

Salma Hayek, The Social Activist

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Part-I

Salma Hayek is a Mexican-American Academy Award-nominated actress, born into a wealthy Roman Catholic family to Spanish-Lebanese parents on September 2, 1966, in Mexico. Hayek's mother, Diana Jimenez Medina, was an excellent opera singer, and her father, Sami Hayek Dominguez, was a well-to-do businessman residing in Mexico (Salma Hayek Pinault on Charity and Activism). The time when she decided to pursue acting seriously was when she was diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD, so she returned from Louisiana and joined Universidad Iberoamericana to study International Relations. Hayek's dream came true when she landed the title role in the telenovela *Teresa* in 1989 in Mexico, which made her a shining star. Following her stardom, she decided to study acting at Stella Adler Studio of Acting in New York under the skilled umbrella of Stella Adler, a commendable acting teacher, so Salma Hayek moved to California to explore Adler's technique of acting.

The story that was publicized around the world and I came to know about Hayek because of that was about her putting a tiny newborn baby to her breast whose mother had lost the milk due to malnutrition to feed the baby. Her act was to advocate and minimize the stigma that is always associated with the act of breastfeeding. Hayek, through this act in public, also aimed to highlight the below-the-poverty-line areas in front of the world to encourage infant nutrition in poverty-stricken conditions during a fact-finding trip collaborated with UNICEF (Duvall, 2015). The thing I have always loved about Salma Hayek is her being a hardworking professional who has grown to what she currently is as a famous social activist due to her professionalism and hard work, whether it is her acting or her activism in social and charitable work.

Moreover, Hayek's social work includes increasing awareness regarding domestic violence, the victims of which are always women around the world, to spread female empowerment and take measures to provide shelter to battered women (Salma Hayek Pinault on Charity and Activism). Hayek, on July 19, 2005, reauthorized the [Violence Against Women Act](#) while testifying before the U.S. Senate. Furthermore, she donated \$25,000 to Mexico to support working females, especially women contributing to the household: "I am a feminist today because a lot of women have struggled to make me who I am today" to affirm her stance in support of female empowerment (Duvall, 2015). Hayek, indeed, as a prominent feminist figure, has made activism about women's empowerment and motivation to thrive equally among men in every setting, and these efforts for standing up against the exploitation of women are a key aspect of her public persona.

Part-II

I have always been committed and passionate to helping others in my immediate surroundings who need any kind of help, whether financial, psychological, or moral, boosting anyone's morale to help them survive amid their trying time. The reason why I love to be a helping hand for the people around me is I feel satisfied helping those individuals in need who come from similar backgrounds such as mine. There are numerous experiences I have been through during my childhood that have stimulated my attraction and passion for the field of social work, and this course, "Social Work and Human Services", has further instigated my strong feelings while studying. The first step towards developing the passion for social work that consequently led to foster care was when I was about 10 in a middle-class family where my parents had to work day and night to provide their children with the necessities of life. I started to save my petty cash on a regular basis to help my father out so that he could manage little financial matters at home. At that immature age, I had no idea that my little efforts would consequently lead me to the big cause of becoming an effective social agent.

As I became older, my social work continued to my full potential with the aim that I could not help the entire poverty-stricken world, but people in need around me could live a better life. I also want to state that I have not always been the confident and passionate person I am today, and it is all because of my outside involvement as a social worker in different poverty-stricken areas of my county. Therefore, I have deduced that confidence and passion cannot be achieved through being busy in one's own personal life as it could lead to self-isolation, which can have a negative impact on the mental health of the person. Thus, what I have inferred from Salma Hayek's story of encouraging others and mine as an independent social worker is that life is always better when we are connected to each other sympathetically as well as empathetically to help others in need with kindness, which would consequently give our social life some love.

Works Cited

Duvall, Spring-Serenity. "Not 'Simply the Breast' Media discourses of celebrity, breastfeeding, and normalcy." *Feminist Media Studies* 15.2 (2015): 324-340.

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