

Educators in a New Era



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"Insight for the Young and Unrestrained" is an original weekly column appearing every Thursday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Gregory V. Diehl. Gregory is a writer, musician, educator, and coach for young people at EnabledYouth.com. Archived columns can be found here. IYU-only RSS feed available here.

The accumulated wisdom of mankind has been kept in written and oral form for thousands of years because the memories of individual people were not enough to preserve it. Individual people grow old, and the the record of their experiences fades with their deteriorating bodies. Parents and educators save youth the trials of experience and the rendering of countless mistakes by sharing this history with them.

It is the great irony of our age that until now, most parents and educators have served primarily to push progress in the wrong direction. They hold their children to the past instead of guiding them into an undefined future. By pushing and upholding conventions of the past, they become supporters of tradition and enemies of innovation.

The greatest challenge facing those who oversee the upbringing of humanity's youth is offering the guidance and protection needed, without imposing any restrictions upon a child's natural development. It's interesting how what's considered "natural" child-rearing today has little to do with nature, and a lot to do with what has momentarily become common practice in one arbitrary corner of the world. What's truly healthy and natural is unique to each child.

At the root of modern educational practice is the premise that all human minds function identically, and accordingly ought to be treated identically. We ignore their unique needs and temperaments. Teachers impose intellectual limitations and barriers by funneling the free flow of information down to a single simplistic process. These kinds of educators diminish the uniqueness of their students instead of enhancing it.

An exemplary educator is capable of sharing the wisdom of their past without using it as a limitation or hindrance upon their growth. But parents and teachers of this caliber are still quite rare in the world. More often, this task is delegated into the hands of someone who has no inherent interest in the long-term outcome of a child's mental and emotional

integrity. This same person proceeds to follow a method and curriculum of education which has been dictated for the masses by the masses.

Teaching doesn't have to be the cold and impersonal experience most of us experienced as youths. I predict that, in time, a new market demand will emerge for a special kind of educator who excels at entering the minds and connecting with the emotions of his students, so as to best serve them on their respective paths to personal achievement. The ability to really know a person, to see simultaneously where they are and where they could go, is a skillset which few yet embody. Good parents, who place education at a high value for their offspring, recognize this proficiency in the people they appoint to aid in their upbringing.

I await the day when teaching, like so many other presently bureaucratized professions, has had its reigns loosened and the barriers to entry removed. There are so many people in the world who could actively employ their specialities in human development, if only cultural paradigm shifted enough to change the standards by which we deem someone qualified to educate. I can't say what education in a more enlightened future will look like, but that's entirely the point. It won't look like any single thing. There will be as many variants as there are combinations of teachers and students, each operating in a manner approaching the optimal conditions that their roles require.

Until we reach that time, I hope we can all learn to recognize and appreciate those parents and educators who already hold to these principles. A teacher is a person who looks upon the weak and seeks only to strengthen them. He is a doctor for the maturing mind. When society can celebrate these kinds of people to the degree of their true worth, the foundations of our world will have radically shifted forward toward a permanent form of intellectual prosperity.

You can contribute to pushing our cultures in this direction with the influence of your market vote. Only hire or work for individuals and organizations who adhere to this progressive school of educational philosophy. Be part of the solution by acting ahead of the curve, and perhaps one day "progressive" teaching and parenting will have turned into the new arbitrary norm.