
Cultural Daily

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Nathan Valdez: “Work Is Truly a Blessing”

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Work Is Truly a Blessing

by Nathan Valdez

We all have different opinions and believe many factors. We may believe things that are controversial, or believe something that helps you get by each day. As I was listening to one of the podcasts from NPR’s “This I Believe,” I heard Army Lieutenant General Russel Honore mention that “work is a blessing.” That caught my attention quick. It reminded why my parents always work hard for their two boys (my brother and I).

Coming from a working-class family, we were never rich or poor, but my parents would constantly work to provide food on the table. Throughout my entire life, I would always help my parents with anything they needed, because at a young age I noticed the stress they would be in. Even to this day, I work in a part time job, making my own money and share pieces of it with gifts to my family; of course, they don’t want me to spend it on them but I do. Helping my family has always been such an important aspect to me. With any big projects they needed help in, I would jump right in.

One of my childhood memories I recall having was working with my father at grandmother’s farm along the several acres of land. Doing farm work is not easy, with such strength needed to attend many tasks. The only border my grandmother had on her land was a rusted and broken up barbed wire fence, doing its best to hold off many critters that were entering her place and disturbing her peace. Of course, my father and I only want the best for her; as she has worked hard her whole life. As we saw the damage done to the fence, my father and I agreed to fix up a new fence for grandma. One that could hold up for a long time, keeping the dangerous critters.

After we finished buying everything we needed, we started working in a blink of an eye. The first thing we started with, was cutting the rusted fence and taking the old “T-Posts” out of the ground. Not even 10 minutes in, I needed a cold drink of water. I forgotten we were in the Lone Star state in San Antonio Texas; plus, it was summer with such humidity, it felt as hot as being baked in an oven. However, I refused to complain. I wanted to prove to my father I am suited for this kind of labor. Luckily, wearing gloves protected us from the sharp edges of the fence and rusted posts. Once we finally completed taking the old fence down, it was time to take a break.

Finally coming inside with air conditioning and food on the table, was absolutely amazing. Having my sweat and cold air made me feel like I was in a cold shower. After an hour of having barbecue for lunch and cold iced tea, my father and I were up and ready to put the new fence on for grandma. Walking outside felt hotter than it was when we came in the house. There were no clouds in sight, or even a single bird on a tree. Even though it was hot and humid outside, it didn't stop the motivation my father and I had to get the new fence up for grandma.

Throughout the rest of the afternoon and border line to the evening, there was a lot of twisting and hammering to the fence and fence posts. As we finally finished fixing up the new fence up, the gloves I was given were tearing form each finger loop. These gloves had enough and were thrown into the dumpster. After looking at the fence, I remember such an immaculate feeling that flew over me. It must have flown over my father as well because he had such a smile as big as mine. The final words I will always remember him say to me was "I am proud of you son" and each time he says those words to me, I always get goosebumps. If I can make him proud with anything I do, there is nothing that can top that.

I can name many stories where I worked in the hot sun with my father or my friends. But that would probably more than 100 pages long. Working in the hot sun always brought the best effort out of me when it comes to working on big projects. It has definitely made me the man I am today. Even though I live here in Virginia, I work at a part time job in Home Depot, helping contractors and workers get their projects done, just as I did when I was a kid. However, I always have a good laugh when it gets hot here. Every now and then, I would hear an employee say "it's hot out here" I always think they don't even know what the definition of "hot" is. The reason why I think that way was because, I know what working in "Texas heat" feels like and this weather doesn't come close. I guess you can say, work is truly a blessing.

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(Read all the pieces in [This I Believe](#); featured image is "Lunch atop a skyscraper" from 1932)

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