

Thyra

transgender woman, 68, Quezon City, currently unemployed

Life is a rainbow of love and hope.

Growing Up Trans

People would heckle me for expressing myself as a transgender girl but I ended up keeping the pain to myself. I was consistently beaten by my father for being effeminate.

Work And Family Life

At age 12, I was forced to leave my parent's home in Surigao to escape the constant beatings from my father, and live with my relatives in another province. I worked at a bakery to support myself. After about seven months, my mother reached out to me, saying she missed me, and she convinced me to return home to Surigao.

At age 15, my parents told me to go to Quezon City with my siblings because of dire economic circumstances. In Quezon City, we lived with an aunt. She told us that we would just eat their leftovers, so I left and went to Angeles City (in central Luzon) to live with another relative. I found work at a bar where I entertained guests.

I met a Black American military officer who asked me to be his girlfriend but I refused because I could not speak English. Eventually, I had boyfriends and I ended up spending my money on their food and drinking sprees, leaving me with no personal savings.



At age 43, I returned to Quezon City. I met a city councilor and found work as a cleaner at her office. At some point, I became a regular employee and I was earning about 7000 pesos a month (about 140 US dollars at present exchange rate). This stint lasted about seven years.

After the office cleaning job, I never had any paid employment. I ended up caring for my nephews and nieces without receiving a salary. I was given money just for my day out. I still live with a relative in Quezon City and rely on donations from relatives, family, church, barangay, and gay friends for ayuda (aid). At times, I hear hurtful words from relatives because I do not have money.

I do volunteer work in church and at the barangay (local government unit office), and in return I get free rice and vitamins. I joined the senior citizen activities of our barangay to keep myself busy and allay my loneliness and fear. At times, I also get to see my gay friends.

Reflections About Growing Older

In hindsight, it is important to have your own savings, own a house, and get along with others so they do not refuse you when you ask for a favor. One should be open to accepting difficulties as life is not always rosy, there is also sorrow. What is important is to do good for yourself and your family.

