As one of the final two contestants on season 11 of American Idol, Jessica Sanchez rose to glory by belting out soaring ballads by the likes of Aretha Franklin and Whitney Houston.

Jessica Elizabeth Sanchez was born and raised in Chula Vista, California, along with her two younger brothers. When the 17-year-old says she’s been singing her whole life, she means it. “I started singing when I was two,” says Jessica. “I took any opportunity I could to sing in front of other people—like at birthday parties or just in front of my grandmother’s friends—but I was so shy that I had to stare at the floor the whole time.” At age 11, the Filipino-Mexican-American appeared on the hit television show, America’s Got Talent, where she wowed the crowd with her cover of song “I Surrender.” “ America’s Got Talent was sort of an experiment,” she says. “It helped me realize the importance of pushing myself and not giving up, not letting anything hold me back from going after my dreams.” Five years later, she got the chance to perform in front of the world again on American Idol season 11.

Although Jessica took the place of runner-up on American Idol she did not allow the loss to affect her dream. She believes that every day is a new opportunity to do something else, focusing on her present moments. “I am very much about big dreams and dreaming big and really hard work. Every day I feel like I have a new goal and a new motivation when I wake up. I always take things day by day.”

Her life after American Idol has been nothing short of wonderful. She has a recurring role on the hit television show Glee; she signed a record deal with Interscope Records for 19 recordings; she recorded and released her first album Me, You & the Music, which made Billboard’s top 200 list of music albums; and she has made guest appearances on Dancing with the Stars as well as American Idol to sing her hit song “Tonight” featuring Grammy award-winning singer/songwriter Ne-Yo.

No matter what obstacles she faces, Jessica Sanchez lives each day with a positive attitude. Focusing her attention on what is happening now in her life, she is always productive and has discovered the “secret” of making her future bright, fulfilling and fun!

This Is It! – Make the most of every moment
Focus your attention on the present. Keep a positive attitude