

Finding Peace Beyond Home

Shanaz

My family and I lived a simple but happy life in our hometown in Pakistan. We were not rich, but our home was filled with love, laughter, and peace. Every evening, we sat together in the warm and cozy light of the lanterns, shared stories, and enjoyed each other's company. Those moments made me feel safe and happy.

As I grew older, I worked very hard to build a better future. I studied, learned new skills, and eventually became successful, a doctor of medicine - ophthalmologist. I earned good money and wanted to help my family live a comfortable life. At first, everyone was proud of me and celebrated my success.

However, things slowly began to change. Some members of my wider family became jealous of my achievements. A woman, a decision maker, a bread-winner? That's too much! After my father passed away, they used to say: "look at how her mother just had

given her all the freedom, nobody stops her, she can stay out of the house for as long as she wants to.” The happy atmosphere at home disappeared. I felt like I was sitting alone in a dark room.

Finally, I decided to leave my hometown and move abroad to start a new life. I settled in Scotland. It was painful and lonely at first, but the experience made me stronger and more independent. Today, I live with peace and hope. I cherish my own family. I know well how important it is to support each other and to encourage my daughter to be bold and reach for her dreams. Looking at my 2 years old grandson I feel so much happiness and that gives me strength to focus on my future and personal growth. I know I have the bright shining light within me.