**What did your part-time job (or jobs) teach you?**

I had a part-time job at a coffee shop for my final three years at college. At first, I worked only on the weekends, and then I worked during semester breaks during the week. It was a valuable experience, which I can summarize in these three areas. ***First***, it taught me the difference between a good boss and a bad boss. Second, I learned that a smile and friendly personality can go a long way. And ***third***, it enlightened me on what kind of job I want, and don’t want.

First, I learned that all bosses are not created equal. I started out as a server and then gradually moved up to cashier. My boss during the week was also the franchise owner. She was a good boss. She very patiently ***showed me the ropes*** and was forgiving when I would make mistakes. She was a hard worker, but ***easy going*** and ***led by example***, and ***shared the credit*** whenever we had a good night. The weekend manager was basically a ***lazy malcontent***, who I suspect may have occasionally ***cooked the books***. She was a textbook example of ***crisis management***. She never took action until there was an emergency. I realized that a good boss is like a good parent, everything good or bad starts with them.

Second, from these two opposite bosses I learned the business value of a smile and friendly personality. The happiness of every customer was not important to me, but I pretended that it was. I found that smiling and being pleasant had a calming affect on customers. When I was very nice to customers they responded likewise to me. It was like a mirror, you get back what you send out. I noticed that the owner would find something to compliment about every customer, their hair, clothes or eyes, something. And that really brightened up the customer’s day. So, I started handing out compliments to everybody: parents, classmates, professors, and I see the benefit. Seeing how the manager handled people made me a better person, I think.

Third, I know it’s the dream of a lot of people, but I don’t think I want to be self-employed. The owner worked so many hours every week, and hardly had any time for a vacation. I’d like a stable job with the government or a big company, that has good benefits. For example, full medical insurance and good retirement. And I especially do not want a long commute. I commute to school three hours a day, no more. So, I either want to live close to work or be able to work from home, or have flexible hours. At the coffee shop I also enjoyed meeting people, so I wouldn’t want a job in an office all by myself, crunching numbers or working on my computer all day long.

In sum, my part-time job was a valuable learning experience. ***First***, it taught me a boss can be the source of all your happiness, or unhappiness. They set the tone. Happy boss, happy worker. ***Second***, I learned that I could be good in sales: I can handle rejection (a little), and when needed I can turn on the charm. ***Finally***, I’d like a stable job that gives me a stable life, with good work-life balance. In addition to that, my boss said that she could write me a great letter of recommendation if ever I needed. And that letter is included in my resume package. (577 words)

Good boss Smiles are infectious Big Company

  