

Opportunities by Pratibha Aphale



Coming to US was like a wild dream come true. One always felt very special and proud to say, I am studying or working in US. For me it was trying to run away from home or getting married and experiencing freedom!

Looking back, it seems like, this was walking into a complete unknown and making it your own! From the time you land on a university campus- try to speak remotely close American English, trying to figure out all the possible rules and regulations, making new friends, navigating through the system. Understanding and managing your finances.....it's all an exciting journey and the one that makes you too independent. I never intended to stay back in US after graduation, but things simply unfolded for me. In fact, I don't think I had any grand plans or any plans at all.

It seemed like a template. Graduate, look for a job, get married, work, travel, have kids! Now looking back it seems like it is such a template for most Asian immigrants and one never realize when they become citizens and start to follow the seasons, the weather every day, football and other sports, make weekend plans and wait for the long weekends. Very quickly one gets use to the new templated version of life. Kids bring new life into your boring life and then you are adding more chores and duties to your already busy life and suddenly mid-life hits! And 40th birthday celebrations start popping up.

You realize your kids are teaching you new things and start accepting that you are now becoming the older generation.

As one reminiscences, I think this journey made me part of some beautiful moments

and taught me too many things. It made me realize what's truly important and helped me understand my priorities. It taught me new compassion and kindness and made world truly a smaller place. It's a privilege to understand things from a global perspective.

This sounds like a cliché journey and maybe it is but it is truly unique for every person. In my case, I happened to be the first female on both sides of the family that went to college not just in another city but in another country! It sounded great but there was a struggle behind it that very few saw.

I am very fortunate to have had this opportunity and like everyone else, I am trying to fit into the new social media crazy AI world. I hope we understand that basic emotions and needs are the same and value the face time equally. Thank You for reading.