



Video Story Transcript

WHY DO YOU WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE?

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Link to YouTube Video:

<https://youtu.be/5sGt3po-IJw>

Note : The following is a transcription of a spoken story performance and may not reflect textbook perfect English. It will guide you as you listen (or read) along.

Hi. My name is Olga Loya and this is an excerpt from a longer story called *Nepantla: Between Worlds*.

The story takes place in East Los Angeles in the 1950s. When I went to high school, I realized I wanted to go to college. I talked to my girlfriends about it, and they said, "Why do you want to go to college? Don't you want to get married and have children?" My parents said the same thing. My mother was always saying: "We want you to get married and be happy."

It took me a long time to get my nerve up to go see the school counselor. I was in the 10th grade when I walked into the counselor's office. The counselor was sitting behind a big desk. He motioned to a chair across from him and I sat down. I could hardly speak I was so nervous. I just sat there.

Finally, he said, "What can I do for you?"

I gulped and said in a scared voice, "Do you think I could go to college?"

I hoped he would say, "Yes, there is no problem. You can surely go to college!"

Instead he said, "Oh no, Olga, you can't go to college. Your family is too poor. You'll never make it. This is what you should do—study shorthand and typing. That way you can work and then get married."

I just sat there, staring at him. I couldn't believe he had just told me I couldn't go to college. Finally I got up and left. I thought, "Well, he said I can't go to college. He should know. He's the counselor." Then I went to the bathroom and cried.

So I started to study typing and shorthand but I wasn't interested in getting married. I didn't want to be married; I wanted to have some time to myself. I wanted to figure out what I wanted in my life. In my senior year, my best friend got married. There was a joke in her family about me because when they took pictures of her throwing her bouquet, I calmly stood there with my hands behind my back as all of my other friends were reaching out for the bouquet. That's how much I didn't want to get married!

One morning in my junior year of high school, I woke up and thought about the advice the counselor had given me. I thought, "What kind of advice was that? Why can't I go to college? I'm not dumb and I can work. How dare he say that to me? To hell with him—I'm going to college!"

I didn't say anything to anyone but I began to study hard. Just before I graduated from high school, I found out I had received a small scholarship to go to the local community college. The day after I got my scholarship, I was walking down my high school hall feeling good. Then I saw my shorthand teacher. She had always been nice to me, and I was excited to tell her about my scholarship. I waved to her, and she came towards me. She was short and round with beady eyes. Before I could say anything to her, she walked right up to me and got so close that she spit in my face as she hissed, "What a waste. You shouldn't have that scholarship—you'll never even finish college!"

I felt like she had kicked me in the stomach. Anger washed over me. I felt my face getting redder and redder. I thought, "Don't say anything, Olga. You are almost out of school. Don't get into trouble now!" And I didn't. I thought to myself though, "We'll see."

As it turned out, that school counselor actually did me a great favor. I would never have made it through college without . . . shorthand. I worked my way through school.

As for the teacher who treated me so disrespectfully, well, she did me a favor, too. Every time I felt like quitting I remembered her beady little eyes and how I thought, "I'll show you."

And I did! I got a scholarship; I graduated from college and became a teacher.