My Beautiful White Blouse

Hoai Do

When I was a child, I went to the hospital with my mother one day to visit my aunt. After seeing a nurse in a beautiful white blouse, I told my mother, “I want to become a nurse when I grow up.” When my mother asked for an explanation, I told her, “Because they look like little angels.”

I grew up in a poor family in a poor country. We worked very hard and still were not able to make enough money to buy food. My career goal seemed like nothing more than a dream. Fortunately, my uncle’s doctor gave me a scholarship so that I could study. I went to a medical secondary school, and it was there that I had the most beautiful days of my childhood. Every morning we were awakened by loud music in the gymnasium before we went to the lecture hall or to train in the hospital. I still remember how happy I felt the first time I tried on my white blouse! But those days were also difficult. We were only given two meals a day consisting of white rice, a little bit of soup, and some vegetables. But I still felt happy because of my white blouse.

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Making your dreams come true isn’t easy. After graduation, I worked for six months without getting paid. I woke up every day at 5:00 a.m., made food for my family, and rode my old bicycle six miles to the hospital. The workday began at 7:00 a.m. and ended at 5:00 p.m. I worked at that hospital for 20 years until my family decided to move to the United States.

Now, I work at a nail salon and go to school to learn English. When my English improves, I hope to go back to nursing. I know that it won’t be easy. Although I have a lot of knowledge from my experience working in nursing, I still need to improve my communication skills and learn vocabulary. However, I have learned that you are never too old to learn. I believe that my hard work and interest in English and nursing will help me to succeed.

Take It Further

What is the sequence of events that led to Hoai Do becoming a nurse?
Read the article on pp. 4-5. How are their stories similar and how are they different?
What is your dream? Do you have a memory from childhood that inspired your dream? Write about it.

Hoai Do studies ESL at the Adult Education Center in Fort Smith, AR. A 49-year-old mother of four, Hoai became a U.S. citizen in 2016 after living in the U.S. for five years.