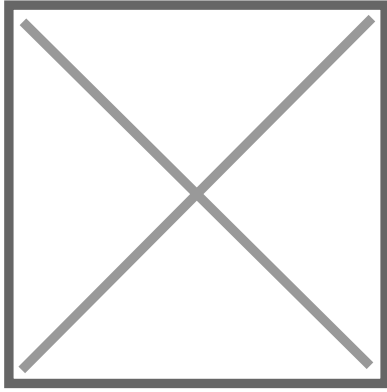




The Danish Virtuous Circle, Pt 2: The Importance of Responsibility

Description

In another article, I wrote about [how being both a student and a worker in Denmark is an amazing thing](#). I take the idea further and tell you what I feel makes the workplace such a great and open environment to learn from.

In general, Denmark is amazing when it comes to work experiences, especially when, like me, you come from a country where being a student reduces you to a no-one, an incapable, someone who isn't fully "complete" yet, like a baby who's been in their mom's womb for a few months only and is not ready to come out yet, or like a teenager who hasn't finished high school yet, and the list goes on.

In many countries, when it comes to work, I have the feeling that some things are never going to be enough. The school you went to, the experience you have, the way you use your experience, where you've worked, and blablabla! It is never going to be enough because *someone* is always going to be *better* than you. And if you happen to find the job you're enough for, a job you like, then there probably will be many other jobs that will be better than yours, more paid, etc. Or maybe that's just the conservative elite French system?

Life-long Education

In Denmark, you are taught many things that are not typically part of a school year curriculum.

So a few things you are taught are not about maths and grammar, they're skills you need to be part of a society that *works* as a whole. You get taught **teamwork** (through a lot of group work and discussions), how to **speak in public** (so even the shiest ones can say what they have to say), how to take **initiatives** (assignment instructions are very large), how to **listen and be listened to** (there is almost no hierarchy both at uni and the workplace), how to be **part of society** (at university, in classrooms where 30+ fit, tables are put in an open rectangle rather than in rows that face the teacher), all in all, you're taught **how to be responsible for your own actions**.

! And you get to develop your skills at your workplace(s), where you've started working at as soon as you were able to be treated as a human being who has a brain and who can use it and who can

have a sense of responsibility.

See, in many places, this would mean waiting until you are 25 years old.

And itâ??s a huge problem!

Can you not remember being a kid and happy to be treated as a responsible person who can do things on their own? How did that make you feel?

If you have no one, nothing near (or far from) you to help you build confidence, especially as a young and ambitious woman living in the 21st century, how can you manage? Letâ??s not talk about ads and all the things that make women feel like we always have to be, or have, or behave in ways we are not, with things we do not have, or behaviors we do not find fit our personalities â?? **letâ??s just say that you cannot be about 25 years old and entering the job market and be expected to thrive just in a snap of fingers.**

From living and experiencing both the university and the workplace in Denmark, I can honestly say that I have gained as much academic knowledge as I have acquired and developed personal (and inter-) skills.

Responsibility, What for?

In Denmark, you are taught to be responsible. You donâ??t need a stupid doctorâ??s note or letter from parents to tell your school that youâ??re sick when youâ??ve reached age 16. Of course, people abuse from that, and they miss the entirety of the 25% absence allowed during a school year in order to sleep in or do whatever they feel like doing, but they also get a sense of responsibility. And thatâ??s one of the most important things you need to be taught when you are 16 years old, because throughout your life, no one is going to take you by the hand to give you everything you need, everything you want, everything you aim for.

When you get sick, you need to catch up on what youâ??ve missed in class.

When you get fired, you need to find a new job.

When youâ??re not happy wherever you find yourself, you need to get up and go out there and look for what makes you happy.

And so in Denmark, youâ??re more likely to find people who take initiatives and who are responsible for their actions because theyâ??re **taught** to do so from age 0 (okay, okay, more or less, maybe not that early. I am just exaggerating here because it seems like it really is a normal thing, whether 50 or 10). Elsewhere, it seems way less important to be taught that responsibility is a real thing in life.

In class, when professors give questions to discuss, and you end up discussing the questions with international students only, you end up discussing other non-uni-related things after a little while and wait until the professor starts speaking again. When you discuss questions with Danes, thereâ??s a 5-minute break at the end of the discussion, just before the professor starts speaking again.

So surprisingly enough, in Denmark, you end up with responsible people. Danes seem to *like* to want to things. They want to help, they want to grow, they want to learn, they want to live well, they want **good things from life**, whatever they might be.

Again, if this country's considered one of the happiest on Earth, what can it be that makes them so happy? Responsibility has definitely its part in the game.

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1. Denmark
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1. education
2. social responsibility

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Author

elytheglobetrotter

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