

YOU NAME IT, I'VE DONE IT!

An EXCERPT from DAVID'S DIARY

by David Skillan

The other day I was thinking about all the jobs I've had in my life—and there have been quite a few. You name it, I've done it! Many were during my eighty-month world travels, when I was in my twenties, and most—but not all—were under my belt by the time I was thirty. I was a very earnest young man, determined to try my hand at anything and everything. Sometimes it was a matter of survival.

I spent time as a police cadet, librarian, driving instructor, safari camp manager, English teacher, soldier, animal trapper, sales rep, construction worker, painter, travel lecturer, stevedore, jackeroo, roustabout, fruit picker, adventure training instructor, writer, photographer, travel lecturer, and travel and tourism instructor. I never worked as a waiter or dishwasher, but I would have, had it been necessary.

Oh yes, I've paid my dues in more ways than one. And in my constant quest for personal “experience,” I sometimes bit off more than I could chew! Some jobs lasted only a few weeks, others months, and a few from one to five years. Many were memorable, some were challenging, others were exciting and interesting. One or two were physically exhausting. A couple were unbelievably monotonous and boring. All were useful experiences for my future career in the travel industry—and so were the many obstacles I encountered, as well as the good times.

Some of my employers were considerate and helpful. Others were tough, strict, and demanding—stern taskmasters who wanted their pound of flesh, but to whom I will always be grateful for teaching me the meaning of excellence and the rewards and satisfaction that come with extreme effort. In most cases I had to learn fast on the job. If I didn't, I was quickly shown the door. That said, I was always one to put my best foot forward. My natural enthusiasm coupled with my hard work paid off handsomely for some of my employers, some of whom stroked my ego, telling me they couldn't do without me and that I was worth my weight in gold. They were quick to take advantage of my willingness to share my many ideas. There's no doubt in my mind that some of those ideas, and my occasionally herculean efforts, made a few people very wealthy. Unfortunately for me, those individuals didn't like to share the bounty. I learned the hard way that one can never become rich working for someone else!

I never had the satisfaction of going to university. But I had the best education at the finest college available—the big, wide world. I got my PhD in life from the school of hard knocks. If it's true that we're all shaped by our experiences, then I must be one of the most understanding and qualified people on the planet.

Every so often, I ask myself what I'd have done if I hadn't chosen my life of travel. What if I'd stayed in England and concentrated on writing or photography? Would I have been mediocre, or very good?

I'll never know the answer, for of course there is none. As it is, I've had more than my share of great highs and lows, and my life has been exceptionally full and exciting. I guess I couldn't ask for anything more than that. ➔