

Elizabeth Skamai

The Missing Semester

Gene Natali Jr. and Matt Kabala

The book I chose to read is called, “The Missing Semester: Your financial choices have consequences. Will you choose wisely?”

After finishing the book there were several points made that really caught my attention. One topic in the book that was talked about was that, “there is no maximum payment.” This really stuck out to me because it seems like such a simple concept yet I had never really thought about it before. Why not pay off loans in the biggest amounts possible each payment or why not just completely pay off the loans if you are able to? It made me realize that I should continue to pay my loans off and then in the future I will not have to worry about them. Once I have my loans paid off I will be able to start saving more money for my retirement much sooner. Along with paying the maximum possible this section of the book also talked about paying off any payment that has a larger interest rate first. This is also something that I had never realized was that important and it really stuck in my head, something that I think will remember for a long time.

Another major point made in this book that really made an impact on me was when they talked about car loans. It really made me feel a lot better about not currently owning a car. In the book it says, “Living vehicle-free is a great way to save your hard-earned dollars.” (Natali and Kabala, 2012) I have always felt this way but still wondered if I should have a car because I see so many others around me with one. Then, I take a step back, especially after reading this, and

realize that I do not have a need for a car right now. I am privileged enough to have friends and family that can transport me to places I need to go. And if I absolutely need a car my parents are willing to let me use theirs. In this section of the book it also points out that, “This is not the time in life to fall into the trap of trying to impress the people around you.” Which also adds to my contentment of deciding all these years to not buy a car yet, and be happy with the one I used for a while that was a hand-me-down old car.

One thought that I know I am guilty of having far too many times is the want to make sure that I have the “right” job. And, of course, this book talks about this too. This book reiterates what I already know but tend to ignore, “any job is better than no job.” It makes no sense to wait for a better job unless you are already working. In our economy today this quote is especially important and meaningful; something that definitely needs to be remembered. Also as reminded in this chapter, you can always wait for that “better job” or “right opportunity” but you should still be working while doing so.

The final subject I would like to talk about from this book is what they focus on at the end. The last chapter talks about getting our seatbelts on and doing some work. We need to make sure that we are doing things on our own, not expecting others to take charge and things to just happen. The book states, “Financial help is not on the way. Too often, too many of us expect something for nothing.” We will be rewarded for the work that we have earned. It may not always happen as quickly as we wish or go as easily as we had hoped but as long as we continue to do things for ourselves and not rely on others all of the time then we will be rewarded. Also in this chapter is the end of the book, they end it with some inspiring and motivating words, “Now, go do it. You’re in charge.”

In conclusion, I found this book to be very helpful and a great source of information and something that allows you to look back on quickly to get advice on several different financial situations. This book is aimed at college aged people, so of course I encourage anyone of college age along with people graduating high school and also anyone getting ready to enter the work force. Natali and Kabala even say themselves at the beginning of the book, “Authors’ note: If you chose to bypass college in favor of trade school, military service, or any number of other possibilities—please read on. The information that follows still applies.” So basically, I advise anyone and everyone to read this book. I think that everyone can get something from it. I was able to take something from each chapter and learn from it, applying to my situation and figuring out what I can do to improve my financial situation. And because I was able to do these things so easily I believe that everyone else will be able to as well.

Work Cited

Natali, E. Jr. and Kabala, M. (2012) *The Missing Semester: Your financial choices have consequences. Will you choose wisely?.*