

Starting Over Is Hard

by Cindy Nieves

When I was a child, I really loved school at one time. My favorite subjects were English, writing, reading and science.

I attended Holy Cross School in the Bronx, New York, but I left in the 6th grade because I was having problems at home. From ages eleven to seventeen, I lived in at least eight different foster homes and went to many different schools and learning centers. I also attended Job Corp.

Because of all the trauma, I found it easier to cope in a smaller setting class. I do remember a special teacher in the middle school. Ms. Flynn was very nice to me and she always praised me. I didn't not get much praise at home, so I loved to hear things like, "You can do it" and "Good job."

I remember being a very pretty girl. However, I didn't like what I saw. I wondered, "Who am I? Who are my parents?" Trauma can really affect children as far as learning is concerned.

I dropped out of high school in the 10th grade. I could not take the pressure anymore. All the moving around made me less and less eager to learn. I pretty much gave up on my education and my dreams of becoming a writer. I started working. I was dishonest and said that I had my GED. However, deep down inside I felt really unhappy because I knew I did not have my GED.

Not having much of an education has affected me in many negative ways. I was often dependent on men and that led to domestic violence several times in my life. Also, it has affected my self-esteem.

I have three boys and one girl who are in middle and elementary school. I feel bad that I cannot help with all of their homework. I feel hopeless at times. I have been feeling sorry for myself for too long.

I now want to take control of my life as a woman for myself and as a mother for my lovely children. I want to break the cycle of non-literacy and the cycle of violence in my family. I volunteer in a women's shelter where I once lived. Now I return to listen and help women who are going through what I once experienced.

Coming to Mujeres Unidas was scary for me at first. After a while I felt at ease because it's all women. I saw so many younger women, I felt old. I wish I could have started over many years ago. I realized it is better to learn when you are younger, but it's never too late. I am willing to do my best.

I want the best for all my children, especially my daughter. I want her to excel to the highest degree. My daughter will be everything she believes she can be. As a woman, I would like her to be better than me. I never want her to be a slave to men or to the system.

My goals are to get my GED and write many books for women, for children and books that are healing and about God. I am truly seeking much more. My dream is to become a writer. It has always been my dream.



Cindy Nieves is a student at Mujeres Unidas en Acción in Boston. The graphic on this page is from the [Mujeres Unidas website](#).