

**Topic:** My experience of my working childhood

**Abstract:** As a kid since I remember, until I finished high school, I remember envying other kids. I hated getting out of school because I knew I had to go to work. My mother told me that my father used to take me to his yard maintenance business since I was able to walk. Soon after I would start helping him out. If I would ask for something else besides food they would tell me that I had to work for it, and I was only about 5 or so. I hated holidays because it meant that there was going to be no class, and instead of going outside and play with friends I would have to work instead. Its my parents background and the class level that they were part of in Mexico that made them raise me in that way.

**Keywords:** Early child work, Mexican parents and their traditions, parents education Towards their children.

### My Fun Childhood

I remember up to this day what my dad said to me when I asked him if they could get me a Nintendo. My fathers answer was, *“quieres jugar? Pos ai'ta el pico y pala”*. He told me to play with a shovel. I have been working since I remember mostly in my fathers yard maintenance business. Since I was able to pull a weed out of the ground. Later I was about 8 years old when I was able to maneuver the lawn mower but wasn't able to push it because it was too heavy. My dad would not let that be an excuse, so he bought a transmission lawnmower, all I had to do was walk behind it and steer it. According to them if we want something we have to earn it. When I wanted new shoes and my old shoes did not have holes yet, then I had to work to get new ones.

At first when I first started going to work with my dad I did like it. I had the idea in my head that work paid off. I was about 6 and for every house that I pulled weeds out

of, I would get a dollar while my dad did his job. At the end of the day I would have ten dollars or more. I never got to see that money I guess it was just an imaginary account and every time my parents would buy me shirt or shoes they would say that it was coming out of my money. My parents had come from Michoacan where they had to work all day , never went to school because they had to work. So sometimes when I didn't want to work my father would tell me that when he was my age he had to work and there was nothing he could do, if he refused then his dad would correct him in a painful way. I had no choice.

When I was in the fourth and fifth grade I would hate it when my dad would pick me up from school in his old working truck. I was embarrassed and wondered why everyone had nice cars and my parents didn't. We wouldn't go home after he picked me up we would go back to his work. Driving off I would crouch a little so that people wouldn't see me. I was starting to get a little older and I would care about what people would think or say. This is when I started hating work. I would wonder why my dad did not have an office job or a worked in something else besides yard maintenance. In my eyes yard maintenance was the most "Mexican" job out there. Sometimes it would be hot but I would still wear a sweater to cover my head, I felt like people wouldn't recognize me. Classmates would get excited when we had spring break or winter break. Summer was the time that kids waited for, But I hated it. I worked after school and on weekends. During the summer while everyone was out playing videogames and playing soccer or football, or do nothing I was stuck working.

Its been said that Mexicans do the work that no one wants to do , and cheap too.

My dad also said that we are hard workers and if I ever complained then I had no hope. Once he told me that in Mexico there is a lot of beggars and homeless. But here in the united states I had to work because I was Mexican . He asked me if I seen beggars and I told him that I had seen them around. Then he asked me if any of them were Mexican? I couldn't think of any , and to this day im sure there is but I have not seen one. He told me that instead of begging for a dollar, they would beg for work in front of Home Depot.

To be more specific of how much I worked at an early age I can say that more than 10 of my fathers clients told my dad that I was too young to be working, and one lady I remember that she didn't want my fathers service because she didn't want to be responsible in any way if something happened to me while I worked with some of the machines. During middle school I was going to work a lot more. I would go in to school close to 8am. So it meant that I could work for an hour and a half or maybe two before my dad dropped me off at school. I just kept my shoes in the truck. That's all a had to change from work to school and then back to work after school. Weekends were not a big deal to me since I had to go work from 6 am until around 4pm. To top it off my uncle was given permission by my dad to take me to work in his stucco business, all I had to do was mix the concrete mix with a shovel. During middle school I was sent to Mexico fro about two months every year during winter break. For most of us it probably would have been exciting to hear that . But the whole idea of me getting sent to Michoacán was to help my grandpa with his work because my father couldn't leave his business. While I was in Michoacan he said that I would see how my fathers childhood was. I would wake up 3am we would saddle up the horse every morning so we could go milk our cows that

were about 3 miles away into the hills. Later we would just work on random things like fixing poles, digging, *cosechando*, *moliendo rastrojo* , and moving hay.

I look back now and I think my mind, and way of thinking changed during the last years of middle school. I didn't care what other people were doing, if they were hanging out after school or doing whatever it was they did. There was never a time that I did not go to work with my dad even if I hated it but toward that time in middle school I knew that I had to go and work. My parents were people who didn't ever go to school, were poor and that's what forced them to pursue a life here. With the experience they had in Mexico they tried the best in raising me. I remember the only time I watched television was when chivas or Mexico national soccer team played , usually on Sundays. During my childhood up until high school I never had a tv in my room. And I wouldn't dare to go watch tv in the living room because I knew my dad would probably say that if I had time to waste then I should waste it helping him out around the house. There was never a day and still up to this date, a day where he has stayed still. He is a workaholic. He was always doing projects around the house and that meant I was doing them too. I didn't have the time to goof off and keep up with the simpson shows as all the other kids did.

I been working since I remember. There was always time or work and at first I was forced to fill that time with work but now its something that im proud of. The recent years from 14 to 18 I was able to work a part time job plus school and also my fathers work. Sometimes from 5 am to 11pm working non stop. Two jobs and at sometimethree.

Sometimes I feel like I got robbed from my childhood but when I look at myself today I have nothing to complain about. I never got to own a Nintendo, and now that there is Xbox and PlayStation I have never played any of them. I don't know the name of artists or the name of celebrities. To this day I do not know how a summer without work feels. The only time I did not work over the summer, I was probably too young to remember maybe under 5. But I do know how to survive and I think that's what my parents wanted to teach me and get me ready for. If I could go back and change anything about my childhood or the way my parents raised me I wouldn't change a thing. It obviously worked at least for me. I'm 20 years old today and own my own yard maintenance business and manage my father's workers for his business, also going to school and sometimes wondering why if I'm already making enough. But my father wasn't wrong in raising me the way he did and I don't think he's wrong when he says I should go to college.