M: When did you first move to Australia?

Cr: Well I moved to Australia only 4 months ago. So I’m just… just arrived, newly arrived.

M: Motivations?

Cr: Well, the main reason is that I met someone. We keep in touch during – more than a year. Me being in Argentina. Well, we decided to try how is it. So, of course we didn’t want to start straight away, like a marriage. So, we decided that maybe I can study something here, have the opportunity to experience this life here in Australia. So, that’s why – in my case I practised yoga for 15 years. I’m actually a Yoga teacher in Argentina. I came here just to improve my English and of course study a little bit more, certify my level of Yoga with an international recognized certification. I met him last here, not here in Melbourne – in Sydney. A long-distance relationship and it was like a job, building this relationship because every day…messages, skype… Fortunately, technology today is like, on your side, when this type of situations happens, you know. Fortunately, both of us, he and me, we have certain economical resources. So, for example he could go to… he went to Argentina last year, he stay with me for 2 months. So, he had the opportunity to meet my environment - My house, my car, my family, my friends, my everything. So, after that we decided to go on and well… to come here.

M: Ethnic Background

Cr: Argentine – its like multicultural.. multiracial? Well, we have a lot of races or ethnicities but mostly Spanish and Italians that came to this part of world after the 1st and 2nd world war. So, in my case, well, I have grandparents and great grandparents Italian and Spanish. I am Argentinian – my parents also. But, my parents and great grandparents, they come from Italy and Spain. I never in my life considered Australia like a possibility. Never. Because I don’t.. I prefer.. I love France. It is the truth. I am totally in love with France. I have been there like more than 10 times and I always visualise myself living in Europe, maybe France. I talk a little bit the language... not so good but, yes I have taken the examination and it’s a medium and average level of French. But well, the love appeared in my life and I never ever thought that he will be here in Australia and I decided last year to come here in Australia only once because I wanted to brush up my English a little bit after going so many years into France. So, I say well, I will come to Australia because there’s nice weather, we are in the same, parallel with Argentina so we share the same seasons, and I say well, the only time I will come here will be this – 2019 and well the love appeared in my life. I didn’t expect it. I visited Paris always, always like a tourist. But, it is not so… Like its strict here in Australia. I can get into Europe maybe sometimes twice a year. I used to go always under a tourist visa so I can stay in the country maybe 1 month. Next time, 1 month and a half. So, I can go, coming, go, get in, get out of the country.

M: Planning?

Cr: Well, at the beginning, when George, my partner he went to visit me in July I started to think seriously about moving here. So, I considered that I started my, to get prepared to come here maybe since April, no March, March last year when I started the IELTS examination because I wanted to improve my English.

M: Options?

Cr: Well my profession in Argentina is something that I can’t really use here. I’m a lawyer. I’m also a teacher at the University. Here, it’s like, being a lawyer is something that is only worth in your country. Here for instance, a country like Australia, maybe they belong to the commonwealth so its common-law and our system is totally different. Its more Romanic, you know. So, it’s like starting again. And of course, the cost to support your living here is too expensive and I can’t support my living and same for a university career. So, I decided to make professional something that I’ve been doing almost all my life which is Yoga. So, I said why not. Really, like it is something very nice to do. So, I decided to go there. It is shorter and of course, something that I could afford.

M: Family?

Cr: No, I am in an age, where my family don’t take decisions on me anymore. I am 45 years old. It’s like, some people can consider it late. Some people may consider well, better later than never. So, I’m here. I just told them when the moment arrived, but they took it in a very good way. My sister, she doesn’t even live in Argentina.

M: Community?

Cr: No, nothing, nothing, zero. So, I’m here from scratch. He’s the only person. In my case I enjoy being alone. I don’t have problems to enjoy by myself. But, for other people I know it can be a little bit challenging.

M: Visa?

Cr: Here in Australia, I came under a student visa. Last year I came as a tourist. It took a long time. Long. Many times I was about to stop everything because I was sick and tired of all the paperwork, all the things. When I thought that I was finished, it wasn’t . New things and new roster came to me, so I again start a lot of money. I spent a lot of money because translating every document. My partner was very supportive. If it weren’t for him, really, I won’t be here because in the middle of the way I was like, I will quit it. Well, when I started to gather all the paperworks that the government ask from me, and I thought it was overwhelming. Overwhelming! All the paperwork, everything because in Argentina, for instance, bureaucracy is not efficient. So, to get one paper of one institution is an issue. So, for me it was exhausting. At the same time, I was working, and I have two jobs… of course everything I need to do to support my life and fortunately, the man I had in my life was very supportive. Sometimes he encouraged me to go on, don’t quit. That’s why I’m here.

M: Skilled migrant?

Cr: I am, I am because I developed myself and my career in an environment that of course, how can I say, it’s like prepares you to be natural in certain things. I worked the last 12 years of my life, for instance, in criminal law. So, really, I have no problems and I have the strength to face a lot of situations and not lose my mind do that. But here, I don’t know if I can put that as a, if I can use all the knowledge, or all the experience. Sometimes, it is not about studying, or everybody can study, everybody just take a seat on the table and just wait, and you will learn. But when it is about inner self, inside you, when you know how to do things, or how to connect ideas, you know how to think and how to solve situations, that is what experience gives. Till the moment, I don’t know if I can use my experience here.

M: Mapping?

Cr: Okay, I draw it? Migration agent – that’s the first thing. But first of that, IELTS. You have 2 versions – I went for the academic one. So, academic. My English was so behind that one year I tried to do my best. I have proved it with a grade of 6 which is enough to come here. But the IELTS is not only the cost of the examination, you have the fee but also private classes. Those private classes started in March, middle of March 2018. I can’t remember the exact date, but it was middle of March 2018. And I did that because I wanted to improve my communication skills. So, after that the immigration agent. He charged me the same fee to apply for the visa here. I can’t remember numbers, but I think it’s more or less between $600-700. So, he charged me that. Plus, I can’t remember exactly but it was about the same to apply visa. And then I had to attest documents. For instance, my degree, letters of recommendation from my 2 jobs, financial situation – I needed to prove that I have enough money to support my living here for 1 year, other things – I need to pay the fee so I paid $10,000 – that’s the cost of the year. I paid altogether, you know why – because I wanted to… just to get rid of it because the rest of the money, I know its just for me. I don’t have to worry. And, they asked me for statutory declaration from 3 people from my community from Argentina. For instance, I play tennis, so I asked one person, someone who plays tennis with me, someone who belongs to the same class… For instance, you go the police. Its like, that you declare under God that I know that person, he’s a very good person, he’s a part of the community. So, everything of that, translated. Yes, and what else. My certificate of birth also translated. Insurance. No medical test, only insurance.

M: Technology

Cr: Google – the main place to research. Then, I tried to find a lot of YouTube videos from people. Argentina or South American coming to Australia but then I stop it. I stop it because some of them were a little depressing with bad perspectives. So, I decided to live my own experience. I tried to find information about institutions. For instance, where is the museum? What is the means of transportation here? How much is the cost of living? Here is very expensive. And Facebook, no not so much.

Well, the Byron website or there is another one. Sometimes, you read, and you find one word that direct you to other kind of research and you find beautiful things. For instance, the information of Byron bay, where is Byron? Oh, it is in Gold Coast. Oh, Gold Coast is where? Oh, Brisbane. And you start a composition of… I went to Gold coast and to Brisbane. Gumtree, and also, I started to look around… just take a look, a glance at the jobs. So, I started with Indeed. The idea was to pick up the language that you need to describe yourself, or describe your role.

M: How did you decide on the institute for your course?

Cr: Because I read the website completely and it is beautiful what they do because they are very focused, and they compromise with the people since the beginning. Not only to the students who train to become Yoga teachers but also to your students. Safety, it is something very important for this institution. They convinced me and you know, I think I am correct with the decision I made. Skype, yes. Ah, the main one is WhatsApp for long distance relationship with partner.

M: Government required?

Cr: The list of things, requirements that they have is very very long. Now, they went out of my mind but one of them, one of them, I needed to wrote a letter to the government explaining why I wanted to come here. I found that a little bit, maybe, rude because it’s like, too much things to give just to prove that you only want to live here for one year. Maybe because in Argentina we are more welcoming with people and if Aussie…Australian people want to go, we won’t make it hard for them. So, here I need to prove that I have $30000. It was very hard to gather all this money, but I did it. I had to prove a lot of things. They wanted me to prove that I had things in Argentina just to bring me back after the visa, you know and I did it because I have a lot of things to go back to in Argentina. I have my family, my friends. Here I am alone and the only person I have is my partner. But, I bet for this. It’s a bet. And I only need one year for this. In one year we can make the decision – if we get married or if it is over. But, it’s like the government is pushing you, you lie, not lie but you look at different options. For instance, paying a course here just to get a student visa and on the other side I don’t want to get married straight away. I needed the space and the time to live together and see how it goes with each other. I don’t want to run into marriage.

*M: I asked her about the prospective marriage visa*

Cr: Well, yes, we talked about that once but what happened –they push you to get married in certain time. You have 9 months. I don’t want to. I don’t want to. I have lot of things to think about. I have my properties. I have things in Argentina. He has things here. My partner, he has 2 kids. Of course, he needs to think about the kids, and I want to think well if I die. Maybe I am too much realistic. It’s like, there are too much things to think about. Just because getting a title of residence here, just get married. I don’t want to do that. But, I want to love here and I want to enjoy this relationship without the pressure of all of this.

M: Challenge

Cr: Well, yes – upgrade English to speak and write as an equal. Now I am one second, maybe 2 back. What else – find a job. You know one man told me… I never mentioned that I am a lawyer because here it is nothing. In my life I’m not so pretentious with things. So, I never mentioned. I am a little bit like a slow to speak. So, this man, he wanted me to be like a superstar. He wanted to pay nothing because we are talking about, in black, cash, no taxes and he only gave me $15. I only did one trial and he wanted me to become like a superstar and he treat me really bad. Like I mentioned you before, like, misguiding me. He proposed me 2 things. I think he wanted to take advantage me because he proposed me after that if I wanted to go and get some experience with him and work for nothing, not being paid, I can go to his shop. So, work and not be paid. This is one option. And the second option he gave to me was well I have another… he had another company for cleaners and that’s something I don’t want to do. I don’t clean my house. I don’t want to go and clean someone else’s house. Really! I want something I appreciate, and I respect a lot people who do that. Of course, I respect them. In my case, what do I want for me… I want something a little bit more qualified. Slowly, slowly start to get something more qualified. Not like this. Maybe they have an idea that if you are South American or something like that, its like, you need to come here and go to clean. Hey! No. And at the same time he offered me to work for nothing. It is life. It is not fair. And if you get angry, you will lose. You say okay, thank you, I will think about it. Bye-bye. I finish with one list if things. I gathered all the documentation. It was like a mountain – mountain of things. And I say I can relax and I started to feel in my body that sensation of relax. Another list came to my email with new things. You know, really, I forgot about them. But for instance, let’s say, the statutory declaration from my community. That’s something new so I need to look for friends, waiting for them to be available, go to the police. It was really, really hard for me and everything then translated. Well, one moment was that. Everything translated in English. Well it is, I have to say, there is a logic. Its logical but I have no more money because I need to keep my living in my country. I save money because the government of Australia wanted me to prove that I have to support my living here and also paying all of that. I said I can’t, I can’t. My partner, he helped me. He helped me paying the translation. So, I paid for instance to translate my degree and he paid me to translate the rest of the documents. But it was, we are talking about a $1000+ more or less.

M: Community service

Cr: Well, where I used to work it is a community service. I worked for the government, it is for justice, in fact. In Argentina, third world country, everything connected with criminal law, it means that you work for poor people. Well, it’s such a way that I sometimes felt like my job was a mix of criminal lawyer, social assistance, psychologist. It was really like working for the community. I also did other things. Not now but when I was younger, I used to go to community dining room – a place where they feed poor people in Argentina. I did that job. You help with the kids, with their homework, you feed them. And here, I’m starting in Oz harvest. It is that anything connected with food and nutrition is very interesting for me. I went to Oz harvest. It is beautiful. That’s what I am doing now.

M: Future options

Cr: I’m not sure of I like Australia. Interesting right? I think I don’t like Australia. There is something very interesting because everybody talk with such love about Australia that really now, I am intrigued. What is it about it? Why? And its 4 months I am living here, and I came here last year too. Really, I don’t find this something amazing. I like other kind of cities. For instance, Paris. Paris is like a museum on the street. You only need to walk, and you are in the middle of a museum. People have such good manners. Here? no!. People in France they have good manners when they eat. They are delicate. They are like stylish. Here it’s like, everything is like, gross. I’m being a horrible person if I say that. Sorry but well, it’s that. But, I really like very much this person that I found. I came here because of him. I’m just giving an opportunity to this country to fall in love with this country too. I want to. But, sometimes you want but you don’t decide. I’m trying to. He cant move. First thing because he can’t speak Spanish and he’s not willing to learn Spanish. I speak English. Maybe I’m not a C1, C2, but my English is perfect to help me to build our relationship – its enough. He has 2 kids. One of his kids, he’s disabled - yes neurological, physiological, physical. It’s a boy. He’s only 7 years old and doctors say his expectation of life is not too long, you know. The other girl – the girl is good. No problem with her. They don’t live with us but every fortnight they come. Next week, for instance, it’s the girls birthday so we are going to celebrate. Well, instead of that I decided to come here. It’s a challenge. So, I would really like to understand why people are so in love with this country. I’m only in love with him. Well, something that I started to realise about Australia, and I love is for instance, so efficient, with the financial system. I went to the commonwealth bank and it was so easy to open an account. It was 10 minutes. I couldn’t believe it. In Argentina everything is a problem. That’s something that I really like. Now I manage all my money and all my payments through the application and it is amazing. It is easy. I’m so relaxed with that. I try to discover things in the landscape. For example, I went to this exhibition about the revolutionaries in the Melbourne museum. It was amazing and I pushed my partner to come with me because it’s like, maybe I’m wrong, but I think that sometimes maybe Australian people are not interested in culture or maybe, learning new things. They only want to wake up, go to work, come back, eat, go back to work. The routine is too strict. But, in the middle of all this there is culture. Culture is so important because it get people together.

M: Final thoughts?

Cr: This is very important for me. Look, I had a job. I had 2 jobs. One of them was a job for life. You know what I mean. I had that position and the only thing I could do in that position is growing. I quit it. It was very big decision and a very hard decision. I only could improve myself with that role. I kept my job at the university. I have a license there. So, it is 2 years. It is a university for Engineers. So, the subject that I am running there, it is like a cultural subject for future Engineers. So, for instance I have courses in civil Engineering, Mechanical and so on, like something general and they considered me for license. So university - I love it. But the other one, they said no, if you leave, you quit. That was something very hard I need to do. Like, I told you before, to bet for this person, really, look, it’s amazing how things work. I didn’t expect and really, I like him. Yes, I love him. But loving someone is not enough but also how you work together. You can love a charming prince but then the charming prince is like an idiot so you can’t keep that image. But here it’s a person that I love and I like. So, I did a lot of hard things just to give this relationship an opportunity. So, quit very important and stable job in Argentina related with my profession. The only perspective in this job was like, growing. And here, look, I have no problems. If I need to go to work in a coffee shop, I have no problems with that. I don’t like cleaning. I don’t like that. But making coffee, maybe working in a shop – I have no problem with that. Of course, its not something recognized, and qualified like I have in Argentina but its okay.