



Dear Ron,

I write to you from sunny Bogotá, Colombia. When I left the U.S. to live and work in Colombia, I don't think I knew how much I would use what I had learned from my Southwestern experience. After four summers of selling books in the Northeast and receiving my degree from a private university, debt free, I desired to use my education to serve abroad. For starters, graduating debt free is such an understated accomplishment that I appreciate more and more with time. Many of my friends graduated with over twenty thousand dollars in debt and really want to travel but cannot afford to. I start with this point because so many college students graduate and have the desire to travel and do something they are passionate about, yet the reality of loans holds them back. Had I not been in the Southwestern program, especially for four years, I would have had to sacrifice my dream to learn Spanish and serve abroad doing something I am passionate about, for a paying job in the States that I would have little interest in.

Two things that attracted me to the Southwestern program that I continue to appreciate were the growth and challenge. Many of my friends worked minimum wage jobs and were camp counselors during the summer, where the mentality was "I hope to get the dollar raise" or "if I could just pick up another shift, I would have enough to pay for..." My summers of selling books allowed me to determine my pay. In real life people get paid for producing, whatever your job is (sales, counseling, teaching, medicine...etc.), and through selling books I learned how to produce. Besides being able to determine my own pay, I learned how to manage my emotions and attitude. It's very easy to be a reactor to outside circumstances or to your own emotions. During many a tiresome day of selling books I learned how to find joy in adversity and praise others when I myself, was feeling down. I use these lessons and many others everyday while living and working here in Colombia.

Selling books is not the only way to grow during college, but I am convinced it is one of the best experiences a student can have and without a doubt it helped instill success principles in me that I use everyday. As a missionary developing an orphanage in a third world country there are plenty of obstacles that force me to rely on my faith in God and the success principles I've learned. Faith combined with a great work ethic is what will cause this orphanage to come to fruition and be a success. It was through my book selling experience that I was pushed to grow in faith and discipline.

Sincerely,

Jacob Grady

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