

Sumen Zhao

Experiential Learning Thursday 1:30- 4:30

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Future by Michael J. Fox

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A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Future by Michael J. Fox tells a story about how someone without a high school diploma made it in the United States. He talks about his hardships, and what he endured while attempting to make it as an actor. Education is a complicated topic in which some believe it is about preparing yourself for a profession while others believe it is for mature life.

There are several definitions of education as told by dictionary.com which include “the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life, and the act or process of imparting or acquiring particular knowledge or skills, as for a profession.” Fox talks about an education he received called Life 101 which he believes “...are more appropriate to a certain age or stage of development.”

I believe an education is going through the process in which we know as school, let it be high school or college as well as lessons we learn while working. I feel as if we only have the education we received from classes and teachers it's not enough to survive in the world. While in the hospitality management major in my school, New York City College of Technology, I am delighted to get first hand experience in culinary, baking and also the dining room. While attending classes for this major I believe more in education while in school, but I feel as if the colleges which focus on your major is better than one of general education or liberal arts.

In this time and generation you need experience to get a job and a job to get experience. I believe Fox's father agrees that you need experience because he said “Hey, if you're going to be a lumberjack, you'd better to go the forest,” on Fox's move to California and this implies he has to be in the correct area to even job search. I started my first job when I was 18 and have not

stopped working since then, both because the salary or money I receive from the job helps me indulge in other aspects of life and also I believe the experience I gained from learning cannot be placed on the same level as the knowledge I gain from attending classes in college. While working at an customer experience job you realize guests or customers are always right, and this mindset helps you with life outside of work because it helps you keep a positive outlook on life and also helps you deal with people easier.

Fox talks about an education he received and he described it as “an amazingly comprehensive education, albeit unstructured, and often unbidden, Life 101” after reading the book I realized that what he said was true, life 101 is a course which you did not pick to learn but are forced to learn when you grow up. As I have previously mentioned I gained my positive outlook on life and dealing with problems that come up based on my previous experience while working as a sales representative.

I believe we should have a course which teaches you the basics of life including do your taxes, the pros and cons of a credit card, basic first aid, how to balance a checkbook and others. I believe these are essential parts of life because Fox was panicked and did not know what to do when he received his first tax bill from the IRS. (Fox, 31) Some aspects of life are not common sense and should be taught, or at least overviewed especially if we need to use it for life, even though it is only once a year.

He also mentioned mathematics in the book to figure out where his money goes after “the check passed through the gauntlet of my financial obligations, I barely had enough left over for leftovers.” I believe mathematics is always taught and even though you know how it works, you never truly realize how much it is until you see it being taken out of your paycheck every time

you receive it. When you start paying bills you start realizing how every dollar adds up and how the government takes a little out every week, it adds up as the weeks go by.

Fox didn't have a blueprint when he went to Hollywood to pursue his dreams of becoming an actor, his "dad agreed to drive me down to Los Angeles to find an agent and begin to build a career." A time when I didn't have a blueprint was actually my trip to work at Disney, all I was told was that I would be in quick service food and beverage and my arrival date. Disney did not inform me of my living situation whether it be Vista way, Chatham square, the commons or Patterson court. We were not informed of our work location whether it be at Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Hollywood Studios or Animal Kingdom. Also because I did not know any other people that applied and were accepted into the program I did not chose my roommates.

Upon acceptance into the program I booked a ticket online and also checked how I can travel from the airport to Vista way welcome center. I did not think about my journey to Disney until about a week before arrival when we received a email asking about which housing complex we preferred. After my arrival to Disney we learned of our living situation, work location and roommates and were given a bit more information.

I am delighted I was able to reside in vista way because I do not drive and there are certain stores, such as Wendy's and Walgreens, which are easily accessible by walking. I adapted to my situation because roommates are a hit or miss and it depends on what you would want to come home to after work or on your days off. I was lucky and bonded with my roommates but since we started working we had conflicting schedules and don't see each other much anymore. I am currently working at Pecos Bill inn and cafe at Magic Kingdom and after going through training and around a week of work I was comfortable with my coworkers and

what I was doing. Our menu changed less than two weeks ago and I am still learning about all the new positions as well as front of house because I am getting cross trained.

Fox went through many life experiences and some may say he got lucky but I believed he worked towards his goal and finally achieved it after striving for it for many years. I believe that if I continue towards my goal to be a chef or culinary major I will achieve it, either by continuing on as a culinary student or at a restaurant.

References

(2010). Retrieved October 14, 2015, from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/education>

Fox, M. J. (2010). *A Funny thing Happened on the Way to the Future*. New York, NY: Hyperion.