

The Profound Limitations of School

Earlier today I was reading an article from one of my favorite homeschooling blogs, and someone commented,

“What if your kids regret being homeschooled?”

This isn't the first time I have heard this, but I couldn't help but wonder why no one ever asked what if public/traditional schooled children will regret being schooled in that particular way.

Well, I decided not to wait and hold my breath until someone asked, and took it upon myself to write an article on behalf of myself:

Someone who regrets being raised in the public school system.

I want to start off by saying that this isn't an article meant to criticize my parents, vilify teachers, or make you feel sorry for me. As a matter of fact, I am not one to really *regret* even the worst of things in life, because it has been my experience that I always find value in those situations later and I am better off from having learned from it.

More than I feel regret, I feel sad. When I really consider my 18 years (from ages 5-23) in the school system, I feel sad about all the time I wasted living for an idea that wasn't mine. I feel sad wondering about all the things I might have been doing if I wasn't sitting in a desk learning boring material that serves next to no use to me today as an adult. I feel sad at how little say I had over my life, and even more so, that I didn't know I was supposed to have a say, and how I believed I was just doing what everyone *had* to do. I feel sad that I missed out on so much opportunity in childhood.

This isn't to say I never had a good time at school. If you put a bear in a cage, he will find a way to have some fun. This isn't to say I didn't gain things at school. For example, I made great friends at school that I still have today (although, I didn't *need* school to make friends, but I digress). Something doesn't have to be all bad all the time to be mostly subpar, which is what it was for me.

People will wonder what's with me. “School did you well,” they will say. “You loved school. You should be appreciative that you can even go to school.”

I just don't agree. I don't have to appreciate anything I didn't choose. I don't have to appreciate that which steals freedom.

Because that is what I learned. You cannot under any circumstance be pro-freedom AND

pro-public (and even much private) education. They are total opposites. School is the antithesis of freedom. Period.

At school you can not arrive when you want, or leave when you want. You may not wear what you want or style your hair how you want (at least, not at my school). You may not even learn what you want, or when you want, or how you want. You may not choose your sources or your teachers. You may not even always get to urinate, defecate, or eat when you want. You may not get time off on the days you want (you must abide the calendar the school has set; this will determine the schedule of your entire family for the entire year). You may not pursue anything outside of school that conflicts with school hours.

And if there is **anything** that I learned, it is that you cannot **say** what you want without consequence.

Oh, and socialization my ass. That's all I ever got in trouble for.

Ok, maybe I sound a little bitter, and it's because I a little am (18 years is a long time!).

In school, there are about 10 subjects and areas of learning offered. I came from a conservative school, so I'll be generous and say 20 subjects on average (make that number 30 if you want!). This number is still incredibly tiny compared to all the things to be learned and experienced in the real world, outside of school. The real world is a huge, amazing place full of amazing people, things to do, and discoveries to find. Heck, your local library offers you more than your school.

This is what I mean by the profound limitations of schooling. What is to be learned in the school environment is profoundly minimal compared to all that can be learned in LIFE.

The essential thing measured by school is whether or not you are good at school. Being good at school is a fine skill if you intend to do school forever. For the rest of us, being good at school is a little like being good at Frisbee. It's nice, but it's not relevant unless your career involves homework assignments, looking through textbooks for answers that are already known to your supervisors, complying with instructions and then, in high-pressure settings, regurgitating those facts with limited processing on your part.

Seth Godin
(Stop Stealing Dreams)

Since I am the one writing this, we can take me for example. That which I am most passionate about now and the area of studies I pursue (midwifery and women's health) were not offered in school. Maybe some in college, but not in the way that it really matters

to me or in the ways that I wish to make a difference in the world. Once I learned about unschooling I dropped out of college and coined myself an “adult unschooler.” I used my 20’s exploring and for the first time, figuring out what excited me and made me feel inspired. Now, at 30, I am much more clear on my mission in life. And I didn’t get it from school. I figured it out because I gave myself the time and the freedom to explore what it was for me. Without school, it is possible that I could have figured this out a lot sooner in life (but who really knows).

The public education system has created a curriculum that excludes an almost infinite number of possible chosen life paths. I mean, any system is going to exclude other systems, naturally. When you enter into the schooling system, you are shutting the door to all other possibilities that do not fall within that system. This done under consent is fine. I enter into systems and leave others behind all the time. The problem is we have been told a lie that says this is the best system, the most salient system, and if we don’t go to this system then we will fail. And for the most part, people deeply believe this lie.

So much of what is possible today as far as “career” and “work” goes, does not require a degree. And with the internet, there is so much more opportunity for self-created business and entrepreneurship.

“There’s not a school on earth, not a university or college that exists that is even remotely equipped to educate you properly on communications and marketing in the world we live in today.”

-Gary Vaynerchuk, entrepreneur, author, self-made millionaire.

Today’s traditional schooling environment is outdated at best, and a complete waste of time for so many people, at worst.

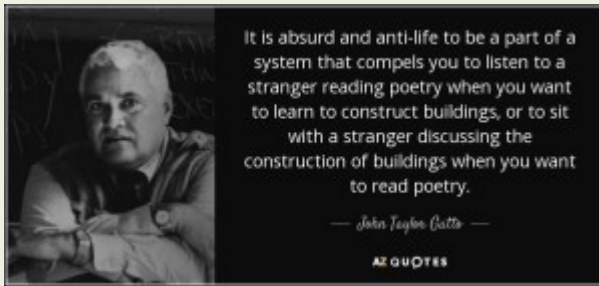
We have to wipe away the misconception that school prepares you for life. For two reasons:

Life is now. It is not a place in the future. You prepare for life by living life, not locked away all day hearing about your future life one day.

The second reason is that it only serves a purpose for a fraction of people. It is not a one size fits all model, and is a very new system compared to the history of the world, created to make workers for industry.

Boldly, I say school doesn’t optimally serve anyone, because lack of freedom and choice isn’t **the best** for anyone.

....but I know there will be push back on that claim.



My son is only three, but I get asked where he will go to school or what kind of schooling he will receive. To me, knowing the answer to this question would be more or less assuming who my son is and should be. It would be molding my son to fit an image before he even had time to show me who he was and what he wanted out of life. I do not assume what his life will look like. This doesn't just simply mean I do not assume what he will want to be when he grows up. I also don't assume he will want to live like me or anyone else. For all I know, he wants to be the next Christopher McCandless, or be a baker in France, or a porn star, or an author, or build the tallest buildings in the world, or play the piano, or swim with dolphins. I literally have no idea, and that is how I like it. I like being a witness to the unfolding, not a manipulator of it.

My bottom line is that compulsory schooling is a form of insanity. If we have to punish and shame children who don't want to follow the rules of a system that doesn't appeal to their true nature or bring them joy (school isn't natural for children or for anyone), then it's a system of abuse and misguided power. Then we are the ones with the problem, not them.

Free your children. Free yourself. Free your life <3

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