

I met Erika two years ago. Erika grew up in a provincial Mexican town called Leon. According to the region's conservative customs, women are expected to marry and serve their husbands. Practically all women there accept their fate; Erika is one notable exception. Rebelling against the constraints imposed on women, she risked social rejection by persuading her parents to let her study engineering in Mexico City. She hoped to influence people's lives and become a well-rounded individual.

At that time, there were only two women studying engineering at the university. Professors didn't expect a woman to become a good engineer and didn't dedicate much time to her, so she had to put in twice the effort to obtain the same grades as her male classmates. She graduated with honors and decided to join P&G, where I met her. Very soon, her strong business vision and leadership skills earned her a fast Brand Manager promotion. However, she felt that P&G was not giving her all the skills needed to help people, so she enrolled in a London MBA program.

When she returned to P&G, she was promoted to Director. She had been planning to start a non-profit organization to help illiterate women when her mother was struck with cancer. Without a moment's hesitation, she left her promising career to achieve her goal in life: helping others. She now spends half of each day taking care of her mom and the other half teaching illiterate women.

Erika has had a deep influence on me. What I most admire about her is her strong belief that we have the responsibility to help others become better persons. She lives according to this credo, which she has used as a guideline since she was very young. She has shown me the importance of attaining a balanced life and contributing to society while accumulating practical skills. Most recently, she has encouraged me to obtain an MBA, because it gave her the skills needed to complete her development and help others.