



Letter to Myself Before Leaving

Ingrid,

Make sure to hold Tia Elvi y Tita for at least ten minutes; don't worry, you're young they'll find it adorable, nothing out of the ordinary. Make sure you look at them until you have memorized the lines of their wrinkles, the precise color of their eyes, the number of eyelashes. Don't forget to note what they are wearing as well. Take a picture with your mind and keep it tucked in your soul.

Walk around your bedroom one last time. Notice the color of the walls. Make sure you can answer these key questions: Are there any pictures hanging? Is your bed made? How many stuffed animals did you leave behind? What color was your pillowcase?

Your mother will specifically tell you not to bring more than one doll with you. She'll tell you that there is no more room for toys in your luggage. Please don't listen. Grab your favorite three and hide them in your backpack. She will not notice.

Now run to Papa Julio's cantina. Take a look around it. I know it may seem insignificant now, but this place holds memories, trust me you'll want to remember it. Now call out his name until he comes out, make sure he does not get away with a simple waved goodbye. Kiss his forehead; make sure you remember his voice, his big brown eyes, and his white hair. Did you take a picture of him too? Assure him with one look that you will become a respectable young lady, he may never get a chance to see you become one.

Have you followed my instructions? Now you are ready to go. But let me tell you one more secret before you leave: it will be a very long time before you see this place again, if you ever do. Don't ask me how long because I don't even have an answer to that now.

Now grab your backpack, keep your smile and enthusiasm, and board the bus.

Sincerely,
Me

About the Author

Ingrid is one of E4FC's 2010 Interns. She emigrated from Guatemala with her family when she was nine years old. This fall she will be completing her senior year at Stanford University where she will be majoring in Management Science and Engineering. In the future, Ingrid hopes to pursue an MBA and become an entrepreneur of socially responsible technology businesses.

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