

Topic: Hard work Pays Off

Abstract: My family immigrated to Texas with very little. My family worked in the fields all over the United States. As time passed education was an important part of our lives. After my dad graduated from college, he was able to provide a successful life for our family. The values passed on from generations in my family are hard work, family loyalty, and to pursue a higher education.

Key Words: Family, hard work, dedication, life, opportunities, successful Americans, grandparents, generations, cultural values

Ethnic Designation: *Mexican-American*

Cultural Category: Family Values

The Past, Present, and Future

Being raised in a Mexican-American family, I was taught strong cultural values. These values included; hard work and dedication, loyalty to family, and to pursue a higher education. My father was taught these values by his parents and now has passed them on to my brother and me. With his past experiences and our family history, I am able to understand the importance of the values they have instilled in me. These values I was raised on, are the same ones I will one day pass on to my own children.

My father's parents, my grandparents, were born and raised in Texas. Their parents immigrated from Mexico into Texas when they were very young. They grew up very poor with limited resources available. In order to keep a roof over their heads and

food on the table each family member was forced to begin working at an early age. Both my grandma and grandpa began working in the fields picking various fruits and vegetables at just the age of ten. They would travel around the United States looking for work opportunities with their families. Together they worked on their hands and knees for minimal pay, just to make a struggling living. For the purpose of having to begin work at age ten, both were unable to continue their education any farther than the eighth grade level. They did not know any English and only spoke Spanish. Communicating in the United States was difficult for them, but they adapted and learned the English language relatively quick. Without very much schooling my grandparents were in for a difficult life, so it would seem? This was not the case, both worked extremely hard at each job they had. The reason they became successful people today is because they had the drive and focus to pursue their goals in life, and would not settle for anything less.

My grandpa lead a group of 100 or more men of the Shelton Manufacturing company that was involved in the RV industry. He did this without even attending high school; his determination to not let any man take his pride and confidence because of education differences got him to that point. He also, later worked at one of the largest and most thriving companies at the time; IBM. He held this job position for over twenty years and developed two assembly and manufacturing patents. Without any education he was able to become a successful American. His past experiences were passed down to my father. He wanted him to gain a higher education so he would not have to work hard labor jobs as he did as a young boy. He always wanted a better life for his children, and that's why he worked so hard to be able to provide better and more opportunities for his kids.

Even though he and my grandma were unable to attend school themselves, they believed that in order to live a successful life you had to attend college.

My father was only the second person in our close family to graduate from high school; the first was his sister, my aunt. My dad took it one step further and attended a junior college. He attended and graduated from Gavilan College. He was proud to be the first to reach these milestones in our family so he decided to go to a four-year university. Although he and our family could not afford to pay for a university, he went anyways because my grandparents pushed him to. He knew that with our growing economy, college graduates were those who were going to be successful and live a good life. After Gavilan he took his studies to Chico University where he practically financed himself through college with a little help from his parents. He took the values that his parents gave to him and reached his goals in life. Other kids would have given up and be satisfied with finishing high school, but he pushed through and never let his drive of a better future for his own life and his family's life. Every step he took was because of my brother and me; he had me when he was just twenty-one years of age. He didn't want me to struggle growing up, so he finished college in order to be able to provide and give me more opportunities for the future.

The values taught to my father from his parents are the same as the ones he is teaching me now. These values will continue to be passed down through generations in our family. The reason I attend college is because I want to one day give my children the same opportunities my family has given me. I have learned from both the past and the present core values of life. Even though my grandparents did not attend school they knew the importance of education. They stressed this to my father and he now stresses this to

me. The purpose of a higher education is to be able to provide for your family. Family is the most important aspect of our lives and they never let me forget that. Every decision I make is a reflection upon our entire family.