

What “Being an Immigrant” means

by Eduardo Lee

Hey, you guys! How long have you been in San Francisco? At least a couple of weeks, I bet! However, I know that some of you have been there almost nine months, haven't you? Well, have you missed your family, friends, or food from your country of origin? Perhaps you are in this kind of emotional state and I hope sincerely that you are very close to going back home where these feelings will disappear. But, what if you weren't able to return home and relieve the homesickness? This is what an immigrant, in most cases, goes through when they live permanently in a different country.

This Interview show us that it doesn't matter where the people are from, human beings are the same sensitive and rooted people when they are **immigrants**.

				
Mark Cogan CHILE	Seho Rhee KOREA	Jose Riquelme CHILE	Milka Paunovic YUGOSLAVIA	Mario El Cafetero ARGENTINE

Our interviewees are:

- **Mark Cogan**, from Chile, 33 years in Canada, he arrived when he was 35 years old
 Family in Canada : My wife and two children.
 Family in Chile : Mother, brothers and sisters

- **Seho Rhee**, from Korea, 11 years in Canada, he arrived when he was 23 years old.
 Family in Canada : Only his wife and one child.
 Family in Korea : All family and relatives

- **Jose Riquelme**, from Chile, 9 years in Canada, he arrived when she was 38 years old
 Family in Canada : All my family (Wife and children)
 Family in Chile : Mother and one sister

- **Mario El Cafetero** , from Argentine, 15 years in Canada, he arrived when he was 37 years old
 Family in Canada : Only my wife
 Family in Argentine : My father and brothers

- **Milka Paunovic**, from Yugoslavia, 33 years in Canada, she arrived with her father when she was only 9 years old.

Family in Canada : One son, 3 sisters, 2 brothers, father and step mother.
Family in Yugoslavia : Mother, uncles and cousins

Have you ever gone back to your country?

Mark : Many times! Once a year
Seho : Yes, Once every 2 years
Jose : No
Mario : Just once in 1998
Milka : Yes, six times in 33 years

Would you like to go back to your country permanently or to stay in Canada?

Mark : Staying here in Canada
Seho : I like to stay in Canada
Jose : Staying in Canada
Mario : Stay here
Milka : Yes I would like go to my country and stay there, probably in my old age

What do you miss most from your country of origin?

Mark : Friends, relatives, Chilean food
Seho : Typical Culture: food, entertainment and communication in Korean language
Jose : Just friends
Mario : Argentinean meat and pizzas
Milka : Beauty of nature and beautiful people

What do you like the most about Canada/Vancouver?

Mark : Quality of life
Seho : Lifestyle, people, expectations from people(less pressure from family or acquaintances).
Jose : Everything
Mario : The scenery of Vancouver
Milka : Vancouver is beautiful, 3rd best place for living in the world

What do you dislike the most about Canada/Vancouver?

Mark : Too much rain
Seho : I dislike the education system for my child : too much freedom!
Jose : Nothing
Mario : The lack of good meat, the lack of good pizza
Milka : Canadian politics

***Have you ever felt any kind of discrimination because of your being an immigrant?
If so, would you like to tell us about it?***

Mark : No.

- Seho : Yes, I do feel discrimination because I still accept the Canadian lifestyle based on my own culture background
- Jose : No
- Mario : Yes, particularly at the beginning because of my accent when I spoke English
- Milka : Yes!. In Vancouver we have Chinese writing and East Indian writing ...they don't care about other nations or languages

If you had the chance to immigrate to a country different from yours, which one would you like to choose and why?

- Mark : Canada again. I have been very happy in this country
- Seho : Canada again, because if I started again I would do much better
- Jose : Canada. I always liked Canada.
- Mario : Canada again!
- Milka : Switzerland, because there is always Peace, no war!

According to you, what is the hardest circumstance for an immigrant?

- Mark : Getting a good job.
- Seho : Learning new Language and culture and be able to work with Canadian citizens
- Jose : Speaking English fluently
- Mario : Depends on if you are able to speak English or not. In case of you don't speak English fluently, the most important thing is learning the language. If you have the English language and a job, the hardest circumstance is getting use to a different way of life
- Milka : To learn English and to associate with other people, if you don't speak English you can't get into the society (depends on the social class)

Do you have any dream you hope to accomplish in Canada/Vancouver?

- Mark : Nothing special. Every thing is ok right now
- Seho : Be able to accomplish my business plan (my own bussiness : A language school)
- Jose : I hope to see my children realized in this country
- Mario : Taking long vacations after 15 years working
- Milka : All accomplished! A house, a beautiful son, a job, etc ...And I'm working with crazy students who make crazy questions (hahahaha)

Any message to the JUST TO READ's readers?

- Mark : Good luck to everybody and have a nice life
- Seho : Please, always encourage yourself to follow your plans if you want to be in a foreign country
- Jose : If you want to immigrate you have to forget about going back to your country or you will not concentrate all your effort in the new country
- Mario : Nothing is impossible, you can achieve anything you want! You only need effort and hard work!
- Milka : Be good, be careful because you are in a different country and different culture than yours. Good luck, learn as much as you can and next time take care which school you chose!

Thanks to Mark, Seho, Jose, Milka and Mario, for sharing with us their feelings, dreams and experiences.

The weather in Vancouver: Sunny today, a high of 16 near the water, 25 in land. And sunny with cloudy periods tomorrow, a high of 18 near the water, and up to 25 inland.

Reporting from Vancouver to Just to Read in San Francisco, ...Eduardo Lee. June 2005.