

#1

I dyed my hair purple yesterday. Not PURPLE, but a dark burgundy that reflects grape neon in the light. Sounds pretty cool, huh? Wrong. I look like a Muppet. I didn't even mean to do it, I simply wanted to have fiery red hair for a week or so, and then wash it out and go back to my dull brown tresses; however, nothing is that simple. So, now I'm stuck with hair color never before seen in nature for who knows how long.

Okay, so bummed. I'll deal with it. I mean, it is not the end of the world, it's just my hair. I wanted to be something that I'm not, to have red hair when I was most obviously destined to be a brunette for as long as I live, and now I'm being punished. I had to try it. How else would I have known that I wasn't really a red-head trapped in a brunette's body? Just like how would I know that Sushi tastes exactly like what it is, unless I tried it. So, it made me sick to my stomach. So, I had to leave the restaurant for fear that I would insult the waitress by tossing my cookies, (a.k.a. seaweed and raw salmon). Not every venture can turn out as planned, but the rewards of those successful experiences far outweigh the drawbacks of the many failures.

That's how I live my life, trying things out. There are some things that even I won't do, and probably never will, like put sour cream on my baked potato, but there are plenty of things that I will do. I will wander around in the library, blindly selecting books, and I'll always find something that interests me. And I'll go out with some guy who looks like a geek, and maybe he'll turn out to be a psychopath who calls me 6 times a day and obsesses over getting a job at the GAP, (it has happened). Or, maybe I'll find someone who is the most loving person I've ever met, (that too has happened). Now, yes, meeting Mr. Wrong, (very wrong), scared me and made me wonder if I should become a nun, but if I had I would never have met Mr. Wonderful, a boy that writes me poetry and brings me flowers and insists I am too thin. If I had never discovered what it was like to be repulsed, how would I have realized that I was in love? From my experiences I have learned that no matter what happens to me, I am not going to give up. I'll always keep trying, never regretting anything, because I know that just by the attempt I have succeeded in overcoming the biggest obstacle of all...fear. And once I have done that, there is nothing else that can stand in my way...not even purple hair.

#2

“Bang”, the starter’s pistol roared, and there on the starting block was four-year old me, not knowing whether to dive in or cry. I am competing in my first meet, having joined my three cousins and my older sister as a member of the “Gators”, an age group swim team, several months earlier. I soon realized swimming was a sport of commitment, requiring daily practices on an almost year round basis. Attracted by the camaraderie and influence by my older sister and my cousins, I readily accepted the challenge and set my sights on the 1996 Olympics.

***“Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler...”***

As I grew older, however, I found myself drawn to other activities. Musicals, student government and, later on, working at our hometown baseball stadium, formed a succession of activities which conflicted with my love of and commitment to swimming. Little by little, and with great difficulty I began to drift away from the tradition of my family, and from a sport in which I had begun to excel, as I made time for these interests.

***“Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted
wear...”***

#3

The one question I wish you had asked is “How has a job experience helped to prepare you to succeed in college?” I never would have thought that telemarketing could benefit me in college, but now as I reflect upon my first job, I realize I have learned many skills. To some, my part time position doesn’t seem significant, but it has given me a better understanding of communicating with different people and achieving my goals. I believe that these qualities I now possess will help me to succeed in college and later in my career.

My first real job experience, besides babysitting, was telemarketing for an insurance agency. I remember feeling nervous and excited as the phone rang. Once the person answered, I would give my sales pitch and try to relate to each person. I learned how to relate to my clients, sell my ideas, and work well with other people. These techniques will help me in my major of chemical engineering because I will have to work in teams, design a product for a specific purpose and type of customer, and then present the design for approval.

Another skill I have developed through telemarketing is how to be mentally determined and focused. Telemarketing can be very frustrating and discouraging. When I would make an appointment, I felt very successful, as if I had achieved my goal. I learned not to give up if I did not succeed at first, but instead to try harder until I was successful. This positive attitude will motivate me to do my best in college and in my career field.

Telemarketing not only gave me insights on communicating with others, it also proved me to be a responsible, reliable, trustworthy person. I was given a key so that I could open the office, work there unsupervised during the evenings, and then lock up. I also developed technical skills that will help me during college as I worked on the computer calculating quotes for both auto and homeowner’s insurance.

This job experience enabled me to develop a better understanding of the world around me. It showed me that in order to successfully work with and for others, I must relate to them and try to understand their perceptions. I am looking forward to college where I can expand my knowledge, meet new people and interact with them in different, unique ways.

One day as I was looking through the New York Times, an article grabbed my attention. The article's title was "Interpreting new world for parents: English puts children in awkward role." In this article, I saw many parallels to my life. My emotions were mirrored by these people whose lives were written about in this article.

When my family moved to the United States, my sister and I learned English more quickly than our parents did. Being the oldest, I was given the job of the family's interpreter. Although my knowledge of the English language was still limited, I tried my best to translate letters from school, bills, and other assorted documents. At first I was overwhelmed with difficult words that I could not understand, so, I tried to learn English more rapidly so that I might be more of a help to my parents. As I grew older, this responsibility of being translator became larger. Soon, I was following my parents to the bank, utility companies, and anywhere else a translator was needed. When my parents' bought a store, I was involved in all their affairs. I knew all the gains and losses of their business. I was aware of the enormous debt that they had accrued over the years. I was involved even until they were nearly bankrupt and had to close the store. Knowing all this pained me very much. I felt that in some way I was robbed of that feeling of bliss when a child is ignorant of his parents' concerns. However, I also felt happy that I was able to help my parents in their time of need.

I realize that because of the way I was raised, I have matured more quickly than I would have under "normal" circumstances. Nevertheless, I do not hate my parents for rearing me under these circumstances. I know that I would have felt worse if I had not assisted them. I felt that being exposed to the real world, the world of bills and debts, has made me wiser, smarter, and definitely more aware of the world outside school and family.

Reading this article created a feeling that I can not fully describe. In some way I can positively say that this article comforted me. I felt that I was the only person amongst my peers who had parents who needed a translator and had always envied other children whose parents spoke perfect English. I was comforted by this article because there were other people who have felt the same emotions that I had felt. As I was reading this article, I wished that I could talk to these people who had endured through the same experience.

I do not see my knowledge of all my parents' concerns as a burden. Instead, I see it as a responsibility, and like all my other responsibilities, I handle it carefully and maturely without shying away from it. Although being aware of all the household matter is sometimes painful, I feel satisfied in knowing that I have helped my parents. A sense of accomplishment fills me in knowing that after all those years where my parents have helped, and continue to help me, I am now also helping them.