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One journey, many discoveries...

From Salesman to Dietician: Jake's Story

Jake Blakeman

Drifting into and out of jobs that only give so much satisfaction is something I have done since leaving school.

At the age of 35, still believing this to be young enough to choose a direction for myself, I thought about what really interested me and what I enjoyed that I could make a living from.

Having always loved food, healthy food, food that optimally fuels the body to the extent that it prevents disease and/or cures disease, I decided to begin on the road to becoming a dietician.

Now science was never my strongest subject at school, in fact it was probably one of my worst, so realising that chemistry and biology were on the agenda was challenge number one.

I researched the route I needed to take to become a dietician.

To gain entry into a University that ran the Nutrition and Dietetics post graduate course I needed to achieve the relevant qualifications. Without any 'A' levels in science related subjects, an access course in 'Applied Science' proved necessary.

To enable me to do this, whilst still maintaining a roof over my head, food in my belly and provide funds for my young daughter, I approached my employers asking them for reduced hours in order to attend college for two years on a part time basis.

And so began the journey. Would I understand science? Could I introduce this very exciting, yet daunting addition into my life and balance it with all other duties, hobbies and social activities? The answer is yes!

I found with a positive mind set, enthusiasm, discipline and an ever focused eye on the goal (and some hard graft), it is possible to achieve your dreams.

Early in the second year of the Access course choices had to be made, big choices that will have an affect for the rest of my life. Which Universities shall I apply to? If not successful in my first choice, that will mean moving away; away from my friends, my family, my daughter. I decided to apply for only one University, close to home, but increased the course options I applied for, all related to nutrition. If I didn't get on the Dietetics course, I could always complete a 'Human Nutrition' course, then, post grad for another two years to gain Dietician status. It seemed like it could be a long haul but if that's what it takes, that's what it takes…….

After much hard work, late nights and sweating over exam results all was rewarded with an acceptance to my local University studying 'Nutrition and Dietetics'. There was a glass or two of iced bubbly drunk that day.

I have started the course and really enjoying it, soaking up information like a sponge. When I look back to the apprehension I felt about embarking on a scientific based path of learning, the concerns and worries of failing, I realise it's not so much the fear of failing that's off-putting; it's the fear of succeeding.

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