

Superstitions Regarding School

My family has been on our unschooling journey for going on six years now. Within that time I have had the opportunity to meet countless other unschooling parents, families and people raised with unschooling, both online and in person. (See my interview of two unschooled adult brothers.)

In every case I have learned more about how unschooling works and the effects of being raised in such an unconventional way. What I have learned has revealed to me bit by bit the superstitious nature that is the belief in the necessity of school and other forms of compulsory education.

With links to some very good resources (all from the great Sandra Dodd), here is a list of superstitions associated with school:

- Without compulsion, children won't learn to read.
- Without compulsion, children won't learn to write.
- Without compulsion, children won't learn to write in cursive.
- Without compulsion, children won't learn basic arithmetic.
- Without compulsion, children won't learn science.
- Without school, children won't make friends.
- Without school, children won't learn to socialize with others.
- Without compulsion, children won't be prepared for college.
- Without compulsion, children won't be prepared for the job market.
- "I could never teach my children anything."
- "I could never be with my children all day long. I'd go insane."

That about covers the basic superstitions people cling to regarding school. At least, those items are the first on their list of concerns whenever the topic is brought up in my conversations with friends and family regarding our lifestyle.

Having been raised with school, most adults can't understand the superstitious nature of their beliefs regarding school. I was certainly no exception to the rule. I felt the same. It took a hard philosophical position to even begin questioning the necessity of schooling. And even then I first looked at other forms of compulsory education before discovering the radical practice of unschooling.

I'm sure glad I did, of course, and I witness other people discovering it all the time, which fills my heart with joy. To see more and more children given the opportunity to live according to their interests and passions is thrilling.

What will the future hold on the practice of self-directed education? I don't know, but I'm optimistic. I'll continue to raise my own children this way and be a resource for others around me looking for help in overcoming their school-based biases. If you find yourself interested in this and would like to chat, please don't hesitate to contact me.