

#GIRLBOSS Author Left School, Built \$100 Million Company

I love reading books about successful entrepreneurs and how they got there. Generally, these entrepreneurs share common qualities of ingenuity, hard work, and determination to turn opportunity into a thriving enterprise. I recently finished Sophia Amoruso's book, *#GIRLBOSS*, and was blown away by this young woman's accomplishments. She went from selling vintage used clothing on eBay to running a 350-person, \$100 million apparel company, Nasty Gal, in eight years. Wow.

I had heard about this bestselling book when it was first published in 2014. Likely in a sleep-deprived stupor with my littlest newborn at the time, I didn't get a chance to read it until it appeared in our Little Free Library in our front yard a few weeks ago. It's a fascinating, fast-paced book that is hard to put down.

The first page offers a chronology of Amoruso's life, including this detail from 2000: "I hate high school, and am sent to a psychiatrist who diagnoses me with depression and ADD. I try the white pills. I try the blue pills. I decide that if this is what it's going to take to like high school, forget it. I throw the pills away and decide to homeschool."

I often write about how conventional forced schooling can stifle creativity, exuberance, and human flourishing. It prioritizes conformity over self-determination. Square pegs don't fit well into round holes, and the hole of standardized schooling is growing increasingly narrow and deep. Amoruso refused to be squished into that hole.

Later in her book, Amoruso shares more details about her schooling experience. She writes:

The pure mechanics of the traditional school system were spirit crushing. I felt it was the Man's way of training America's youth to endure a lifetime repeating the behaviors taught in school, but in an office environment. I felt like a prisoner. I woke up at the same every day and sat in the same chairs five days a week. I had no more autonomy than a Pavlovian dog.

We should listen to the entrepreneurs. Questioning the status quo is often what makes them highly successful. They don't tolerate how things are and instead work toward creating what could be. They dream and they do, fueled by the human drive to explore and

invent. Amoruso continues:

It's unfortunate that school is so often regarded as a one-size-fits-all kind of deal. And if it doesn't fit, you're treated as if there is something wrong with you; so it is you, not the system, which is failing. Now, I'm not trying to give every slacker a free pass to cut class and head straight to Burger King, but I do think we should acknowledge that school isn't for everyone. So, #GIRLBOSS, if you suck at school, don't let it kill your spirit. It does not mean that you are stupid or worthless, or that you are never going to succeed at anything. It just means that your talents lie elsewhere, so take the opportunity to seek out what you are good at, and find a place where you can flourish.

How many young entrepreneurs are sitting in one-size-fits-all classrooms today being told to conform, to bury their creativity and hide their originality? How many are being forced to squeeze into a pre-cut round hole? How many are made to feel stupid? How many of these talented individuals are losing their inner spark, and how many of us will lose from the enterprises, masterpieces, and inventions they may never build?

Freeing these young people from conventional classrooms will help them to pioneer the unconventional goods and services that drive human progress and improve our lives.