



My Lucid Reality (Not Dream)

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In this piece, Oregon FCCLA State President, Canden Gutierrez, reflects on his journey as a state officer as he was elected last April at the State Leadership Conference in Portland, Oregon. Read as you will find out what exactly you can gain from being affiliated with the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America.



Never would I have thought that I would receive such a big opportunity like the one FCCLA has granted me. To this day, I will never forget the endless nights cramming to complete projects, friends I never knew I would make, and opportunities to travel that have only expanded the way I view this world. As State President, I have learned a lot on what it takes to lead and influence the members that look up to you. It is through these lessons that I have elicited the motivation I hold to represent the state of Oregon. Let me just show you a little bit of those things that I have learned along this journey:

You are different and that's perfectly okay!

Coming from such an underrepresented background, it was hard to believe that there was any exit to the dark, protracted tunnel I was stuck in. You fight to see the light you've heard to be there, somewhere out there, but you consistently doubt your ability to be worthy of even leaving the site you're in. Along this battle I fought through, I saw determination and confidence to be my only friends in this precipitated adventure. I have learned that your capabilities fall way beyond the expectations you have set for yourself. It is your doubt that will hold you back from that light you relentlessly keep seeking to see. I used my minority background as an excuse to not achieve the achievable; this is where I fell wrong. As our nation comes to a state of equity in terms of education, it is important to reach out to the opportunities you thought you couldn't afford. We are who we are and don't ever let that define where you stand in this place we call home. Through FCCLA, I have been able to see a light so bright that even a vision so settled can be refined by the experiences it hands you.

And it was at that election announcement that I realized everything I believed to be true was just a facade in disparity. You are more than a checklist to fill in; *you are different and that's perfectly okay!*



It isn't easy, but dreams don't dream themselves.

Your drive to work is a diamond you don't ever want to lose sight of. At the beginning of my FCCLA career, I was curious to see what values this organization held that would bring the best out of my experience affiliated with it. It was at the first meeting that I was drawn to the ideas they wanted to persist success with by the end of the year. Right away was that application filled out in its entirety. You see, finding *your* passion and sticking with that passion takes work if you want it to prosper. I can't stress how

many times I've been put in the situation of prioritizing responsibilities all at once, but at the end, I knew this was the organization I couldn't give up. The sacrifices you commit can be rewarding even at the times it hits you hard; the results are there, but you just have to keep looking. We are all predisposed to be settled on one specific path, but let me just tell you that you're wrong. My mindset has been geared to max as it fights through any obstacle that comes its way. Let this be a sentiment to change the way you wake up every morning, the way you take on every day, and even the way you take on this beast we call life. These goals can be checked off one by one as we start thinking like the beast we have been always scared of confronting. You are capable because nothing in this world would have been accomplished without a little taste of that emotion. *It isn't easy, but dreams don't dream themselves.*



You could never go wrong with a positive attitude.

As I climbed my way up the ladder, it was always in the back of my head that I was the one representing a community of people; a community that shared the same interests. It was insisted that I represent it well with a charming, yet friendly attitude; one that I simply had to learn. Very clearly do I remember the pessimist inside me evoke its underlying ways in a manner I never want to see. As I performed this task I was assigned, it became apparent that I was doing it all too well, but in a way that seemed genuine. I approached each member and it seemed like they were willing to hear me out, so why couldn't I make time to

- hear them out? I know it may seem confusing, but let me just say that the happiness I gained was from the members themselves. Talking to people and knowing their story only opened me to realize how much you can learn from just a simple conversation. FCCLA was the outlet I never knew would mature me so fully, and it is why I see this world so differently; in a way too vividly. Thinking positively was only enabling me to become the optimist I am today. I encourage you to seek a way to fit a friendly gesture in your everyday schedule. At the end, it leaves a mark on your reputation that only enhances the opportunities headed your way. And they were right, *you could never go wrong with a positive attitude.*
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