



Getting An Education

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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Today I am going to share Alexander's story.

Alexander is the older of two children. He didn't really like school until he entered Foothills Composite High in Okotoks where he met a teacher who encouraged and inspired him. Chef Greg Poile, who is the head of the Culinary Fine Arts program, got Alexander involved in preparing and serving lunches for the school cafeteria and volunteering as a sous chef for charity events. Alexander's interest in food grew as he worked part-time throughout high school in the produce department of a local grocery store.

When Alexander graduated, he had scholarship money to claim but his employer offered him a position as the Produce Manager. An increase in salary and the title motivated him to forego further education. He worked hard, saved his money and learned a great deal about people over the next couple of years. One day, two of his employees got in a fight. One ended up in the hospital and the other in jail. So much for staff! Alexander just worked harder!

Because we are close and I have experience with universities, Alexander asked for advice. He wanted to keep his job and stay in Okotoks but had decided that he was ready to pursue further education. We discussed the options and he enrolled in an accredited marketing degree program that he could do over the internet. He committed himself and now averages two hours a day on course work instead of just computer gaming or watching television.

About a year ago, Alexander applied for a position in Calgary with a large food distribution company. The first day he was given a promotion when management learned that he was enrolled in a marketing program. At the staff Christmas party that year he was introduced as the company's youngest employee. Since then he was promoted to an organic produce marketing position. In the spring he was delighted to receive a large Income Tax refund because of his tuition deductions.

On July 26th, Alexander celebrated his twenty-first birthday. He has an excellent job, great resume, money in the bank and almost half of the courses needed for his degree.

How do I know all this? Because Alexander is my oldest grandchild.

If you are unhappy with your career, why not use Alexander's story as an inspiration:

1. Try something new - Don't try to figure everything out. Milton Garland was the oldest working man in the United States and, when interviewed at the age of 102 years, explained his theory. Do something and when you get good at it, you will like it and then you won't want to quit!
2. Find a mentor - When you have someone who has a passion for something that grabs your interest then you will be inspired by them.
3. Absorb yourself in learning environments - Become a volunteer, get a job and take serious interest in finding opportunities to gain knowledge and skills in the area you choose.
4. Do good research - Consult with someone who has personal experience with higher learning and can share information about educational options to help you reach your goals.
5. Take a chance - You really haven't much to lose and a great deal to gain by setting new goals. There are so many financial and educational resources available that your biggest investment will likely be your time.