

Having the Best of Both Worlds

Introduction

I have lived in India, Chicago, and Dallas, Texas (USA). The shift was in itself very hectic considering the change of schools, friends, communication barriers, and the overall culture shock. At the end of the day, however, the whole experience has been much more exhilarating with the balancing of different lifestyles, traditions, and backgrounds. In this paper, I discuss my experience in both worlds.

The Way There and Back Again

My hometown is in Chicago; I was born and raised here for seven years before my parents decided to move to India. The reason behind the shift was because my father had landed a very lucrative work contract with an NGO in India for 15 years. I have to say, back then, the news that we were shifting did not settle down well with me. I was fidgety and angry at my parents for making me leave my friends and school buddies in Chicago. I believed that that was the end of the road for me, and I would not be able to make new friends in India. I fussed about it all day long but, at the end of the day, we made the shift. At first, I despised the place, the environment, food, and new customs. My parents were worried about this and tried all they could to help me and my siblings adjust to the new culture and lifestyle. It was almost impossible to adapt to the new environment; the dressing, family values, religious beliefs, gender orientation, and even the education system was all new and strange to all of us. Unlike the U.S., India's way of life was much more traditional, restrictive, and conservative. One needed to work harder both at school and home, more so at home, where even the extended family was too involved in the everyday happenings at home.

Born and raised in the U.S., there were many times when I experienced difficulties as regards the language complexities and when the right moment to speak either English or Indian was. With time, though, I slowly adapted to the new way of life all with the help of my parents and friends at school. All of a sudden, my father's contract came to a halt, and we had to move back to the U.S., this time, however, to Dallas, Texas. The move back was, as expected, terrible. I could

barely remember anything before flying out to India. The culture shock was encountered all over again with new measures and angles to it. Having a taste of the conservative lifestyle back in India, fitting back with the Texas' liberalism was pretty hard. It took quite some time to remodel and realign our behaviors, attitudes, and social graces in line with the new environment. Overall the different settings shaped me in a way that I can adjust in various places easily now and know what to expect at various locations more or less. Also, now after I have experienced both India and USA, I know what the right things in each place to follow are and what things help in forming a better all-around person.

Conclusion

Looking back at everything, I have had the best of both worlds living in two different countries; two cultures one life. Not many people can survive in two states, especially not in countries where the cultures and lifestyles clash, so my family and I are quite lucky to have eaten from both plates and learned a handful along this path.