

You Don't Have to Be a Fool to Deschool

Growing up as a child, I remember watching “pro-education” commercials with slogans like “Don’t be a fool, Stay in School” or “The mind is a terrible thing to waste.” Where I’m from, the term “drop-out” generates just about the same effect as the term “dope-dealer.”

Now that I’m an adult, I’m quite fortunate to be able to see through the ideological snobbery so often directed at unschooling, homeschooling, private schooling, and alternatives to college.

As I mentioned in my talk “Raise a child, not a cliché,” many of us are waking up to the fact that we’ve been doing this whole learning thing backwards. Slowly but surely our world is experiencing a Copernican revolution where education is ceasing to revolve around the agendas of authoritarians/bureaucrats and is beginning to shift towards an autonomous model with the learner at the center.

With podcasts like *The Successful Drop Out*, organizations like The Alliance for Self-directed Education, apprenticeship programs like my own (Praxis), and many others, we are upgrading to an Education 2.0 world where people no longer feel on the defense about taking charge of their own educational path.

After my recent post about those who make the “it worked for me” argument when it comes to college and compulsory schooling, I received the following comment/question:

If you’re cynical about your life, what’s the one thing you wished you had more of? If your answer isn’t “education,” we are all ears. But, that begs the question: If “more education” is the answer, more education about what?

That comment/question gave me the perfect opportunity to share a very important and increasingly popular position:

“If you’re cynical about your life, more education is definitely the answer. More education about what? Here’s the place to start: more education about the fact that education is not the same thing as schooling. Until people internalize that lesson, they’ll never know how to take responsibility for their own personal development. And until a person takes ownership of that, no amount of educational resources

and opportunities will really matter.”

Nothing is more important than our ability to learn. And nothing is more dangerous than the idea that learning cannot or should not happen outside of traditional/subsidized institutions.

The mind is a terrible thing to waste on a such a trash-filled idea.

Don't be a fool. Rise above school.