

## I Have to Be Strong

By Mulianawati Andokho  
Philadelphia

A husband who previously loved and married me for several years suddenly said he would divorce for no apparent reason. I was shocked. I do not know how my days would be without him in a country that was not my home country.

I have to start a new life. My Lord, what should I do? I asked the pastor to pray because I was already thinking about goodbye to everything. I visited a counselor who was without empathy. She just said flatly, you are young, look smart, do what you like.

I came back to my room and wanted to bang my head against the wall. But, I knelt on the floor and cried. I went to the free library and thought about going to school and immediately looking for a job.

For days, I browsed the internet in the library. I got a Pell grant for ESL classes before taking a program in accounting at Community College of Philadelphia.

In 2018 I was busy studying, working at Strafford. I also went through a painful process at the family court. I often cried wherever I was. My face was sorrowful. Several professors noticed my situation and gave me advice on counseling and going to Women in Transition.

Their support gave me a spirit of independence and a meaningful life. Before the pandemic, I was a volunteer for the tax season 2020.

Furthermore, I must be excited. I want to work in a nonprofit organization. I have a dream of owning a house, driving my own car, even though I haven't got all of them. I have to kneel a lot, calling, "my Lord, help me, strengthen me" so that I don't lie on the railroad.

At the time of writing this essay, I was studying accounting online in my rental room, at the age of 57 years old, accompanied by the song "You Say" by Lauren Daigle.