In the book *Blood, Bones, and Butter*, written by Gabrielle Hamilton, the author tells about her unique journey to becoming a chef. Hamilton starts off as a rebellious teen entering the kitchen workforce and finagling her way through an array of situations. She lives off of adventure and experimentation. Along the path, she is able to learn a lot and to find the tools needed to start up her successful restaurant. Unlike many of the other chefs, her most significant learning experiences were not in the classroom but through her many jobs and with her peers. Hamilton's unconventional path is a prime example that not everything has a linear path, she learned how to cook through her family, various jobs, and the people she met along the way.

Hamilton lived an adventurous life, which may have been a significant attribute as to why she was not able to complete her formal education until her third try. She attended the University of Michigan, which she noted was like the Harvard of the Midwest, and got a degree in creative writing. Up until then, it seemed like Hamilton was fighting her interest in food and ignoring the culinary skills she had come to acquire, as the meaning behind it seemed purposeless. This is seen when she wrote that people "tried to talk me out of my pessimistic and cynical place by pointing out how important food is in our lives," but was not persuaded by any of them (93). Hamilton would argue that the conversation at the dinner table was superficial when it came to discussing the food, to which her peers would advise to try working in a soup kitchen to find more fulfillment. Hamilton felt that she had to be more than a person who served plain meals, which is why formal education, in her eyes, was a way to discover her purpose finally. While her degree may have contributed to her colorful writing, it does not seem like it added much substance to her knowledge to becoming a chef. She recalled a memory where she felt little connection to her classmates and felt relief when she noticed someone else also felt like her. During that class outing, she recounts, "I will have to survive one more ear of this if I want to walk away with the master's degree from the Harvard of the Midwest," which helps show the dismay with what she used to consider an aspiration to her (105). Hamilton was not thriving in that environment, as she began to see her formal education as something she needed to tough out. Academia did not bring much exhilaration for her and left a void in her pursuit to find purpose.

This is something she realized as she found herself aching to return to the kitchen even if did not hold much "meaning and purpose," which made her see the kitchen as more "practical and satisfying" (107). Each time, she picked up a job in a food-related business, which brings into question whether she felt a connection to the industry as she could have easily tried something new. Having a job at a restaurant while in high school is very common and in college too, but as she got older, she remained in that environment. It seems as if her calling was always there, but not necessarily accepted by her, which is seen by her attempts at a college education over going to school for a formal culinary career. Her captivating book and language used may be attributed to her degree, but the experiences she seems to identify with the most, do not take place in the classroom.

It seems that Hamilton's biggest learning experiences came from not only her various work settings, but also people who were not necessarily her mentors, yet ended up being just that. To start off, through her catering job, she was able to see the beauty incorporated from food into events ranging from the visually appealing deserts like sugar blown glass to the waiters working in a synchronized motion to deliver the food. A lot of preparation and timing goes into successfully catering an event, this learning experience, which she may not have realized at the
From working in the catering business, she was able to meet Misty, someone who was a great mentor but was not realized by Hamilton as she recalls, "I had been staring right at Misty across that prep table and didn't even recognize her for what she would come to be" (111). Misty was an avid cook with extensive knowledge of food and was able to be an example to Hamilton, as Misty left the catering business to start her own restaurant. Hamilton was able to observe a chef that was not only not afraid to admit they did not know something but that looked up information to become more acquainted. Hamilton recalls memories of witnessing Misty harvest her garden and cook from it, which rekindled feelings associated with her own family's food gatherings. So, when the opportunity came to open her own restaurant, she was hesitant because it had never actually crossed her mind as something feasible, yet when she toured the space of her future restaurant, she could already envision how she could run it. While her life took many turns, it seemed like the kitchen always found its way back into her life.

Once she opened her restaurant, she eventually met an Italian man whom she would indirectly continue her culinary knowledge with. Through her husband, she was able to meet Alda, her mother in law, with a niche for cooking Italian food. A language barrier challenged her relationship with her, yet through cooking, they were able to build a relationship. Even though this is after Hamilton opened up her restaurant and accepted the chef life, it goes to show that her culinary knowledge is not stationary but everlasting. Learning new things in the kitchen brings her a lot of happiness, the visits to Italy became an anticipated time for her. Hamilton learned more than cooking from Alda as seen when she wrote, "I can see that these people hold Alda in great esteem with respect and kindness… I can't tell if I am just learning how to make orecchiette, or if I am learning how to be the woman who keeps the sack of keys" (226). It is clear to see Hamilton's admiration towards a woman that became like a mother figure to her, so much so, that she wants to be able to relay Alda character to her children. Time and time again, Hamilton's destination is revolved around food, it provides the foundation for a lot of her interactions.

While the people that made their way into her life had a lasting impact, Hamilton seemed to have had a predisposition to cooking when looking at her immediate family, primarily her mother. Hamilton was exposed to a cooking environment at a young age as her family had traditions centered around food. Furthermore, her mother was an excellent cook and was one of Hamilton's first mentors. Hamilton had a realization of this when she finally visits her mother after many years and has a meal cooked her mother. Hamilton wrote, "the chicken is perfectly roasted with garlic and rosemary and Dijon mustard and lemons; it's the same chicken I roast at the restaurant and at my own home" (182). The excerpt shows that Hamilton recognized that a lot of her cooking is influenced by her mother even if she had not considered her as a teacher up to that point. As much as Hamilton had conflicting thoughts and opinions about her mother, she could not deny that in some way she was predisposed to cooking. Additionally, Hamilton's family had traditions centered around food and had vivid memories about them, which left an impact on her. The kitchen in her home was in sorts, her first classroom.

Ultimately, one cannot deny that Hamilton has had an eventful journey on her route to becoming a chef. She tried to find her purpose through formal education but came to the realization that she was always involved with her passion. Her formal education may not have thought her any new culinary skills, but it had its role in reminding Hamilton what truly interested her. Family and friends also had a substantial role in influencing her to take the culinary path, although it was not something Hamilton was able to see right away. Nevertheless, Hamilton's road to becoming a chef was not a common one and goes to show that an eventful life can be an education too.