

## PEOPLE

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ILCANIA ANGELES  
EXQUISITE FEMININITY FEATURED MENTEE



Meet Ilciana Angeles, a 16 year old immigrant from the Dominican Republic. She arrived in America, but no matter where you're from or raised, we all have a powerful testimony in us and Ilciana is sharing her story.

# ILCANIA ANGELES

Before I migrated to America in 2016, I thought I was a “regular” girl. I had good grades. I liked being outside and hanging out with my friends.

I came from a very humble family. We did not have a lot of money, but we were happy with what we had. I understood that some people were born with money and some were not born with as much money. I saw that as motivation.

I tried to be the best daughter, student, and friend, but I realized that sometimes trying your best isn't good enough especially because I was constantly being reminded that I wasn't good enough. I was told things like, “You should have died”. I was told that I was not as good as other girls. When my Mom told me that we were coming to America, I saw it as an escape. I wanted to get away from the negativity. I thought that if I left Dominican, the bullying would stop. I thought people would finally stop being mean and disrespectful.

When I arrived in America, it got worse. I could not get use to the idea that I had to start all over again, new friends, new school, and a new house. In other words, a new life. It was hard for me to get use to because I hated change and I did not want my life to get any worse. I had to face discrimination for the first time when I was 13 years old in the 9th grade. I never told anyone because I was afraid that they might make fun of me. I thought I could handle it, but I was wrong. It was too much for me to handle at such a young age. I always kept my problems to myself because I did not want to bother anyone. I did not want my friends and family to think that I was a cry-baby.

My grades started to drop, and I stopped talking to my family. I became an aggressive, less social, unhappy, solitary, and sad person. I would cry myself to sleep because I did not know what was wrong with me. I felt lost and unloved.

In October of 2018, I gave up on myself and started self-harming. I was convinced that it was what I needed to make myself feel better. However, my parents soon found out from one of my teachers and they immediately signed me up for counseling. I did not want to go to counseling, but I knew deep down in my heart that I needed it. Then I met Miss Nicole. The first day she came to my house, I did not want to meet with her, but my Mom forced me to. After introducing ourselves to one another, Miss Nicole asked me what my favorite color was. I told her then she asked my why. I told her that the color represented me and how empty I felt inside. What I thought was a simple question turned out to be the deepest question that I had ever been asked. After that, we began having more sessions.

Most importantly, she helped bring me closer to my family and God, and for that I am so thankful. I now know my worth and I can express myself without being scared. I am braver than I believe, stronger than I seem, and smarter than I think.



Miss Nicole taught me so many things. She taught me that I needed to learn about myself before I could “love” someone else. She helped me overcome my fears. Thanks to her I now know that...

*I AM precious*

**I AM beautiful inside and out**

*I AM a gift of unique treasures*

**I AM intelligent**

*I AM a hard worker*

**I AM successful**

*I CAN achieve anything I desire*

**I CAN do ALL things through Christ who gives me strength**

*I WILL always be encouraging to other girls*

**I WILL always be true to myself**