

Unauthorized, manipulative, not-so-special advertising/mind control section:

- ★ Imagine a place where you are forced to spend thirteen plus years of your precious youth doing unproductive, unpaid, and unfulfilling "hard labour." It's not prison.
- ★ Imagine a place where you must trust those who control your fate, while they may have the utmost contempt for you for the most arbitrary of reasons. It's not a communist dictatorship.
- ★ Imagine a place where unquestioning obedience and following orders is the first and foremost duty. It's not the armed forces.
- ★ Imagine a place where you must keep an "open mind" to their thoughts and beliefs, but your voice is insignificant at best. It's not church.
- ★ Imagine a place where everyone has problems with their minds and require constant treatment and surveillance. It's not a mental hospital.
- ★ Imagine a place devoid of all vitality, where uneasiness and despair are all too common. It's not in a factory of dead-end jobs.
- ★ Imagine a place where the wealthy, the brown-nosers, and the shameless self-promoters all get ahead instead of those with talent. It's not corporate America.
- ★ Imagine a place where the important task of teaching the essential skills needed for a minimum wage job and years of poverty are performed. It's not a third world relief effort.
- ★ Imagine a place where a certain underclass is treated like slaves, with no rights and no privacy, "for their own good" and the good of the community. It's not covered under the Bill of Rights or the Emancipation Proclamation.

It's our school system where learning to be obedient isn't everything - It's the only thing. The thousands of successful students can't possibly be wrong. The millions of unsuccessful students can't possibly be right. Under it's narrow perception there's something terribly wrong with the "uneducated." They're not ok. While only the "educated" are ok. They've got fancy paperwork to prove it. If school is anything, it's certainly not a place to learn.

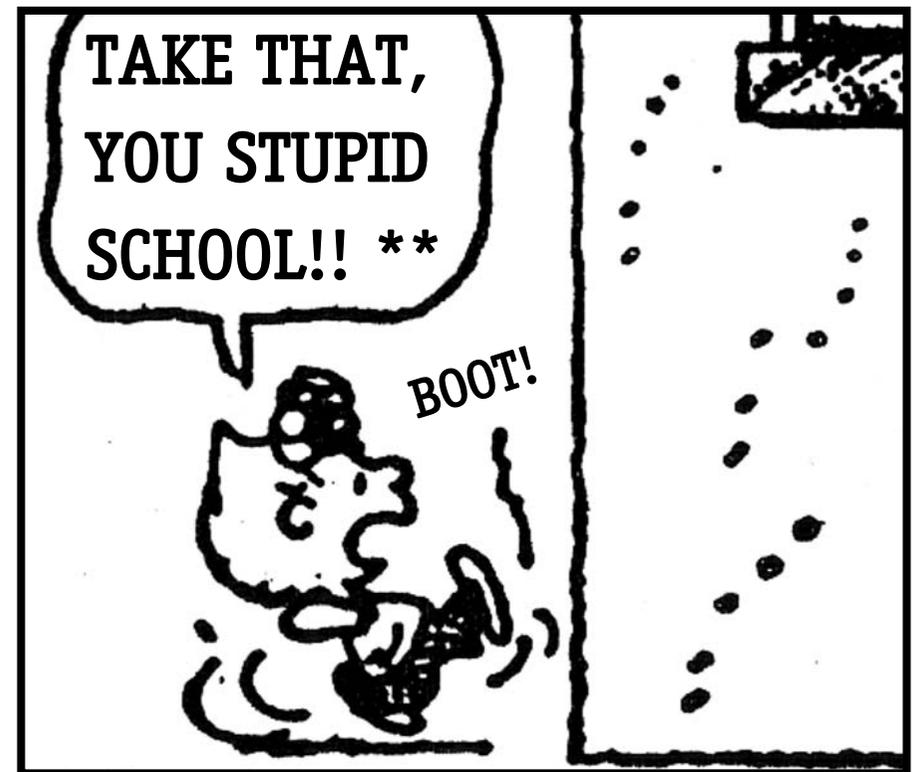
The answers that need to be questioned are all inside:

Is education through schooling necessary or even desirable? Why don't experts on education ask or answer this question? Why are schools in a free and democratic society so totalitarian and undemocratic? Is education so important it must be forced upon every citizen whether they like it or not? Does it really take thirteen plus years of enduring boredom and taking orders to live a productive and fulfilling life? Who are they really helping? Why must so many fail so that so few succeed? Why is taking advantage of kids, treating them as inferior, and bullying them around, thought of as a noble and romantic profession? Why do schools more resemble prisons than community centres? If we didn't have schools how would we learn new skills, subjects, and ideas? Why are more innovative, less time consuming, and less costly options dismissed so easily? Is this the best the educational establishment can do?

Against Education: For the Abolition of School

The Only Thing Wrong with Education is that
You Don't Learn Anything. *

* except obedience, systematic abuse, monotony, and of course, the necessity of more education



** That may relieve immediate frustration, but you would be more effective in organising a boycott.

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- ★ “If you see someone approaching with the obvious intent of doing good, run for your life.” - Henry David Thoreau
- ★ “All professions are a conspiracy against the laity.” - George Bernard Shaw
- ★ “Professional Employment and Its Useful Enemies” - title of an essay by Ivan Illich demonstrating how most of the work of professionals is useless if not counterproductive to the good of all and how it drives out personal autonomy.

No one should “stay in school.” No one really needs school and few really want it.

Nearly all the problems our society faces today can probably be traced back to our school systems. Under the guise of education, they take our most vulnerable and precious people and mold them into their idea of what a good citizen should be, mainly an obedient producer and consumer. These good citizens are groomed to be ignorant, insecure, alienated, and all but incapable of helping themselves. Yet how societies continue to revere school as sacred and fundamental to “education” is a testament to how effective they are in forming our perspectives of the world. It’s time to rethink our conventional wisdom about schools and decide whether education is something that must be systematically imposed on someone through schools or whether it’s a continuous self-directed process that is only inhibited by schools.

Education through school is typically synonymous with learning, but they are two different, if not opposite, ideas entirely. School is indeed an institution where “learning” (or treatment for institutional ignorance) takes place, but the lessons imposed are all about learning your place in the hierarchy of society and the slave or servant-like behaviour necessary to survive within an authoritarian institution. They combine the latest in state of the art propaganda methodology with old-fashioned coercion to achieve these ends. All of this is marketed and sold as education, a must-have school-produced commodity. Learning, in contrast, is the development of the knowledge, skill, mind, and character to live up to one’s potential. Learning is something both desirable and useful to the individual and possibly society-at-large. Schools have little tolerance for learning in this sense. Their primary concern is social control.

Meet the Education Police: The Supreme Authority Over the Incompetent, Unqualified, and Uneducated Masses

“Exercise of authority perverts. Obedience to authority humiliates.”

- Michael Bakunin

Schools champion themselves as the centres of learning in our communities where professional educators systematically plan the educational life of our children. They want parents and their children to have faith in these three overriding princi-

This pamphlet was inspired by umpteen years of schooling, experience teaching both professionally and unprofessionally, and these publications:

School, Who Needs It? - Michael Szuberla

Deschooling Society; Towards a History of Needs - Ivan Illich

Dumbing Us Down - John Taylor Gatto

Beyond Discipline; No Contest; Punished by Rewards - Alfie Kohn

The Teacher Unions: How the NEA & AFT Sabotage Reforms and Hold Students, Parents, Teachers, & Taxpayers Hostage to Bureaucracy (Ouch!) - Myron Lieberman

This pamphlet was written (typed), edited (censored), and over-produced (ruined) by: for lack of a better pseudonym... Paul McDonagh.

Originally written 5/96, last revised 5/99. A treatise on economics is forthcoming. questions? comment? clarifications? catch all 17 spelling and grammatical errors? email paul@bpaul.com or visit mediaworks.cjb.net on the porno superhighway™ a friendly fire provocations and mediaworks disorganisation educational deprogram

Quotes, Sound Bites. etc.:

- ★ If you're so smart why did you have to go to school?
- ★ There's no school like no school.
- ★ Without school how would anyone ever learn how officially stupid, incompetent, and undesirable they really are?
- ★ "To me the worst thing seems to be a school principally to work with the methods of fear, coercion, and an artificial authority. Such treatment destroys the sound sentiments, the sincerity, and the self-confidence of pupils and produces a subservient subject." - Albert Einstein
- ★ "The only real education is self-education. An education should allow you to discover who you are. It should allow you to uncover and refine your talents and put them to use. Education should not be endless memorisation of facts and passive observation of a teacher speaking in front of the class. The main lessons schools teach are endurance to boredom and obedience to authority." From Szuberla's *School, Who Needs It?*
- ★ "The people must not realize they are being manipulated for them to be manipulated effectively." - Winston Smith
- ★ "I hear and forget. I see and I remember. I do and I never forget." - Chinese Proverb
- ★ "The two best groups of learners are children and scientists. Why? Because both are naturally curious. Both ask lots of questions. Curiosity and questions are the motivation and the means of learning." - from a booklet on succeeding in college
- ★ "Research shows that students retain 90% of what is important and interesting to them, while they forget over 80% of what is essentially meaningless." - from above booklet
- ★ "Don't be stupid. Stay in school." - Michael Jordan, college dropout

ples: 1) Children belong in school. 2) Children learn in school. 3) Only professional teachers can teach children properly. Once these unfounded claims are accepted as truth, schools can do as they please because everyone is inadequate to participate in our society without their proper education. People are nurtured to consent to schooling because, like initiation rituals and hazing, they believe there are no feasible alternatives. Schools become students' trusted surrogate parents.

Schools, under the authority of the federal, state, and local governments Departments of Education, have monopoly power over to educate every citizen. The children are legally forced to attend school for a predetermined amount of time (in our free society they do have the choice to go to prison instead), at which point they can drop out or continue to receive their high school diploma. After that, they have the option of continuing toward other degrees and certificates through various schools to land a job in the profession of their choice. Of course, everyone knows that employers are encouraged and often regulated to discriminate against more competent people in favour of credentialed people. Schools, in essence, have become a mandatory system of credentialisation. One must first meet the demands of school to get their occupational destination.

Paying Up the Perpetual Promotion Machine

As economic beings, appreciative of effective and efficient structures, the rising cost of schooling is a vital issue. The time spent in school, 1,000 + hours/year for 10 (dropouts) to 20 + years (doctorates) just in preparation for work and possibly a career one might enjoy is a huge investment of one's life. During the typical full-time school week, most of the students' waking hours are taken up for school - attending classes, completing schoolwork, and their "free time" preparing for, recovering from, travelling to and from school, etc. Many students suffer from a lack of time, energy, and sleep (vital for physiological growth and recovery) to do what is otherwise enjoyable and important to them. Essentially, our younger years are spent living for school, something many of us find little pleasure or usefulness in. Surely, there is a better way to live and learn in what many regard as the best years of their lives.

Money is a scarce resource for those of us who don't own controlling interest in the world. The monetary costs of a Kindergarten through 12th grade schooling is conservatively estimated a \$5,000/year (one might even spend more money on school clothes, supplies, transportation, private/parochial schooling etc.). The costs for publicly subsidized colleges are around \$10,000/ year. All these costs are expected to go up through the "need for continuous education" (lifelong schooling and retraining), the increasing "need to keep up with technology," the increasing "need for special education," and the increasing "demand for college." Of course, these "needs" and "demands" are the result of schools creating and expanding new areas of public incompetence. A simple cost-benefit approach to schooling makes the possible alternatives even more appealing.

The Real Curriculum: the Values Imposed by School

“Education (through schooling) is a system of imposed ignorance. It is a system of indoctrination. It drives out of you a lot of the capacity to understand things.”

- Noam Chomsky

Reading, writing, arithmetic, science, social studies, etc. are what good students believe they're in school to learn about. These are all secondary to the real curriculum, which has a much different focus. It consists of the political, economic, and philosophical lessons students are forced to live and learn while within hallowed halls of school. None of these lessons come naturally, yet all must be learned to assure any chance of success in school. They are so rarely questioned by the professional educators chosen to package and enforce them they may as well be called the Ten Commandments of School. It is a teacher proof curriculum. Teachers deviating significantly from these lessons will find themselves on the unemployment lines with the other schoolhouse casualties.

The lessons and values that all schools force their students to learn and internalise no matter how much they resist are: (in no order of importance)

1. Obedience to Authority - Teachers and administrators formulate students' pre-planned education and they must obey them always to properly receive it. Teachers determine what is important for them and what they must do in order to advance, no matter how arbitrary it is.

2. Passivity - Students must sit back and take what's coming. School is neither time nor place to seek out things on your own. This is a spectator education. Students participate only when ordered to or given the privilege, as students have few rights.

3. Conformity - Consistent and predictable behaviour is required of all students. Uniform education doesn't allow much in the way of the creative, curious, and restless tendencies inherent in almost everyone. Non-conformists are in for a long uphill fight.

4. Learning is a Painstaking Process - School makes learning slow, arduous, frustrating, confusing, and boring. Teachers act as the pleasure police, suspicious of fun, making sure students learn things of minimal importance and interest. In this regard, they probably encourage ignorance and stifle curiosity in subjects considered educational.

5. Education is a Tool - Education (and thus guilt by association, learning) has little value in itself. It's simply a tool to use to work to acquire status and a bunch of valuable junk, which will make students happy beyond their wildest dreams. Their education is only valuable to the extent in which it serves a potential employer.

6. Competitiveness - Students compete against each other to win the highest grades and the favour of their teacher. They are never too comfortable about their position and often cling onto superstitions and irrational beliefs to pull them through. Students are isolated against each other creating gaps between everyone (and pos-

worth the time to consider how intimate and “in your face” it is with education. If mass media and lay observations are any indication, most people don’t think the government is all that noble, trustworthy, and truthful. Yet in education, we give them a reason to tax (murder) us, push us around, and to shape the future of every individual. Much of the public sees politicians as unfit to govern and vice versa. Maybe learning is so important that we can do without the middlemen and educate ourselves (if you want something done right...). Let the government concentrate on maintaining its military and keeping the economy safe for those that own it.

Uninteresting Perpendicular Note:

The public library, which costs taxpayers about \$50/year, is a great source of learning material. Anyone can get access to billions of dollars of books, videos, internet access, and other informative media. One can get a curriculum of far greater breadth and depth than any school could ever provide. Friends, casual relationships, and people of like interests can provide for great discussions and conversations on any topic of interest. This type of learning is dirt cheap in economic terms yet priceless in developing your own mind. Who knows what kind of groundbreaking ideas or revelations unheard of in schools you can discover.

sibly distrust and paranoia), few winners at the expense of the many losers, all in the name of education.

7. Hierarchical Orientation - Students know their place, the places of those around them, and where they fit in the whole scheme of things. They know who is “successful” and “failing.” Their level of schooling and some odd calculation called a GPA measure and rank them accordingly. From their success with school and the amount of school they’ve completed, they know where they fit in the pecking order.

8. Mechanical Mind Set - Students are machines and tools. They are assigned a task, given input, and graded on how accurate the output is. They are to produce and stop on demand. Much of their capacity for creative inquiry is neglected. Thus, the actual stimulation and interest level of most activities are minimal.

9. Institutional Pathology - The institution reigns supreme in this society - schools, governments, and especially corporate entities. Students’ lives revolve around school and they must adhere and adjust to its time and energy demands constantly. The rest of their personal lives are to be scheduled around school if they have the energy to do so, of course.

10. Emotional and Intellectual Dependency - Students are constantly evaluated and judged. They are graded (and thus degraded) and given exact percentages that determine how dis/satisfied a student should be with him/herself, not to mention their parents. Students need the teachers’ approval to be happy and confident in themselves and their intellectual endeavours. Students are told whether they’re good or bad, and win or lose, believe they get what they deserve.

Creating an Industrial-Strength Addiction

All these lessons learned in school can be seen manifesting themselves in the world around. People have a loss of autonomy and develop artificial “needs.” They need authority to organise their work life and tell them what to do. They need professional and expert authorities to educate them when they’re ignorant, medicate them when they’re ill, uplift them when they’re depressed, fix whatever’s broke, decide what’s best for them, etc. They need to bury their heads in the sands of a well-paying job, no matter how useless, insignificant, or antisocial the work. They need the products and services advertisers push on them. They need to make a competition of everything and constantly compare and isolate themselves from those around them. They need to keep up with the Joneses. They are spectators in need of entertainment, vicariously living through others--celebrities, sports heroes, offspring, etc.-- to escape the drudgery of everyday life. They need to impress others and communicate “success” through the purchase of status goods - fancy houses, cars, jewellery, etc. - which they, more than likely, can barely afford. They need to succeed, by everyone else’s standard. In short, they have one life-consuming need, a debilitating yet socially acceptable addiction ... more.

In the futile attempt to meet these needs they lose track of what they really want. Often these wants and values are radically different from those of our school and

commerce-driven society. Only the truly self-confident can see through the heavily armed propaganda battalion, the trillion \$ industry of advertisers, marketers, and public relations pros (and cons), and the omnipresent religious dogma of schooling to know for sure.

In Whose Interest? Why Self-Interest Rates are Skyrocketing...

“The monotony of repetitive work (and lack of truly stimulating activities) makes people as stupid as possible for a human being to become.”

- Adam Smith,
godfather of economics

Schools tell everyone that they're all about the students' best interest (of course they never prove it). Unfortunately, this a business world and business, or more accurately large corporations, who care about the public to the extent they can make money off them, have enough financial leverage to undermine democracy and shape society as they see fit. They pretty much determine what our governments, schools, and therefore population at large will do. Our society, much like most if not all others, is a plutocracy where money and those who have it rule. Corporations and their wealthy owners exert enormous power over legislation and economic policies. They need people to know where they fit in the whole scheme of things, not as controllers of their own fate but as mere survivors of uncontrollable circumstances. In this regard, schools provide an invaluable and essential service to them.

Corporations need people dumbed down enough to consent to work for them and even more stupid to want their shoddy and useless products and services, that's the basis of the entire economy. Schools are training grounds for corporate tools, disempowering people to the point where they'll accept jobs with no dignity or sense of meaningful accomplishment. They need people with enthusiasm for the status quo, trained to accept monotony. They need to fill positions throughout their hierarchy, and school separates the field of candidates conveniently by grade cards and degrees.

Corporations produce most of the materials for school, a huge industry within itself (about \$350 billion/year). They skew the messages to be ideologically friendly toward their efforts to commercialise and commodify everything around the globe.

They supply propaganda and drop their important educational messages - to paraphrase “you are inadequate and can't possibly be happy without our commodities, buy (insert product name here)” - wherever schools will give them space.

Teachers and administrators have a huge interest in preserving and expanding schools. Being a professional educator is thought of as a noble, respectable, and worthwhile job, because they've been telling us that for years. Schools are sacred

spending an average of 2-3 hours a day on educational activities. In their words, schooling “breaks the spirit of children.”

8. Progressive schooling methods (implying that the rest are regressive or at best stagnant) are popular amongst the “radical, revolutionary, and rebellious” teachers and administrators. What they amount to is a kinder gentler yet still coercive “educational” environment with new and improved euphemisms. These pioneers of pedagogy, who generally acknowledge that teachers can't educate students, students must educate themselves. What they fail to realize or don't want to (salaries have been known to affect better judgment) are that schools and professional teachers are in the way. Of course there's neither much money nor glory in such thinking. To their credit, progressive educators address their misdemeanours against humanity. To their discredit, they neglect the crimes almost completely.

9. Self-esteem is another focus of modern schools. Never mind the fact the idea was popularised by Psycho-something-ist Nathaniel Branden, a member of the philosophical Objectivist cult (with aspirations to soon become a major religion) who believe that selfishness is the only virtue. While there are no real measures of self-esteem, high self-esteemers care about themselves and not about others. People with low self-esteem care neither about themselves nor others, and those in the middle care both about themselves and others. Most self-esteem enhancement programs may be producing a more narcissistic and intolerable generation of kids than intended.

10. Everyone seems to think there are problems with our educational systems (corporate exec's, polytricksters, the assorted moral minorities). Their common “for the children” solution is usually more school funding (the exec's and their political employees don't want corporations to pay any taxes to do this and the moralists usually set up more expensive yet equally poor private schools). The military and police have shown that by giving them more money they will assure there will be no peace or order ever. Schools will follow suit and create a larger, more powerful, and self-serving bureaucracy, and similar to cancer, it will seek to grow and suck the vitality out of the organism it plagues.

11. Universities were once thought of as hotbeds for intellectual activity, but this increasingly is not the case. The intellectual establishment of academia has been put in charge of rationalizing the New World Pecking Order, which is a repackaged version of the Old World Pecking Order. With the competitive and rigid structure of schools and the compulsion to “publish or die”, professors tend to produce trivial, uncritical, and “safe” research and writings that will impress the right people, namely their peers and superiors (is this the best these open-minded people can do?). Often the “best and brightest” are turned off by such an atmosphere. Universities have lost their vitality by adhering to principles of elitist grandstanding and conservative neophobia (fear of anything new), all but assuring rigor mortis has set in. As psychologist Erich Fromm and Science philosopher Paul Feyerabend noted, most advances in human history have come from disobedience and disregard for conventional methods.

12. For those sceptical of government, wanting it to “get off their backs”, it might be

2. Massachusetts invented the first compulsory schools in the U.S. in 1852 at a time when (coincidentally?) rapid industrialisation, factories, and modern prisons were reshaping the landscape of the U.S. An estimated 80 percent of the Massachusetts population resisted requiring a militia to force children into attendance. Ralph Waldo Emerson, a famous philosopher of the time, said the reason for schools was to “keep them (common folks) from our (the ruling class’s) throats.”

3. The whole concept of “children” is relatively new. The creation of a class of citizens who must be protected from their own freedom and mischief occurred around 200 years ago by the wealthy classes and under Vatican orders. Before then young people worked and played just as their parents did. They used their skills when they developed. The wealthy classes could afford to pamper their children, and as the middle classes and lower classes could afford, they did the same. One criticism of school is that they treat people like children for so long, that is exactly how they act the rest of their lives - like children.

4. Most schools are based on behaviourist principles, B.F. Skinner’s dogmatic psychological theory which wants us to go “beyond freedom and dignity” by eliminating undesirable behaviour through punishment, and reinforce desirable and obedient behaviour through rewards. It is a motivational theory that came directly from work with laboratory animals. It’s a rather convenient way to justify having power over people by thinking they have no free will, they are too stupid to make their own decisions, and that they are like wild animals in need of being “domesticated.” Consequently when people are treated like stupid animals, it’s no surprise as to how they behave.

5. Schools consistently fail by their own standards. Their students routinely fail proficiency tests, designed by schools to set minimum competence and knowledge standards. School officials can only shrug their shoulders at the fact that 25-30 percent of U.S. adults are illiterate. As for any sense of integrity, it is widely observed that much of college consists of learning that most of what was taught the first twelve years of school in science and history are either lies or obsolete. In computerese this is called GIGO (garbage in garbage out). The expert educators’ whole self-proclaimed reason for being is highly questionable.

6. Several studies, Ivar Berg’s Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery being one of the first, have shown that there is no relationship between the competence a person is supposed to have acquired through schooling and his effectiveness on the job. A high school drop out and a master’s degree recipient from the best engineering school have an equal chance to excel as an engineer. There is however a strong connection between the money spent on schooling and the total life-long income a person will receive. Over-priced designer label school graduates, i.e. Harvard alums, should make more than your more economical run-of-the-mill low profile college grads, although they essentially teach the same thing.

7. The people who put their kids through home schooling more than anyone else are ... surprise ... school teachers and administrators. They know the ugly reality of school all too well to let their kids be subjected to it. Homeschoolers are widely reported to be 5 to 10 years ahead of their conventionally schooled peers while

cash cows for them - a government regulated monopoly on education. It’s a relatively secure well-paying profession, and understandably, they don’t want to give that up. Health care, legal, and financial professionals rely on schools to feed off its highly revered status and to artificially limit the number of people entering the field, thereby creating a scarcity of people legally allowed within their profession. This inflates the prices for their (dis)services generating obscene incomes for those within the field. The disempowered and dependent citizens produced by schools are the whole basis for these professions’ existence and proliferation, in the first place. They are taught that everyone is in need of professional “help” in all their affairs and that they are incompetent in these dealings. Schools serve to raise the demand for professional services while lowering supply of those qualified to perform them. In nearly every industry, it’s the nature of our economic system: manipulating the supply and demand of goods and services through the use and abuse of public agencies.

Students’ and their parents’ interests are exploited. Their influence on schools is marginal, because they lack the right credentials for their opinions to be heard let alone taken seriously. Experts (who as we all know are never wrong) in education and the hundreds of thousands of highly paid education professionals can’t stand to have their power over our lives questioned. Where education is concerned schools always get the final say.

Beyond Schools: Back to the Drawing Board

If everyone were to be allowed to fully participate in all the decisions that effect our lives (the definition of real democracy) with the utmost regard for individual freedom (not the contemporary “freedom” to obey, conform, and consume) school as we know it would not exist. Unfortunately “democracy and freedom” are running jokes wherever you go, especially in school. They’re not to be taken seriously, unless you want to be called a troublemaker.

Compulsory schools, authoritarian teaching methods, full-time professional educators, and passive learning are, quite simply, obsolete. No one should be forced to go to school. No one should be required to learn things that are of no importance or use to him or her. No one should accept an “education” defined, designed, and administered by an elitist priesthood of educators. No one should substitute regurgitation of information for real learning.

We could close all schools and turn them into community and resource centres where courses in various disciplines, trades, and crafts can be “taught” by anyone to anyone. One’s merits should determine competency, not a licensing system. Courses should strive to be as democratic as possible, where people are encouraged to participate as much as possible with hands on experience.

We could rediscover apprenticeships. Most jobs can be performed competently with a few weeks of interaction with an experienced worker and on the job training. Most jobs minus the cosmetic complexities (conforming to behaviour/appearance standards etc.) aren’t too terribly difficult for anyone to pick up. The time, energy,

and resources spent on schooling are a huge investment of one's life. It discourages and denies underprivileged and restless people the chance to enter and explore their profession(s) of choice.

Humans are infinitely more complex and have too much potential for schools to handle and to facilitate real education. Everyone is a teacher. Everyone is a student. Searching for, learning, and sharing new skills and ideas have been around thousands of years before anyone dreamed (or more accurately had nightmares) about school. Real learning doesn't require an army of teachers and administrators nor walls nor desks or a rigid structure of any kind. Honest participation and a desire to learn are all that is really required.

In the Mean Time: Strategies to Defy School Damage

Schools are firmly implanted in this society and working to free their stranglehold on our lives won't be easy. Individual rebellion and dissension are playing right into their hands. They have plenty of safeguards and experience in dealing with such annoyances. Organising an independent and thoughtful (as opposed to militant) union of students and parents seeking a more just education system would be much more prosperous. Publishing pamphlets, public discussions, demonstrations, and strikes would definitely raise awareness, essential for any meaningful change. Resisting schooling and challenging the legitimacy of any power structure is an education within itself.

The legal route is an option, even though justice has long since been outlawed. In legal language students attend school under duress, the threat of punishment. Once they can legally drop out, they stay in high school/college under economic duress, the threat of financial harm. Both run against the notion of a free and democratic society. Lawsuits or new legislation are needed calling for: 1) an end to compulsory schooling and 2) the end of employment discrimination against competent individuals without school degrees. If successful, these laws would put education back in the hands of the people and out of the hands of schools.

It is possible to avoid school altogether and join the ranks of people who realize school is no place to learn - homeschoolers. Depending on where you live, you may need to navigate all the bureaucrats and red tape police. They may give you all the discouragement you ever wanted and more. Materials are available through libraries and home schooling organisations that will tell you everything you need to know to get started.

Jumping to Conclusions

"The power to define is both the power to create and to destroy."

- A Universal Truism

A favourite dismissive non-argument of some that read this may be, "it's negative" or "it's pessimistic." I can only agree. To be negative and pessimistic about school results from its negative and pessimistic view of human nature. By their actions and sometimes words we learn that education must be forced on people through bribes and punishments. Both education and people need to be controlled in order to be effective. What this says about humanity is: 1) We aren't too interested in learning. 2) We are too dumb to learn anything of value on our own. 3) We need freedom and protection from our greatest enemy, ourselves.

I am biased by a much more positive and optimistic view of mankind based on my own experiences. We enjoy learning interesting, useful, and challenging things. We have a tremendous capacity for creativity and autonomy yet need environments that will allow them to flourish. We are at our worst when we are isolated and become uptight in competitive atmospheres. We are at our best when we are in an equitable and co-operative atmosphere where everyone is on the same level - no superiors, no inferiors, just people of differing talents. We will be healthier and happier people when the institutions that have the greatest effect on our lives are under our control and not by some self-chosen elite.

We have been bombarded by so many people about all the alleged benefits of schooling that it might seem hard to believe that schools are probably more harmful than helpful. The people who essential serve as cheerleaders and salesmen for schools would probably consider it heretical to entertain such notions. These people who require an open-mind to swallow their dogma generally take it personally when presented with an unorthodox view of schooling; their profession has become their identity. Unless the education industrial (inferiority) complex is some sort of universal religion that will unite us in perfect harmony, it must prove itself to be a legitimate authority over our lives. But here's the kicker: schools cannot prove they have the right to undermine democracy and freedom for any reason.

The test is over. The scores have been tabulated. The results are conclusive. Schools have failed.

Interesting Parallel Notes:

1. The British school system, from which America's are derived, was developed by an alchemist. Class, subject, and grade are all terms from alchemy, the "science" that could turn lead into gold and men into fools. Ironically, we don't use the British term "master" for teachers anymore, possibly because of its connotations of slavery. An inside secret to marketing is to always change the packaging, never the product. How's that for progressive education?