

Endrit Ferati

ENG1101

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Change Of Environments For The Albanian Immigrant

The date was October 13 of 2006, and I had just landed in JFK International Airport without knowing a single word in English. At such a young age all I thought was that I was on a vacation with my mother but little did I know that I was entering a new chapter in my life. Not knowing that I had to begin a new lifestyle with people I didn't even know existed, to learn a whole different language. I was in for a joyride.

Entering a whole new educational system was my biggest issue due to not knowing how to properly introduce myself to any student or teacher. I was surrounded by a whole different crowd of kids, with different names and nationalities I never knew existed. First week of my kindergarten, the principal insisted that my parents register me into an ESL class and afterschool so I could catch up to all the other students with my reading, writing and English speech. I struggled for over 1 month to learn how to properly say "My Name Is Endrit". I would go home everyday crying to myself thinking I'll never be able to use this new language and that I will never succeed in life. I would tell my parents that I am struggling to learn the language and they would either have a smirk or giggle, and when I tell you that made me so much more upset because I would think that they don't expect much out of me and that they were making fun of me. A few weeks passed and I was finally able to say that sentence almost perfectly. I remember that day like it was yesterday, my mom had picked me up from school and on the walk back from school I was skipping and had a bright smile on my face. I hadn't told my mom the news yet, she was very confused about what was going on. Little did she know I had perfected my first proper sentence in English. When I got home I told them about it, I had never seen my mom's face light up so bright. It brought so much joy to my eyes.

Now we fast forward 6 years. I'm entering middle school. A brand new environment. I don't know anyone there besides my best friend I met in 3rd grade. We didn't know what was coming our way, a whole different vibe as us teenagers would say it. The first day of school approached, I was thinking me and my friend were bound to be put in the same class. Even though I had been in the United States Of America for a couple of years, I wouldn't say my English was the best. I still struggled a little with understanding some classes, I didn't have my paraprofessional with me anymore like I did in my elementary days and I would honestly lose track sometimes of my homework and understanding the lectures during class. But I didn't let my struggles get the best of me. I worked hard for all 3 years, made amazing memories, great friends, and most definitely improved my English skills in all aspects. One memory that stays in my head till this day is at my

8th grade graduation my father had mentioned a quote my grandfather would always mention to my father and his siblings, it was "A person who doesn't challenge their own self is a failure" and when i first heard it i kind of didn't understand it much and didn't bother asking my father what it meant.

3 months have passed and summer break is over. Once again I was entering a different environment and this time it wasn't as hard due to having more friends and getting the habit of transitioning into different environments in my past. But my father mentioned that quote once again and told me to really think about it on my way to school. I was thinking to myself was my father telling me that I haven't fulfilled his expectations on how far I've made it in my journey. I finished my first day at school. I couldn't wait to get home and ask my dad what the quote actually meant. Finally I was able to ask him what it meant. He told me that if i didn't challenge myself to my fullest potential, i wouldn't have accomplished to be the young man i was. Once I heard that I was really mind blown at what it really meant and him telling me that really helped me in my 4 years of highschool. I really enjoyed my 4 years of highschool even though it was cut short 2 years due to the pandemic i still made it worth my while. Till this day i tell my sister never to give up when they hit a bump down the road whether its in school or an outside of school situation. Throughout my high school years every time I had a mental roadblock with anything I would put that quote into consideration and think, would my grandfather be disappointed in me if I gave up over something silly.

Now finally I have entered my final stage of being a student, college. My mom was telling me how a lot of people aren't fortunate enough to make it this far, if it's because they can't afford it and/or don't have access to it or just choose to go down a different route. Both my parents were very proud of the gentleman I have become, especially since I had to adapt to a new environment at such a young age. One thing i can tell anyone that is attempting to adapt to a new environment do not let anything stop you from achieving what you really want, because if you let something so small stop you then you will never achieve your fullest potential in any aspect.