

You get authentic knowledge if you study communication

Balázs Kaufmann, the former student of the Faculty of Business and Economics at UP works for Hir24.hu at the moment. The Hégető Honorka Prize-winning journalist recently visited the Ukrainian battlefields and tasted the life of military reporters. We met in the freshman camp. We were similar in many respects and different in many others. So we became friends.



As far as I remember it was really brave of you to walk into Univ (the university journal) as a freshman, or at least it was not a normal thing to do.

Yes, that's my memory, too. Many of us felt that we were special because we knocked at the door of the editorial office of UnivPécs. This is the brilliance of a university paper. It is a place where people can get such feelings. That they are brave and unique, however, I do not think that as journalists we are more distinguished than the representatives of any other professions. We were the ones who were given such courage by UnivPécs. We went there and wondered whether we would be taken seriously and given the opportunity to write. It was an inspired moment.



What other bold moments have you had in your life?

I have had not so much bold but rather over daring moments that I can remember. The story how I started to work for the Hungarian national television comes to my mind immediately. The main reason why we are having this talk, why you considered me worthy of interviewing is, I think, that it has been almost nine years that I have been involved with mainstream media. And it was decided during my university years. The regional station of Hungarian Television, which still existed back then, was the place of a course offered for those studying communication. This was held by the head of the TV station who, after the semester, asked me whether I felt like working for the national TV. To which I instantly said yes, the same day. From the outside it must have seemed a very brave thing and I also thought so, however, looking back I have dissonant feelings about my bravado. Today I think that it might perhaps been better to be brave in something else at the university, for example at the exams.

Career or university? You had your choice then.

At the age of twenty I went to work for the Hungarian television and I was given a camera straight away and had the chance to shoot. I felt important and thought that it made sense what I was doing. Stooping over the textbooks and go to take the exams, well, that did not make sense.

Majoring in communication I was one of those who thought they had come here to become journalists and professionals in the fields of TV or radio. However, we were presented an awful amount of sociology, cultural anthropology, statistics and other similar fields that we were not even aware of. It seemed like extremely boring. Many of us thought that it would have been better if we had got some tools. This was pretty misleading, because many schools of communication came into being at that time and they all provided this practical knowledge. They wanted to teach how to use the tools and by doing this they considerably undermined the field we call media studies. I also miss the knowledge that one could easily get by studying statistics, cultural anthropology or sociology. It is essential for media professionals to be able to speak fluently, know how to hold the microphone and be aware of the basics. That is where we start from but authentic knowledge comes from being a major in communication. So later I had to make up for that on my own using various books and articles.



Do you plan to study more about these?

Yes. I need my degree. I only need the document now, but I do not have the enjoyment of being a university student because I lost that when I went to work at the age of twenty.

If you could go back in time...

I would obviously choose the university.

Then you would miss many things: awards, experiences, adventures...

There would be other things.

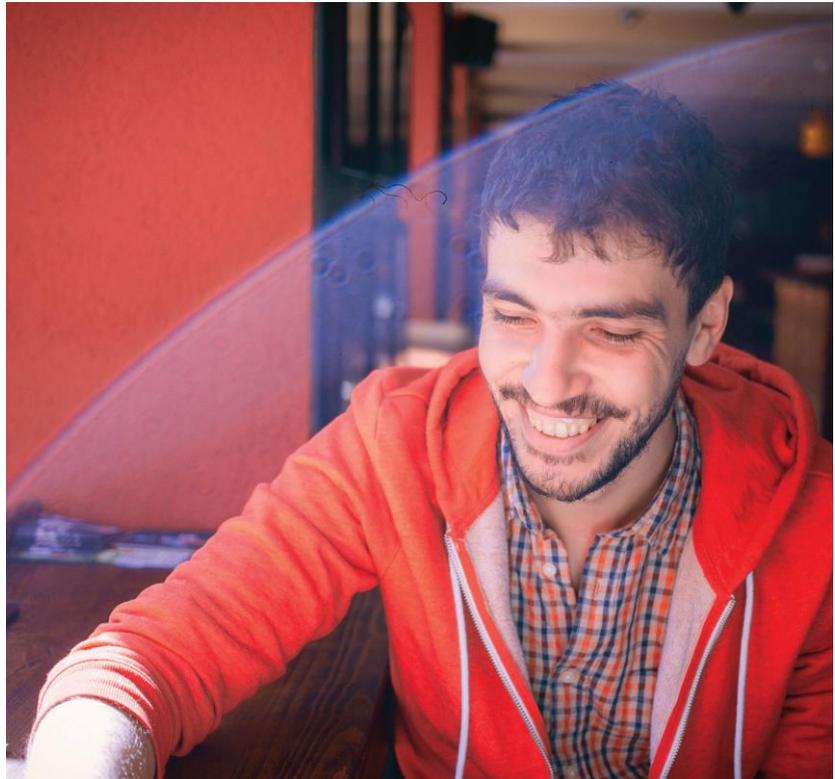
University and university media?

Maybe. As I'm an extrovert and a workaholic. I must do something. To

achieve something you need a nestling-place which the university provides together with a lot of information that you acquire and that it is silly to miss.

Why do you think your present work is important?

Because of many things. Hír24 is a site where you can freely deal with whatever you are interested in in a way, of course, that it become interesting for the readers, too. What is more, the members of the team are worthy people themselves. These girls and boys are about my age and we have some senior colleagues with classic experiences as journalists. From what they do we can learn a lot.



Szabolcs KASZA