Luis Hernandez

Joseph, Long

Work of Art

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Autobiography

I, Luis Hernandez see myself as a person that is very determined, as someone that wants to dream big, and as someone that knows my state of mind will keep on changing as my experience in this world continues to grow. My major influences have been my parents. They both came here as illegal immigrants and have showed me that anything is possible. I have been absorbing as much as I can from what I see and try to make something of this world and my purpose on it.

My determination to overcome any obstacle has been due to the fact that I have had two role models since I was little, they are my parents and for this attitude on life that they have instilled in me, is something that I am very grateful for. They always remind me that no matter what the problem is or how hard a situation looks the will power of a human being can rise above. Of course these are just words that they spoke to me and as a kid I would pay some to attention to them, but quickly forget about it later on.

When I was 10 my parents finally had fixed their citizenship and decided to take us on a trip to Mexico. We originally lived in San Diego, but right after the trip to Mexico we were moving to Idaho to move into our new home that my parents had just bought. When we got to Mexico my parents took us to where they lived when they were infants. Honestly, their old houses looked like something that you see on African Documentaries. There was a well where they would get water from, the house was built from adobe bricks and the stoves ran on fire. I was in humbled to see that the two closest people to me, my father and mother had come from such place. There was no opportunity to make money, or to have a stable job, or to even go to school. As my dad put it, they worked the land and they had only enough to feed themselves and survive. My mom’s house wasn’t much better. It was a bit more modern, but still it was a very poorly constructed house that was located on a somewhat violent neighborhood. At that moment I began see that I was very fortunate to have been born in the United States of America and that it was all because my parents made the decision to live here. We were not rich, but if I compared my dad’s childhood to mine, mine was probably 100 times better than his. I had so much things to be grateful for.

After we left Mexico, we flew to Idaho and we moved in to the two story house that my parents bought. Compared to the apartment that we lived in in San Diego the house was massive. Now I saw the big picture. I saw all three stages and I saw that all the hard work that my parents put forth was to better the life of our family. They went from living in Mexico, to crossing the border and finding an apartment, to finally being able to buy their house and further their children’s’ education, something that their parents were not able to do for them. Nothing was given to them, they created their own success with their own two hands. From then on something clicked. The easiest way to put it is that any time I feel I’m struggling with anything, I recall the moments that my dad described; the days where he would have to get up around 3, feed the cattle, walk to his bus stop that was an hour away, return and harvest the crop, where he would barely had time to do any homework or sleep, and still get a good grades in high school. He was not going to go to college because he was too poor. He didn’t know how, but he knew he was going to be different than all his previous family members and make something of himself. Against all odds he succeeded, so how can I complain. I am already here in the US, have my parents support, resources, and opportunities. All I have to do is do push through. The way I end up seeing it is if my parents could achieve success under those circumstances, than I should at least double it under mine. Yes, I stay up 2 whole days some times to finish a painting and my homework , and yes I biked 12 miles to a job interview at three in the morning, but I don’t mind it because I can do anything with my determination.

The reason that I am going to college is to peruse a dream not a job. I have seen and it has been made very clear to me that there is a difference between the two. A job is something that you know you do for the money not because you like it. A dream is when you peruse something that you have always wanted to do. Not many people peruse a dream because it is so much riskier, you usually don’t think it will happen, or you do not believe in yourself. I have chosen to peruse my dream of getting a job related to art because I know that once I make it I will be so much happier than if I was to do a regular job. The one rule that I have set for myself to guarantee that I will make it, is that I have to be good at whatever I want to be, not matter what it takes.

One thing that has really lead me to peruse my dream of getting a job in art is my father. We are all here because we have been given the gift of life, but my father’s was almost taken when he got heart surgery. He doesn’t really like to talk about it, but from what I know he went into cardiac arrest and they had to bring him back. I was very young at the time and thankfully I don’t remember anything of it, but now thinking about it really scares me. Just the thought of having a life without my father really is unfathomable. As I grew older this thought of how we all have only a certain time in this world started to linger. Death is a very depressing subject, we must all go sooner or later, so when I go I want to have no regrets, or dreams that were never fulfilled. I won’t fail because when you peruse a dream no matter how it ends, you know that you at least gave it your all.

Lastly and most recently moving here to Portland to study has really opened up my mind about many things both good and bad. For one, although I already worked and was enrolled in college some courses before I moved here it was nothing like going to an actual university. In this environment I am really pushed to finish my projects on time. Unlike high school, you can’t turn in a project late and although it was hard I think that I have learned to better manage my time. No one will push me around to do my assignments and although I never needed it, there is a bigger sense of satisfaction when I can get good grades independently.

Another great thing is that I have been able to do is spend more time painting. I have found more free time since I moved out of my house in Idaho and although there are parties and I do go sometimes, I usually choose to paint or illustrate. I am taking 17 credits so when I really want to take my time on a painting I must stay up late and put in the extra hours.

This leads me to my final thought about the education that I am getting here at Portland State University and the confidence that I am getting. Don’t get me wrong, the city is way better than living in Nampa, Idaho and I have been very satisfied with all my courses. It’s just that I have noticed that all the time that I have put into painting, illustrating, basically any art, has served as a way to teach myself. For example, the first few days in my design class they began to show us the different elements of painting such as gradients, lines, hues, blending etc. I don’t want to sound rude, but it wasn’t a helpful lecture. You can tell a student how to draw and what techniques to use, but without practice they will not execute it right. What I am trying to say is that you can tell when someone is passionate about art because in a weird way you can see their experience as soon as they take the first brush stroke. And I am confident that in that class I have put in much more effort in my art. I hope that as the classes’ center more around my subject that I will see more of these dedicated artist. I am not trying to sound cocky at all, but so far my art classes seem too easy.

 I still have much learning to do in this world. I know that 10 or even 5 years from now my view of things might slightly change or be completely obscured. Portland is really a great place that has allowed me to develop as an art major and I can see that there will be much bigger opportunities here compared to living in Nampa. So far I’ve lived in three different states and they have shaped me into what I am. From living in the poor side of San Diego, to going to a nice neighborhood where I spent about six years, to moving to Portland. No matter what the place is or how much time passes I believe that these three attitudes on life will remain with me. They are a vital thing to my success and happiness and thanks to my parents, I know that I will keep on perusing my dream. The day that I am taken from this world I want to be satisfied with the way I live my life and so far, even with all the obstacles that have arose, I think I am.