KRR: Gaith struggled with the video upload, so I gave him permission to just submit the text portion.

Gaith Alani

From Nothing to Everything

Many things have shaped me as a person today and what I wanted to be. Some of those things have impacted my life drastically and my career choice. When I was 17 and still a junior in high school, my parents decided to build a beautiful home. They began by destroying our original house and completely starting from scratch. This was challenging and caused the whole family to move in with my grandparents. My older home was an elementary home with one bedroom where all my family lived. A tiny home gathered my family, but a change was needed. My older home had a small yard, and the house was small. There were two bathrooms and a small kitchen. The house was sturdy and peaceful.

As a teen, I enjoyed watching construction. In a way, I made sure everyone did their job correctly. It was an environment that I was surrounded by for several years. I got to see my original house turn into crumbs, and I got to watch the building process run as smoothly as water. Everything was set in place. Looking at the blueprints and seeing them in person come together felt like an actual work of art, and everything was settling into place. At that age and at that moment, I knew exactly what I wanted to do with my life. Being a civil engineer and watching him work, making sure everything was how it was supposed to be, and seeing him and his relationships with his teams made me feel like it was an entire family. Also, aspiring to what my mother was doing then, from explaining what she wanted the house to look like and drawing out her imagination on paper, was eye-opening. Her process of thinking enlightened me more about this role. Seeing how my mother wanted her dream house to become a reality was a great experience for me.

Halfway through building my mother's dream home, we hit a bump in the road, and the construction workers began to be sloppy; my mother wasn't happy with how some things were turning out, and even after talking to the civil engineer, it didn't seem like he saw a problem with how the structure was coming together. Witnessing this moment made me realize that with civil engineers, personal opinions can not be included unless asked for; if the client is willing to pay for the extra labor, then it is their choice as long as they're happy with the products.

After my mother noticed a couple of mistakes within the structure, she didn't trust the person building what's soon to be our home, and she began questioning everything he did and his crew. She felt the need to supervise their work and, in a way, became a civil engineer. As I was beside her, learning from her and watching her, I learned leadership skills and what it means to fight for what you want and what you asked for. Learning those skills at 17, when I did not know much about civil engineering and its components, was a big eye-opener and a new pathway to utilize the skills I will learn. So, those skills will be vital when I have my own crew, and they will teach me how to assign roles and responsibilities properly. Who to pick for what job?

On the other hand, my father, who is less strict and easy flowing, thought everything was going smoothly. I didn't notice him looking at details as much as my mother did, and seeing them do it made me curious as to what they were looking for. I would ask them, and their answer would be once you see it, you'll know. It made me sit there and think, and sooner than later, I realized that it forces the person to double-check their work multiple times to ensure it's flawless. Sometimes when we look over something for a while, we tend to skip over the details that our brains fill in, but looking at things in detail helps people ensure their work is perfect.

Attention to detail is a skill every civil engineer needs to have. It's a skill that makes their work unique, perfect, and a work of art. Without attention to details or small things, the work begins to be more basic and less exciting to look at. Both my parents have taught me to pay attention to details and ensure that those wants are met. This will help me catch mistakes sooner than my clients and fix them sooner to ensure the construction work is completed on time. Growing up surrounded by people who paid attention to details as my mother did, helped me do it, and it made it a routine to make sure everything was perfect and the way I wanted it to be.

Ultimately, my family had one beautiful house to live in, built to perfection. Every detail was how it was supposed to be; every door, shade of color, light fixture, everything was set in place as my parents envisioned. The house ended up with four total bedrooms and one huge master room with its bathroom and balcony. 2 rooms had a sunroof. There were two new sitting areas and living rooms. They also added an open staircase to build the upstairs. The floors were marble, the walls were painted white, and there were spotlights in all the ceilings. Gold accent touches on the handles of the kitchen cabinets and door knobs. Black accent touches in the bathrooms with the black marble floors and a balcony. The white walls had textured art in an off-white color. It was just perfect. What was a home that held five members in one bedroom and two bathrooms became a significant area with four bedrooms, two living rooms, three bathrooms, and three total balconies. Seeing how happy and content my mother was after the completion was one of the biggest reasons for my involvement in this project.

These scenes from the beginning, middle, and end, including the bumps in the road and the smooth parts, made the whole experience much better. It made it realistic, the imperfections made it perfect, and it helped set a future for myself. It helped me plan my college and gave me a dream. I will forever be grateful and thankful for getting to experience something as raw as building an entire home from scratch and watching it come together till the end.

Although I was immensely proud of the new home my parents built, I could not fully enjoy it since my family moved to the United States in 2014. However, I vividly recall the first time I walked into the completed house. The smell of fresh paint, and clean home, and clean furniture is a smell I can never forget. The scent is like when you buy, a new car is how I describe the smell. While it was a completely different home, I could still see my old, original home through it. At that moment, I knew this project was done with passion and love, not something that was put together just to be ready; instead, it was built to last. Since this story is personal and it's a story I usually wouldn't like to share with a class, I wouldn't want to perform it if I were chosen.