

# “I’m No Longer Scared”

By Vanessa Valerio



## I'd like to share an inspiring story about one of our long-time caregivers. I will call her Nelda to protect her privacy.

Nelda joined Care Indeed in 2011. At 5'2", she is larger than life. She has a way of filling the room with her husky voice and lively personality. Nelda is very dear to me. She has seen the struggles that I have faced and overcome.

Like me, she is also very superstitious. She gave me a money tree which we both believe has brought us luck. You will find this tree in our Menlo Park office.

Nelda is a cancer survivor and I recently found out that her cancer came back. Heartbroken, I reached out to her immediately. Our conversation began asking how she's doing. She said that she will start her chemotherapy next week.

I asked, "How are you coping?" Her response moved me.

"Vanessa, I am ready for what is to come. I am no longer scared. What else could be more painful than losing a child? I have everything I need. I am at peace with myself and the people around me. This is the happiest time of my life."

In 2017, Nelda lost a child and I witnessed how she grieved and bounced back. I honestly expected her to give me a different answer. She added, "I prayed to God that if I could have \$1,000 cash and a work-free week before my treatment, I'd be happy. God answered my prayers. I have \$1,000 and this is the fifth day that I am doing whatever I want to do before I start my treatment."

Nelda's story is one of gratitude, acceptance and resilience. She is thankful for things she has and she gracefully surrenders to things that are beyond her control.

Even with her health challenges, she has remained positive and continues to find meaning and bliss.

My conversation with her reminded me of how I have been ungrateful at times, always wanting for more.

This mindset, to a certain extent, has taken time which I could have spent with the people who matter the most to me.

I have my own story, moderately successful to some fellow immigrants it may seem. I've made my share of mistakes but I am happy where I'm at. Like Nelda, I choose to live each day with the excitement and wonder of a child. I take the time to really know our caregivers and even become a part of their lives. In doing so, I learn inspiring lessons about life from them.

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