

A Perfect Life

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An essay written for an advanced writing class, during my time at The Evergreen State College. This essay really helps readers simplify and view life from a different perspective.

I doubt that any person could ever honestly state, "My life is perfect and I lived my life exactly how I planned it when I was younger." There are just too many "underterminables" that cause "problems" when determining where you are going and how you will get to have a "perfect life." One moment you are on top of the world, the next you are feeling at your all time low. While at The Evergreen State College, I have realized that; all people are perfect, vocabulary is important, perception is everything and life is one long journey with its many unexpected turns, hills and valleys.

You can compare life to planning a road trip. You can record the time and date you plan to reach your final destination, the sites you want to see and believe you know why you are going there. You can map out the route you wish to take, but no matter how well you may have planned, something always happens that you did not and cannot anticipate.

How could I have ever been prepared for the hardships that I endured thus far in my life? I have fallen in love a couple of times and fallen in lust too many. I have spent my hard-earned cash on a few

good investments and foolishly spoiled away thousands of times more. I have had good times and bad times in my dealings with friends, family and acquaintances. However, I fear that I could have acted better and more wisely. Thus, have had better relationships and gained more wisdom from healthier interaction with those who surrounded me. After all, wisdom comes only from experiencing interaction with people, places, things or ideas.

Experience can be gained in dealing with people, reading a book, watching a movie, taking a trip or whatever. In order to find happiness in our experiences, we must live. We must learn from living, and we must love to learn.

Likewise, if we do not love to learn and refuse to live by declining to participate in life by attempting to gain experiences, we are not really living life. After all, the only kind of person that does not learn is one that is no longer living and therefore, dead. It is our experiences of learning that determines who we become and identify us as individuals. Therefore, our experiences from birth to death are the ingredients that become our strengths and weaknesses. I believe our strengths and weaknesses begin their development both in the womb, when our bodies are forming and at birth.

As newborns, the first thing we learn to do is breath. We do not even have to think about breathing, because it is an automated life-

function. However, we do have to learn how to move our fingers, move our arms and legs and eventually rollover, crawl, walk then run.

These initial life experiences, as trivial as they may seem, are learned and exemplify learning in its purest form. We learn by gaining experiences, by doing something, a little at a time and building upon those experiences. We rarely, if ever, acknowledge that in order for us to walk, talk or read, we first had to learn how to stand up, learn to articulate sound and associate shapes as letters that form words. We just do it! Walking, talking and reading become automated-learned experiences that we constantly use and build upon.

Wisdom comes from learning, through gaining experience and from living. We grow wiser by building upon our own experiences, both positive and negative. If we have an experience that is positive, like saying "Please" at the dinner table and being rewarded by a parent for using good manners. We learn from the doing of the action; saying "Please" combined with the positive outcome; the reward; "Good job!" from our parent. From that minute experience, a positive association is created in your memory and wisdom is learned.

Likewise, if you tell your parent you hate peas and then throw your plate across the table, chances are you will quickly learn that exhibiting those behaviors will have a negative outcome on your hind-end. You would learn it is not wise to throw food and will probably

learn a more positive manner in which to express your feelings. You would develop a negative association in your memory. With such like actions, you would also gain a little bit of wisdom that will later be used in dealing with people and expressing your feelings to get positive results.

My life has been filled with many rewards and positive experiences from which I have learned and gained wisdom from. Not all my positive experiences felt so positive when they were happening. However, after all the was said and done, I realized that those negative experiences were opportunities to learn from, that helped me to make better decisions when similar or worse experiences occurred. The final outcome, I have become a better, smarter and wiser person for enduring my "negative" experience.

I guess you might say, "There is no such thing as a negative experience." If you can endure and live through a negative experience, there is always something that can be learned from it. Consequently, you become a better, wiser person for it.

I have also learned that if I practice doing something wrong, I get better at doing it wrong. If I try then fail, try it another way and fail, then do it a completely different way and have positive results; I learn something new. For that very reason, I believe that wisdom is

the product or outcome of combining experience, patience and practice.

In my journey through life, I know that I am no where near where I planned on being, when I was ten. I do know that everything has happened for a reason. Every fall, every failure, every wrong turn, every curve in the road, every "bad" experience, is no accident and not truly a problem, but an experience to build upon and a challenge.

Challenges are really opportunities to experience endure and learn from. Therefore, we should not ever regret making mistakes, because there are no such things as mistakes. What some people may classify as mistakes, are actually opportunities for growth in knowledge and wisdom. They are no different than the opportunities you shared with your parents, at the dinner table with a plate of peas, when you were a child.

I believe that no person should ever look for pity for not being where he or she planned on being in life. Every person has done and is doing exactly what he or she was meant to do; live life by building upon experiences, one at a time.

Since there truly is no such thing as a mistake, just opportunities for growth, then everybody should claim to have a "perfect life." It could be said that the only difference between living a life of happiness or of depression, caused from a feeling of inadequacy is perception.

Imagine how perfect life would truly be if all we did was eliminating a few choice words and then went to The Evergreen State College in Tacoma.