In a search for a better life and to escape violence and the oppression she felt as a young woman in Guatemala, Blanca and her husband decided to pursue the American dream. They left two young children in the care of her mother-in-law and started out for this country on January first 14 years ago. After many delays in Mexico and a loss of money spent on disappearing smugglers, they made it across the border two months later. Unable to speak English, devoid of friends and family, they made a humble beginning. Blanca took on three housecleaning jobs working from 8 a.m. to midnight and her husband found work in construction. After eight years working for others, all the while trying to improve her English, Blanca started her own cleaning company. She now employs two other workers. Never forgetting her humble beginnings, Blanca hopes to expand her staff by offering a helping hand to newly arriving immigrants in search of work. This recording took place first as an initial phone conversation about the coronavirus followed a few days later as a regular podcast episode.

PANDEMIC DAYS/02:23

DEBORAH:

Can you tell me? How's your life different? Just talk to me.

BLANCA:

It's stressing. It's difficult. Stressing and it's a bad, bad time.

DEBORAH:

Really? Are you able to do any work or you staying home?

BLANCA:

No. I stay home. I work two days a week but

it's not homes, it's small apartments. But the people go out maybe four or five hours, you know, and I clean the apartment. But I wanna use gloves. I wanna use a mask. And every time I need to change my gloves.

DEBORAH:

Right.

BLANCA:

It's not easy. It's not easy, Deborah.

DEBORAH:

Very stressful, huh?

BLANCA:

There were very stressful, stressed, very stressed because I didn't know. I work every day.

DEBORAH:

Still.

BLANCA:

Saturday and Sunday. Yeah. And I stay home for almost for three weeks.

DEBORAH:

Wow. That's hard.

BLANCA:

That's no good. My son too. And my husband. That the good thing is I will try to stay with my family together. I will try to play cards or cook. Oh!

DEBORAH:

Do you have enough food?

BLANCA:

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I wanna food. Rice, beans, milk, eggs. Then I watch the news and say ah maybe they're gonna close the Stop and Shop they want to close everyplace. Star Market, Basket Market. I don't know. It's not closed, but sometimes I went to the Stop and Shop or different place because I need alcohol for disinfectant and Clorox something with Clorox but I find nothing in the stores, Deborah.

DEBORAH:

The shelves are empty.

BLANCA:

I know.

DEBORAH:

Are you losing money?

BLANCA:

Yeah. I am losing money. I've had to stop sending money to my mom in Guatemala, and to my daughter too. Because the place when I go to send the money is closed. I'm not working. My son is not working. My husband is not working.

DEBORAH:

It's so hard.

BLANCA:

I know. I know. My brother lives upstairs with me and he have depression because he has almost one month that he's not working. And he has multiple sclerosis.

DEBORAH:

Oh no!

BLANCA:

Yeah. And he have very depression. And the wife is pregnant. She works in the Cheese-cake Factory.

DEBORAH:

Is that closed or just take out?

BLANCA:

She works two days a week but only making food to go. People can't go to the restaurant to sit and to eat. Only for to go. But my brother not work any days.

DEBORAH:

Okay. Well thank you for sharing what's going on for you in this terrible time. I know you're a very strong person. You've been through a lot, so we're gonna get through this and I will talk to you much more on Thursday.

SEEKING BETTER LIFE/06:08

A few days later, we started our official Immigrant Voices Podcast interview with Blanca.

DEBORAH:

So my guest for the immigrant voices project podcast project today is Blanca and she is from Guatemala. Tell me, tell me, Blanca, what are the main things I want to know

are what you left behind? What was the hard thing about coming to this country? What were your struggles and successes? And what are your dreams for the future? Okay? I'm listening.

BLANCA:

I come in to my country because in Guatemala is difficult especially for the woman. I stay in this country for, uh, almost 15 years.

DEBORAH:

Were you married before you came here?

BLANCA:

Yeah. Yeah. I married and I one or two kids. And, my daughter is how old when I come to this country. My daughter has four years old and my son I have a two years old. This is difficult part for me because, it's, it's very, very difficult for any mother when, you know my son is in Guatemala and me is in this country, but oh my God. It's not easy.

DEBORAH:

So did you have to leave them behind when they were four and two? Or did you bring them with you?

BLANCA:

No, I leave behind.

DEBORAH:

Oh. That must have been so hard.

FINDING WORK/08:08

BLANCA:

I know. I know and they were living with my mother-in-law. And I wanna start to work here and I gonna send money, but it's not easy because when I arrived to this country the difficult for us is that you know not that language because I don't have speak English nothing. And I want to start to work to clean a house, but I know alone I want to work for the other company and, it's not too good because work two days a week and much money. I started to clean the house, but I working only maybe for three months because I work only two days a week and later I want to start to work in a hospital to a housekeeper and that work Monday to Saturday. And I one at work to eight o'clock to four o'clock. I have another work, but it's not full-time only part-time I want to work in a big company to uh, same, uh, housekeeping same work to housekeeping.

DEBORAH:

So you had two jobs, two jobs?

BLANCA:

Three jobs!

DEBORAH:

What's the third job?

BLANCA:

Same housekeeping, but I will not work in the and I when I worked my part-time uh, 10 o'clock, I went to uh went to another work for two hour more. And but I want to finish at 12 o'clock midnight.

DEBORAH:

Oh my goodness. So you were working from eight in the morning until midnight?

BLANCA:

Yes. Yeah.

DEBORAH:

And how long did you keep that up?

BLANCA:

Whoa. Eight years.

STARTING A BUSINESS/10:14

DEBORAH:

Eight years! When did you decide to go out on your own, have your own cleaning company?

BLANCA:

My husband worked to construction. And when he finished the construction, the people say, "Oh, you no have a people to clean the house or apartment?" And he say, "Yes, one lady." I want to start for two apartment.

DEBORAH:

That's how you started. And how many years ago was that?

BLANCA:

Six years ago.

DEBORAH:

So you've been on your own, your own company for six years.

BLANCA:

Si, for six. Yeah. But when I started, I have a only two houses and I work alone, but the step to a step, when one uh maybe in the second year the work is uh more and more and more. Now it's have I worked at three lady with me, but now I want to stop because for that you know?

DEBORAH:

Because of the virus?

BLANCA:

Virus, yeah.

STRUGGLES/11:35

DEBORAH:

What was the hardest thing about for you coming to the United States? I know you said you couldn't speak any English. You left your children behind, but when you got here what was the hardest thing after you got here?

BLANCA:

Uh, many things. The more difficult was my kids, so four and two years old. And I remember I crying, crying for my, for my son. And uh. Oh.

DEBORAH:

Did they come to this country eventually?

BLANCA:

No. Yeah.

DEBORAH:

When did they come?

BLANCA:

My son came in 2009. And my daughter stayed in Guatemala.

DEBORAH:

Oh, your daughter's still in Guatemala?

BLANCA:

Yeah.

DEBORAH:

But your son is here. That's good.

BLANCA:

Yeah, my son is here. And my daughter comes every year but she's still a student for a medicine, she's a doctor.

GOODIES FROM HOME/12:45

DEBORAH:

Did you ever bring some object with you from Guatemala that you still have today? Some small object or something that you brought with you that you still have?

BLANCA:

Yeah. Yeah. My mom sent to me something for my country.

DEBORAH:

What did she send you?

BLANCA:

She sent to me food because you know uh the food in this country years ago I don't like. For example, I don't like hamburger or pizza. And then she sent to me some Guatemalan food.

DEBORAH:

Oh nice. Name some of the foods that she sent.

BLANCA:

She sent for example candies or my mama made for me—it's Spanish *dolce de leche* and *conserva de coco*. Yeah. And sometimes she sent to me clothes for example sweaters she made.

DEBORAH:

Do you communicate with your mother through the computer or FaceTime time on the phone?

BLANCA:

No, no Deborah because my mother live in a village.

DEBORAH:

In the village. Okay.

BLANCA:

Yeah. And I don't have internet. I only call and texting for WhatsApp and a call or you speak only look face-to-face.

DEBORAH:

Yes. How often do you talk to her?

BLANCA:

Every night. For example, during this time I call every day and every night because my mother and father are scared about this difficult time. Because in Guatemala coronavirus.

DEBORAH:

The coronavirus is there too?

BLANCA:

Yeah.

DEBORAH:

Oh dear.

BLANCA:

I'm scared for my daddy because he has problems with his pancreas.

DEBORAH:

Oh, his pancreas.

BLANCA:

Yeah.

DEBORAH:

They're staying in the house all the time?

BLANCA:

Yeah.

HINDSIGHT/15:13

DEBORAH:

So based on your experience and what you've learned since you've been here, what thing do you wish you could have changed before you came to the States? If you could have changed something. What would it have been?

BLANCA:

Many things.

DEBORAH:

What comes to your mind?

BLANCA:

Many things. For example, the language. I want to continue to speak more English. The food, the friends. When I came to this country I didn't have many friends.

DEBORAH:

But that changed.

BLANCA:

Yeah.

DEBORAH:

Now you have, you have a lot.

BLANCA:

When I came to this country not too much friend. Now I speak a little English communication with other people for example, American people or different kind of people. You know for example now I say, "Hi! How are you?"

DEBORAH:

You have more confidence now.

BLANCA:

Yeah.

SUCCESSSES/16:28

DEBORAH:

You've had some successes. Tell me about some of the things you're proud of that

have happened to you or that you've made happen to you since you've been here. What makes you proud?

BLANCA:

My English. My English and my work because you know now I want to work alone. I don't wanna work for another company I want to work for me. Yeah and I try to open a company, but then this time is difficult because yeah. I don't know if he for example loss a house or apartment. When I back to home to clean a house. I don't know.

DEBORAH:

You don't know how many customers you're going to have.

BLANCA:

Exactly. Yeah, exactly. I don't know. It's just scary with this planning for the future. Not uh taking more house or apartment. I wanna take maybe another lady worked for me but I dunno.

DEBORAH:

So what do you do to calm yourself down? And during this time what, what calms you down?

BLANCA:

I don't know, Deborah. I don't know if it's it's difficult because.

FUTURE HOPES/18:00

DEBORAH:

You're discouraged, uh. Well, when you think, when we think about this virus getting finishing and things, getting close to normal again what are some of the dreams the hopes you have for your life?

BLANCA:

I continue work. Take maybe the same house in the apartment, but I'm a scary with it because I don't know. I see people I told my house or apartment for cleaning because a lot of people may be lose their working. And I don't know if I want to continue cleaning with another lady. Maybe I want to clean alone. Not with another lady. And uh, so.

DEBORAH:

Yeah, this is definitely a difficult time. When things were kind of smooth and not so difficult. Did you have any hobbies, things you like to do? Some kind of craft or reading or music or dancing, or what are the things you like to do?

ONLINE ESL/19:21

BLANCA:

I like reading. I like to dancing. I like to practice my English. For example with Erica I want to call last week. I look at the faces on Zoom. Six people with Erica and Michelle.

DEBORAH:

Are you going to classes online in the Zoom room?

BLANCA:

It's good. It's a little crazy because everyone is speaking at the same time. Oh could you speak one by one because if you speak at the same time it's no good. I like to practice English and you know . . . I don't know Deborah.

DEBORAH:

I know you've been through some medical problems, but are you feeling okay now?

BLANCA:

Uh, so, so. I wanna you know every day I'll take my medicine and I want to try to not stay too stressing because this is not good for me.

CHOOSING THE U.S./20:52

DEBORAH:

What do you like about living in the United States over when you were living in Guatemala? What is better for you in the United States?

BLANCA:

Because it's safe. That's the reason I came to this country to feel safe. In Guatemala it was very dangerous. This country is safe. That's the reason I love this country.

DEBORAH:

Was your journey getting here difficult?

BLANCA:

Yup.

DEBORAH:

Can you talk about it a little bit?

BLANCA:

For example, maybe seven or eight years ago I didn't have any work because the company I worked for American Cleaning closed. I didn't work for about six months. It was very difficult for me because I wanted to send money to my family in Guatemala. This time is so difficult for me. And the oth-

er things that is bad is the immigration.

DEBORAH:

Oh immigration.

BLANCA:

Yeah. You said that's, it's very difficult for me many people. Not only for me but for many people in this country.

DEBORAH:

I know. I know.

BLANCA:

I know it's difficult for everybody around the world. Exactly. Right, exactly. Around the world.

JOURNEY NOTES/22:54

DEBORAH:

I did ask you about when you came to the United States. Was the journey coming here from Guatemala difficult? What, what were the, some of the difficulties that you encountered?

BLANCA:

Um, I don't understand much this question.

DEBORAH:

Your trip from Guatemala to the U. S.

BLANCA:

Ooh.

DEBORAH:

Was that hard?

BLANCA:

Very hard.

DEBORAH:

Why?

BLANCA:

Because I came to Mexico.

DEBORAH:

Okay.

BLANCA:

And um you know I came to Guatemala on January first and come to this country March first.

DEBORAH:

Oh, so you left Guatemala January first and then you didn't get here until March first. It took you that long. What year was that?

BLANCA:

Almost 14 years ago. I don't remember what year.

DEBORAH:

Fourteen years ago. So the trip, was it dangerous?

BLANCA:

Yeah. Very danger.

DEBORAH:

What made it dangerous?

BLANCA:

Mexico because you know the people in bring the money because I come with my father and another friend and the people in Mexico uh you know bring my money and you know I don't know where's the people and other days. I looking for the people the people the people you know the people I don't know where.

DEBORAH:

Oh, you paid money to come here and then they disappeared. They took your money.

BLANCA:

Yes.

DEBORAH:

Oh dear.

BLANCA:

That's the reason why I stay a long time in Mexico.

DEBORAH:

I see. How did you finally make it here?

BLANCA:

Family you know living in the United States send the money to.

DEBORAH:

To help you come the rest of the way. So that was a family that you knew from Guatemala or?

BLANCA:

No. In the United States.

DEBORAH:

How did they find you?

BLANCA:

Well yeah. I'm not sure. I want to look in for another person to um to uh I dunno cross the border. Um, yeah.

HELPING OTHERS/25:54

DEBORAH:

Is there anything else you want to tell me about your experience either coming here, living here, about the future, or something that would help another immigrant hearing your story? What would you tell them to encourage them or discourage them or give them. What advice would you give?

BLANCA:

I want to love this country, Deborah. I want to come to this country. This country help everybody. This country supports different people, for example, Chinese people, different immigrant. And I have so proud this this country this United States, but I don't know what my planning is. Take more, more work to help another people. Maybe work two more people you know for example people can't—you know the caravan yeah. That people a lot of people this country looking for work.

DEBORAH:

Right.

BLANCA:

Then my plan is you know take more and more and more house or apartment to support that another ladies. The ladies came to this country I had to Salvador or Guatemala I don't know English, um, you know, um. It's not good because they are coming to this country because in their country is not safe at this time. Because it's not good. Um, the reason I want to try to take more apartment in a house or office or I don't know, uh, for help another ladies.

DEBORAH:

So are you saying that you want to help the newer immigrants by being able to give them work or give them a place to live?

BLANCA:

No. More work.

WRAPPING UP/28:23

DEBORAH:

Blanca, thank you so much for chatting with me. I really appreciate your sharing your experience with me today. Thank you so much.

BLANCA:

Thank you Deborah.

DEBORAH:

Bye.

BLANCA:

Bye.

Blanca's enthusiasm for learning English and starting her own business has certainly been hampered by the pandemic yet she attends Zoom ESL classes and thinks about ways she can help her fellow immigrants. A grateful resident of this country she is proud of the life she and her family have created. Blanca is a vibrant member of the Gardner Pilot Academy family and we are inspired by her resilience and positive presence.



EPISODE #11— SOE SOE FROM MYANMAR (BURMA)

GUEST INTRO/00:39

When the events of 9/11, 2001 caused the U.S. to cancel all visas to Myanmar, Soe Soe reapplied. Her urgent goal was to come to Boston to join family members already settled in the States. She needed to help her ailing father and give her younger sister a hand with the care of her first born child. In 2002, Soe Soe succeeded and traveled here with an older sister whose hearing impairment prevented her from getting work. Not only did Soe Soe become a major caretaker for her family in her new country, but she also worked three part-time jobs outside her home. Eventually she began to learn English and through a fortuitous connection with a new friend from Burma, Soe Soe parlayed her Burmese University training as an accountant into a job at a Boston bank where she still works today. Naturalized as a U.S. citizen in 2008, she has returned to her native country numerous times to connect with the relatives she left behind.

GETTING TO THE U.S./02:06

DEBORAH:

My guest is Soe Soe from Myanmar and you came to the United States in 2002.

SOE SOE:
2002.

DEBORAH:

So tell me your story the best you can.

SOE SOE:

When I came in my daddy was sick. He have cancer. That's why I have to come in to help. My daddy was here with my younger sister.

DEBORAH:

Where were they in the United States?

SOE SOE:

In the Boston and Brighton too.

DEBORAH:

Oh. Okay.

SOE SOE:

Yeah. And then he lived with my youngest sister, Emily and then when I come in, I have another sister. With other sister, we came in to the United States.

DEBORAH:

Okay. So how many sisters were there?

SOE SOE:

We have a four sister, three sister. And now it's three sisters in United States. And then one in Burma.

DEBORAH:

Was it hard to make the trip here to take care of your father? Did you have any problems getting to the United States, getting a visa or whatever?

SOE SOE:

Oh yeah. I started in my country. It was very difficult to come in because the time was 9/11 you know, the time is 2001 9/11.

DEBORAH:

Was it after 9/11?

SOE SOE:

Yeah, after 9/11 we almost got a visa. After 9/11 had a problem in here. And all the visas got cancelled. It's harder over there so we had to restart again in my country. And then another time I get a visa is 2002. I got another one. Visa.

DEBORAH:

A year later.

SOE SOE:

Yeah. A year later. Yeah. 2002. And then 2001, my sister has a baby first baby in here the States. My sister and my daddy stay in here. And then she has family. And then she have a baby and then she have her daddy our daddy is a sick. And then she got a very

difficult time for her. And then we didn't get the visa yet.

DEBORAH:

Oh. So they were waiting for you to come. And you were still waiting for your visa?

SOE SOE:

Yeah, we are very hard to get it. And then 2002 we got here. And then I came with another sister. She is deaf. She is like a deaf. Not, it's not she doesn't know English. She doesn't speak English and then she cannot work. She stays home.

DEBORAH:

And what about you? Had you studied English before you came here?

SOE SOE:

Oh, in my country, I get a graduate in my country. That's how I can work in my company. And I was working there in my country. First university and then in my company. Yeah, I did it, but my sister is that when she was young she is like not normal and then she cannot understand. And then she deaf she cannot hear.

DEBORAH:

Are you saying you, your sister couldn't hear, she was hard of hearing?

SOE SOE:

Yeah.

DEBORAH:

Oh, so that made it so hard for the language.

WORK LIFE BEGINS/05:40

SOE SOE:

I came in with her and then I came the United States. I get here and then I start working the Star Market.

DEBORAH:

What did you do at the Star Market?

SOE SOE:

I doing the cashier, but I'm not English, but I could have graduated in my country. But in my language. I'm not used to English. And then I have a very difficult for everything. When I get here. I'm doing the

cashier. Then my sister stay home. Help my daddy, and then help my other sister's baby. She take care for that baby, but with my daddy, but he still sick. And then 2005, my daddy passed away.

DEBORAH:

That must have been so hard for your family.

SOE SOE:

Yeah. . . but we stayed with we stayed with the family.

DEBORAH:

And what did you do to get by? In terms of your broken heart about it?

SOE SOE:

Yeah. . . it's hard.

DEBORAH:

And you kept working at the Star Market?

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS/07:02

SOE SOE:

I got lucky. My. . . yeah. I still work in the Star Market. And then I looking for another job too, they look at it's not full-time job you know part time job. That's why I need to benefit. Then I need for me, but my sister has MassHealth my other sister, she is older sister. Disability ladies. I don't need to worry about her because the government take care for that. And then I still look for that other job, but I didn't get a full time job. But I got another job is part time.

DEBORAH:

Another part-time job. And what, what was that? What were you doing?

SOE SOE:

That one was cashier too, because I'm doing the Star Market. I need more money because I working hard you know. It's hard. But I still going to school. That time is I'm going to the Jackson Mann school. Jackson Mann school had that ESL class.

DEBORAH:

Oh, ESL class.

SOE SOE:

Yeah ESL class.

DEBORAH:

In Cambridge?

SOE SOE:

Yeah. That one is Cambridge or Brighton.

I didn't know that. I'm not really, but yeah, I get in there. Then one of my customers in the Star Market. And then one lady. She is Burmese too. She comes from Burma. I never seen it. I would never met her in my country. I never see. I never when I get here I never met her too. I saw her in the Star Market. She bought her groceries and then she always come to see me, and then she talking with me and I. One day she keep coming and then, cause I didn't notice that she was looking for an employer, employee, right.

DEBORAH:

Oh.

SOE SOE:

Employee. She is a supervisor. I don't know her, but I just talking and then she is. She is gentle lady that we talking about my language or work related, where you come from. What city in your country there. You keep asking that I didn't know how to she, and I never met her in my country and here too. I met her in the Star Market. She saw me. And then she keeps saying that one day she came in and then, "Are you interesting for the bank teller or something?" she asking me.

DEBORAH:

What did you say?

SOE SOE:

"Of course, of course," I sound like that. "I am really interested." And then, if can help you, then she said that to me, and then if you want it, and then I come to pick up the application. That time is we don't do the internet. I don't have a computer. Yeah. I don't, she said that, "Come to pick up that application and then you write down the application. You fill it out that get to me that," she says. "I'm not sure you got it or not. I'm not sure," she said like that's okay. And then thank you for your help. And then she really helped me. Then she, she gives to me application. I applied for that and then I drop it right away for her. And then when I come back, they have, they call me and then they want me to interview. But that time is my English not, it's not really good to know, just like us right now because I'm scary, shy to talking English. Now is more good to talk.

DEBORAH:

But you showed up, you showed up for the

interview. How did the interview go?

SOE SOE:

And then interview. Because I working two jobs right?

DEBORAH:

Yes.

SOE SOE:

The Star Market and Target. I get an interview and then. The thing is they are not hiring for family. Family they are not hiring. Then they first asking me that lady and you are family or not because of the same country we are language is same. I said, "No, never met in Burma and I met her here in Star Market and I'm like I didn't never know. I know about one lady in country, one lady, lady work at that. And then I know of that one already. I don't know who, I don't know where she is living. I don't know her." And then I said like that, "Okay, you are not related, that's good. Oh, which job you quit, you cannot work in three jobs." They say that. Which one you want to quit the job? And then I say okay. Star Market is very close to my house my apartment. That's why I quit Target. I said like that. Okay. And then the interview they not asking about too much. And then they asked about the that lady is a relative or not, and then we stopped and then you went to pick it. You still can do job or you want to work. And only my job I still look two jobs. I felt like that if you hiring me then I will quit one job. And then I said like that.

DEBORAH:

So did they offer you a full-time job?

SOE SOE:

Yeah, they offered me a full time job. I'm really happy for that.

DEBORAH:

How long have you been working there?

SOE SOE:

I get in 2007.

DEBORAH:

You're still there?

SOE SOE:

My father passed away 2005, 2006, and then 2007 is I still work in Star Market and Target two jobs. And then I have to wait a one month. They said that we have to check up background. They said that to me. We

check background already and then we call you and then they say that. Okay. I waiting, waiting, waiting for job. Then they didn't call me for months. Wait, I thought they were not calling me. They're not taking me because I don't know English well enough. Well, that's why I thought I my mind is like that too. My English is no good. They didn't call me and then I didn't get a certificate in nothing here. I don't have the certificate in that I got from graduation in my country. And here is nothing certificate. You know.

DEBORAH:

What kind of work did you do in your country when you graduated in your country?

SOE SOE:

I got accounting too.

DEBORAH:

Oh, so you have accounting background.

SOE SOE:

Yeah, I get it.

DEBORAH:

So the bank liked that, huh?

SOE SOE:

Yeah. After they hired me they really like me because I'm working hard. And then, then you know I working there and then they look at me and then how I working, but English is not really good yet then. They liked I working hard. That's why.

DEBORAH:

Yes.

SOE SOE:

Whatever they teach me I got easy how to do that. And then I get it that.

DEBORAH:

You're a quick learner. A quick study. Good.

SOE SOE:

Yeah, I get it quick, I am quick learner.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/15:02

DEBORAH:

So, what are you most proud of since you've been here? What things are, do you feel the most proud of your victories, your accomplishments?

SOE SOE:

I'm not really proud on my self. I don't I don't have enough yet.

DEBORAH:

Getting that job. A full-time job at a bank is wonderful.

SOE SOE:

Yeah. Well, I'm happy for that. I'm really happy. And I appreciate from my co- my friend, right. She referred for me and then that. And then I still work in Star Market and bank. Two jobs still working.

DEBORAH:

Oh you do, still?

SOE SOE:

And then, our apartment is low income apartment in the Charlesview Apartments. Do you know that? Right?

DEBORAH:

Oh, okay.

SOE SOE:

Because of my sister is a disability. That's why we have a low income, but I working two jobs you know. My rent is going high.

PANDEMIC DAYS/16:10

DEBORAH:

So what's happening now with the coronavirus?

SOE SOE:

Coronavirus is really crazy for scary and then yeah.

DEBORAH:

Are you staying home? Are you are you working? Tell me what's happening for you.

SOE SOE:

I working. And then I work in the bank. The bank is not closed.

DEBORAH:

Okay. And do you wear a mask?

SOE SOE:

I wear when I'm going to work I wear then. But the bank is not closed, but our branch is drive through only. Drive through only. Then drive through. They can cash it. And the deposits. We can do that drive through and then not in the lobby. The lobby is closed. And then now is we have a special is every once, three days a week we have to work.

DEBORAH:

Okay. So is this giving you financial hardship?

SOE SOE:

Yeah, three day for 20 hours, while we working that they pay a full-time 40 hour.

DEBORAH:

Oh, they're paying you for full time.

SOE SOE:

Full-time but we have to work only 20 hours.

DEBORAH:

Oh, that's a good, that's pretty good.

SOE SOE:

Yeah, that is good. Yeah. Good for that. Yeah.

THE HARDEST THING/17:35

DEBORAH:

What's the hardest thing for you coming to this country and leaving Burma behind?

SOE SOE:

Because hard thing is no and no understanding and then no English words. Well, that is a really hard, still hard for me. Now I cannot do the drive-thru.

DEBORAH:

What do you miss from Myanmar? From Burma?

SOE SOE:

I miss my sister. When we got here and then my daddy applied for her. For her family have to come in, she have a husband and son, one son. And then he applied me for my, my daddy applied the for her. Now we have a waiting list, long time. And then my daddy, is he applied for all orderly, and then she's still waiting, but we got it here. And then we'll come here. Then my family still in Burma. She's still waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting. And then my daddy is passed away.

DEBORAH:

Right.

SOE SOE:

She's still waiting. And that 2006. My daddy passed away in 2005 January, and then we get my, my daddy applying for her paper-work is that we accept it 2005 December.

DEBORAH:

And you're still waiting.

SOE SOE:

My sister still waiting. And then paper com-

ment is 2005 December. My daddy passed away in 2005, January, and then my daddy is a sponsor. Right. But my daddy passed away. They got a paperwork.

DEBORAH:

So can you be her sponsor?

SOE SOE:

I cannot do that. I tried it and then I, I get a wrong lawyer or something like that. I did it. We did not joint. I try not to, try to be a co-sponsor for her, but he cannot sign it. Do you have my daddy's signature.

DEBORAH:

Do you have a green card?

SOE SOE:

I have a citizen.

DEBORAH:

When did you become a citizen?

SOE SOE:

2008. Oh, I forgot it. I pass it.

DEBORAH:

That's something to be proud of. No?

SOE SOE:

Yeah. I'm so proud of about 2008. Yeah, I get a citizen. American citizen.

DEBORAH:

Good for you.

SOE SOE:

Yeah.

DEBORAH:

That's great.

SOE SOE:

Yeah.

THINGS FROM BURMA/20:10

DEBORAH:

So, what else can you tell me? Is there some little object or something that you brought with you from Burma that you've always had with you? Maybe something you carry in your pocket book, maybe some piece of jewelry or some, something from?

SOE SOE:

Yeah, I have, I have like jewelry too.

DEBORAH:

What did you bring that you still have?

SOE SOE:

I bring all gold. Gold jewelry. I have a lot of gold. But when we came is not, we cannot bring a lot. And then, but 2002 then 2019 is four times back home four time already back home. I always, I have a chance I'm going back home already. Four time already, because 2009, 2011, 2015. And then 2017. I went back home four time already.

DEBORAH:

Oh, that's great. Because you're a citizen. So you have no problem.

SOE SOE:

Yeah, I am a citizen. Yeah. I a citizen in 2008. And then I went back home in 2009. Right.

ADVICE/21:18

DEBORAH:

What if you were going to give advice to somebody coming to this country for the first time. What, advice? Both cautious. Maybe they have an unrealistic idea about what it's going to be like here. What, what advice would you say?

SOE SOE:

In here? What I like it?

DEBORAH:

What would you tell them? Somebody from coming from your country to give advice to them, what would you say?

SOE SOE:

Every, I don't know in my country. I'm working hard myself in the United States, you know. I get a lot of hard time and then I have a working hard and the language is different. Here is really hard time. But, in my country, when I go there to visit all of them think I come from Heaven.

DEBORAH:

Your people there.

SOE SOE:

I come that from Heaven. It's Heaven.

DEBORAH:

What do you say to them? When you say, you say it's not Heaven.

SOE SOE:

Yeah. They thought my house have a money tree in my house that I said that I have to working hard. Everybody not only me. American people are working hard. But right. Is in there human right is really good.

And then in my country is really. We cannot talk about the government and then we can not talk about the president. We can not complain about anything, anytime that that is a you go to the jail. Any time. That is the problem.

DEBORAH:

So when you go, when you go there for visits, you have to be very careful.

SOE SOE:

Yeah. Yeah. We cannot. Yeah. In my country is like that. It's coffee shop. And then you talk about the government is no good. And then you complain about the government.

DEBORAH:

Who's listening? How do you know somebody is listening?

SOE SOE:

Yeah, we don't know that. We don't know that. We talk about that with our friend. At night you have to go to the jail. You have to go to the jail at night. They come to pick you up at night.

DEBORAH:

Wow.

SOE SOE:

Yeah. Oh, I talking there and all in the morning and then you are in the jail at night and my country is like that. We cannot say nothing for, one of my, my second cousin, he draw, he is a cartoonist.

DEBORAH:

Oh, a cartoonist.

SOE SOE:

Yeah. He draw for the government picture and then like a, like a crazy government picture and then he draw it and he go to the jail.

DEBORAH:

Did they arrest him?

SOE SOE:

Yeah.

DEBORAH:

Is he still in prison?

SOE SOE:

He is outside right now. He was in 1988. He have in jail in 1988. Nineteen eighty eight is the very hardest time in my country.

DEBORAH:

But that wasn't why you came, you came here because of your father's illness, right?

SOE SOE:

Yeah. When I came here my daddy is really sick. And then my, my sister have a baby at the same time. It's a difficult for them, you know, difficult for and but we have a plan for to come in. We have a visa. Is that time is good in that I'm not thinking about anything. Okay. I have to come in with my sister has been at.

DEBORAH:

Yeah. But then 9/11 happened and it lost a year. You lost a year.

SOE SOE:

Yeah. I waiting for not full a year. Tell me it's over.

DREAMS/25:20

DEBORAH:

So tell me, Soe Soe, what are your dreams about the future? Do you have any dreams about the future?

SOE SOE:

I want to own the house.

DEBORAH:

That's a good one. Do you have a family? Are you are you married? Do you have children?

SOE SOE:

I'm not. I don't have a kid. I don't have a marry. And then I have to do my side is hard. Yeah, I buy them myself. My sister stayed with my sister and she cannot working, but the government's supposed to have, but my rent is my rent is not really bad. Yeah. No it's income. Yeah. Low income.

WRAPPING UP/26:04

DEBORAH:

All right. Do you have any questions you want to ask me?

SOE SOE:

No. You have a question and then I want to answer that it.

DEBORAH:

Yeah. But I like what you said about when you go to Myanmar they think that you come from Heaven and that you have a money tree in your house.

SOE SOE:

Yeah.

DEBORAH:

They don't know how hard you worked.

SOE SOE:

Yeah. They don't know I'm a really hard, but they don't like that. Yeah. Not in my my family in my relatives, but in the airport, we've got an airport and then somebody delivery for the luggage to our car and then a base men they carry for that. We have to pay money. They look at it in there. Name tag. Right? We have a luggage and my name tag on that. And then my name is Soe Soe Mar. I come from addresses. One week the luggage was missing and then when we get at it that's why we have to write down the address. The carrier said, "Oh," but the carrier. Yeah. "Oh, she comes up from United States. The United States. Oh! Oh!" Oh my God. That in the airport. In the airport. Not in my family. Yeah. They don't want me. And then I never met them too. I've come from Heaven.

DEBORAH:

That's so funny. Thank you so so much. I really enjoyed it.

SOE SOE:

Thank you.

DEBORAH:

Thank you so much.

SOE SOE:

Thank you so much. Bye have a nice day. Thank you. Bye.

Soe Soe's resilience in the face of loss of loved ones and her dedication to succeed no matter how hard the task has enabled her to build a life of great purpose and meaning in her new country. When she travels back to her native country of Myanmar, she laughs when strangers see her luggage name tags from the U.S., convinced she must have a money tree growing in her living room. Instead, she tells them hard work and perseverance are what paved the way.



EPISODE #12— ADRIANE FROM BRAZIL

GUEST INTRODUCTION/00:39

With poor job prospects, and feeling unsafe in her native country, Adriane decided to leave Brazil and follow her mother and brother to the States in 2003. Crossing the border from Mexico into Texas proved a challenge, especially the last three days without food and water, a place to sleep, and only a trash bag to keep her dry during a major downpour. Crowded in a van with 11 other Brazilians she made her way to Boston in borrowed men's clothing—her height demanded it—and she fell into the arms of her mother who had sold her car to finance her daughter's trip. A dishwasher by day at Legal Seafoods, Adriane would return at night to clean the restaurant. From there housekeeping jobs began. Today in business for herself, Adriane has more than 30 loyal customers—a thriving business that employs several workers. In 2019 Adriane became a U.S. Citizen and is a proud and grateful American.

COMING TO THE U.S./01:59

DEBORAH:

My guest is Adrian and she is from Brazil, right?

ADRIANE:

Yes.

DEBORAH:

Okay. What year did you come to the States?

ADRIANE:

When?

DEBORAH:

Yes. When was it that you came?

ADRIANE:

September 28, 2003.

DEBORAH:

September 28th, 2003. So tell me a little bit about your journey. What made you decide to come here?

ADRIANE:

My mom, she came first 1998 she was so happy to live here. And then in February of 2003 my brother he came and I was in Brazil. Not a good job. No opportunity to be successful. I decided to ask my mom, so she could help me to come to America and she said OK. She sold her car to help me to come here. So I came from the border. I flew from Brazil to Mexico and I cannot say I had a hard time crossing. But I took 7 days to arrive here.

DEBORAH:

From Mexico.

ADRIANE:

Yes. And four days we had a food and water and then.

DEBORAH:

What happened the last three days?

ADRIANE:

Yes, exactly.

DEBORAH:

Tell me a little bit about it. If you don't mind.

ADRIANE:

Two days before I arrived here, we were in Texas waiting for the van to come take us to Boston. And this house where we was to sleep. Two days before we come to Boston. I think we were about 15 people between Brazilians and Spanish and I arrived on September 28. Was a beautiful day. My mom was here waiting for me and my brother so when I arrived here I was dressed as a man.

DEBORAH:

Really?

ADRIANE:

Because my clothes I changed with another guy because I was so dirty because we were crossing the border.

DEBORAH:

The border.

ADRIANE:

And well that's my story.

DEBORAH:

So you found men's clothing and you are very tall, so I'm sure.

ADRIANE:

Wow. That's so funny. Who gave you that?

DEBORAH:

Who gave you the clothes? The men's clothes?

ADRIANE:

Yeah, this guy was with us. We was a group. He had the extra.

DEBORAH:

Oh, this was the 15 people that were in the van.

ADRIANE:

No, just just 11 in Brazil.

DEBORAH:

Okay. That's still a lot of people in a van.

ADRIANE:

And the van and yeah you can imagine that.

DEBORAH:

Wow. So you, you arrived and your mother saw you and you were dressed like a man.

ADRIANE:

And she laughed, "What's going on with you? Why you look like a man?" Nothing to do. My clothes were so dirty I have to change because I'm tall.

THE HARDEST DAY/06:07

DEBORAH:

Right? Amazing. What was the hardest day from the time you left Brazil to when you got to Boston? Was there one day special? That was just so hard?

ADRIANE:

One day it's so hard. I felt sick. Because we spent so many times lying on the ground and talking. Because there's nothing to do just wait for the right time to cross. This day was so bad for me and in the evening it started to rain. I had a black big plastic bag so I could get in the bag.

DEBORAH:

To stay dry.

ADRIANE:

Yeah, exactly.

DEBORAH:

Well.

ADRIANE:

Yeah. It's terrible day, but I'm here.

DEBORAH:

That's good. That's great that you're here. And you became a citizen. How long did that take to become a U.S. citizen?

BECOMING A CITIZEN/07:16

ADRIANE:

I start my process in 2012, and I got my citizenship last year.

DEBORAH:

Yes, I know. I remember. 2019.

ADRIANE:

Exactly. Yeah.

DEBORAH:

In the fall. Did you have obstacles to keep you from getting your citizenship from 2003 to 2012?

ADRIANE:

Yes.

DEBORAH:

What some of the obstacles?

ADRIANE:

Wow. I think my marriage.

DEBORAH:

Did you get married after you came here or before?

ADRIANE:

Oh, I got married after in 2009. I met my second husband in 2008 and we got a marriage in 2009 and it's not a good marriage, unfortunately.

DEBORAH:

Do you have children?

ADRIANE:

Not with him? Thank you, God. He's American citizen.

DEBORAH:

So being on your own. Were you like a sin-

gle parent here in the States? Like you had children, but no husband?

ADRIANE:

Yeah. Yeah.

DEBORAH:

What was the happiest day so far are that you can remember since you came to the States?

CAREER PATH/08:34

ADRIANE:

I took six months to get a good job. I went to New Jersey. I lived in Newark, New Jersey and I worked in Legal Seafood restaurant. I worked during the day as a dishwasher and at the night cleaning the restaurant.

DEBORAH:

Wow. Long day!

ADRIANE:

Yeah.

DEBORAH:

What brought you to New Jersey?

ADRIANE:

A friend because it was so difficult to find a job. And he was going to New Jersey and he invited me to go with him. My mom went back to Brazil in February and in March I went to New Jersey to start the job there, but I didn't like. I was so tired work. I worked in the morning. And go home sleep and go back to the Legal Seafoods at night to clean. It's really hard.

DEBORAH:

Too much.

ADRIANE:

And then on May I came back with the same guy. He was tired too to stay there. And I came back with him and finally I got a job as a housecleaner.

DEBORAH:

And how long did you do that before you started your own company?

ADRIANE:

I started my own company in 2009. I had two friends. The one friend she was thinking of going back to Brazil. And she said, "I like my customers. Do you want to take them?" So I said "Oh, that's good! I can do that." And she went back to Brazil. I had five customers. I started with five.

DEBORAH:

Pretty good. How many do you have now?

ADRIANE:

Now I have more than 30.

DEBORAH:

Wow. That's amazing.

ADRIANE:

Yeah. And I start with five. It's not the same all the time because some people maybe don't have money so they can't afford and stop the cleaning. Sometimes they move to another state. Things like that happen.

PANDEMIC SLOW DOWN/11:06

DEBORAH:

And what's been happening since the coronavirus outbreak? How has that had an effect on your business?

ADRIANE:

I have really, really nice customers. They are not customers. They are friends. They're really good and I try to do my best. And they help me alot. Most of them work from home and they pay and they can help me and send me the check or cash.

DEBORAH:

Even though you're not actually going to their house and cleaning.

ADRIANE:

Exactly. Yeah. Even I'm not cleaning for them.

DEBORAH:

Good faith, good faith.

ADRIANE:

They send me cards that say, "Oh I miss you." I have a customer she's in Randolph, and she send me a check and a card and says, "Oh, I miss you. And my cats too!" And I say, "Okay, me too."

DEBORAH:

Wow. That's wonderful that you have such dedicated customers. That's, that's great. And that they become your friends. I asked you a question earlier, but you didn't answer it. I asked you what was the happiest day that you can think of.

ADRIANE:

For now what's happened now?

DEBORAH:

Since you came to the States, I'm sure you've had many happy days, but think about maybe one in particular that you can tell me about it. It can have to do with your business. It could have to do with your family. It could have to do with anything.

ADRIANE:

Well that's so many so many days like that.

CHALLENGES/12:54

DEBORAH:

What stands out? Does something pop into your head?

ADRIANE:

I think when I applied for my daughter. I applied together with me. They made a mistake and I had to cancel her application for the green card so I get so mad about that. Because family is a family. And I was expecting to have her with me. This day was terrible. And I think when I lost my mother-in-law three years ago. She was living in New Hampshire. My ex-husband put her in a nursing home and he was in jail. That's why I divorced him.

DEBORAH:

I see.

ADRIANE:

We make a mistake in our lives, so of course we not expect for that. But because some times you don't know each other. He put her in a nursing home and every two weeks I had to go there and pay all the bills, clean the house, visit her in a nursing home. And she passed away three years ago because she got so upset.

DEBORAH:

Were you close with her?

ADRIANE:

Oh yeah. Yeah. Very close.

DEBORAH:

So what happened with your daughter? Were you able to make a new application?

ADRIANE:

Yes, she was supposed to be here almost a month ago. Her flight was canceled for many days. She's in San Paolo right now. She's waiting when the airports can open so she can come. It's crazy.

DEBORAH:

How old is she?

ADRIANE:

She's 26

DEBORAH:

She is 26. So when you left Brazil to come to the States and make your journey, did you leave her behind?

ADRIANE:

Yes. Yes. She was with my, my ex husband and I have a two sons.

DEBORAH:

Wow. How old are your sons?

ADRIANE:

The old one is a 32. The other one is 30 and she is a 26 and I have a grandson eight years old.

DEBORAH:

Oh, wow. So do you go on the computer to see them or do FaceTime with them?

ADRIANE:

Oh yeah. Yeah. I know WhatsApp.

DEBORAH:

That's great. But your daughter, your daughter is coming though. Everything is the application is okay.

ADRIANE:

Yes everything's okay. She had an interview in February and she got a visa when she arrives in here they going to check and how say when it get accustomed?

DEBORAH:

Oh, through customs.

ADRIANE:

Yeah. When she arrived at the airport and they going to check on a computer and see everything's okay. And I have to apply for her green card when she arrived.

DEBORAH:

Now that you're a citizen, you can do that.

ADRIANE:

Yeah.

DEBORAH:

That's great.

ADRIANE:

Yeah. But when she comes here, she comes

with the visa. When, she got here, I have to pay, 2000 or \$2,220. For her green card.

DEBORAH:

Oh, okay.

ADRIANE:

I have to do online.

HAPPY DAYS/17:02

DEBORAH:

So when I asked you the happiest day, were you thinking about the day when she arrives will be the happiest day?

ADRIANE:

Oh yes. When I got my citizenship first when I got my green card and then my citizenship. Now I can see I'm improving my English. I have so many days I can say happy days more than bad days and the sad days. Right?

DEBORAH:

So the good days are outnumbering the bad days.

ADRIANE:

Yes.

DEBORAH:

What are some of your dreams about the future?

ADRIANE:

Now I have to think about my retirement. Oh yeah. I'm so close. I'm 53 now.

DEBORAH:

You're very young. You're young fifty-three.

ADRIANE:

But at 62, I think it. That's retirement, right?

FROM BRAZIL/17:55

DEBORAH:

Well, you can start getting social security because now that you're a citizen, you can. So, did you bring anything with you from Brazil that you still have today? Like, I don't know maybe some little thing. One of the people I talked to brought her doll from when she was five years old. She still has it.

ADRIANE:

Yes I have.

DEBORAH:

What did you bring?

ADRIANE:

I have now? I think I have, yeah, I have four because of I lost one —little rocks, colored rocks.

DEBORAH:

Where did you get those in Brazil? Was it near the water?

ADRIANE:

Yes. Yes. In Brazil.

DEBORAH:

And why are you attached to them? Why did you bring them?

ADRIANE:

Because we were at the church starting to pray. We have some dreams. And we started to pray for our dreams and they was given each Sunday service they were giving one little rock. This could be a dream. And I didn't finish. It was seven Sundays. But I didn't finish because the fifth I came!

DEBORAH:

So you have four rocks or five?

ADRIANE:

I have four but I lost one. And I have them with my stuff.

DEBORAH:

When you think about praying about the future, do you look at the rocks? Do you bring them out?

CHANGE IN PLANS/19:39

ADRIANE:

Yeah. I came to stay just for five years. Sometimes you change your mind.

DEBORAH:

So you were planning to stay here just five years?

ADRIANE:

Yes and I saw more opportunity to stay here and be someone here. Make a difference. I saw the opportunity to be a success here.

DEBORAH:

What are you the most proud of in terms of your successes that you've had? I know you've had a lot of successes, Adrian.

ADRIANE:

Yeah. I'm proud for this opportunity. This nation gave to me. I know I am an immi-

grant but I know I can feel free here because in Brazil it's so dangerous now. We can't walk in the street. We cannot feel safe at home. And here we are more safe. We can work. We can make a difference. I'm so proud to live here. That's why I love to live here. Because I have this opportunity to do something, to get the community. Now I can vote. That's so important.

DEBORAH:

Well, we're certainly proud to have you be an American, which you are a United States citizen. You were an American before, because you were from South America, but this is to be an American citizen. It's, it's wonderful that you feel that way. That pride.

ADRIANE:

Yeah. I'm so proud to be here.

ADVICE/21:39

DEBORAH:

What would you tell somebody who's thinking about coming to this country? What would you say to them for advice, what to do? What not to do?

ADRIANE:

I say the truth. Some people come, just dreaming. They don't know the truth. It's not easy to live here. It's not like in Brazil. Here, the money how can I say, if you don't work, you cannot buy anything. You cannot have nothing. The money how can I say, capitalist nation.

DEBORAH:

Capitalism?

ADRIANE:

Yes that's right. I can tell them, "If you want work you come. If not, you're lazy. You cannot be here."

DEBORAH:

Yeah. If they're lazy, don't bother.

ADRIANE:

Because if you come here you know you have to work hard because we are immigrant and we have opportunity, of course we have. But I cannot have if I'm not legal, the same opportunity the legal American citizen has.

DEBORAH:

But you do now.

ADRIANE:

Now I can. But I say to people, "So, you have to work hard if you. Don't be lazy! Lazy here is not welcome." But it's true.

DEBORAH:

In other words, what you're telling them is if you come to the United States, don't think it's going to be easy. It's not, nobody's going to bring you success on a golden platter. You have to work and you worked plenty hard for it. My goodness. And you continue to.

ADRIANE:

Some people when they get here, they want to start at the top. We have to start down and go up.

DEBORAH:

That's good advice.

ADRIANE:

I start like that down. And now I'm up. And so many people start down and now is up.

DEBORAH:

There's that opportunity to do that.

ADRIANE:

We have so many opportunities here so we have to hug that!

DEBORAH:

Hug it like put your arms around, even though we're not supposed to touch, touch anybody or anything right?

ADRIANE:

Now, we can't.

BEYOND CORONAVIRUS/24:36

DEBORAH:

How do you feel about what's going on with the virus? You think it's going to pass? You think things are going to change? What do you think about it? Are you frightened?

ADRIANE:

Yeah. I believe in God. That's why I know everything's gonna be okay soon. Because it's hard now but it's going to pass and everything's gonna be normal again. So we can be together. Family and co-workers. Friends. We can go out and see the sun and see people. It's really hard now with so many people dying. Oh it's terrible. And stay home! It's terrible because we get so tired to stay home. Right?

DEBORAH:

It's true. And we eat too much.

ADRIANE:

Ah yes, exactly. We're gonna get fat!

DEBORAH:

Well, it's, you're so such an optimist. You, you really have a very positive view and in class you are always smiling and willing to jump in. So I appreciate that. Is there anything you want to ask me about anything?

ADRIANE:

No. Do you have more questions?

DEBORAH:

Well, I want you to send me pictures of your rocks. Will you do that?

ADRIANE:

Yeah.

DEBORAH:

Thank you so much, Adriane.

ADRIANE:

You're welcome.

DEBORAH:

Really lovely talking to you and I hope to talk to you soon. Bye bye.

Adriane takes nothing for granted. First her green card and then her citizenship paved her path to independence. Her positive attitude endeared her to many clients who sustained her during the pandemic lock down when leaving her house to clean for them was out of the question. Still their checks and cash came through the door as a sign of their loyalty and a tribute to Adriane's hard work and commitment to them.



Adriane's spiritual "dream" stones from Brazil. She still uses them today as a way to bolster her courage and determination when dreaming about the future.