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Living with Machistas

Everyone has their own experiences with intersectionality. According to Kimberle Crenshaw intersectionality means that many of our social justice problems like racism and sexism are often overlapping creating multiple levels of social injustice.

Growing up as a woman it was mostly living with men that are sexist. The definition of sexism is “pre-justice, stereotyping or discrimination typically against women on the basis of sex”. For example, A sexist would say “You can’t do that, that is a man's job”. You would think only men are sexist, but women are also sexist. It was hard growing up with everyone around me with that mentality. My parents are old school so they were strong believers that it is okay for the women should play their part as a housewife. Since I am the first generation, sadly most of my whole family especially the men believe that women should just stay home to cook, clean and take care of the kids. Since it was so common in Mexico for women to stay home and just cater to their husband. They believe that women should not go out and do a man's job because that would mean the husband isn’t providing enough for his family, men were afraid of getting making fun of by other men saying that their wife had to go out and work because he is not providing enough. This reminds of the reading (1972) I want a Wife by Judy brady he said “I want a wife

who will take care of my physical needs. I want a wife who will keep my house clean. A wife who will pick up after my children, a wife who will pick up after me. I want a wife who will keep my clothes clean, ironed, mended, replaced, when need be,” Sadly all the men wanted that “Wife” Judy Brady describes. The men in my family then would pass on that mentality that image of a wife to their sons. They wouldn’t let their sons do the most basic chores because that is not a “Man's” job and will proceed to tell them that is a Women's job. In Mexico they would call that “Machista”. The translation of Machista is male chauvinist. A male chauvinist definition is a man who thinks women are not equal as men.

My grandparents made being a Machista a Norm, so it was taught and passed on to my parents. My parents continued to believe it was normal, but obviously that started changing after their 2nd daughter which is now 30. But I remember growing seeing my mom as a stay-at-home mom, which you can say she was a housewife. At the time it was normal to me to do what I thought was “normal” growing up with a sexist father. For example, around the age of 8, I remember my mom used to have anxiety and scared that the food wouldn’t be done on time for when my dad gets home. She would be scared because she was so used to giving my dad dinner at a certain time, she would think my dad would get frustrated if food wasn’t ready by 4 p.m. which will be the time he gets home from work. But sadly, that would be the case. Since he was so used to having the treatment of my mother and his daughters to have everything set up on the table on time, he would start an argument with my mother on why it was not ready. He was so used to us catering to him that it will get him upset if things weren't done. Also, when I would have my male cousins come over when I was younger, they would try to give a hand when setting up the table for dinner and I remember my uncle telling him “No son, sit down they would take care of it”. I began to ask my uncle “why? he wants to help because it's fun to set up

the table it's like we are playing house". He then proceeds to tell me "No! are you insane that's not a man's job." I was young and did not really think much of it but looking back at it I wish I would've told him off. Also, it is pretty sad that knowing my mother was there she did not say anything, not a word. But maybe it wasn't her place, but it wasn't wrong to tell my uncle otherwise.

It was hard trying to change the way my dad would think especially since he has 5 daughters. Also, we did not have a brother/male to defend us or to tell him otherwise. Since we feared my father, we did not even want to try and sit down and give him a talk. But my older sister that is now 30 one day did sit him down and spoke to him with tears in her eyes. This conversation happened about 6-7 years ago. She asked him why he is like this that she doesn't want to be with a man that thinks just like him. That it's not fair that my father would preach to us that he would want a man that treats his daughters like queens, but my father would treat his daughters and wife like his maids. But ever since that conversation he did come to a realization that we deserved better. It is sad to say that I am probably not the only person that grew up with a Machista Father but luckily with the talk that my older sister had with him, He has changed his ways. He now cooks for us even after a long shift at work, he also gives us a hand with chores and lets us have our day off when it comes to having the house clean. He also now tells others that giving your wife a hand won't hurt its not only a "Wife's" job to clean, cook and take care of the kids. I am happy we got to change the way my father has made.