Moving Forward

By Estela Villarreal

The waiting area was a long passage with chairs lined up against the wall. It was not a brightly lit area, it was dim and although I could barely make out the faces of those around me I was glad to see I wasn’t the only one with an expression of confusion on my face. I remember sitting there wondering what we were going to discuss. The conversation over the phone had been very short and straight to the point.

“Would you like to meet so we can get you registered for the fall semester?”

“Sure, that would be great.”

I don’t precisely remember the date or the time, but the strange awkward feeling that I got as I walked into my counselor’s office is as vivid today as it was then. Suddenly, I didn’t know what questions I had or what I should be listening for. The counselor smiled at me and I tried to smile back. However, my mind kept wandering to the turmoil and buzz of life around me. As I sat there I must have felt like a much stronger person. I put on my carefully constructed mask of “I have my life figured out and perfectly in order,” and I spoke with about fifty extra pounds of confidence that I did not have.

“What classes do you want to take?”

“Umm, I’m not sure. I had been looking through the schedule of classes and I saw a few that were interesting, but I really don’t know.”

My attempt to keep the situation controlled failed. I felt an alarm go off in my head rattling on about something that sounded
like “abandon ship!” Then as fast as my neurons would allow I pushed the thought from my head.

“Focus,” I thought to myself.

I chose the classes that would work for the first semester and was thankful that come September I would at least have a full serving of classes on my plate. Thus started the beginning of my college trek that would get me geared and hop scotching my way to the future.

With the beginning came a passion, whose origin I’m not quite certain of. It could be that it was there since the beginning, or maybe it is something that we all have built into ourselves and don’t realize it. What I do know for sure is that as difficult as it may be to get my day started and moving, I try to keep my future within sight. At a glance, being passionate about one’s future seems flat out tired and clichéd, but there is nothing that I love more and nothing that I work harder for than to have my life operating smoothly towards that brighter tomorrow.

Keeping my future in sight is a lot harder than it sounds, well at least to me. There are times when there are just so many things to do and so many things to keep track of that I get lost in all the commotion of a busy life. Working two jobs, while being a full time student and an active functioning member of my family is hard work that is more easily said than done. Between rushing from my classes to my sister’s school, and then running to one of my jobs I end up forgetting why I am even worried about making it from place to place. I end up getting frustrated with the fact that there are so many things to do and so little time. Sometimes getting angry at inanimate objects because they happen to get in the way and cause me inconveniences, like when a shopping cart was in
a parking space I wanted. I got out of the car and shoved the cart so hard that it tipped over making a horrible crashing sound that made me get more flustered than I was already feeling. In those moments I feel the blood rushing in my veins, and feel how my body tenses up and all my clear comforting judgment goes cascading out the door. However, once that short neurotic episode is past, and I get my head facing the right direction I remember what it is I am working for, then I smile to myself and move on to the next thing on the list.

The lists of “to do” can usually be found in my trusty planner. It simply goes where I go. Planners and I have had long and interesting companionships. There was the time when I just did not use it enough, and what happened then was that I simply forgot many of the things I had to do, and by the time I would remember I would have to rush in order to do it, or it would be too late already. Then came the time when I used it too much, I would constantly be pulling it out for a “status report” on my day. It is true that I became more organized and I rarely forgot events now, but the problem was that I would stress too much. I wasn’t only stressed because I had too much on mind, but I was stressed because like things often do, they did not work out according to plan. So I learned to maintain a balance of just using my planner as a reference instead of my complete command center. Now my planner keeps me organized with out so much of the added stress.

While tossing around my daily events there is one thing that keeps playing back into the routine, and that is the mind set with which I do it all. What I have come to realize is that whenever I am feeling the most dazed and confused there is one thing that always helps me out, that is positivity. Having a positive state of mind is what gets me
through much of the rough spots. The phrase “it can always be worse,” pops into my mind and I imagine myself getting into terrible accidents, or much more horrible having a loved one get into an accident. Those haunting thoughts give me strength to keep pushing forward. I think to myself; if I stop now eventually things will be worse. That is another one of my scary thoughts so once again I find my center and look forward towards the future, and just like that I am trudging towards it once more. Being in that positive state of mind is truly a powerful thing, it gives you no excuse to give up because even if you end up with one hundred reasons to fail, you always have at least one to succeed.

At a glance, being positive about one’s life and hopeful about the future is pretty standard, but once you actually live out each day you find that having passion for the life you live is a state of being in which you constantly have to be working in order to keep it that way. From getting lost to finding the path again I remember that staying positive and centered is the only way to keep moving forward to the shining unknown I call the future.