



## FAMILY

Well yes, one fights and gets upset, and stops talking, and sometimes shouts, and there may even be blows to the face, or kicks in the testicles; I ended up fighting with my brother that way, usually after he punched me in the face. That is why one thinks that it is better to live alone, and in fact it is, although sometimes family is needed.

And I say this thinking about me. I don't like being bothered, just as my grandmother used to say, even during the ten years she spent in her rocking chair before she died. *"Don't bother me,"* she used to say. She was beautiful, the old lady, especially because she gave me ten cents almost everyday to buy "peperechas", and she shared with me "agüita de calzon" (very light coffee) in the afternoon.

No one in the family enjoyed her company like me, I'm sure of that. That's why I'm good, or almost good, but only with those I feel like. My grandmother, on the other hand, was good to everyone, even to my brother, with whom she fought daily.

But yeah, I was saying that it feels good to live alone, but, as Cesar Vallejo said: There are blows in life, so strong ... I don't know! Blows as of the hatred of God; as if before them, the hangover of everything suffered will be empowered in the soul ... I don't know! ...

So, yeah, there are moments like that in life. It could be only two or three occasions when life comes upon us with all its weight, and that is when the family takes on its true value. And this is something nice in El Salvador as I notice; there, family has a value that I do not perceive in many other cultures.

Yes, I know, we are pipiles, and that means we fight every day, but when life comes over someone of the family, everyone runs to help lower the load.

This is a privilege that many of those who live outside or alone do not have. Yes, of course, friends and lovers help, but in family terms HELP comes in capital letters, and people stay until the load is light and the strength is recovered to continue one's path.

I learned this from my grandmother. "hey!, little bastards," she would shout at us, but she was always there to get us

up when life put us to the test. Like the time I came back home crying because they didn't allow me to enter the movie theater and watch the premiere of Shark because I wasn't old enough to see violence.

I told my mother "don't ask, you just buy the tickets and go." But she ignored me. So I returned home crying, and my grandmother gave me ten cents to buy peperecha, and that is how I knew that she would always be there to help me with the great problems of life.

And it was also then that I knew that tears are the perfect blackmail. Unfortunately, now that I am a little older, I am not allowed to cry, and if I cry, people leave. So I don't cry anymore.

But I was saying that family has a value that exceeds the values of any other kinds of company. I notice it with my family, which I don't have with me, but I've seen how they support each other. I don't know if it's because my grandmother instilled that value in us, or for some other reason, but I've seen everyone coming and going to where it is needed. Those who carry my DNA are like that, good, so I find out now that our DNA is good.

Yesterday was the last day of last year and today is the first day of a new decade, and I have to admit that, although I had a good time with my fighting friends, I missed my family a lot. So today, which is the first day of a new decade, which may be my last decade in life, I decided to stay at home and put this thought into words. And it's not that it matters, but if I think it's important to remind the world that despite the fights, and the anger, and the scolding, nothing has more value than the family.

Happy new decade to all. To live it as a family.

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