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## Less Money, Mo' Problems

V.S.

## The Greater Reward

Recently, my mom reminded me when I was seven years old, I said I wanted to work at the chicken place. She then asked if I wanted to own the chicken place. To this, I replied, “No, I think it would be fun to give people their food through the drive-through window.” I vaguely remember specifically wanting to be employed by a “chicken place.” Still, I know for sure that I wanted to be a McDonald’s worker.



That honestly seemed like one of the best jobs at the time. I could get free or discounted food, make money, play on the inside playground, and work at a drive-thru, which I previously thought the concept of was so cool. I’m not exactly sure what the appeal was for me, but back then, it was awesome. So awesome that I would even practice giving my mom food via a makeshift drive-thru. I set up whatever could form the rectangular-ish shape, gathered my fake

food products, and truly put my heart and soul into “selling” food to my mother. Bless her heart, she put up with me trying to perfect her “order” and making sure I served it correctly: directly into her hand, with a smile, and a “Have a great day” to send her on her way as a satisfied “customer.”

For as long as I can remember, I wanted to work. More specifically, I liked the benefits that came with having a job. Or, to be even more precise, I wanted to make money. Since then, I’ve always come up with ideas to earn money and hustle my way to **success**. Quite a few

business plans spawned during the early 2010s: I was still in the early stages of a business called *Fun Fundraisers*, where people could sell their own original products, and a small amount of profit would go to the company itself, while the majority would go to the creator and a fundraiser of their



choice. I aspired to have my own babysitting business, going as far as making a flyer stating it was \$5 per child babysat. Inspired by a favorite show of mine, *Ed, Edd n' Eddy*, I fancied the “Rich Club” scheme for kids. Though joining the club would require payment to get in. Even though my creativity and drive would run wild during this time, they remained in their infancy. The train never left the station. I guess it’s primarily because I was still a kid and didn’t have much concern for things I agonize over now. I had a home, clothes, a bed, food, and transportation: all for free. Anything I desired (within reason) was provided by my family, mainly my mom.

My mother was very encouraging with my “projects” but would sign me up for other things I could earn money doing. My cousins and I had the opportunity to audition for talent



companies. Eventually, I ended up getting a job modeling for a zoo pamphlet. What would now be a simple \$100 check back then meant I was rich. Though I learned early on what it meant to be financially responsible and to provide for my family, as my mother used half of it to pay for essential groceries. My grandmother thought I

could use my talents and become a child star, often saying I should audition for Disney Channel. That idea, however, was not approved by my mother due to her being weary of the industry itself and me having a career as a minor.

I think modeling was just something fun for me as a child, but she was not particularly on board with me having a job. She kept me involved with extracurricular activities like dance, gymnastics, karate, and taekwondo. Coming into public school, I wanted to be involved with as much stuff as possible, which has carried into high



school with me. I have always felt I had to do activities to be busy so I don't feel lazy or left out. Subsequently, having so many activities made it difficult to work on my side hustles or have time

for a job. Though my friends would end up being able to work alongside doing their own ventures, my mom wasn't supportive of me doing both.

My mom said I should focus on my studies and what activities I was already participating in. Her intentions were to help me avoid the stresses that accompany juggling work and academics. She did not want me to be overwhelmed with it all and just enjoy my musical and athletic pursuits in school. I have constantly heard from adults that I should be able to enjoy my activities and just be young in general. My Track and Field coach in high school would say it would be best to enjoy being a kid instead of working while in high school. He thought we would have plenty of time to work later in life.

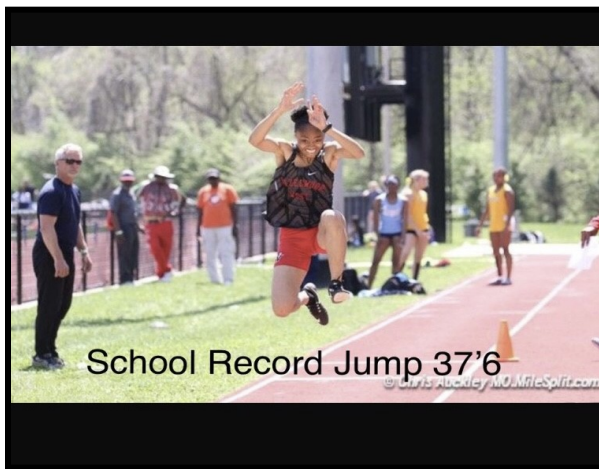
I, however, have always disagreed with this point of view. From my perspective, I was missing out on some critical straight-out-of-a-movie quirks of being a teenager: Going to school and balancing it with working a basic job, but earning money for yourself, acquiring skills like time management, working well with others, saving up for things that you'll need like a car, etc. In my opinion, working is an integral part of being an adolescent. Working can open so many doors financially and career-wise and add stability and structure to life, even while young. It can be hard to enjoy youth without having your own money and constantly having to depend on others. Reliance on others can sometimes enable someone to not do things they need to themselves.

Now being on my own, for the most part, as a college student, I figured it was time to try to earn



some income. I am not fond of relying wholly on family for essentials when I should be capable of getting them myself. The constant thoughts of running out of resources and not being able to afford things honestly motivate and frighten me simultaneously. Still, the habit of being involved with a couple of things on campus has proven a bit difficult for me to get a job.

It all has given me the chance to go back to when I was young and develop ways to make money on the side. Nevertheless, I realized it was hard to think of something more convenient for potential customers: I'm not that great at doing hair, not proficient with core classes to tutor, and I would have to work around not just my own schedule to revise/peer review students' papers/work, right now I don't have a license or car to door dash or give people rides for money, I only have basic skills with sewing and don't have the money to buy a sewing machine so I could fix or design others clothes, and the list goes on. I do realize that these can just sound like excuses. Or I'm enabling myself with all the activities I choose to participate in. I would say that those activities provide the same skills that a job would, rewarding better enjoyment of what you



work towards, instead of just working towards the reward of getting paid.

Even so, I am presently working on applying for jobs on campus. It is more convenient due to not having a car to travel outside school.

Since I've never had a job before, I had to receive extra guidance on putting together a

resume. It has all been new to me, but I still wish I had started the whole process in high school.

Now, it seems, it is time to play catch up. In the end, I have still not found whether or not growing up without having a job was beneficial. My hope for the future is to find a suitable

reward to align with where I see myself and to find an answer to my everlasting query. Does less money cause mo' problems, or does the greater reward invite mo' problems? Someday I will uncover the answer to this wicked question.

## Works Cited

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