



CIVICS LESSON

Carlos Cadena

Social Mobility

Cadena began his life in extreme poverty, raised by a divorced mother who had to work all the time to support her seven children. Yet Cadena overcame the challenges of his upbringing to a great career as an attorney, rising to become a trailblazing Texas judge. Like Cadena, you can rise up from wherever you start in life. To do so, work on your:

CAPABILITIES

In Biblical times, Jesus was a carpenter; his disciple Peter, a fisherman; the great apostle Paul, a tentmaker. Just as they had the ability to provide something of value in the marketplace of over two thousand years ago, you need to focus on developing your natural talent into a skill relevant in today's economy. Invest in yourself to gain or improve your skill set and upgrade your capabilities, thereby increasing your value to potential employers. Whatever your God-given talent, gift, or ability, cultivate it to its highest level. This is where the hard work comes in. Devote yourself to be the best at what you do — and to work harder than anyone else to become the best. One of the keys is to cultivate a learning style that's continual because of the ever-shifting twenty-first century job market. In today's globally competitive economy, employers want you to be adaptable, to be ready to plug in and play to dynamic, new environments. That means self-upgrade as you go. Become a lifelong learner.

CREDENTIALS

Capabilities are important, but your pathway of personal progress will be paved, to a large extent, by your attaining credentials: high school to trade school to community college to four-year college to graduate and/or professional school to on-the-job training to professional certifications to continuing education — the list goes on and on. It doesn't matter where you start in life. Cadena started in the

most humble beginnings and attained amazing advancement. The further you go on the educational/credential road will fuel your journey towards economic success and personal fulfillment. Don't get mad at the person who got the job you wanted. Get busy. Get better. Work harder. There'll be another opportunity. Get ready for it. It doesn't matter whether you are white collar, blue collar, or no collar. The decisions you make every day — both big and small — will greatly influence how socially mobile you are, how self-sufficient you will be, how high up the socioeconomic ladder you will climb, how happy you will be. Your dreams are attainable. Keep working with all you've got to reach them.