

# Jeandre Vogel

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When I think of the word "resilience," I think of my mother. A woman whose story is one of loss, perseverance, and courage that I can only describe as superhuman. Born and raised in a developing country, my mother's life was shaped by hardship and sacrifice.

She lost her father at a young age, leaving her to navigate the world without the protection and guidance a father's love provides. But even in the face of such loss, she was determined. She did what many might have considered impossible. She fought, and she fought hard. Yet, there was always something missing — an opportunity, a chance to break free from the cycle of hardship.

As a young woman, she married my father, and together they built a family. But life had more challenges in store for her. With three young children, she made a decision that would change her life forever. She left behind the only world she knew — her mother, her brothers, the only home she'd ever known — and moved with my father to a foreign country. A place where she knew no one, where everything was unfamiliar, and where the language, culture, and systems were completely different.

Her journey was not easy. She arrived in this new country with nothing but hope, her husband, and her three young children. There were no guarantees, no promises of success. There were moments when she questioned whether she had made the right choice, moments of deep loneliness and doubt. She would call her mother back home, hearing the voices of her brothers and feeling the pain of missing them — especially when, one by one, two of her brothers passed away unexpectedly, leaving an unhealable wound in her heart. Yet, despite the crushing weight of grief, she never gave up. She never allowed herself to break.

She worked tirelessly to provide for us, often in jobs that demanded far more than she had ever been trained for. She learned new skills, adapted to the culture, and did what needed to be done to make sure we had a better life than she had growing up. Every

day was a test of endurance, but through it all, she showed us what true strength meant. The strength to persevere when everything seemed impossible. The strength to carry the weight of her past, her grief, and her family's future all at once.

She never complained, never allowed us to see how hard it was. She pushed through every obstacle and taught us to do the same. We watched her build a life — not just for us, but for herself. She took every opportunity that came her way, even when they were few and far between, and turned them into something that would sustain us all.

Through her, I learned that the strongest women are not the ones who never fall, but the ones who get up every time they do. She built something out of nothing, and she did it with love, resilience, and a quiet strength that I've come to admire every single day. The strength she displayed in the face of unbearable grief, and the courage she showed to keep going, is something I carry with me always.

On this International Women's Day, I want to honour my mother. A woman who sacrificed everything for her children, who left behind everything she knew to create a better life for us. A woman who faced the most challenging circumstances and persevered with grace. She showed me that no matter how difficult the journey, no matter how deep the pain, there is always hope and always a way forward.

She is the embodiment of strength and love, and she is the reason I believe in the power of women to change the world. Her story isn't just hers — it's the story of every woman who has fought for a better life, who has faced unimaginable loss, and who has carried the weight of the world on her shoulders without ever giving up. My mother is my hero, and I will always be in awe of the strength she showed to make a life for her family that none of us would have had without her.