



OF EXPERIENCE AND EXPERIENCES

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Experiences in our daily lives often serve as a tremendous reservoir of information and guidance for how we eventually define ourselves in the future. We should never consider a single experience as being singularly influential or motivational. A single experience could inspire us more greatly than all others, but a life lived fully considers all experiences as vital and contributory to what is and what will be.

Take teaching for example. A young teacher is well-advised to seek the wisdom of those who have come before her. She should never consider a good educational background as the only passport to career success. She must never think of herself as being in a league of her own, for she is yet to fashion her own league. Instead, she must look to older, more experienced teachers who had started molding countless minds long before she stopped wearing baby diapers. She should look to older advice and older ways of teaching, for in these times of more enlightened education and the never-ending introduction of newer learning concepts, it is still the old ways that genuinely work. In order for a young teacher to become effective at her chosen profession, she needs to trust the educational system that has molded her to become what she is now.

Priests and nuns often derive stories from their day-to-day experiences and encounters with people to create more convincing settings for their advice-giving. I have often observed my favorite priestly sermons begin with amusing personal anecdotes and end with lessons on life in connection to the day's biblical gospels. I find that the more extraordinary priests are never afraid of exposing their daily grind for our daily bread. Such men of the cloth and nuns, too, have never forgotten that the choice to become servants of God had stemmed from their personal experience and experiences of finding God in the smallest of ways.

Parenthood is another arena that needs both experience and experiences to become more effective and efficient. No, we should not approach being a parent as always having to wing it, despite the modern concepts on bringing children up. Parenthood plays a delicate balance between what is right and what needs to be done. It is not some kind of specialized field where one size fits all—it is a veritable plethora of contradictions and concessions. Parents should exercise parental authority steadily but gently, firmly but lovingly. Rules are rules, but who is to say when a child would eventually commit an infraction and thereby create changes in the regulations?

Dear reader, you might be in an entirely different career path from those mentioned above. But it helps to never forget that your experiences in life and whatever experience you amass for your career ultimately shape you into what you are now and what you'll become in the future.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Why is it important to take our personal experiences as a whole and not singularly when we plan our future?
2. How is experience in a career contributory to one's future in that career?
3. Is there any particular person in your field whom you admire for his/her experience in the industry? What makes this particular person special?
4. How can someone new to your field amass experience necessary to succeed? Be as specific as needed.
5. Why is relevant experience on the job often a qualification used by employers in the hiring process?