

Growing up and going into the real world can be a scary. When I thought of going into the real world before hand it scared me. I was nervous that I would fail and would not be able to get to where I want to go.

At Ponderosa Hall I have been able to meet some fun, interesting, and inspiring characters. Caroline Beteta, Mike Naggiar, John Gregory, and Stephanie Ortiz to name a few. These people are all outstanding and all have worked very hard to get to where they are today. But these skills that they have obtained and these goals they achieved were in no way handed to them. In fact, they all struggled in one way or another to reach the point in their lives that they are at currently.

To be able to reach success in your career and in life in general you must have 'soft skills' as explained by Stephanie Ortiz who has been the executive dean at Sierra College since 2002 (15 years). Always make sure you have your 'keys' like John Gregory. Who is quite the success and even started at the bottom earning money working at Taco Bell. He served our country by joining the U.S. Army after that. He came home and opened the Golden Capital Network and worked with businesses that are now great successes like Pandora, Sierra Nevada, StubHub, and more. These businesses at the time were just a thought and John Gregory helped make those thoughts into a reality. Remember Caroline Beteta's "Hang Ten" tips. These tips have helped her get to where she is today and she is the CEO of Visit California, went to Stanford for business, travels the world, works with many important people, and celebrities. And most of all, I will always remember the great stories and advice given to me from Mike Naggiar. Always keep going, do something, keep a good head on your shoulders, do not only think about the money, etc.

All of these individuals have something great to offer. I am forever grateful for the advice I got from each and every one of them. Every single one told me that the road is going to be bumpy, every single one of them told me it is going to be hard, and every single one of them told me that it is not going to go how I have it planned out in my head.

Stephanie Ortiz explained to me her list of 'soft skills' which are: be adaptable, have an analysis and solution mindset, be able to be a team player, have digital fluency, social diversity awareness, an entrepreneurial mindset, be resilient, and have empathy. Originally wanting to be a teacher, Stephanie later realized that she was better being a dean. She is good at what she does too.

You should stretch yourself, do internships, give it a shot, make the most of things thrown your way, think about your overall goal when you are feeling unmotivated,

dreams can change, you have to work for it if you really want it, nothing is going to fall into your lap, ask for things, and be daring but wear protective gear at the same time.

Like John Gregory, do not forget your “keys”. You have to get out there and take initiative, have a sense of urgency, get things done, help out, be there for others, see the application through the employer’s eyes, just do it, ask for forgiveness instead of asking for permission, and know the importance of teams. A major key is to be a networker, it is about who you know, and in order to know more people and build relationships with more people you need to be able to network. When you volunteer, take an internship, work with people, etc. you are networking. In order to better yourself you need to surround yourself with people you believe to be smarter and better than you and in turn you will become better yourself. If you always do these things and have a daily plan then you will be able to get to where you are going with a little more ease.

Caroline Beteta had some great words of wisdom in which she called her “Hang Ten” tips. Work for free by taking internships, it only takes one yes, never take no for an answer, gain exposure, get involved, be yourself, try all things, do what you love, emulate successful leaders, and dream big.

Mike Naggiar, the fascinating vineyard owner, and was born in Egypt. Mike worked hard his whole life. Born in Egypt, went to highschool and college in England, and he lived and looked for work in Canada. He has worked in different areas of managing, sales, and engineering. Starting as an electrical engineer in a factory right after college. He later moved onto Helard Packard as a sales representative and only made \$5,000 a year. He shared that in order to be successful: think of how you can benefit the business, make a contribution, hard work can make up for many things, and leave if they do not treat you well or they take advantage of you. You have to take on new assignments, be willing to learn, be a team player, do not be selfish, and always be doing something. When working give credit when it is due, have a good attitude in work and life, motivate your employees, and remember you are only as good as those who work for you. In any place, time, or whatever situation treat everyone with respect, treat others how you want to be treated, and do not think you are better than anyone else. Finally, two things to never forget is to save 10% of everything you make and do not count on anybody.

From all of the marvelous people that I was able to meet at Ponderosa Hall, they all gave me a different piece of the puzzle, and in the end it is my job to decide if I want to put the puzzle together. I learned to always count on myself and never count on anybody else. I have to work hard, keep going, and make a positive impact wherever I go. In the end, the only one left is me, I am the one that has to take care of myself, I am

the one that is going to get myself to where I want to be, and no one else. No matter how long I wait nothing is going to fall in my lap because that is not how life works. I have to be the one that makes things happen because at the end of the day it is just me.

Bekah Nunez
