

Moving to virginia changed my life essay sample

[Life](#)



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Who knew, changing environments could have a vast effect on my life and the lives of my four children. Changing environments changed our lives socially, economically and spiritually. All I had to do was want it bad enough, dream it big enough and prepare for the best life I had always envisioned for us. Positive changes occurred within all of us, just by changing our environment. Who knew a better life existed (outside the ghetto). In the year 1993, I was 27 years old, a wife and mother of four young children when I decided to separate from my husband, leave my home town (Bakersfield, California) and relocate to Virginia. My marriage was failing (at least, I thought so, him, not so much) I had grown tired of what I considered to be, “Ghetto Mentality”.

According to the urban dictionary, it is a person being too mentally “into” ghetto subjects, clothes, music, or way of life. Staying in an abusive, toxic relationship, living below the poverty line and raising my children in an area full of crime, drugs and bad influences, was not the kind of life I wanted to continue (It was not the life I imagined at all for us) to live. My husband of ten years and father to my children, had been a pretty good provider but he was an addict, and for repeated drug use and other crimes, was returning to prison for the third or fourth time in our lives, I felt the need and timing were right to separate from him, move and make a change. Changing our way of life was crucial. Moving away to Virginia, seemed like a great idea. I took control of our lives, prepared the children for a long car ride, and looked forward to the future and the endless possibilities, our new life abroad would bring.

I believed moving to Virginia would change our lives forever for the better. I suppose, I could have moved to a different area in Bakersfield, or even a different city in California, but the opportunity to move to the east coast had come and I was ready. This was going to be our grand escape to a better life and I could feel it all over my body like a warm relaxing bath awaiting me. My best friend Lisa, was the brains behind this grand idea to move. She had recently married and moved to Virginia, as well. She and I had been spending an astronomical amount of money on phone bills just trying to stay in touch and keep our close friendship. Moving closer to her was the best solution for all of us. She advised me of the dangers of staying in an abusive relationship (she had escaped one herself) and how it could affect my children and have a negative impact on them later on in life.

Her motives for wanting me to move were a bit selfish in one way but necessary for me and all of whom that were dependent upon me. My friend and I had been best friends since high school but I was in a relationship that was controlling and abusive. Also, my husband and his family had come from a very strict and rigid religious background and getting divorced from him or having friends other than the ones from my church were strictly forbidden. Now, I had found a way out. In addition to all the great advice and support, my friend gave. She also shared with me information about the booming job market in the surrounding areas where she lived. In Virginia, Maryland and Washington D. C., there were many career opportunities that were available to me in my then career field of assisted nursing. She also raved about the affordable housing there, outstanding school system and great opportunities I would have to enhance my social life.

Relocating for me meant freedom and building a new foundation for independence. I visited Virginia for a week, filled out over ninety applications for jobs. Out of all those applications, received only two call-backs. I was just so excited to receive any calls at all that I interviewed and accepted the first job offer I received. Finding that job was a joy and an exhaustingly long process. Afterward, I traveled by plane for the first time, back home to prepare everyone for the big move. I started emptying my apartment and gave away most of my furnishings to family members and people in need. I held a garage sale and sold what I had left in my storage. I raised enough money to fund the three days trip and the expenses associated with it, like car maintenance, food and lodging cost. In less than a week I was able to raise over \$2, 000. 00.

Everything seemed to fall right in to place. I couldn't believe we were driving all the way to Virginia. Just me and my children-altogether, in a car, for three whole days. We hit the road in my small, black 4 door sedan, with its sunroof on top, and little flip up head lights in front. I packed, what I called a " Back Seat Fun Basket", so my children would be entertained and to make the drive fun for them. I thought to myself, " Thank God I have good kids, this trip is going to be amazingly stressful" and I chuckled a sigh of relief. Even though I was embarking on a long journey of change and relocating, it seemed as though a huge load was taken off my shoulders. I could finally breathe, for the first time in my life, since I had left home at tender age of thirteen and married at age seventeen, I could literally breathe freely. Our journey was about to begin and I embraced it. It was going to be a long, hot

and adventurous car ride. We were traveling in the middle of July, so the weather was dry heat or humid like a sauna.

All the States we traveled through were pretty stifling. The children thought it was the most fun they had ever had, the fun basket came in handy. I had placed in the basket many fun activities. I created games for them to play while I drove. We played “ Eye Spy, with my Naked Eye” many times along the way. I even helped the kids make colorful maps of all the States we crossed to get into Virginia. I packed snacks, fruits and canned goods so we didn't need to stop or eat out that often. We slept in the car most of the trip in order to save money. I utilized truck stops for safe havens, resting areas and pit stops for gas and other personal needs. Finding adequate resting places on the road, came second nature to me. Although I had never left California before, believe me, I had traveled every inch of road there and driven quite a few big rigs (Diesel Trucks).

I learned from my experiences traveling with my husband who's profession happened to be long distance truck driving. This trip created a new sense of independence in me that I enjoyed (despite the lack of sleep and utter exhaustion I felt deep within, from all that driving by myself). When we arrived at the Virginia State line, I called home and told my mother that we had finally made it to God's true country. My mother and I had this ongoing debate about which united States were truly “ God's Country”, she cried and laughed hysterically at the same time when she heard my voice, as she said, “ California Is God's Country”, I heard a snicker in her voice and imagined the grin on her face, she was pleased to hear we had made our journey safely. The Virginia air smelled of fresh pine. It had rained recently

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and the scent of pine filled the car as we drove with our windows down. I noticed wet red dirt that resembled clay. I pointed out this discovery to the kids, whom were amazed at every new sight.

The air was so clean, there was no scent of smog, to which I had grown accustomed, in my home town. We observed many trees and relished in their beauty. There were trees of all kinds ranging from pine, to cedar, hickory and many others. The colors that filled them made me realize, I had truly arrived. The scenery was so beautiful and welcoming. I was home and it felt that way from the moment I arrived. My children and I noticed fall leaves everywhere. All colors associated with autumn made me cry, I was just so happy and exhausted. I couldn't wait to get out of the car and really relax. After about three days of driving I was totally worn out and suffered from a bad case of insomnia. In spite of it all, I was excited to start my new job and our new life.

I was introduced to many new and friendly people whom were helpful in my aim to find quality child and after school care. My new job, actually paid more money than I was getting in California (doing exactly the same work). I was paid nearly eight dollars more for doing the same job (who knew). With the pay increase I received, I could afford to place my children in extracurricular activities. My boys were interested in karate classes while the girls wanted to sign up for dance and drama classes. I would do all I could to make their dreams and wishes come true. The cost of living in Virginia was considerably lower compared to California. We were adjusting to our new lives and temporary home we able to live with my best friend and her family for a short time, which was an awesome experience.

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The kids were able to see and feel what it was like to live in a loving home and experience a neighborhood where peoples love and laughter were consistent and authentic. We had a few hiccups with the children getting along during our adjustment period but overall with cookouts and family gatherings every weekend, it was all worth it. After about a week of relaxing and adjusting to home life, the children were all ready to attend their new schools and I was more than ready to start my new job. My job was very rewarding and afforded me chances to improve our lives by offering an array benefits including a 401k plan and an extensive medical and dental, which I didn't have before. After about six months we were able to move into our own place. Our lives had changed, I no longer had a fear of being shot or my children being in trouble or hurt, as I did growing up.

I loved our new neighborhood. I had a fulfilling career in assisted nursing and was able to take on a second job working in a child care center, which eventually became my main career passion and desire. Moving to Virginia from California changed my life. I eventually became the director of a nationwide preschool program providing childcare to well established military and government employees. Later, I became able to buy a home and provide for my children in ways I was not able to before. I was introduced to people at a local church, whom were loving, kind and very instrumental in helping to raise and nurture my four kids. While I worked and commuted long distances during the day and sometimes night, there were people who were constantly there for me.

I had to work very hard to have the things I wanted. I had to sacrifice much quality time with my children but I wouldn't change anything or any

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experience at all. I love Virginia! Although, I currently live in California, the experiences I had in Virginia will forever stay with me. I learned what it is to have good work ethic, a strong trusting, spiritual and family foundation. I connected with people with whom, I have admired and respected over the years and continue to keep contact with today. Moving saved my life and the lives of my four children. They are all grown up now and have their own lives, college degrees, family and children of their own. I will never forget how moving away and living to Virginia for twelve plus years changed our lives forever.

References

Urban dictionary

<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Ghetto%20Mentality>