

I: Woman interviewing

M: Woman being interviewed; Mercy

Home is where the heart is

I: Mercy, you've got a really interesting background. Where were you born?

M: I was born in Oxford, England, where I grew up. I was there for approximately 14 years. My parents are Indian so we spoke both Indian and English in the home. We spoke Punjabi language. And then we moved to Canada, London, Ontario.

I: Why did you move to Canada?

M: Because I had to.

I: Because you **had** to?

M: Yes. I didn't want to but it was a move that my mother... My mother wanted to move there to be together with my brother. My father wasn't around, so... so she wanted to be closer to family over there.

I: You said your mother wanted to move to Canada to be with family, and you clearly didn't. Did you protest loudly?

M: Absolutely. I ranted and raved, but I got nowhere. But I decided that when I was in Canada, I would not pick up the Canadian accent.

I: So that was your kind of rebellion, was it?

M: That's right. Yes. I would keep my identity and I was English, and not a Canadian.

I: And what was it like for you as a 14-year-old to move from Oxford, England to Canada?

M: It was extremely hard. It was coming into a completely different culture, almost a different language.

I: What was different about the culture?

M: It was so fast. It was so... Everybody used to go out and go to McDonald's and shops were open, it seemed like, all the time, all... yeah, day long.

I: Around the clock?

M: Around the clock. And there was so much competition in the schools.

I: Really? I thought there was a lot of competition in English schools.

M: In a way there is, but not to that extent. I think what we experienced when we were in Canada was that you really, really had to study hard to do kind of okay, you know? It seemed a lot harder in some way. I can't really explain it, but it was tough. But it was probably because I didn't want to move, so everything was hard.

I: What about making new friends? I mean, when you're 14, that sometimes is quite a difficult age, isn't it.

M: It wasn't too difficult, actually, because the Canadians are quite a warm people. So in that respect it went quite well, but I really, really missed my friends at home.

I: Were you able to keep in touch with them?

M: I kept in touch with some of them, but as the years went by, it was only a few that I managed to keep in touch with.

I: And of course that was before Facebook, wasn't it, so perhaps it was a bit more difficult. Did you write letters or did you phone them or what?

M: I wrote letters. I was actually quite good at writing letters. So that went quite well.

I: Did you come back to the U.K. to visit your friends?

M: I did, actually. I came back on two occasions during the five-year stay that I had in Canada and visited with friends and family.

I: So you stayed in Canada for five years, so that's from 14 to about 19.

M: That's right.

I: When you came back to the U.K., what did you feel then about coming back to England?

M: I felt as though I'd come back home again. I felt that the people spoke like I did and I don't know, I just felt as though I was like a fish in water again.

I: Did you not miss anything about Canada when you came back?

M: No, to tell you the truth, I didn't.