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Life Stories of Learning

The last couple of years of my high school education I was challenged with courses and even teacher’s open agendas that the concepts had been taught were not of the First Nations ideologies and values that I grew up and that I felt true to my core. So, I never understood or valued the idea of going into university and continuing an education that was not my own.

As soon as I graduated from high school, I bought a plane ticket to Nova Scotia and travelled the East Coast with two friends. From landing in Dartmouth, we travelled around the provinces and did some tours, and relaxed, tried to figure out people were saying in Cape Breton. I visited my maternal grandmother’s childhood house in a little town called Glace Bay, Nova Scotia. On we went towards Ontario where I met up with my maternal grandmother’s sister, Aunt Alice. Right off of the bat I could tell she was a lot cooler than my grandmother, a little younger, not religious. We didn’t have to say grace for dinner, and when we went up north to Manitoulin Island to see my favourite cousin, who I hadn’t seen in months, to go party, she didn’t guilt me like my grandmother would have. In hindsight, thinking about radical aunts and grandmothers, my maternal grandmother was the one to leave all of her siblings and move across the country with her husband and kids, to have their own journey… so in the context of my cool outlook of adventures, was my grandmother the cool one, maybe? Minus being catholic, of course.

Alright, now moving on. To start with my first plane trip without adults was the start of my journeys of instability and fear of the mundane.

Fast Froward to living in Grande Prairie lifeguarding, working six days a week, partying every Saturday night, meal prepping Sundays, because, health? I was run down, and sick of the GP life. Big trucks with big tires, eff the environment, and MONEY over everything. So, I saved all of the money I could, it was a fair amount, and I moved home with plans to travel, again.

Once I got home, I loved it, family, consistency, people with similar values and morals. I enjoyed my time, with no real future plan and just worked, three minimum wage jobs. After about a year, I was not interested in leaving to travel, and I was tired of working jobs that I wasn’t interested in. So, I started the process of going back to university and figuring out what I wanted as a career, and what I wanted in the future.

Fast forward to being in university, the first couple months, well maybe the first year I very much did have the feeling of wanting to flee, but managed to keep that at bay and manage with small trips and adventures during breaks. Now, there is nothing I love more than staying home, with no plans, and being home with myself, my thoughts, and my books. I used to feel sick thinking about not buying a plane ticket, having a mortgage, doing house and yard obligations, and doing *mundane* things day to day. The concept of education is now very important to me, as much as I would love to fight the system, I have realized, for myself at least, it might be easier to fight the system from inside, and start at the bottom and work my way up and out.

All of my child and youth years my dad pushed education on us. The concept of it did not mesh with the thoughts and values of travelling and not staying in one place for very long. I now understand he wanted to give us power he or his parents never got to have in the new system of what we now know as Canada. Thinking about my fathers family’s history, it is my obligation to gain an education.