

## My People

Who are my people? My people are my rocks, my strength and my courage. My people strengthen my faith, my culture and my relationships, and through all of those qualities, have built who I am today.

Who am I? I am my mamá, who is strong and capable. Able to handle everything and anything, she is a force to be reckoned with. She is fluent in the language of mathematics and exemplary in the field of education, and always willing to help out when a student, teacher or friend requires her assistance. A dedicated educator, a devoted daughter, and most importantly a sleepless mother of 5, my mamá is who I am now, and everything I wish to be in the future.

I am my tata, who is superior in every way. A champion of his health, his education and his faith, my father is relentless. He leads me through the path of life, challenging me to be my best self though the worst of times. He is an incredible individual who never lets anyone get in the way of what he believes in. Different? Yes. Stubborn? Undoubtedly. But these qualities construct the tight woven fabric which winds myself and my father together.

I am my siblings, 4 drastically different people who come together to complete the ensemble which is my family. They possess limitless creativity, which they express through their immeasurable talent in dance, music, and art. My siblings have encouraged me in ways no one else could dream of, and I owe everything I am to them.

What am I? I am a child of God. A product of divinity and perfection. I am neither divine or perfect, but I am a follower of the path toward what will inevitably lead to those qualities. My people are those who lead me down that path, and allow me to grow in my faith so that I may one day lead others.

I am a child of love, acceptance and forgiveness. I am the kindness of my church family, who have taught me how to live life to the fullest by giving myself to those in need.

I am culture. I am red and green chile, music and dance, tamales and friendship. I am tradition.

I am my tías and tíos, my grandma and grandpa who kept these traditions alive and are now handing my generation the reins to continue the old story, but write a new one in the process. My extended family are my people, and their culture is my life.

Why? Why am I here? Why do I have people who are so supportive and loving? I am here to be those people. I am here to love and support mi gente as they have loved and supported me. My people learn from me as I learn from them. It is this knowledge that has fashioned me into who I am.

Who am I?

I am mi gente.