

Essay Question: What is the most important lesson you learned while working at the theatre that you think will help you throughout your life?

When I was sixteen and hunting for my first job, I had only two criteria: to have fun and make money. Since most of my limited funds were usually spent on movie tickets, a job at my local movie theatre seemed perfect. I vividly remember my interview and the thrill of hearing, “When can you start?” like it happened yesterday. I also remember deciding with firm resolve that I would quit immediately after high school. After all, it was a basic entry level job, and although it sounded easy and fun, I was convinced I would soon grow bored and move on.

Despite my plans, when the time came to submit my two-week notice, I couldn’t bring myself to do it. I didn’t understand why at the time, but even after my friends had left, I couldn’t imagine being happy anywhere else. Three years into my job, a full year past my planned departure, it suddenly struck me why I hadn’t been able to quit—I had never hit the anticipated wall. A slew of adjectives could be used to describe my time at the theatre—chaotic, enriching, and certainly challenging, but boring never made the list.

I also realized just how much I had evolved since starting. I was no longer the shy girl with few friends and even fewer people skills who had applied hoping to make an easy buck. The unpredictable environment of the theatre had transformed me, and for the first time in my life, I was confident, outspoken, and felt like I belonged somewhere. My time at the theatre also gave me crucial life skills that have been and will continue to be beneficial for the rest of my life. I believe the most important skill this job has taught me is adaptability in the face of adversity.

In an industry as fast-paced and ever-changing as entertainment, the ability to adapt is not just beneficial—it’s essential, and the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 proved this. Although every business faced unique challenges, the theatre industry specifically encountered unprecedented obstacles still discussed by experts and the public to this day. The response to these challenges and the ongoing fight to come back to where we were before 2020 showed me a depth to the value of adaptability I had never seen before. I had a front row seat as difficult decisions were made, policies amended, and roles drastically altered as thousands of employees came together, each committed to keeping the community and joy that movies bring alive. Working for the theatre has taught me that adapting is more than changing. It means fighting for a cause and being willing to make tough choices to get there. It means seeing yourself as you are and taking necessary steps to become better. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to use this and other lessons from the theatre in my life and future education so I can work towards becoming the best version of myself possible.