

If you don't try, you fail

- **Silverstein**

*Dedicated to all the teachers who do the job of showing us their passion and teaching us ours,
and to all the students who never get to experience that.*

*Specifically, for the kids who will get the education they deserve because we made our voice
heard.*

“Those in power just don't want us kids to change anything because they know we will”

-Garth E. Beyer

1. Preface: Education exclamation!

It was nearly six months before I began writing this manifesto that I first learned exactly what Charter schools and Magnet schools were. When I was told that these schools provided a curriculum that typically specializes on a field of study and that there has to be a lottery at most for admission, I was astounded. I was never told I had the option to go to a school where I had the ability to study more of what I really wanted to. No one, not even the media, who I would think would always be jumping to write about this, mentioned charter schools.

After learning this, I was told that “most of the charter schools are problematic.”

Problematic? How could that be? It would make sense that they would be underfunded because they are breaking away from the traditional educative progression. However, if you put a bunch of kids that want to focus on a teacher, a mentor, someone that preaches what the kids truly want to learn, surely the lack of funds could hardly be “problematic”. Not only are parents willing to spend more to give their children an education outside of the norm, but teachers take cuts so that they can teach what they are passionate about.

If money can't be the problem since passion, lessons, and ideas cost nothing, if the students can't be the problem since they are focused and motivated; and if the teachers can't be the problem since they are passionate enough to take the lower wage jobs, then what is the problem?

There isn't one (with that type of education).

Over the last seven years I have lived through secondary and post-secondary education. I went to a high school that I would have deemed *average*. However, there would have to be outliers in order to make it truly average, and there really weren't (unless you count two people getting a perfect score on the ACT as an outlier).

It was a high school with the same standards and pre-determined course schedules as any other high school. While there, I had written down pages upon pages of ways that education could be improved in my notebooks, scrap pieces of paper, and sometimes in the class books themselves. We often get reminded that ideas are nothing without action.

My mission then is the same now; to make a positive ruckus toward improvement. I was the one to raise my hand and ask questions that we would not be tested on. I recall a time in an environmental science class when we were studying Tsunami's. I raised my hand and asked if the speed of Earth's rotation had a large enough impression on the speed and impact of a Tsunami based off the direction it was heading. The teacher had no clue. My ability to ask questions that could not be answered by the teachers, the people who are supposed to specialize on the subject, only increased. I was addicted. Questions that started based off my actual interest and passion turned into a test of the teacher's passion and intentions. Would they know the answer? Would they find out? Did they ever wonder the same thing? Did they care?

In this manifesto, I am going to argue that I am not the only student who has questions and a passion and that the teacher I mentioned was not the only one who lacked what is supposed to be the essence of teaching. The continuation of using the same educational framework that was placed in the 1900's will not only be the downfall of the economy, but it will be the downfall of spirit, of character, of passion and most importantly of dreams.

2. A walk through school

Contrary to belief, walking through a high school or college, you won't find people nose deep in a book. Yes, you will find them in the library, but they are not checking out any books. From my experience and attendance in the library, the number of students who would check a library book out is 5%, and I'm being generous. Nor will you find students using class room books unless actually *told* to open their books to page 394. Of which, 40% of students did not even bring their book to class. The biggest complaint I heard in college about books, was not how expensive they are (though I heard plenty of that and even contributed to it), it was that they bought a book and didn't even use it. The string of advice about books isn't where to get the cheapest books, but what classes you will even need your book for.

What you will find in the library are a dozen students on the computers, some of them sharing screens. What teachers see is their students on Facebook, but what they are really doing is multitasking. They also have a tab open researching what they have questions on because the teacher didn't make it clear and of course, the answers aren't in the book that was prescribed for the class. Maybe I'm already sounding bias, but ask any graduate this question, "Did you learn more from Google or more from school?"

This manifesto is written to change the answer to that question.

There is no reason why students should be learning more from Google than from school. The tools, the value of face time, and the ability to inspire are the core pillars to education, none of which can be provided by Google. Obviously, Google hasn't acquired a hand to shake, a smile to share or the ability to inspire someone to do what they have a passion for. That leaves one explanation. Schools are still using the prescribed and historic educational tools from the 1900's. They are avoiding conversations and they are killing dreams rather than schooling them.

Out of the 35+ teachers I have had, there has been one that was so thrilled and passionate about the subject that he taught that I wasn't the only one engaged, everyone was. This teacher was the only one that ever stunted my streak of asking questions that teachers could not answer. This teacher was the only one that replied to my emails, suggested books to read, had discussions with me, asked me to stay after class to talk, and encouraged me to take courses at UW-Madison on the same subject. One teacher who taught what they were passionate about, not just what they got a degree in or what they have memorized. One teacher who could get the attention of students who had no interest in the subject. One teacher who crafted conversations into the presentations. One teacher that knew how to school dreams rather than slaughter them.

You may be thinking that this teacher makes a lot of money and teaches at a big brand school. He doesn't. He's just another teacher working at an average public college with an average public college pay. This one teacher does not have a line of students who want to study his subject. The class is one of many options to fulfill the graduation requirement.

Regardless, even if the teacher and school was making much more money and had a big name for itself, there would still only be this one teacher who breaks the status-quo, the somber routine of teaching. But instead of paying to have a dozen teachers like the one I mentioned, schools spend the money from their increased tuition and donations on more buildings to expand classes and a big football stadium to avert the eyes and minds of people wondering why they didn't use the money to fill the classrooms they have with teachers who want to school dreams and students who want to learn them.

Even more unfortunately, the students, parents, teachers and taxpayers who already understand the premises of this manifesto, do little to nothing to change what school is for. Don't get me wrong, they want to, you want to (that's why you're reading this), I want to, but still so many sit idly by only shaking their heads. (This!) This -not charter schools- is problematic.

Seth Godin has made some of the problems I am going to discuss aware to over 300,000 people by writing and sharing *Stop Stealing Dreams*. I am standing up and speaking up for the 30 million people (students significantly included) who need a different form of encouragement and to be made aware of key elements that were glossed over to the other 300,000 people that read *Stop Stealing Dreams*.

You, the students, the teachers, the parents, and tax payers need to know that there is a side of education that Seth can show you, and there is a side of education that a person who had just gone through it can show you. And it's much worse.

Straightforwardly put, very few colleges are trying to recruit students who are passionate. Graduation rate has no correlation to the amount of passion in the school; it is only connected to how factory-like the school is and how desensitized the students are. The schools who recruit the passionate are the people you know about when their name is mentioned. These people were able to use school to improve their passion to such a degree that they have made a name for themselves (not their school) by the time of graduation. Often times, they leave before graduating: Mark Zuckerberg, Steve Jobs, Bill Gates... But wait, neither Mark, nor Steve, nor Bill manifested their passions from school. They may have done it while in school, but it seems they created their names despite of any classes they took.

3. A pocket of side notes to this manifesto

I've numbered the sections in order for you to specifically mark certain points in your future discussion of the book, as well as to correlate the information from a recent graduate to the comments and notations made by Seth Godin in his eBook *Stop Stealing Dreams*. The numbers make it easy to apply a connection which will result in a further understanding of each idea.

- You have the ability to read this eBook quite separately. I am going to assume you have already read *Stop Stealing Dreams*. If you haven't, I insist that you open it up side by side and compare, but it isn't necessary.
- The following sections are written in my perspective and I have done my best to make it clear, but it's up to you to decipher whether I mean "I and other students" or "you and I" when I use "we".
- The ideas are formulated in the type of blog posts since that is how I have always written and will make it easier for you to create a vacancy through the whitespace to fill it with your own thoughts on each idea.

At times, while I have written to inform and persuade, it may feel like I am ranting. It should. While one rant may not change the way things are, if it resonates with you and you echo this information by tweeting, emailing to others, forwarding it, passing it on by word of mouth, sharing it on Facebook, and any other way to make it bounce off each and every persons mind, a chorus of rants can change the way school is taught.

While the ideas in this manuscript are so rare, they sadly lack the enforcement to be made popular, but they are still worth a lot and I hope you agree. Despite the information, the power, the gift, and the awareness you have been handed, I encourage you not to charge anyone to view it. Unless, of course, you are charging them their previously held beliefs of school and the status-quo - for after reading this, they will be throwing them in the trash anyway.

Lastly, create a brouhaha. People die standing still. Get out and voice this. Ask the unanswerable questions, not only to your teachers, but to the school board, to other tax payers, to all the students. I have seen groups of students make drastic changes despite the views of the school board and tax payers. I have seen school wide walkouts that enforced our powers and rights for an education worth attending as well as people actually taking the time to write their personal email to administrative board members as well as senators. You can join the tribe of hundreds of thousands of other people in an effort to improve the way school is taught in whatever way possible. Share this or create your own manifesto to get people out of their shadows, their boxes, and all things that have prevented them from voicing their beliefs in educational reformation.

Above all else, thank you for reading and making improvement contagious. We can do this.

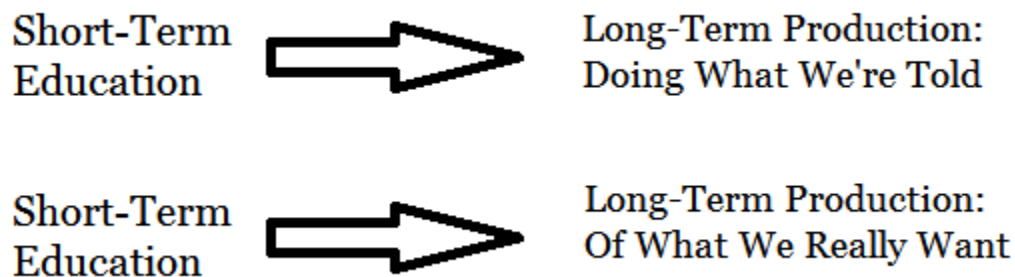
4. Maybe child labor laws should be revoked.

Over a hundred years ago, the realization of the tough working environment and tragic accidents flipped the reality switch in a few people's minds and the activist community began to build in

order to prevent children of a young age from working. Of course the only objection they faced was the employers of the thousands of children. Ironically, now if you ask anyone if they wanted cheap labor to get their work done, they would be on top of it. But if you tell them the age of the workers, decisions quickly change. What a difference from back in the old days.

Even more ironically, it's not strictly because of their age. It is because people think that in order to do the job correctly, more efficiently, they had to have an education, which is the exact argument that was made to win the battle against child labor in 1918. What no one realizes is that the kids who worked at the age of five actually learned more of the lessons that will make them successful than the kids who start school at age five. A dying brain beats a dead one.

Now, it's safe to say that what we are doing now, what we are teaching now is wrong, but that's not saying that what we were doing before the education system was right either. What if there was a way to make the American dream become a reality by changing one habit; by eliminating the factory formula of short-term education for the long-term production of doing what we're told and replacing it with a short-term education for the long term-production of what we really want.



5. Wait. Nothing's changed. (That's the problem)

The formula school is using now is perfect. You read the proclamation right. Putting in some short-term education to get out long-term production is great!

Let's look at a similar formula, $2 + 2 = 4$ right? Well what does 2 oranges + 2 oranges make? It doesn't make 4, it makes 4 *oranges*, but the school system doesn't acknowledge this or teach it. It teaches that no matter what you add two of, the answer is still four. It's not.

The formula the public school system has now is perfect, but the variables they put into it are flawed. The problem is the type of short-term education put in and the type of long-term production that is its result. The school is adding 2 rotten oranges with another 2 rotten oranges and they believe the answer is still 4 because four is a perfect answer. It's what we've been

taught when you add 2 and 2 together. When really it is 4 rotten oranges, 4 rotten years of education.

Everyone in their right mind wants to do what they love and make money from it. Does that sound too difficult? Does that sound like it's something that is impossible to teach, to make happen? There are millions of people living their dream every day and if they can learn it, they can teach it.

But what do we teach students instead? Trigonometry. Which only a select few will ever use again. That's not the only subject either that is time spent degrading the educational value of each student in attendance. I use Trigonometry as the example because I failed my first course of Trig. I could give a dozen excuses why but the *reason* why? I knew I would never use it again. Instead, I spent my time writing poetry, love letters, free-writing and being an idea guy (my passion). But I knew I wanted to go to college. So what did I do? I remained compliant; I tried to fit back on the track by taking the class again and getting a B.

Why do I share this personal example? Because what is happening is personal. What we are being taught is a personal matter, learning doesn't come from a book, it comes from experience. The worst part is that we're not even trying to be taught experiences from a book, we're just being taught the book and a book is not worth much if it is never read, the same as experience, if it is never had. If you put in the wrong type of education, then you get out the wrong type of long-term production. Which column do you think is the type we *don't* want or need?

Long Term Production

Adaptation

Artfulness

Broad Horizons

Character

Creativity

Commitment

Consistent Improvement

Essence

Flexibility

Integrity

Originality

Long Term Production

What we have now

Passionate

Positive Influence

Quality

Respect

Virtue

Now it's clear that the goals, lifestyles, attitudes, and types of workers needs have changed. That means that the type of long-term production schools are churning out needs to be changed which means the type of education that is being taught needs to be changed. The formula can stay the same, the type of data we put into it needs to change.

6. Everything is Massive

Every meal, it seems, is massive. Everything is either large, extra large or supersized. Drinks in particular are beyond supersize, they are gargantuan. It seems that every place that sells drinks, they only have different sizes of large. The problem with large is that you can have different *sizes* of large but you can't have different *types* of large.

On the other side of the spectrum, if you go into a restaurant and ask for a small drink, you get the option of a small clear plastic cup, a small glass, a small Styrofoam cup, a small bottle of what you already want in it or a small cup with the restaurants logo on it. Ask for a large and you get a large plastic cup, that's it.

Now swap the drink you want, with the education you're getting:

Large – to everyone

Small – to different types of people

Schools think that one size fits all (large). The current educational structure is about massive uniform education to produce massive uniform long-term production. If there are 3000 people at one high school, there's no energy to specialize. There's only enough energy to show students how to *just get by*.

The question remaining is if *mass* marketing, *mass* advertising, and *mass* communication are all dying and *specialized* marketing, *specialized* advertising and *specialized* communication are striving, is it right to toss trillions of dollars and our spirits to push mass education to try and make it work? Are we going to keep paying for a large? Or suck it up and order the small?

7. Rote, Rote, Rote, Rote was necessary

There are two positive forms of massive which need to be implemented into the schooling formula; the education being taught needs to implement massive specialization so that there can be a massive specialized long-term production. (I hope you see what I did there.)

Unfortunately, the education now is massively uniform, with the focus on memorization and the ability to do what you're told. In the past, both memorization and doing what you're told were necessary. Now anything can be Googled on your phone in less than twenty seconds and the people who make headlines, the people who are living their passion, the people who make money doing it, are the people who didn't do what they were told.

A major trend you will witness throughout this manifesto is that the greatest successes occur despite or in spite of school, not because of it.

Using rote learning to teach information that will never be used again -- that is the type of education that is being put in the current formula. Sure, it fits the long-term production that was sought after in the early 1900's, but it doesn't seem quite fitting for the long-term production the world is calling for now.

Mass education, mass rote learning, and then *mass testing*. The most efficient and historical testing by education standards is the multiple choice test. Also known as the single mass murderer of passion by punishing those who don't keep up, by harming those who's mind is on something more productive elsewhere, torturing to those who want to excel past it and a death wish to anyone who avoids it.

8. Psychology and the internet

Research has continuously been showing that we forget things we are confident we can find on the Internet. It's similar to being in a relationship. You automatically don't bother filling your brain with concepts or memories that you know your spouse can recall. A simple example is going grocery shopping; you don't bother remembering to grab the eggs because your spouse always remembers to. No need for you to add another thing on your list to remember.

Betsy Sparrow, lead author of a science article from Columbia University titled *Google Effects on Memory: Cognitive Consequences of Having Information at Our Fingertips* has this to say.

Since the advent of search engines, we are reorganizing the way we remember things. Our brains rely on the Internet for memory in much the same way they rely on the memory of a friend, family member or co-worker. We remember less through knowing information itself than by knowing *where* the information can be found.

This provides a problem to the traditional school curriculum, but only because it is unwilling to change to accommodate this fact. In this sense, we are more likely to remember things that are not available online, something school teaches little of.

9. What can be taught

I mentioned earlier, if it can be learned, it can be taught. Hundreds of people every week are making news for achieving their dreams. Girls at the age of 5 are turned into pop sensations due to a little boost of charisma and a video camera. A homeless guy can get a job because someone videotaped his voice so he could get some extra pocket change. A guy sings about Chocolate Rain and get's more views than the news network in a day. Above all, people are living their dreams and making more than enough money doing so. Importantly, these people are doing more good, giving more gifts, and sharing more love than anyone who just graduated from school.

These people were self-taught achievers of their dreams because they overcame fear, made goals, commitments, and promises to themselves which they kept. They prepared, they planned, they expressed themselves, they innovated, they put their personal touch to it, and they exploited their uniqueness and their character into their product. If all of that is what it takes to live a dream...well what are we doing teaching to be fearful, to be hesitant, to follow prescribed procedures, to maintain status-quo, to stay average, to avoid conflict and detain ingenuity.

And these are just the habits that are taught, think about the adverse attitudes that school creates.

Not only are mediocre attitudes being created during school, but at the same time any of the attitudes that should be taught are being destroyed and recalibrated.

You know what I find funny? That the ones who “make it big” are the dreamers. Those who aren't even old enough to have their dream patterns altered by school, or are homeless and don't go to school or those who don't focus on school but go to it anyway and dream during class about what they are going to accomplish when they get home. They thrive because they dream, and they dream because they are not taught not to. Ignorance in this case, isn't bliss, it's a dream given the ability to be achieved.

10. New Structure Set

The scholars we want and need to have come out of school will only happen if we change it and create different ways to deliver lessons. We must start schooling dreams.

Here are a dozen ways school can be rethought and taught:

Homework is work that one is inspired to do

“Today's lesson” is a collaboration of the class's ideas and thoughts on a subject through discussion, no right, no wrong

Class textbooks chosen by teacher's favorites on the subject

A class for anything that one would want to learn. If there isn't one, students create and teach it.

Sending scantron to the guillotine

Experience and creation determine achievement level

Self graded report cards

Life design instead of life science

11. Change can be rampant, fluid-like and precise.

We all have the power to change: change ourselves, change others, change items, change behaviors, and so why not aim it at education? Everything that incorporates the lessons that school teachers teach are either obsolete or can be learned on the internet in a 5 minute summary or twenty minute lecture from someone who cares.

In fact, a lot can be learned on the internet in 5-20 minutes. Why? Because the teachers we need in our schools, are online. They are writing and publishing lessons on everything imaginable, there are a hundred times more articles being posted on the web each day, as well as being read, than there are students going to class. While those who write blog posts, submit articles, and offer their minds up to students, don't call themselves or get paid as much as teachers, they are *teachers* to every student with internet access. The internet is by far the most powerful, flexible, and instant source of learning.

It is also the single largest producer of successful dreamers. Its ability to be customized, specialized, internalized, and individualized is what allows it to create every kind of person this world and the long-term production goal, needs. But it just can't compete with the 1,620 personal hours spent each year teaching the exact opposite.

12. A dream killing society

Everyone is born a dreamer. Luckily, the system, as hard-pressed to destroy dreams as it is, still can't prevent minds from at least flickering short images of should-be dreams even though, the flickers, the pipe dreams, the empty wishes are exactly so, empty. They are not enough to tease a student to learn more, to push further, or to even give it a second glance. We're not only killing dreams, we're preventing them. For a society that used to kill off the weak and encourage the strong, we're doing the exact opposite.

13. Two bumper stickers

The first one is a joke and it is funny because the purpose behind it is falsely advertised. The bumper sticker says "My child is a high school honor student". That's like saying that I'm a

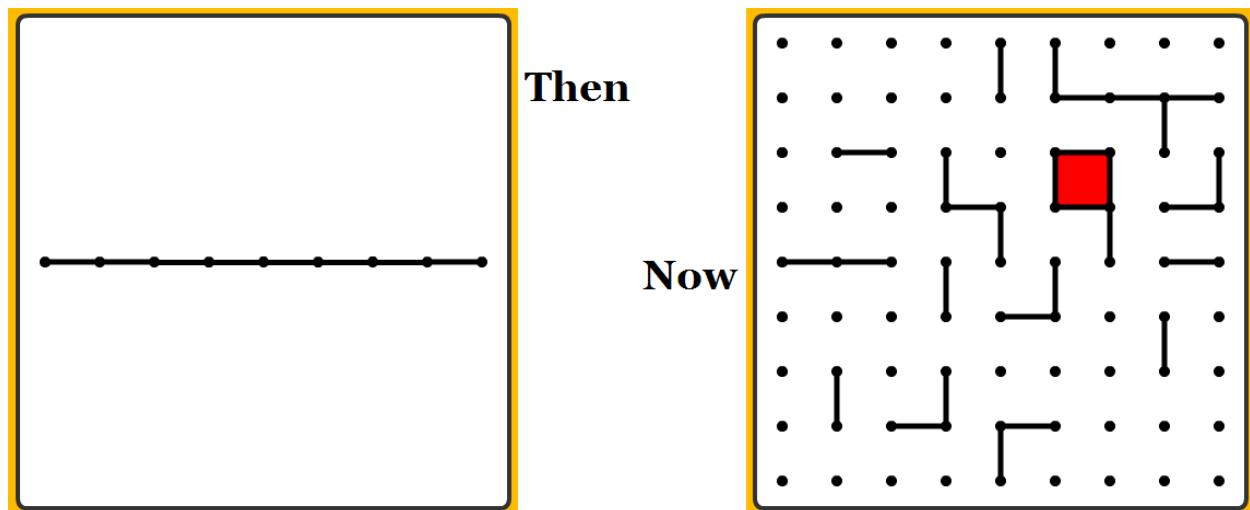
professional soccer player when all I do is sit on the bench. The result of being an honor student is from being more compliant, more obedient and better at limiting yourself than anyone else. Exactly what school was meant to breed...in the 1920's.

The second bumper sticker is one I never saw until I created it. It says "Start Schooling Dreams." It's not just a plea, it's a demand. A demand on behalf of everyone who was forced through the 16 year process of having their dreams killed and a demand on behalf of every child that is about to enter another year of it.

The world has changed, it calls for dreamers. Are we going to give the world what it needs?

14. The box revolution

For years it was about getting out of your box and into a nicely formed assembly line. Now it's a new type of box revolution. The best way to explain this concept is through the connect the dots box game.



This box revolution is about connecting a specifically defined group of people to conquer, improve, and succeed in a specific area. It is about connecting the passionate and the creative. It's about bringing together the inventors, the promoters, the producers, the sellers and the consumers - not creating a separate line for each but connecting them together. The box revolution is about using what you have inside your box, connecting with what others have in their boxes, and creating an abundance of fulfilled dreams.

15. The race to the bottom is a solo one

"I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member" – Groucho Marx

In today's complex world, nobody does anything successful alone, it's all about teamwork. Yet schools insist on isolating students and making every activity solo work. The sad, the most

pitiful, the most stressful action that schools take in opposition to isolation is sparingly assigning group work.

I have a shout-out to the schools, a shout-out not only from myself, but with the power of the millions of voices from students attending schools:

We hate group work! We hate it because we suck at it. We suck at it because we've been taught to work individually all our life.

Want to know why the major problem in group work is one person taking the reins while the others sit back and relax? It's not a matter of laziness. It's a matter of obedience. Being taught to do work individually for the last 10 years makes working individually what we are good at. One person does all the work because that is how the best grade can be achieved and we've been taught that grades matter more than anything else.

It can't be that way. Not anymore. The world doesn't call for it. The life after school doesn't need it. The available jobs don't ask for that on their requirements. And did I mention that we hate it?

16. Isolation

During a sociology class I took, we learned about how detrimental it is to a person to be isolated and confined. We watched a video on a case where a girl was stuck in a room with no human interaction, forced to go to the bathroom in a pan and barely fed any food. Isolation harms and stunts development. That's obvious even without the videos to show us.

Yet, we are trapped in classrooms. Confined to the curriculum designed for the workers of the 1920 industrialization period and producing a similar result of the sociology case I mentioned above.

Let us free.

17. If what is taught is obsolete, then whoever does that teaching needs to change

Another thing learned during the sociology class was the Pygmalion effect, also known as the Rosenthal effect. It refers to the observable fact that the greater the expectation of a student, the better they perform.

Remember how I liked to ask questions teachers couldn't answer? I raised my hand during one sociology lesson and my question.

“Are teachers taught about the Pygmalion effect?”

Unlike previous questions that remained unanswered, this was worse *because* of the answer. My teacher was shocked, she hadn't thought about it. (If you didn't guess, teachers are NOT taught the Pygmalion effect.)

Am I wrong to think that a single teacher can't have a powerful and positive expectation of 30 students? I have seen teachers tell other teachers how a student is a bad student, how they don't listen, or that they aren't very smart. I have also seen the teacher whom that was told to, change their behavior toward that student when she entered their class. As a result? The student became worse, listened less, and became even dumber. All the while, the few *bright* students got brighter because the teachers challenged them and *expected* them to be a "perfect student."

If we want to right the wrongs of a simple but tremendously powerful oversight, we will need to enlighten ourselves, our teachers, and our peers of the Pygmalion effect. If this is done, we won't see "bright students," we will see bright classes, bright schools, and this simple act of education could create a sense of a bright country – a country that, by expecting the best, is creating the best and the brightest.

Want to create dreamers in school? Expect dreamers.

Want to expect dreamers? Hire teachers who understand the Pygmalion effect.

18. A plea to teachers for excellence

Epictetus once wrote that, "One that desires to excel should endeavor in those things that are in themselves most excellent." He also said, "Only the educated are free." Both of which, go hand in hand. Becoming educated using the system that is in place now puts bars up in your life, treats you as a prisoner, and you get a number, not a name. However, if you become educated in that of which you excel in -- in what you *want* to learn and excel in -- you are free. Free to continue being excellent, free to share your excellence, and free to live in excellence.

But it's never a matter of if we want to learn something in school. It's never asked. It's not even hinted at. You know what? Sometimes teachers *know* that no one wants to learn what they are teaching. See, it's not just about us, the students, the taxpayers, and parents... I'm going to be harsh for a moment on teachers.

The teachers who teach, do so because they do not desire to learn anymore, which is the same as saying that they have been completely brainwashed to listen, to follow directions, to do as their told, to teach a prescribed curriculum (often from a power point!). It's not going to be easy, especially for teachers, but they have a choice. Despite this fact that teachers have been trained worse than any of us, they have as much responsibility as the students, the parents, and tax payers to stand up and make a change for themselves, for the students, and for the world.

Sadly, instead they stand up, go on a strike, picket, and beg for more money to keep doing what their told. What if they decided to teach what students wanted to learn and what they wanted to

teach? Do you think they would still be demanding more money? Doesn't it make sense that, of course they would want to get paid more, not to teach, but because they have to keep teaching what they know students don't want to hear, don't want learn, don't want to know, and don't want to do. While the decision of what to learn is up to the student, the decision to what to teach is up to the teacher, and that's a world changing decision. The decision they have been choosing isn't working anymore.

My plea to teachers: If you are going to go on a strike, strike to teach what you want to teach so students can learn what they want to learn. School fixed. World improved. However, I have one last question. Why are teachers so hesitant to create a positive change when every student is willing to stand up with them? We're here to help each other.

19. The improvement preventer (what we are doing now)

The reason why teachers won't speak up, why they won't change what they've been taught and to teach students what they both love is the same reason we have taken so long to begin making a rumpus towards improvement and change...

Fear

Now fear trumps passion two to one only when passion is in its early stages. Unfortunately, with school starting for those at an average of four or five years old, they only know so much of a dream as their parents taught them, which if their parents went through school, that isn't much. However, if we continued demanding school be taught differently, that school constructs its curriculum around helping create dreams and fulfilling them, fear would have no chance throughout life – not even fear of success.

20. The scientific method

Every student is taught how to use it but never what to use it on. A scientific biology lab I took incorporated the method into every lab we had. Three quarters into the semester a discussion was sparked about whether scientists seek to prove themselves right or to prove others wrong.

Most scientists and people use the scientific method to prove themselves right rather than use it to prove everyone else wrong. The idea hit me like the pungent stench of the dead worm we worked on two weeks before the epiphany. To find truth, you must seek out all that is false. That is the heart of what the scientific method is to be used on; failing consistently until you find truth.

What we are taught to use it on though is what society has already deemed as truth. We are not taught to challenge ideas, only to use the scientific method to support the current idea, the current status-quo, and the current command made by a teacher, never to challenge it. No teacher says to go out and use the scientific method and report your findings. They only say to use the scientific method on this one factor of which they already know the answer to.

21. Can the scientific method that creates scientists, philosophers, businesspeople, and all around successful people be taught?

Yes. Well, self-taught, really. One has to seek out on her own all that is false. That doesn't go in saying that in which needs to be self-taught can't receive guidance, a partner, or mentor to help self-knowledge be achieved.

That is the responsibility of the parents and teachers who are in contact with her day after day. These forms of relationships open the ability to experiment, truly experiment that which each student wants to experiment and provides encouragement, evaluation, and assistance when necessary.

There is freedom in self-teaching, there is no freedom in the educational system that is in place now, no bravery, no self-direction, no choice, and absolutely no objection.

22. What is freedom

Freedom is an absolutely huge concept and theme to this manifesto, so it seems fitting to explore what freedom is.

Freedom is essential to our lives. It may even be the key to happiness, and is surely the shortcut to success for any individual willing to take the risk for freedom.

But what is freedom?

Freedom is the ability to give your love to anything. The ability to see shapes in the clouds and notice the underside of leaves in the wind. The realization of your chance to not be anyone else but yourself. In fact, freedom is the act of becoming more of your self. It is a flexible mind and a heart that never sleeps. That is freedom.

23. Being realistic

Let's be realistic about school. You go to school, follow orders, do as your told, get good grades, pass the tests, and you will get a good job and have a good life. It's so positive, so profound, and so... secure.

How can that be realistic when all through life being realistic is synonymous with being a pessimist, devil's advocate, and negative minded?

Because deep down, that security, that "good life" *is* deception. Those who administer schools have placed an illusion over what is real in education so as to make it seem true and great. It is a lie that we are having our kids believe in, one that supports realism as a good thing.

There is a saying sweeping across all forms of social media: “Dear Optimist, Pessimist and Realist, while you guys were busy arguing about the glass of water, I drank it! Sincerely, The Opportunist.”

A realist accepts things as they are. We are raising realists, ones who stay dormant, immobile, unmoving, and unmotivated. I would argue that part of being an optimist is being an opportunist and being a pessimist is synonymous with being a realist. So that comes down to the question, do we want to raise opportunists or realists? Even better, are WE going to buy into this “reality”, or will we take this opportunity to change what school is for and to set an example for future generations?

Either the glass is half empty and that it is just half a glass or the glass is half full and we can drink it. Choosing the latter will fulfill our thirst, and if not, we can always find more water.

24. What if it's a glass of dirty water?

Sure, the glass can be half full but what is it filled with?

Darren Hardy, Publisher of SUCCESS magazine, had posted an article regarding Wolf Blitzer and how he is hurting America. I had no choice but to pull this following segment from his post. Feel free to visit the full article [here](#).

Your mind is like an empty glass. It will hold anything you put into it. You put in sensational news, salacious headlines and talk show rants and you are pouring dirty water into your glass. If you've got dark, dismal, worrisome water in your glass, everything you create will be filtered through that muddy mess, because that's what you'll be thinking about. Garbage in, garbage out.

You can flush your dirty glass with clean, clear, pure water. What is clear water? Positive, inspirational and supportive input and ideas. Stories of aspiration, people who, despite challenges, are overcoming obstacles and achieving great things. Strategies of success, prosperity, health, love and joy. Ideas to create more abundance, to grow, expand and become more. But it's a constant battle as we are surrounded by those who want to spew dirty water into our glass constantly.

With that I would like to bring up the solution to the problem by introducing the concept of fasting. While fasting means “to abstain from eating,” it is better defined as the action of abstaining from [insert anything] for a period of time. In the following personal story, fasting holds true to both drinking and eating. Toward the end of the post, you will be acquainted with mental and social fasting.

A while ago I was feeling a bit sick. I told a friend that I wasn't going to eat or drink anything. She asked, “How are you supposed to feel better if you don't eat anything?” I described how my stomach was like a glass of dirty water. If a glass is already half-way filled with dirty water and you put clean water in it. What do you have?

A glass *full* of dirty water. Now, you can add as much pure water to the glass as you want and it will overflow but still remain dirty. In my case, I was going to let my stomach get rid of and deteriorate all the stuff that was causing me to feel sick before I would fill it with more food and nourishment.

I used the analogy with my stomach sickness as a vehicle for the glass of water. I rather like Darren Hardy's direction towards your mind being the glass that is filled with water. I have always loved the idea of a glass half full; it's the worldwide mark of an optimist. Mistakenly though, I see a countless number of people trying to better themselves but only having more problems. While they have good intentions, they are fighting a losing battle. No matter how much pure, clean, and fresh water you put in your glass or how much colorful positive assurance you pour into your mind, you are just adding more to what is already tarnished.

This means that before we can start living a life full of positivity, of a determined attitude, and excellence, before we can have an education that is honest, and creative and introspective, we must first empty the glass. Empty it by doing away with the current educational system and replacing it with something that distributes clean water to all the students.

25. Getting ~~paid~~ educated by the hour

The trouble with getting paid by the hour is that there are only so many hours in the year. There is a ceiling to your income. If you make 8 dollars an hour then the most you could make if you worked every hour for a year is \$70,080. If you made 16 dollars an hour then the most you could make if you worked every hour for a year is \$140,160. Will either amount make you happy? Would it matter? It wouldn't since you don't have any time to spend the money.

A person who doesn't get paid by the hour, but gets paid when they ship their work can make \$140,160 *in a month*. It's likely too because they are the ones who are self-taught and retain more useful information in an hour than what can be taught in school in a week. They are the ones who dove so deep into their passion that they know more than any college professor teaching on the subject.

Those who work to be paid by the hour were taught how to do so. They went to school for 6 hours a day and got paid with education that withheld the beliefs, customs, and incomes of a factory assembly line work. They became accustomed to customs and the result was far from customization. They are robotic, taught by rhetoric, and the result is a sad \$ amount for every hour spent working. If you get paid by the hour, there is a short ceiling. The same with education, unless you change what is taught.

26. Patience

The essential, the successful, and the linchpins don't have it.

School initiates patience. You have to be patient and wait to get to the next lesson and you have to wait until the class you really love that starts at 2:00pm. Worst of all, you have to wait until the class you despise is over. Day after day.

The essential, successful, and the linchpins can't handle it. Instead of listening to the teacher repeat herself for the fourth time that day, they choose to direct their mind at something they can teach themselves, which by the way, is anything and everything. They will, instead of memorizing facts in the class, exchange it with practicing their passion, planning to ship their product or simply write poetry while they sit at the desk. Anything is an improvement.

If you want to be successful in anything, you have to be impatient.

27. Teachers are meant to spark impatience

If it were between a teacher and a computer, which knows more? Anything a teacher is currently drilling can be found online.

I came across the following a while ago on Yahoo answers. Arturo, asked

“What is school for? If it is truly for learning, why is it so inefficient? [...]

Who else has thought this? I am 15 and in 10th grade, but I know more than most of my teachers. I have asked my teachers before; some questions that they were unable to answer (of course, within their field), so I question how they could not know so many things if they are teachers for this. Another thing is, I don't learn much at school that I don't already know, and I can't stand being there. I am tired of how mindless everyone seems to be, not only that but everyone is like a puppet, if I wanted to I could influence almost anyone to do anything. My teachers have said before that certain assignments are completed as though by a college level student, but that does not mean I make good grades, but I know the reason is because I really don't care. Long story short: I hate school, and I could learn a year's worth of information in about two weeks (and so can many other people if teaching weren't so simplified). Why does school not allow teachers to use proper techniques to teach in a shorter amount of time? My own answer for this is that we are being tested for our tolerance and behavior, rather than intelligence, but I would like to see other answers.”

Arturo says it well, but let's jump back to the teacher or computer question. Teachers can and are being replaced by computers. It's what happens when all you teach is memorization of facts.

However, there is a certain type of teacher that is irreplaceable, one that sparks impatience. One who truly wants her students to learn, to dream, and to go after their passion. Teachers are sought after by this type of student, but so few teachers are available to fulfill the needs. The need of the student isn't to learn information; it's to be motivated to learn it. It's to be pushed, to have time eliminated from the scientific equation, and to be watched while they succeed. Arturo, at age of

15 has yet to have a teacher like this and may never have a teacher that preaches impatience, unless, that is, we demand it.

28. Parents are meant to spark impatience too

But they don't. They are supposed to have the time, not need to work in the factory, be able to motivate, and press you to measure up to your dreams and ship your passion.

My parents are much like many other parents: divorced. But I also have a view of two different worlds. One parent works a factory job, presses me to go to school, to focus on getting a good job, to follow orders, and stick with tradition. The other parent pulls off two jobs, one of them their passion. This parent acts as a maieutic teacher, doesn't tell me what to do but tells me to show what I can do. This parent pushes me to follow my passion, whether it's through school or not.

I know what it's like to have each type of parent: one that sparks impatience and one that doesn't. And you can guess which one helps me live more of my passion, achieve more of my goals, and be happier with my life. Through these family relationships, I have also realized that there is a great sacrifice that we need to make. While the traditional parent is slowly realizing what it means to live one's passion and that the sacrifice of assurance, of security, and of status-quo is well worth it - which goes to show that this revolution is more contagious than a smile - it still isn't enough.

This is the sacrifice that we (the students) need to make, we need to be both the trailblazers and pioneers, we need to be the trial for something we already know will work, we need to be the first to follow-through and ship ourselves. We need to do what our statesmen and women have not, we need to do what our teachers and administrators are not, and we need to do what our parents can't, we need to ignite our own impatience. We need to be what our parents should be, what our teachers should be, and what the people who come into our lives should be. That is your calling, it's a tough one, but imagine all the generations to come that are going to look up at you and thank you for giving them the chance to discover and live their dreams.

29. There is always room for improvement

Sure, but sometimes instead of a small improvement, a bigger improvement can be made by taking a dramatic action, an effort for change. Neither of which can be done unless the little voice syndrome is ignored. That little voice that shouts your fears at you, that little voice that says we can just make a tweak here because we don't want to risk the alternative: real change.

Would you repair and polish up a horse carriage to travel cross country or would you just exchange it with a car? The car is there, the tools accessible, the resources are available.

The same goes for school. You can make tweaks, minor improvements, and small repairs to it, but it still won't get you cross country. It's easy though if you can just ignore the little voice

syndrome and opt for the new car, opt for the new meaning of what school is for, opt for change and big improvement, and opt for an education worth continuing and taking cross country.

30. The people who see results

Contrary to belief, the big improvements, the people who see results, are the ones who work at them only a little a day. Thanks to the networked community of the internet and close connections with likeminded people, the ability to learn something new, or a bit of a subject each day is easy. It's the choice to do it that remains to be untaught.

It's common knowledge that the earlier you start following your muse, your calling, the easier and sooner you can become a legend at it. Kids playing piano and singing at age seven are much more likely to hit the top 50 songs when they are older than someone who just starts to learn piano at age 30. The same goes for a painter who started making really spectacular finger-paint artwork at age five.

While parents may encourage these results at such a young age, the moment they enter school, it is untaught. Why are you playing piano when you need to be studying for a test? Or learning how to oil paint when you have homework to do?

Now, the truly remarkable people, the biggest names in art history, are the ones who stayed up late every night writing, woke up early every morning to sketch a picture, used their study hall to plan their next project, and basically made time for their passion no matter how busy their schedule. It's not about cutting out learning or painting; it isn't a one or the other situation. It's the little things each day that create results, these small efforts that add to your overall passion.

31. The economy boost

Every boost in the economy has come from those who seek results, from self-starting, self-reliant, initiative-taking, motivated people. The reason why society always says that the best time to create a business in a depressing economic time is that there are so many people who are willing to do whatever it is to get a pay check. Even if it's breaking tradition or the status-quo they have lived side by side with. They will even, say, maybe, work for a company that wants them to be creative, to extend their imagination and abilities and to become indispensable. Which is exactly what creates the most profit and what the entire economy could be run on.

There are two catches to this. The first is that we are living in a time that we can use this disparity to direct people of all ages toward what matters most. What can get us out of this mess is a few people speaking up and saying, "Look, we can do it *this* way and everything will be wonderful again!" That is all that needs to be done because this time, it's apparent that what we are doing is wrong and the alternative – schooling dreams – is right. There's no need to convince, only to spread the word and take action.

The second (even more positive) catch to this is that these people who are directed towards their dreams, who invent and create businesses, in turn hire more of the economy boosting type of

employees mentioned at the beginning of this chapter who often go off on their own, create their own invention, build their own office, and hire more people with equal qualities of initiative, innovation, and inspiration. It's a continuous cycle, a productive one at that.

Society knows this, we just suck at educating people to follow through with it. I would like to make that past tense.

32. Willpower

I was told that Willpower is a limited source that is replenished each day. Just as we get 1,440 minutes each day, making up our time, we get a certain amount of willpower that can be used throughout the day. There's a big trend about willpower that needs to be mentioned.

Willpower can both be destroyed and grown; it can be depleted, or taught and replenished. The current school system sucks student's dry of willpower because they are never asked or even told to use it, to practice it, to learn it, or to grow it. By the end of the 16 years of education, the limit of willpower a student has is zero if not downright negative.

To grow the amount of willpower a mind can contain is done by straying from instructions, by achieving something great at an early age, by stretching possibilities and breaking barriers.

33. A teacher who yelled a lot

No, she wasn't a gym teacher. She was a science teacher and there are two particular instances I remember when her yelling and emotion breaking anger was over the line.

The class had a project where we got an element from the periodic table and had to sell it to the class by telling the audience what made it special. As always, I had to exceed expectations through creativity and got an old newspaper, drew a picture of the element, and then wrote a sales ad for it - all in the newspaper. The teacher and class loved it even though it was unique and I got an A. The next day there were more presentations and there was a kid who copied me with the newspaper idea. Before he even pitched the idea, the teacher was all over him, yelling at him for copying me and ended up asking *me* if it was okay for *him* to even do that. Of course I said I didn't care, it was a great idea I had and I'm happy that other people used it.

The teacher clearly never made the connection that everything is plagiarism, that everything has been thought of by another person in one form or another and everything *new* is just a result of different combinations of old and different ways of presenting it. The boy who copied me made a statement when he copied me, he said that creativity is always rewarded and if he follows those who are creative, he will be rewarded. This statement is partially true; he would of course had to add his own flare to my creativity to make it honestly creative. Regardless, the teacher was still yelling at him in the time it took you to read up to this point. He had a rough day and the teacher said that she refused to give him any grade higher than a C.

Onto a second story. After all the yelling, the disrespect she gave to the students, and how much she crushed the dreams of those who didn't have a passion in the subject, it was time for teacher evaluations. (Lucky us) Basically it was a one page sheet that asked what the teacher was doing well, what we liked about the class, what we didn't like, and something we would like to see improved. I was the bravest soul in the classroom and wrote that the teacher yelled way too much and thought it was completely disrespectful. To add even more bravery on top of that, I wrote my name on the evaluation when we had the option not to. I called her out on her disrespect and she called me to stay after class to reprimand me for writing it, at which time she said that I was the disrespectful one.

You want to know something though? She changed after that. She didn't yell as much, at least not in my class. Speaking out made the difference. This is what we need from all the other students, to stand out against teachers, show them what they are doing wrong and tell them what we want. This is what parents, taxpayers and likeminded individuals need to do.

Was it scary staying after class alone? Yes. I was nervous, afraid, and even slightly regretted writing something down. It wasn't pleasant at first, but it got easier and it made a difference. If I, if we, need to go through 10 minutes of feeling utterly uncomfortable to make the change we need, is it worth it? I think so.

34. Commitment and self-respect

You can't have a commitment unless you have self-respect. You can't have self-respect unless you are first respected by someone. Despite the want for something different, something unique and remarkable, we acknowledge and accept the first judgment that is put on us when we go for something. So often it's a judgment that we can't do something, that it's too "big" for us, or that it's a stupid idea. If only people realized this and would give respect to the person who connects the dots, to the person who fills in the dots, the person who draws around the dots, or even to the one who completely ignores them and goes after something that matters, then we would have students with commitments, self-respect, providing a world of above average results. It never starts with yourself; it always starts with someone saying "you can do it".

35. Are five words too many?

A general guideline when picking out a book from the library in elementary school was that if you picked it up and read a page and you didn't know how to pronounce or know the definition of 5 words, then you shouldn't read the book.

In other words, the students turn down the challenge to learn and to expand their vocabulary. It is as if the students aren't smart enough to learn new words when reading a book. As if they shouldn't be challenged to learn new words and meanings.

Are five words too many? Or too few? If you hand a child that fancies learning about history, particularly WWII, do you think they won't learn what Appeasement, Blitzkrieg, Aeronautical Inspection District, Conspicuous Gallantry, Napalm, Genuine, Pantomime, or Cynaogens Chloride mean or how to pronounce them? Isn't it vital that they actually learn these if they want to excel?

Words spark a particular part of the brain like sugar to your taste buds. Once you learn a few words, you want to learn more which leads you into higher level reading material and even more knowledge than before. This is being stunted by the expectation that because a student can't read a handful of words in a book, that there is no point in reading it at all.

In all of history, the English language is the only language that was able to take 26 letters to make any word to describe anything. That means that it can hardly take any serious amount of time to teach kids 1. How to pronounce words, and 2. How to Google the definition of the word. It's a lot easier to tell a kid to put down a book and to try something easier so you don't have to help teach them. It's a lot more beneficial to give kids the tools to learn the new words.

36. Daydreaming

Daydreaming could be an actual class. You can even have an exam on it. A class on daydreaming could pause the students' fast paced lives, let them be unbelievably creative, and give them an environment where there are no ceilings, no restrictions, and no guidelines. Just dream. To draw it out, write it out, play it out in whatever form they want. It's in these moments of grounding, of meditation if you will, that the most enlightened ideas arrive. When the mind has freedom, ideas for real change, real improvement, and real dream conquering take place.

The other thing about daydreaming is that it is exhausting if done for a long enough time. If a full hour a day is given to day dreaming, or even two hours a week, people find it to be so exhausting that going after the dreams becomes irresistible. It gets harder to daydream and easier to begin living the dreams.

37. Teaching *why* not *what*

Teachers are drilling students to learn basic math, yet they still need calculators for the most novice equations. They are drilling grammar, Greek and Latin, and a bit of word structure, yet ppl r stile righting like this. They are drilling students to memorize the periodic table yet a student can only remember 5-8 elements because they actually matter. Students care about oxygen, h2o, gold, silver...

All teachers are teaching is "what": what is this, what is that, instead of teaching *why* you need to learn basic math, *why* you need proper grammar and sentence structure, and *why* you even need to memorize the periodic table. (Good luck on the last one) By teaching "why", teachers are teaching students to care. To care about understanding math, to care about language and communication and to care about chemistry.

If students cared, they wouldn't need a calculator to add four different numbers together, or spell check or a giant periodic table. When they are taught "why," the "what" just follows. Learning, memorizing, and growing educationally becomes easy when students care.

38. Teachers teach like students learn

Students learn when they want. It needs to be the same for teachers. The number of online tutorials, lecture videos, and interactive webinars are taking over the educational system, not because they explain the subject better, but because they explain it differently. They explain it with passion because the person (the teacher) who made the video did it because they truly wanted to, they were passionate about it. The majority isn't even paid to do it, yet they do. If we are proclaiming that students deserve to learn what their passions are and all the lessons that will help them achieve their dreams, why should the teachers deserve anything less?

In an exclusive interview *The Chronicle* had with Bill Gates in their July 6, 2012 issue, Bill said he "argues for a radical reform of college teaching, advocating a move toward 'flipped' classrooms, in which students watch videos from superstar professors as homework and use class time for group projects and other interactive activities"

Could this be something we tried?

39. Fulfilling expectations pt.1

It's not so much human nature, but it might as well be. After all, it's something that's engrained into our brains from the moment we're out of the womb. Our parents expect us to walk by the age of one, expect us to have manners as we grow up. Along with teachers they expect us to get good grades and a good job. The factory owner expects us to comply, to be obedient, and to hold back our creativity. So we do. We have been fulfilling more expectations in the last century than ever in history.

What's worse?

We're expected to deal, to comply, and to look up to all the mediocrity, inconsistency, and disillusionment of who are supposed to be our role models.

40. Fulfilling expectations pt. 2 (a note to students)

Remember the Pygmalion effect? Those who are given higher expectations perform better.

Before teachers, parents, and school board members can provide a higher expectation of their students and children, we have to have high expectations for ourselves. We have to expect them to put faith in us, to encourage us, and to have confidence in our abilities, regardless if they can see them or not.

The trick to changing the current parental habit into something that causes artistic probability in kids is to put those expectations upon ourselves.

If you're lost, it's because you have never thought a circle could have a beginning, but it does. It starts with you, with not only your expectations of yourself, your peers, your teachers, and your parents, but the fulfillment of those expectations. What goes around comes around. You can start the circle whenever you want, you can start now by expecting the best from you, from your siblings, from your fellow students, your relatives, friends and anyone else in your circle.

What goes around comes around and when you start expecting the best from everyone around you including yourself, others start to do the same.

41. Sacrifice

There are two quick points I want to make about sacrifice.

The first is that for any relationship to work there must be a balanced form of sacrifice. No relationship can work for long if there is only sacrifice made by one person, or one side of the spectrum.

The second point is that I could assume 60% of kids have to act like parents to their own parents due to divorce. I'm part of that percentage. I've had to do the duties and try to settle the confusions in the household at age 15. Quite frankly, it sucked. But you know what? It's something I had to do. There was a calling and I had to answer.

The calling I had is similar to the one we all have right now. We have to sacrifice selfishness for selflessness to give our kids and the future generations the life they deserve to live and the ability to dream. It's time we stop muttering to ourselves that we wish our parents worked harder, tried harder, pushed harder, made more money, spent more time together, took more trips, gave us a better education, and took the time to truly invest in us, and to begin to do so ourselves.

We can't let our kids think the same thing of us. If we all work hard enough, speak up, go after our dreams and start schooling them to others, we are able to also live the lives we want our children to have. We have to set the example.

And that's okay because ten years ago, people would have had to sacrifice all the time in their lives to make this change we need to make now. With the vastness of our networks, the speed of our connections, and the dire need to start schooling dreams, we can do this relatively quickly. It's not a quick *fix*, it's a quick *change*.

Note: You always have a choice. Always. This striped shirt or the solid color one? This tooth paste, or that one? To listen to a lecture or doodle? To change the way school is taught or do nothing? There is a choice but what you need to do is choose that you don't have a choice. Weird isn't it?

School needs to be changed and you're the one who's going to help by choosing not to have a choice of sitting idly by, ignoring your calling, and letting dreams die. Once you do this, there aren't two sides, there aren't two options, there is only changing school in every way possible and the only time to do it is now. That's it. The choice is yours.

I've chosen not to have a choice and that is how it is easy for me to write this manifesto. I don't have a choice anymore. That's how important school is.

42. ~~Less is more~~ Less of less is more

Less is more, only for the monopolies, the factory owner, the school supervisor and those in charge of any type of assembly line. Less educated, less intellectual, less self-respect, less originality, less culture, and the more you produce more obedience, more ignorance, more factory workers and more strength in the status quo. That is all.

Less of less is more. Less of a poor education, less of an empty bookcase, less of beating ourselves up, less of remaining an oddity, less conformation, less appeal of our culture and less fulfillment of negative expectations. This, and only this, will bring you more. (More of whatever you want)

43. Quick side question

Around 60% of the world is living in poverty and around 89% of the world is living in educational poverty. Which one do you think needs to be changed so that the other can lower significantly?

44. What to give

Give us more of what we want, instead of less of what we don't want.

45. Do you want fewer facts? Or more facts?

What has been and is currently being taught is to follow facts. In every subject, it's a table or timeline of facts that need to be memorized in that order. When writing papers, it's about researching facts and making sure they are in line. Trivia is solely based on facts. Scantron tests, multiple choice tests, pop quiz's, regular quizzes, tests, final exams, extra credit, and every other form of a question that is in a classroom is about facts.

Facts that we don't want to know, don't need to know, and that we could Google in 7.65 seconds if we wanted to know. Since we can find these facts in a heartbeat, we don't need to follow them. We also don't need to know or memorize as many of them because our lives no longer call for it.

A miracle happens when students actually want to know a fact about something or another. The answer to the question for students who are taught to dream, to pursue their passion, and learn what they want, is that they want more facts, but facts that they want, not facts that people force

upon them to memorize. The amazing thing that happens when kids are learning about their passion is that instead of always following facts like school teaches, the facts miraculously follow them.

46. Fact: It's all Googlable

When it was time to go to the library to do research in middle school, high school or college... every computer was full, no one actually walked around to the books to find something on their subject. Well, I guess there were a few people that went looking for books, but I guarantee you, they weren't looking for books that would help with their research. (They came back with the trending book series, Harry Potter, Twilight, Hunger Games, etc.) Why? Because books that provide facts can all be Googled. Plus, the search engine is a lot quicker than how long it takes for me to find section "Wil-866" to get the book I might need, to search the index for the topic I want and to flip to the page and scan all the uselessness until I find the answer.

47. Following instructions

School is about following instructions, that should be a given by now. Even worse, students are getting greater benefits while at school if they follow instructions. I can recall a time in 8th grade that a teacher would write "Put a star by your name for extra credit" in the middle of the directions of a worksheet. Did this process make me smarter? More creative? Spark my dream? All it did was train me to know that if I followed directions then I would get rewarded. It made everyone else who didn't put a star by their name feel wronged, left out and dumb. Were they?

48. The Wave & leaning forward

[The Wave](#) was a novel about a high school experiment that went too far. It was a mandatory read in 9th grade. The book focused on group pressure and the relationship with discipline in accordance with the rise of the genocidal Nazi's. It was also an experiment that we had to do in school while we read the book.

A select group of students in every class were assigned to be officers (Nazi's) who would have complete authority over everyone else. They would report back to the teachers (Generals) with names of students and their disobedient actions. Any student whose name was on the report would get points docked off the final grade for the "project".

While I could stimulate your expectation of what happened, how formal almost everything was, and how it actually did get close to crossing the line, there is a particular notice I took to the types of people who got reported.

One of the rules was that we had to be sitting perfectly straight in our chairs at all times. Dozens of names were reported for either of two reasons. They were either leaning forward or leaning back.

What I noticed was that those who were caught leaning forward, were engaged in the lesson, wanting to learn more, and actually cared a bit about what the teacher was preaching. They were docked points for caring.

Those who were leaning back were bored, tired, lazy, and didn't care. They got docked points as well.

This was just an experiment but if you ask me, having gone through all of school, this is still happening, except students aren't being docked points, they are having their dreams squandered or worse, erased. It wasn't fair in Europe in the 1940's and it's not fair to the students in school now.

49. What makes up a dream?

A dream is an experience that we know how our senses will interact to. The journey to a successful dream is one filled with effort, creativity, self-resilience, constant change, and the necessity to go back and improve before you can move on.

Going further into the journey, it's filled with failure, setbacks, challenges, forces pulling you back, and road blocks too thick to smash and too high to jump.

The only way you can take the journey is to go through all the fears and challenges, to extricate all the self-motivation and passion that is required to reach your dream and most importantly, you have to care. Care endlessly. Care about every aspect of the dream.

Is caring about what is being taught in school the responsibility of the student? Or is the teacher supposed to teach the student to be interested, to be motivated, and to care?

50. Those that care

...don't need to attend class. They can solve everything on their own. They can Google any answer. They can find more than one "teacher" and more than 25 other "students" to collaborate with online. They can spark discussions. They can invent. They can share their passion. They can motivate others.

What they can't do is teach themselves how to care in the first place. It's the prerequisite to all of the above and it's the teacher's job to teach that, and it's our job to make sure caring is on the teacher's agenda.

51. Class lectures, choice lectures, online lectures and zombies

Class lectures are like zombies, dead, but still moving, mumbling, and trying to act like they're not dead. 3 out of 25 students in attendance at the class lecture want to be there and are taking everything they can from it. 5 out of 25 students want to be there but aren't getting what they want from it and can't ask any questions during the lecture so they give up. 17 out of 25 students

just don't want to be lectured on the subject because they have no interest and they simply don't care. Class lectures are the dominant form of lecturing in school at the moment.

Choice lectures are like zombies in the Michael Jackson Thriller video, beneath the fake grime and dirt, they are real people. If 25 students attended a choice lecture, it's because all 25 want to be there, want to learn, and want to ask questions. These students are open to learning a bit about what they really want to know and a bit about anything that is related to the subject. These students are the ones who volunteer, the ones who can ask questions during the lecture and after, the ones who want to meet the speaker and the ones who take something home with them afterwards.

Online lectures are like a zombie apocalypse waiting to happen. You don't have just 25 students who attend the lecture by choice; you have every student with an internet connection (That's everyone) and who have an inner desire, a need to learn. Their passion is there and they care so much about the subject. Online lectures allow students to focus on exactly what they want to learn and to interact with hundreds, thousands, if not millions of other professionals and other students who create and attend the online lecture. It's an apocalypse that we need to make happen.

Note: Online lectures can be connected with the real classroom experience. That would be what we call discussion time. Despite all that I emotion about the shifting digital education, I firmly believe face-to-face, real human interaction must remain.

52. Ending the conflict of year-round schooling

Year-round schooling doesn't sound so bad if what is taught is changed and what is learned is wanted to be, does it?

53. Computer vs. Teacher

The gap is closing. It's not closing for all teachers, but for most teachers it is. The computer is starting to do the job of a mediocre teacher much better. However, there is one thing a teacher can do that a computer can't which is the reason why we still need teachers.

A computer can give a tiny dose of motivation; it can make you care about making an impact for a day but not a lifetime. Haven't you watched a motivational video on Youtube? ([My personal favorite](#)) Two days or even a day after, all the motivation is lost, gone, disappeared.

On the other hand, a teacher can express their expectation of a student, telling the student that they believe they are destined for great things. That is something that lasts a lifetime. That is what makes a kid care. It's what motivates them to learn and what teaches them to dream. It's this factor that will make schools last forever.

Already the computer outsmarts the teacher, so why do we have teachers? Unless we start admitting teachers who can teach dreams, who have their own passion, who can motivate and make kids care, why go to school? This realization is becoming more widespread as the availability of educational resources increases online. Unless school can give kids a reason to come each day and sit in a class for 6-8 hours other than just learning facts that can be learned online, there won't be a school left to go to. I don't want that. I am sure neither do you.

54. A tragic misbalance

Education is using a Libra scale, but it is balancing the wrong things. It's tried balancing a ripe, intelligent mind with the curriculum that is taught. It didn't work. Instead of changing the curriculum, they changed the ripe intelligent mind with a rotting, sunken one. It lowered the average so that it fit the curriculum and they could find balance.

Instead of putting their efforts into teaching those who had a slow-start, we're deprived the normal help that parents provide or just simply have a hard time getting it, school decided to dumb down the average and praise those who went above (where the average should be). They thought meritocracy would be enough for those far below the line to rise up. Contrary to their thought process, the meritocracy of it all has only helped those who went above the already lowered average, get higher.

"If the shoe doesn't fit, must we change the foot?" – Gloria Steinem

55. Followership and leading

The song your singing, someone sang before it. The math problem you're trying to solve, someone has already solved. The free-throw you are trying to sink has already been made. The tune you are playing has already been played.

Schools, and even students, understand that emulating the successful brings us to success. But we believe that a bit too much. With the focus of playing exactly like you are hearing on the CD, shooting a basketball just as you watched the previous person shoot, or using the same thought process to solve the math problem offers no room for creativity or leadership. At some point, we decided that kids shouldn't lead their way or go beyond what they hear and see. What we are teaching now is a sense of false leadership.

Having a plan, giving a map, and providing role models is essential to raising successful students, but when all they can do is follow the plan, the map, or role model, they are held back, forced to be someone else other than themselves, and never get to taste the art that those who they are now emulating had tasted when they used their own creativity to rise past the idol they were emulating. Leadership is building off all those who you follow/emulate and this is one of the time proven ways to learn.

56. Eliminating student's frustration

Patience may be exhausting but it does no harm to oneself. Frustration though, in anything, throws punches at the part of you that wants to exert the emotional labor to overcome the situation. School isn't growing the power of emotional labor in the students though, it is creating more frustration. Here are tips to eliminating frustration

1. Grades are an illusion of value. When you view them you are seeing a false reality and remain ignorant to your talents. Prove them wrong.
2. Prove them wrong by showing them what is real, tangible and far more valuable than grades. (Your art, insight, dreams, questions...)
3. Scantrons, test keys and grades in general are incoherent to the effort you put in. Ever noticed how someone who wrote the paper 3 hours before the class got the same grade as the student who has been working on it for 3 days?
4. Ask unanswerable questions (any question you can't find in the book)
5. [Standout](#)
6. If the teacher didn't get through the work she needed to get through that day because you sparked a real discussion, take tomorrow off. You deserve it.

57. Leaders create problems

It's a good thing. We need more problems. The types of problems we need are ones that only leaders can create – problems that have never been solved. You teach kids to become leaders by teaching them to care and to create an initiative. It's when you combine initiative with dreams that problems that have no solutions are created. These problems, though, don't come from anything mediocre, average or banal. These problems arise out of the creation of something phenomenal, monumental, and jaw-dropping with interest. These problems come from something only leaders can manifest, but only after they learn to care and take initiative.

58. New problems, new solutions

With an outburst of new problems, comes a need for people to discover new and interesting solutions. These problems can't be solved with a quick fix, with any tool an average person carries, or by using notes that you memorized from a classroom. Teachers not only need to teach kids how to lead but to also find solutions for never-answered-before problems. Teachers are there to help kids get unstuck and if there is no answer key, there must be a discussion and when there is a discussion, that's when problems get solved. If you noticed, this is a cycle of constant improvement not just for both students and teachers, but globally as well, and it can only be done by changing the curriculum and raising the average in school. Only then will it be sensible to use the Libra scale.

59. The type of dreams to teach

If you're going to dream, dream big. Right? Wrong? ...Both, actually.

School is doing a great job at teaching dreams, but small ones, so-called “realistic” dreams. If you follow instructions, obey the syllabus, and get good grades then you will get a decent job! What a great dream!

Another product of school is big dreams. These dreams aren’t sparked by the teacher though, or the curriculum, or the class, or a book, or anything that is inside a school other than one’s own mind. These big dreams are ignited when one has drawn herself so far out of the learning environment that she begins to daydream while in class. Dreams of finding a winning lottery ticket, of marrying a billionaire, of being CEO of Apple next week, or any farfetched dream that is unrealistic.

What school must do is combine the two. By teaching dreams, goals, passion, and planning to inquisitive minds, the big dreams take on the reality of the little ones. While you may not be CEO of Apple next week, you may be CEO of a similar company that you create in a few years. Being a realist can be a good thing. It’s up to the school us to prove it.

60. Report card comments

Every teacher who made a note on my report card that said, “exceeds expectations,” “is going places,” “brings something special to the classroom each day,” “adds to all discussions,” and so on, never followed up. Reading the comments was a huge boost, but it was just like the motivation you get when you read something inspirational online, just temporary. Shouldn’t teachers follow up on students like this?

Every teacher who has made a note on a report card that said, “needs improvement,” “hope to see more progress next semester,” “often absent to class and never contributes when she attends,” “lacks determination,” and so on, never followed up. The only time you hear a “see me after class” is when a student is reprimanded, retold to follow instructions, or said to their face exactly what they already put on the report card. Reading these particular comments is a huge blow to ones already low work ethic, and this is not something temporary. It’s like a bee stinger that you can’t get out. Seems like a student that needs to be followed up on.

Isn’t it following up with students who excel *or* lag in class the emotional labor that the teacher needs to focus on? Maybe, it’s all the teacher needs to focus on.

61. X-Marks the spot

There are only a few spots where the X is marked in each classroom, sometimes on a student, sometimes walked on near the door, sometimes a foot away from the student sitting toward the front, sometimes there is never even an X, but it is rarely ever placed right on a student. The maps that teachers are using have deteriorated through time and are both wrong and useless. This results in an abysmal effort toward finding a treasure.

What if, for one semester the X was marked on every single student in the classroom? Or what if, the teacher, the captain, or the one in charge had to place an X on every student and dig until they found a treasure? This would mean that the teacher would have to encourage students to stand out and become the X and then help them create initiative, to school a bit of dreams (the treasure) and connect with them by establishing steps and accountability to achievement. In addition, the teacher would have to come to terms that she may have to dig longer for some treasures than others. With the current map, there's no reason to. There are so many other X's that may require less digging.

To employ this requires a new map, but this map is meant to change, to be altered, and to grow with every student. The captain's map says to create a separate new map for each individual. These maps place an X on every child; there can be no avoidance, no place to hide, and no dreams too big that they can take cover under. Only when fear is constantly faced, challenges are constantly arising and new problems are being created can one get the treasure they deserve. And it all starts with marking a student with an "X."

62. A shortage of books creates a shortage of passionate students

Reading 5, 25 or 100 books in a year doesn't just give you the ability to say you did it. (Although it is something very few can say.) When it comes down to it, reading so many books gives you an edge, a greater insight, a broader mind, a brighter intellect, and a more controlled imagination. The current school system knows this, but abuses it. They abuse it by assigning books to be read to memorize facts from and threatening students with a "F" if they don't read it, because there will be a test. - There is always a test. - It's no wonder why so few students read books, in or out of school, if all they can ever associate it with is school and tests.

Everyone's mind, the economy, school, our culture and all things that sprout from it, grow when ideas are exchanged, people are connected, and previous high built walls are knocked down. Teaching kids to want to read is simultaneous with teaching them to care. Reading is the one source that creates the most growth because books force one's mind to explore all possibilities, different outlooks, and inspires a bit of research from here and there.

With it being the connection revolution, the internet allows there to be even larger discussions about topics written in a book. Much larger discussions than those which are held in a classroom that has trouble fitting and teaching 30 kids in it. Less we forget that only three of these students read the assigned readings anyway.

63. Book discussions

The internet is known to be full of noise, to be dirty and to spark a lot of contradiction with the content provided. Yet, a blog post created for a basic geography class could have people bouncing up and down their chairs waiting for someone else to reply to their thoughts about it.

Think about it, in this situation a student's opinion actually matters.

You don't see this in a classroom because a teacher can be vague, deny a student's idea and can avoid questions that are unanswerable in a class room setting because they are the authority.

As powerful as speaking in class can be, it does more damage in a school setting than out. Speaking in the school setting is for questions (which most are too afraid to ask), facts (which no one cares about and that they can Google), and memorized content (Memorized? Ha.). The internet, however, initiates our speaking abilities, which translates into our writing abilities, by making students feel safe, giving them time to think through their ideas without any pressure, and to organize their thoughts before making a possibly permanent impact. Creating a discussion through writing makes each student smarter because the freedom allows room for passion to trickle in. The more passion, the easier it is to write, the more one writes, and the more one writes the more ideas get connected and spread and the cycle keeps going.

And once the passion is there, once the discussion has been kicked off, it becomes a lot easier to get up and publicly speak about what you have experienced.

64. Getting your slot - some are limited, some are not-

There are only so many seats in the Senate, only one person can fulfill the position of co-chairman of a huge company, there only needs to be one manager who watches the thousands of factory workers. If you get through the famous college without making a disturbance, you get waitlisted for these positions.

You used to get your slot immediately after completing college but now the competition for who is more obedient, who is more competent, and who can work in the assembly line better has made it harder to fill one of these "important" slots.

These slots are limited and the entire process is backfiring. Now people are getting rejected their deserved slot because they are overqualified. They are overqualified because you can only be so good at reading and following a manual. Employers know this. You may even go so far as to say that those who are graduating with an associate's degree can do the job the same as someone who has their bachelors. The reason why lesser educated people get the job is because they are just as competent and good at following directions as those who are more educated. The employer thinks, "Why should I have to pay more to someone with a bachelor's degree that can do the same thing someone else does for less?" Slots may be limited, but that doesn't mean you should want them.

On the other hand, there are a lot of slots open that may interest you more, actually, an unlimited amount and they are directly related to the amount of effort you put in to achieve them. This is something that will begin to be taught, the process of creating your dream job rather than waiting for it.

65. The coming meltdown of higher education (as seen by a 19 year old)

1. College is getting more expensive and it won't stop

Last year there was a 5.5% increase* on tuition at all Wisconsin Colleges and Universities. They have proposed the same increase for this year and it will happen. Can you guess what they have planned for next year? This isn't just in Wisconsin, it's everywhere.

Personally, I'm tired of hearing how much school debt everyone is in. I hear it from other 19 year olds, 23 year olds, and even 40 year olds. Can you believe that there are 50 year old people with \$40,000 in school debt all the while trying to raise a kid? Of course you can because you're exposed to it just as much as I am. No matter where you are living, it's a problem. Was it worth it? Going that far in debt? Are they CEO? Even a supervisor? Probably not.

Want to know something even more? I have an associate's degree and have zero debt and am doing the same job that others are doing with a bachelors and half a hundred thousand dollars in debt. Tuition won't stop increasing; combine word of mouth with the ability for the internet to make this knowledge viral and you will soon find much more than a 5.5% increase in those who choose to take loans to fund a new business instead of school, all before age 20.

And even if the business fails and one needs to take up a different job, who do you think they will hire, someone so self-motivated that they can start a business by age 20? Or the person who got a piece of paper from a college and is only working to pay off the debt?

Side Note: On the topic of the cost for tuition, look at this. According to the U.S Department of Education, these private for profit 4 year schools have the highest tuition. Tell me if you see a trend?

- Sante Fe University of Art and Design
- School of Visual Arts
- The Art Center Design College, Tuscon
- American Academy of Art
- Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design

It just goes to show how desperate, how much we are willing to pay to learn about art, our passions, and our dreams.

* 5.5% is the limit that it can be raised according to the law, we will see how long that holds up...

2. Colleges are making too much noise and we're noticing it

I'm not the only one that decided not to go to a particular college because they kept sending me mail. I received over 5 different mailings from a handful of schools which included packets, small envelopes, large folders and little booklets. Is that really how colleges are going to waste the money we give them? That money could be going towards promoting their website, branching out to connect with us in a real way, or offering incentives to go to their college (lower tuition anyone?).

All this time you have been reading, we have been focused on schooling dreams, making big changes and raising the bar. What if, instead of colleges investing all the money into marketing, sports teams, and those who got chosen early, they decided to direct it towards a lower tuition, a stronger experience, and an overall effort at churning out people who care (teachers and students)? Just an idea.

It will happen sooner or later but with your help, it will be sooner. It needs to be. And it will be the colleges that take this in mind now that will become the famous ones, the trustworthy famous ones.

3. What makes a college the best?

As I was writing this, I got a phone call and listened to a long background story about why the daughter did not turn in some paperwork. In the story, the mother had mentioned how she moved to Hawaii after she graduated and she said to me, "at job interviews the employers were amazed that I graduated from a Wisconsin school. For some reason, they know that some Midwest schools are really great and high quality." How do employers from Hawaii know this? Beats me, but I can take a guess.

Maybe, just maybe, they heard from word of mouth from a number of people about how great a school was. This is something that can only be done by 1. People they are connected with and 2. People who have actually experienced the education at that school. No one in Hawaii is getting newsletters, spam, and press releases about how great a certain Wisconsin college is. Does it make that college the best one? According to some employers in Hawaii, yes. But according to current statistics, no.

Current statistics *aren't* measuring what people think about the college, the success rate of students who graduate or what students do when they drop out from college or how much the school is spoken positively about by word of mouth. No. The "best schools" are statistically measured by the number of applications they get in and the retention rate. Both, ill figured.

The reason why schools focus on marketing themselves is so they get more applications and can reject more students. As a result, they are the school that everyone wants to get into but can't. They're the best. The second measure is retention rate and let me ask you; don't you think that if it is the best school, students wouldn't stay there for four years? If it's the best school, I see them churning out the same number of passionate engineers of all subjects quicker than they are

churning out factory working cogs now. It doesn't take four years to make an artist, not if they care at least.

4. Success Measurement

There is a saying of that which can be measured can be managed. The one break in this law is that success does not have a single determined measurement. Success is dynamic and it is something only each person can decide what it really means for them to be successful.

Does it make sense how we are trying to measure success now? They got a degree and got a good job, so they are successful. What about the student who dropped out and turned his garage into a record store and has a steady business despite the world-wide drop in record sales? Is he not successful?

I'm going to speak for all students when I say that we are tired of being told *this way* is successful and *that way* is not, that what we want, we can't be successful in and that there is some universal definition of success that we are forced to fulfill.

So I ask again: who is really successful? The students who breeze safely through school and into an average job or students who breeze easily through all their music classes drop out their junior year and start their own business which has the potential to lead them into profits, into another business or into the job they want in the recording or producing industry?

The answer is the music genius's, but not because I say so, or you say so, but because to that person, she is successful. For me, knowing that is success to her is worth more than a couple letters after her name.

5. The desire for more experience

In the heart of every person searching for a higher educational school to attend lies a desire for an experience. A real experience outside of the classroom setting. Students are aware that access to all the information they would learn in the current classes can be received from friends, the library or online. What the school seekers really want to have in a school is a class that makes an impact, an opportunity to focus more on the environment of the campus, the outings that they can partake in, the internships, and everything that a real employer would look for, and activities that really make someone stand out.

This is why you find people who pay \$40,000 for tuition (rather, get \$40,000 in debt to pay tuition) but will still go even deeper in debt to take a five day canoe trip with a team of likeminded adventurers. They will go even deeper in debt to take a non-required course in pottery because they really love it. They will go even deeper in debt and forfeit their entire summer to spend it abroad learning about another culture. That is what students want and their plea for it is getting even louder.

Knowing that they will go even further in debt to partake in activities which have no relevance to the degree they will receive shows that despite the constant force on them for formality, order, and obedience, some part of them knows what they need, want, and will fight to keep or have more of. The desire has been kindling over the years and is now beginning to spread like wildfire.

66. Big buildings, small employees. Small buildings, big employees.

Why are big buildings big? Big plants huge? And big warehouses so enormous? It's definitely not to employ thousands of people to work in them. It's to fit the machines that do all the duties that the people used to do. The bigger the building, the fewer the employees and the few employees that are there are the factory workers, they press buttons and turn a wrench when necessary.

Why do smaller buildings have so few employees? Because the space needs to be filled with customers, not employees or machines. This in turn makes a limited number of positions for employees and not just any employees, special ones. The few that are hired follow their intuition, understand communication, are creative and passionate about being there. An employer can't make any mistakes when there is only enough room in the store to hire two employees and so they choose these special people.

Wait. It doesn't end there. It's not just the employee who is special, the entire circumstance is special. It's special because these types of employees have the ability to duplicate their own process of inventing their own business and running another small building, which then employs a few more intuitive, inventive, and inspired people that end up doing the same thing. Some become the owners of the big buildings, some become owners of small niche shops, while others go off to create something completely different. The cycle goes on because it's powered by special people. Big building's aren't remarkable anymore.

67. The biggest successes in history were accidents or resulted from consistent questioning

Which came first, the dumb caveman or the fire?

Either way, the discovery of fire was an accident. Maybe the caveman found that lava hit wood and created this bright hot light, touched it, burnt himself and became a dumb caveman. Or maybe the caveman actually was already dumb enough that he rubbed two sticks together so fast that it surprisingly caught fire. The caveman then touched it, burnt himself and was still called a dumb caveman but with that made a breakthrough.

What matters is that breakthroughs like this used to happen very often. It has died down, not because of everything that can be discovered has, but because we reprimand those who make accidents or constantly ask questions. What we need to teach is not who can do it best by

following instructions, but who can fail the best, learn from the failure and make something better than what can be made by following instructions.

Will Keith Kellogg had accidentally left some boiled wheat sitting out and it went stale. Instead of throwing it away, Will and his brother Dr. John Harvey Kellogg put it through the rollers to make long sheets of dough. Once it went through, they realized the dough had turned into flakes which they decided to toast. Soon after, they chose to run the same experiment with corn and in 1906 the Kellogg's company was created, along with the internationally known Corn Flakes.

Richard James, a naval engineer attempted to invent a spring that would stabilize the sensitivity of ships equipment. When a spring he had worked on fell off a shelf and continued moving away, the idea was sparked. With help from his wife, they decided to name the invention Slinky and have sold over 270 million globally.

Scientists, engineers, philosophers and alike, all became famous due to their consistent questioning of all things and aptitude for making mistakes. They would ask why until they either found an answer or created one. As we realized earlier, in order to have interesting solutions, we have to create interesting problems and asking why is one of the best ways.

Setting things on fire and seeing what happens is helpful too. If you think about it, you can't be smart until you are a bit dumb.

68. The expectation of failure

You may have the expectation of success in every student but no student will reach their potential if you don't also expect failure. 20 years ago, there couldn't be failure in things that mattered. You couldn't stack a \$350,000 pile of mulch 155 feet high because the heat inside would create an unstoppable fire which would result in a \$350,000 loss. You couldn't build a tornado shed 1 yard above the current requirements because it got ripped up and people died.

How did they figure that out?

Do you think there's a specific type of mulch that can be piled up that high and not cause a fire?

The only way we can find out is if we put a group of people who care about mulch in the Failure Room to exchange ideas, thoughts, and run experiments (also called failures).

You need to fail if you want to succeed, but first you need an environment that helps and even promotes failure. School.

69. Redefining "smart" in two phrases

- "She is so smart"

- "She is so smart, why didn't I think of that?"

The first phrase is only ever related to some form of grade, whether on a standardized test or her evaluation on following instructions. It's something you hear most often at school. As we already know, grades are an illusion which makes saying someone is smart in that situation a false accusation.

However, in the second phrase, defining her as "smart" takes on an entirely new level, one outside of grades. It implies that she had done something different; found a way to make that something better, bigger, faster and more unique. These smarts are noticeable, respected, appropriately rewarded and results with one of the finest compliments that are only given to the most successful people on the planet. For now, at least.

70. How to create

As you already learned, playing the same tune you are hearing on a CD is followership, not leadership, and is certainly not creative. Nor is playing just a random tune, creative. Although it is practice like this which can lead to creativity, merely hitting strings at random is not something original. Give anyone who has never played a guitar and they will do just that, strum and push down on a few chords at random. So how do we create?

Jeff Goin points out the middle ground between writing the same as someone else has and just writing randomness.

“A good writer curates. She scoops up all the little pieces of inspiration around her, melding and mashing them, putting it all together in a hodgepodge mosaic that makes something new.

Sometimes, we don't even realize we do this, but we all do it. Great artists borrow from other artists. They meld together pieces of the chaotic mess we all call life, and they end up with a whole new creation.”

With a musical instrument then, creativity comes from the combination of playing a song you know and strumming random chords until create something original.

71. Three kinds of learning

The first is what we learn in school: a couple skills, a cup of knowledge and a billion facts (which we have already forgotten).

The second is what we learn outside of school: the 20+ ways a hockey player can be penalized, how to change the language on Facebook to "Pirate Speak" and a billion TV and music trivia answers

The third is what we want to learn in school: leadership skills, teamwork, relative knowledge, how to fail, how to create new problems, likeability and connection, art

72. How I started caring about history

The first time I ever received a “C” was in social studies class in fourth grade. Not a good start given the fact I wanted to be a History teacher. After that I grew a particular hatred towards history, I didn’t see a point in memorizing all of the facts about it, or what good it did. I thought we should have been studying more of the future. I maintained the belief that there are really important aspects of history that need to be taken in account but the idea bordered on philosophy rather than important dates and names.

Now I had just finished reading a book called “A Little History of The World” by E. H. Gombrich, which basically tells the entire pre-history and history of the world in sequence. It’s filled with names, dates and locations but it uses them as if they were the least important factor of the story, they are merely marks in time to maintain the bigger picture. Nothing to be memorized, just simply noticed. I feel like everything I learned in 16 years of school, this book summarizes it all. While reading through it, I actually only remembered a quarter of the dates and names, purely because they were interesting when I learned them the first time: Lao Tzu, 300 Spartans, Charlemagne, etc. The rest was I’m sure review, but it felt like I was learning it for the first time. It got me thinking how this one book could be given to a 5th grader and any other history class could be focused on why and how things happened rather than what happened.

The other response to this book I have is that it made me like history again. It told a story, it told important philosophies from every noteworthy and unnoteworthy event. It also inspired me to research and read more on particular subjects because Gombrich made them sound interesting. It’s a compelling book on history that can make you care, that sparks some curiosity, something a history class doesn’t come close to.

73. Just one course

I had asked a great friend of mine, Karthik Puvvada, who knows a lot about purple cows what course he would add if he could add just one course to the school system.

Story Telling

74. Hackers

I was lucky to be friends with a few computer hackers. Not really hackers, but they knew way more than I did about programming, torrents, and basically how anything on or in the computer worked. They could disassemble, add to and reassemble anything: software or the computer itself. Did they learn any of it in school? Well, probably because that’s how they would work to get around blocked websites and play games when they were supposed to be doing something else.

Computer science like they learned is not something that is taught in school for reasons you can likely guess, it doesn’t fit into the curriculum of rote learning, memorization, and scantron tests.

My friends were passionate about computers and games which resulted in the experimentation of how it all worked. Through their own tests, on their own time and destroying their own systems, they discovered shortcuts, how to make improvements and to develop something entirely their own. The computer science that my friends learned isn't the only subject that won't be taught in school until we change its framework. Other subjects...

Negotiations (not debate)

Public speaking

Leadership

Video design

Poetry

Graphic art

Entrepreneurial alchemy

Plagiarism

Pitching/Sales

75. Just ask

Students want to ask real questions in class, ones about creativity, the way people think, why they do what they do, how to do something, what makes fruit organic? But we can't ask these questions in school unless we want to be punished.

Before we can ask those questions, without fear we have to start asking questions like:

Do you not think I have the talent?

Why?

Do you care about teaching?

Is this curriculum strengthening our culture?

Are you opening new doors? Or pushing us through the same old and worn out ones?

What will I take from this class that will help me out in life? (My personal favorite, no need to be afraid asking it during class, it's on everyone's mind as well)

Do I even need to be here to pass?

76. I got a C- in my bible as literature class

This along with my first failing in Trigonometry class (more on that in a moment) were the only “bad” grades I received in college. Let me plea the case of every other student who has ever gotten a C or anything lower.

The teacher, very content on teaching bible as literature missed the ENTIRE point of why it is a class. Here was the curriculum.

1. Read a passage
2. Quiz
3. Read a passage
4. Quiz
5. Read a Passage
6. Quiz
7. Midterm
8. Read a passage
9. Quiz
10. Read a passage
11. Quiz
12.
13. Write an essay producing all the facts on a piece of what you read (your choice on topic)
14. Quiz
15. Read a passage
16.
17. Final

What we read, was great. What we were quizzed on? Names, dates, places – trivia. The midterm? Same as the quizzes just on different names, dates and places and many of the same ones. The final? Even more names, dates and places. I learned a lot of trivia (and forgot a lot of trivia since then), but did I learn anything about the Bible? Why passages were written? What life lessons could I take from it? What defines it as such an important piece of literature worthy of having a class dedicated to it?

I did, but only because I looked for them while I read it since it was the only way to get myself to kind of-sort of enjoy reading it. The teacher and class offered no incentive, no reason to care, no reason to read. (60% of the class didn't) If you have read the bible, or even realized how much it is quoted from and stories are told from it, then you know how valuable it can be (all religious aspects aside). What if the curriculum looked like this...

1. Read a passage
2. Discussion
3. Read a passage

4. Discussion
5. Read a passage
6. Discussion
7. Midterm – Essay on the story that stuck out most to you and its significance to humankind
8. Read a passage
9. Discussion
10. Read a passage
11. Discussion
12. Final – Essay on an argument of three aspects of the bible you disagree with and what you would implement instead. In addition, you also need to create your own bible story to be added which contains a theme from another story in the bible.

From the looks of the curriculum there is still no incentive or reason to care or read it but if you partook in a discussion, if you got to feel the passion of the teacher and the beginning of people starting to care about their contribution to the discussion... only then do you have a real bible as literature class.

While the above concept can relate to almost any class, it doesn't fully explain why I failed Trigonometry the first time around.

Trigonometry was desperately frustrating and will never be of any use to me. If you remember, I spent my time doing something more productive. Would you be surprised that only 3 people excelled in the class? The three people had the spark and passion and confidence to learn it before the class even started. Do you think they got it from the previous math class they took? Doubt it. They knew what they wanted to do after school, knew what they needed to do during it (follow instructions and remain compliant), and they knew it would be easy. That's fine. We need extraordinary mathematicians like this but we also need extraordinary engineers, writers, artists, musicians, businesspeople, salesmen, and leaders.

We are producing genocide on dreams by forcing these extraordinary people to go through each level of math, especially when each level of math is meant to weed the people out. It's a screening process to produce only the best mathematicians. So I ask again, why are we putting people who will fail that screening through it?

77. Making it interesting

Fact: Tutankhamen was only 8 or 9 when he became ruler of Egypt.

I learned a lot of facts about Tutankhamen and Egyptian civilization in my 6th grade social studies class with Mrs. Muehlfelder, who was distinctly remembered for two reasons. The first

was that she would yell at anyone and give detentions to those who didn't cover their mouths when they yawned. She was also known for doing one of the coolest things a social studies teacher (or any other teacher in the school) had done. She made learning about Egyptian history interesting. How?

We reenacted a mummifying and burial process that was used on Tutankhamen, on a large frozen turkey which she bought at her own expense. We had it in the classroom, we let it thaw out and get a little "bad". Then we made the wrappings that would go around it in a similar way that the Egyptians did. We glorified the box it would fit in, cut some holes in it for the demons to leave, spent a full class time going outside as a team, taking turns digging a hole, burying it, and mapping the location of it so if we ever wanted to dig it up again we could find it.

Altogether, it was about a 3 day process all the while we were learning about the Egyptians as we worked. What if there was a one, two or three day process like this in every class that happened once or twice a month? What if every teacher found a way to make the lesson interesting like Mrs. Muehlfelder? It's so easy to get kids to have fun while learning; it just seems odd that the only easy route that is worth taking, we don't take.

78. Taking charge

It's easy to comprehend that if someone stands out, decides something can be better, and is determined to make it so, that they take charge. You see this when someone becomes point guard on the basketball team, implements a student directed marching band event, or runs for the class Presidential position of Student Government.

These students are the same as the three who made it through Trigonometry with a perfect score; it's their talent because they learned on their own that it is what they need to do now to do what they want later. Could we teach this drive to take charge? Yes.

Take a group of high school students and have them teach a group of younger students learn math. Teach them to care about math and power them with the possibilities that learning math can bring them. The point isn't to turn all of them into the most intellectual mathematicians of all time, the goal is to turn out a few extra who really care and are passionate and who take charge.

The others, who still don't feel that math is their path, put them in charge of monitoring the entire budget of the school store. Let them coach the entire basketball team, soccer team, football team, lacrosse team, and any other sport. Let them coordinate the entire school assembly. Let them run orientation or any other event.

One thing about students, *ANY* student, is that if you put them in the position to take charge, they will.

79. The type of math we need to be taught

Trigonometry, calculus, deciphering mathematical symbols and learning a whole new language called mathematics should be taught to those who want to take charge of the subject. That doesn't mean that creating and translating different mathematical formulas and symbols isn't valuable. In fact, it's one of the most valuable things a person needs to learn but the math that is needed is not being taught.

What kids *aren't* taught in math:

How loans and debt work

How interest works

How IRA, money markets, bonds, or any other type of investments works

The difference between leasing something and purchasing it

How to write a check or balance a checkbook (in the world of credit/debit cards, to keep an eye on their online books)

How to write a budget

How to sell a car

What mortgage is

The difference between a scholarship, grant and a loan

How to keep track and file taxes

That is the math that matters, the math that is not being taught. Don't you think that if every student knew this math instead of failing at trig and calc (which rarely apply to the above list) that there would be less debt, less confusion, less mathematical abuse and maybe students may leave the class with something they can actually apply to their lives?

80. The stench lingers

Every one of us wants to make an improvement in something, we want to get better at something, and we have thousands and thousands of really great ideas, ones of excessant change and mythical prosperity. Great ideas that we may be passionate about but then we smell it. The smelly smell that smells smelly. We smell the lingering stench of school.

We smell the stench when we realize that we will have to learn something in order to make the idea happen, to produce the change we were just dreaming about and to feel the pride of knowing we are the ones who did it.

What school has taught us is to hate learning. No wonder very few kids read any informative books, attend any public seminars or want to take any tests outside of school. They have been so engrained to believe that the only ways to learn are the ones they had to use while going through school and thus would rather opt out of a life changing opportunity than do that.

You know smell is the strongest of the five senses right? So the idea gets dropped, the dream disposed of, and the passionate action disappears all because kids smell school whenever they think they have to learn something no matter what the change they could create from learning it is.

Febreeze won't get rid of the smell, I've tried. Now it's time to toss the curriculum and start over. A fresh slate with clean air.

81. When homeschooling will be justified

From my 19 year old view, having just finished school early, do I think that students should be homeschooled? It's not really a yes or no answer but I won't leave you at "it depends" either because I know what it depends on.

I'm not the only one that knows all of what I've mentioned and what I am arguing for. There are other people arguing for the same, but instead of writing a book and asking questions, they have pulled their children out of the system to teach them themselves. If you can answer yes to the following situations, then yes, home school.

It depends on:

If the parents learned from experience and kept up with the constant race to the bottom to know what to teach the opposite of? Then yes, home school.

If the parents studied the physiological repercussions of social isolation that homeschooling produces as much as they would have read when having their first child? Then yes, home school.

If the parents understood that they can't produce enough children to find all of their own failures to correct like school does? Then yes, home school.

If the parents received the same kind of education and are willing to improve upon the curriculum they received? Then yes, home school.

If the parents realized that they will have to teach their kids even longer than they would have to learn at school? Then yes, home school.

If the parents set up a thousand roadblocks for their kids to jump through, to challenge fear, to stick them outside in the real world on the highest pedestal? Then yes, home school.

If the parents noticed that they could give their kids all the praise possible but it will never be acknowledged as powerfully from someone who isn't required to love them (and you found a way around it)? Then yes, home school.

My personal and conclusive take on it.

Is it justifiable to be home schooling now? No.

Will it be? Yes, but by then it won't matter because there will be no reason to take kids out of school in spite of it. (In other words, No, as long as we do something about it.)

82. Some courses that I would like to see taught in school

How to build a patio

Web design

Improv

Event organization

Behavioral reading

Change oil, tires, and breaks

DIY

Create the dots (as opposed to connect)

83. EBSCO will only expand (it's been going for 68 years, why stop?)

Pulled directly from www.Ebsco.com

Established in 1944, EBSCO is the world's leading information agent providing consultative services and cutting-edge technology for managing and accessing quality content, including print and e-journals, e-packages, research databases, e-books and more. Now more than ever libraries and research organizations are looking for new ways to manage their collections more efficiently.

Remember at the beginning of this manifesto that I said as a class we would go to the library and all get on the computers? EBSCO is the resource we got to use for our research. We went to a library, full of books, newspapers, magazines and so on, to go on a computer library which has 10 million times more resources and the ability to find an accurate source to use in the same amount of time it takes you to type what you need into the search tool. In addition, there are even more sites like EBSCO that have popped up. You know what they are called? Libraries. These are the libraries that are being used and expanded, not the traditional house of books which are

tangible. Those who run EBSCO and sites like it are the new librarians now and everyone loves it.

84. Cheating is a crime

There's a huge dispute going on about online classes vs. classes held at the school, with other people, face to face in the classroom. A recent uppercut that was thrown at online courses was that the ability to cheat in online classes is exceedingly easier than in a real classroom.

An anonymous student at a U.S public University teamed up with three friends to Ace a high level science course with as little as 20 minutes a week dedicated only to take the online quiz. Using a Google resource to take notes for each other, one would take the test first, scratch out the wrong answer and write the correct ones in the notes and then share it with the next person who did the same thing who shared it with the third friend and then they did the same thing and so on. It so happened that the multiple choice database that was used for the test was pulling questions from a limited supply. Although there would be different questions in different order for each student, if you put four together, they could nearly crack it so that the fourth person, sometimes even the third, taking the test could Ace it. All they needed to do was alternate who went first each week.

Did I mention that it was also an open book test? It didn't matter though and it never will unless the kids want to learn what is in the book.

Cheating happens. It happens online or in the traditional school place. As long as there are multiple choices, trivia, facts, scantrons and no interest, there will be cheating.

They say cheating is a crime. I say, the fact you can cheat (or that you would even want to) is a crime.

85. A philosophy to care and the teacher who taught it

Remember that one amazing teacher I had? Here is an email I sent him and his response.

Hello Mr. Smith (not his real name),

We were talking in class about those four great philosophers and I had a question, but there was not enough time to ask it and receive an answer since we were too absorbed in the discussions that were ignited. So I thought I would send you a message with my question. Now, I have heard many reasons why such great philosophers were produced back in that time. Lots of sunlight and open air, they could think all day and didn't have other obligations etc. etc. So here is my question, do you think it is possible for there to be another ...revelation, I think is the correct word to use. Is it possible for there to become another wave of brilliant philosophers such as the ones mentioned in class? Or even at least one new one? I feel like everything has been thought of and there can be no

one like Confucius or Buddha again. I was wondering what your opinion might be?
Thanks

- Garth E. Beyer

His response:

Hi Garth,

What a wonderful question, thanks. This is a topic that people have been wondering about for a long time. In fact, when I was in college, I encountered a book with the interesting title, *The Literature of Exhaustion*, which argued that writers today have little new to say, and just find unusual ways to reformulate what has already been said. There is also the great novel by Jean-Paul Sartre called *Nausea*, where one of the characters spends his life studying how people keep repeating the same ideas that were started in the ancient world. Then he finds an idea that hasn't been repeated, and he doesn't know what to do!

Already in the Book of Ecclesiastes from the Hebrew Bible, there was the famous verse: "There is nothing new under the sun", and the Greek philosopher Epicurus believed that we don't really create anything, but just rearrange atoms. And then, as I was mentioning in class, it really seems like Confucius, Lao Zi, the Buddha and Socrates basically addressed so many of the main philosophical problems, that it almost renders later thinkers irrelevant. But I don't completely think that's true. What philosophy turns out to be is a *dialogue* toward truth, rather than just truth itself? In fact, Confucius himself was merely repeating what he thought were the most important "rules of propriety" during an ideal period long ago in the Zhou Dynasty. Socrates innovated merely by asking lots and lots of questions. So even these incredibly original thinkers turn out to be not that original!

Finally, I think that technology and change is so hyper and sped up these days, that a new type of thinking is developing, and that new kinds of philosophy are definitely possible in such an environment. The very fact that we have information-overload (and the ancients didn't) could actually work in our favor, inspiring us to new philosophical levels. So that's the beginning of an answer to your very good question, and I look forward to talking about this more. Thanks for writing.

We went on to discuss it further but you get the point from this. All his response says, between every word and every character is "I care". Is that all you should take from it though, or is there another level to it, one that has been and is affecting our educational culture directly? One word: Plagiarism

86. Plagiarism needs to take place

If you also cared what Mr. Smith said, you would have begun to think and wonder if anything is original then. Maybe you have already wondered about it before. Plainly, if you took away the questions Socrates asked, took away the previous rules or propriety, if you had isolated any of the greatest philosophers, scientists, and artists in the world, then they would have never become so.

Originality isn't something you can try to do, it's something that happens. If you try to create something no one has ever created before by testing an idea every time you think no one has thought of it, you will get nowhere. Not only will you find that every idea has been thought of in one way or another, but you can't think of an idea without it being part of another thought.

If you try to create something no one has ever created before by taking an idea from every single person that can relate to what you want to create, then you have originality. Why try to create a new block when you can build your own tower with all the blocks you have. It is when you build that tower that you find that there is a particular block you need that you can't find, so you invent it. You don't invent a block and build everything from there.

Maria Papova who writes for Brain Pickings wrote this article on May 10th, 2012. It is titled Mark Twain on Plagiarism and Originality: "All Ideas Are Second-Hand"

" 'The kernel, the soul — let us go further and say the substance, the bulk, the actual and valuable material of all human utterances — is plagiarism.'

*The combinatorial nature of creativity is something I think about a great deal, so this 1903 letter **Mark Twain** wrote to his friend **Helen Keller**, found in **Mark Twain's Letters, Vol. 2 of 2**, makes me nod with the manic indefatigability of a dashboard bobble-head dog. In this excerpt, Twain addresses some plagiarism charges that had been made against Keller some 11 years prior, when her short story "The Frost King" was found to be strikingly similar to Margaret Canby's "Frost Fairies." Heller was acquitted after an investigation, but the incident stuck with Twain and prompted him to pen the following passionate words more than a decade later, which articulate just about everything I believe to be true of combinatorial creativity and the myth of originality:*

Oh, dear me, how unspeakably funny and owlshly idiotic and grotesque was that 'plagiarism' farce! As if there was much of anything in any human utterance, oral or written, except plagiarism! The kernel, the soul — let us go further and say the substance, the bulk, the actual and valuable material of all human utterances — is plagiarism. For substantially all ideas are second-hand, consciously and unconsciously drawn from a million outside sources, and daily use by the garnerer with a pride and satisfaction born of the superstition that he originated them; whereas there is not a rag of originality about them anywhere except the little discoloration they get from his mental and moral calibre and his temperament, and which is revealed in characteristics of phrasing. When a great orator makes a great speech you are listening to ten centuries and ten thousand men — but we call it his speech, and really some exceedingly small portion of it is his. But not enough to signify. It is merely a Waterloo. It is Wellington's battle, in some degree, and we call it his; but there are others that contributed. It takes a thousand men to invent a telegraph, or a steam engine, or a phonograph, or a telephone or any other important thing — and the last man gets the credit and we forget the others. He added his little mite — that is all he did. These object lessons should teach us that ninety-nine

parts of all things that proceed from the intellect are plagiarisms, pure and simple; and the lesson ought to make us modest. But nothing can do that.

Steve Jobs, of course, knew this when he famously proclaimed that “creativity is just connecting things” — and Kirby Ferguson reminds us that Jobs didn’t technically invent any of the things that made him into a cultural icon, he merely perfected them to a point of genius. Still, this fear of unoriginality — and, at its extreme, plagiarism — plagues the creative ego like no other malady. No one has countered this paradox more eloquently and succinctly than Salvador Dalí:

“Those who do not want to imitate anything, produce nothing.”

Thousands of teachers and researchers and software developers are trying to create the next best plagiarism tester for students’ essays. It’s the same as trying to create an online course that includes multiple choice questions that are uncheatable. As long as there is no passion, there will be cheating. As long as there is passion, there will still be cheating, but it will create original work.

However, it takes a talented teacher to get students to understand that it is okay to pull from resources, to add on to them, to build their towers. The thousands of teachers, researcher’s administrators, and software developers could better use their time to teach students how to best plagiarize than to not plagiarize at all.

87. Easy information, easy A

Despite failing grades, classes are easy. All you have to do is memorize, read, follow directions, and avoid any turbulence. All the information is there and easy. Instead of schools changing what is taught, they made it simpler, dumbed it down, and some are even tempting students to respond in answers with a 140 character limit. It may be producing more A’s, but it’s not making students any smarter or retaining any of the knowledge longer than if they cared to know it.

However, for knowledge to be understood and retained long-term, students don’t need to completely be passionate about the subject; in no way am I hoping to create a Utopian school, just a better one that fits the technological and connective structure of the rest of the world. (and art of course). For some students, they may not know what their passion is and it’s the teacher’s job to show them. One way to do that is to create a desired difficulty, opposite of the easy A.

In order to understand a desired difficulty, you have to make your mind aware of cognitive disfluency and its power during the learning process to produce stronger understandings and retention rates of things that matter. It’s a safe learning process and one that can be used alongside rote learning because at the heart of it, it’s making something challenging, worthwhile and complex enough for someone to care about it.

Cognitive disfluency refers to a type of mental and understanding ease. It entails using small words, large words, different fonts, shorter or longer sentences, familiar concepts, bold points and various other means to cause a person to focus further.

The opposite, cognitive fluency is what is used in the school system now. All one type, all one size, all one font, all the same question, all the same answer, and all the same size circle you need to fill in with a number #2 pencil. It's easy and requires no focus.

Cognitive disfluency breaks the steady flow of information so that it can't as easily leave. Surprisingly, it can easily enter into the brain just as the type of structure that is used to create cognitive fluency. In other words, switching it up, adding some difficulty, creating passionate focus, and putting some flare to the learning process makes student's develop a deeper understanding, stronger knowledge base, and easier retention and remembrance of the information.

88. Cramming: short term results, long term disappointment

Where does cramming come in? It doesn't. Well, it's not supposed to, that's the point of cramming; filling a small vacuum bag with as much information as possible and to continue filling it even though we all know it can't hold any more. Whether it is cramming facts or passion, fluency or disfluency, it all ends up a mess with little recollection and long term disappointment.

Currently, students are being served a large plate of educational filiofetism and so they stuff their faces to the point they can't put their lips together to retain any of the food. They gag, they choke, they nearly vomit and yet we still feed them the same learning strategies, the same syllabi, the same requirement to obey, and the same dying hope that if you get good grades, you get a good job, you get a good house, a good car and a good life. Kids are being force fed facts when all that needs to be done is to try serving something else.

How about real life assessments and experiments? Relating a concept to how it applies to real life and then following through isn't something that can be crammed, nor is it anything you can spit back out. Once you fail, once you get rejected, once you make the improvements, once you test it again and succeed, it doesn't go away. Experience is permanent. There's no need to stress over the decreasing learning retention rate of a student if they are branded with experience. And that is something they can take with them in the real world. This way, kids get long term results and short term disappointment. Reminding students to study for exams and forcing them to cram is doing the exact opposite.

89. Higher education is turning into a Girl Scout experience

There is more to learn about Girl Scouts than the fact that once you have a Girl Scout cookie, nothing can compare.

Girl Scouts don't get a degree after taking tests on memorization, although if they did, they would surely pass because they memorize through action and experience. Regardless, the closest recognition they get to a degree is a paper that represents their Certification as a Troop Leader. This certifies them to create more leaders. How do they become a leader?

Years of earning badges, awards, and real recognition.

Business Badges, Leadership Awards, Mentoring Awards, Meritorious Service Awards, Skill Building Awards, Legacy Awards, Participation Patches and Pins, Special Opportunity Awards, and so many others that you would need to eat all the girl scout cookies to have a vest large enough to fit all of the patches and pins on.

Taking free educational online courses may not give you credits, but that's not to say it won't help you get your degree if you so wish. Regardless, the virtual school is beginning to reward students who complete their courses with badges they can wear (online) to represent their success. The online school which becomes the most popular fastest will be the one that gets the world to acknowledge their badges as marks of true excellence.

It's a battle being waged online. Starting a new virtual school in hopes to give out badges seems a bit farfetched but it can and will work. The traditional, 3 billion dollar school needs to offer the same incentives and rewards as the Girl Scouts.

The questions asked to earn a badge:

How much have you done because of school?

What are all your meaningful accomplishments?

What have been your life changing actions?

What have you gone out, shaken up and gotten rewarded for?

How have you recorded and shared your experience with others?

The Girl Scouts are so successful because the responses to these questions are how they earn their badges and certificates. Should it be any different in school?

90. Research vs. Experience

I, along with millions of other kids, could have Googled what happens to a battery when you smash it, what is inside a keyboard, or how to put an inter-tube into a bike tire. But we didn't. We got the acid on our skin, made a wallet out of the insides of a keyboard, and made alphabet magnets out of the computer keys, and ended up paying for a new tire out of frustration.

It's not a matter of which one is better research or experience; it's a matter of combining them into experience research.

91. Tolerance and the boiling pot

Tolerance is something else that is expected, taught, and praised at school. We don't like the way the teacher teaches, but we deal with it. We can't stand all the multiple choice questions, but we don't ask for something different. We don't think it is fair we have to stay in a class where we know everything already. But we do. We're forced too. At least, we have been raised to think that since our first day at school.

Folks. The pot is boiling. We have been tolerant of the increasing temperatures of this liquid education and we can't handle being burnt anymore. Whether, you, parents, taxpayers, teachers, or outlying administrators wish to help change school and redefine what school is for or decide not to, students are going to start jumping out of the pot. Where they will jump, I don't know. Can we change school so as to give them a real reason to stay? You bet.

92. School is...

An art museum without any lights on.

93. Traditionally habitual

If you focus on things moment to moment, there is no habit. You can brush your teeth every night but if you focus on how soft the bristles are, how they lightly scrape across your gum line, how you switch movements from up and down, to a circular rotation. It ceases to be a habit, you are aware.

Classes have become habit. There is no need to bring your mind. You show up, sit down, look forward, and stare at the board behind the teacher so it seems that you are paying attention. You scan over the reading, take the test, and then you come back tomorrow and do the same exact thing. That's just for one class. Most schools have students doing this 4-8 times a day. They say you only need 21 days of consistently doing something once a day for it to become habit. School is 16 years of habit, a bit extreme, don't you think?

If *being* aware, defeats habits, then we need the kids to *stay* aware. Wait. School administrators already know that. It is why you are told to pay attention every 5 minutes, told to study for an exam 10 times through class, and checked up on every day to see if you are reading the book and following instructions. (Students aren't, they're just good at making you think they are.)

Does it make students more aware? Yes and no. What does it mean to be aware? It means to live in the moment. The key word is "live". Live in the moment, to be passionate moment to moment, to be thankful moment to moment, and to be alive moment to moment. To live, there must be an understanding. When students are told to pay attention, to become aware, there is no understanding, only acceptance to obey.

When students are truly aware, when they can understand and concentrate on the most important things, they can conquer the world. Lessons become less habitual. By changing the curriculum, the lesson plan and the syllabi, the only habit students will develop is the habit of doing the thing they fear most. They do it because they have been taught to care, to understand, and to take charge. This habit of doing the things you fear is the only habit that should be taking place because doing things you fear is its destruction. The less fear, the less habits, the more understanding and the more living.

94. The right perspective on mentorship

You're looking for mentors to give to you, but you need to give to them.

When you get a mentor, as it benefits anyone who does, the obligation to fulfill expectations is only the base of what defines the relationship between mentor and pupil.

What makes it work is what you have to show and give the mentor. Not in the sense of doing as the mentor says, but doing more, proving them wrong, and surprising them. You may view them as a mentor, but they need to view themselves as observers, as pushers, as people who are about to get their minds blown.

The thing about this post-industrial society is that the teachers, mentors, evaluators and advisers... they need to be re-taught. They have grown up learning how to follow orders and eventually on how to give orders, how to maintain the status quo and the terrible curriculum of teaching set by tradition. It's your job as the pupil of a mentor to be the teacher, to represent this post-industrial generation and to not only create something innovative and irreplaceable, but to change the way education is taught.

School is no longer a place for teachers. Not as long as they continue teaching the same lessons, techniques and dead dreams. Nor is it a place for coaching, whether in sports or academia. We can't let our kids wait to be picked, or to let them turn the advantaged students into school trophies.

School must transition into a place where you can find a mentorship, a partnership, and someone who cares. The mentors won't be there to force feed information. Mentors will be there to be taught. They will be taught that kids, no matter their age, can do something that matters if given the inspiration to care and the honest support they deserve.

95. "I don't know"

Unfortunately there is no inspiration or support because teachers don't give students enough time in class to ask questions and get self interested. Even when a student does overcome the fear, embarrassment, and breaking of the status-quo to ask a question, the teacher answers it far too quickly and in short.

The only occurrence when time is available to answer a question is when the teacher asks it. Although, there is never any need to think about it, mull it over, or to understand it. Not because the student can answer it right away but because they can just as easily say “I don’t know.”

That’s what we are saying is acceptable in class. It’s acceptable to not know, to not try, to fold. The teacher then does one of two things. The teacher either reprimands the student and asks someone else to answer or just says what the correct answer is. No understanding, no discussion, no help, and no feeling that either one cares.

The point of class is to philosophize with the students/teachers to find an acceptable answer; to build the bridge to an interesting solution. More importantly, “I don’t know” doesn’t cut it in the real world.

96. Putting yourself first

School gives us an ultimatum. Either we can become selfish, absorb all the facts and trivia as much as possible so that we can get a good job and a good life, *or* we can live a hard life trying to be selfless.

Is it such a hard life, if in being selfless, we radiate care, kindness, and compassion? Why do what others want and expect when what we want and expect from ourselves will make others happy? Putting yourself in front of others is the right thing to do as long as you care.

You know now that you can teach people to care, now it is only a matter of proving how “good” of a life you can have by learning selflessness, by learning what you want, by learning to care than learning in the current system of selfishness, manipulation, and exaggeration.

97. Why the traditional school setting will go side-by-side with the progression of online courses

Education is exposing you to smarter and better people, something that can be done online as well. Education is about connecting with other smart and great people, something that can be done online as well.

But.

A group of connective linchpins in an online chat room can come up with some extraordinary *ideas*.

A group of connective linchpins in a classroom can come up with some extraordinary *results*.

The only variable of the factory structure of school that needs to remain is the value that is put towards shipping. Everything else needs to be trashed. All that school needs is to keep shipping, but what it ships, how it ships, where it ships, and most importantly, who it ships to, needs to change.

Online courses, virtual presentations, and unlimited resources are perfect for learning all about a product, preparing to ship it, and receiving feedback on the result. Where is the product though? Where is the guidance? The creation of a product and the discovery of how to get unstuck is something that can only be completed when you connect in person with other likeminded people.

These ideas I have been relating to you, similar ones can be found online but my creation and their creations have all come from a source, a real interaction, a real experience, making them invaluable.

98. Participation

Participation follows passion. A question is asked, a hand raised and someone volunteers only when they care about asking, answering and volunteering. The only time they care is if they have been instilled with the passion of the particular subject. Changing the participation of communication in a class setting is essential to changing school entirely.

However much I believe good communication means talking even when you least want to, not everyone is passionate about spoken words. As a result of a passion that I developed through years of volunteering and participating to speak in class, in meetings, at graduation, in Toastmasters and so on, has made me realize that inculcating the act to participate, to speak out, is the well-needed goal of teachers.

There have been too many times that not only I, but a select few others, were extremely frustrated with the class in which I or we were the only ones to ever participate. I wanted to get up and ask why no one was participating! Why they even came to class if they are just going to be there, a shadow, and only really show up to take a test on information they won't remember or care to remember after the test. We need students to realize that the point of coming to class is to learn and that the only things you learn and remember are what you actively participate in and are active minded with.

Side note: Although I did voice my notice and frustration of the lack of participation with the teacher, I failed to really stand up in class and shout what I had just written. I hope that this book makes up for that.

99. What participation is not

A teacher of mine had told the class to all raise their hands because we should know the answer to a question she posed. Immediately after being told, everyone raised their hand. Instead of the teacher calling on someone, she had said "Wow, you are all well trained."

The entire class laughed. I didn't.

100. Selling it

Billions of dollars, millions of people, and thousands of hours are being spent and used every year to continue selling the system. To hush those who are fighting the status-quo and making a ruckus and to sell it even more to those already buying into the system. It's a waste.

The problem with selling is that it is extremely difficult when the customer doesn't want to buy. (I don't, do you?)

Lucky for the administrators, they have millions of parents, students, taxpayers, teachers and billions of dollars that want to be spent on a new system. One that works.

If you have customers (us) who already want to buy, selling becomes easy. Once we begin telling them what we want to buy into, that is what will be made available.

101. The difference between being smart and bullshitting a paper

I have written a substantial amount of papers and reports throughout my educational career. The majority of which were written the night before or the day it was due. My reasoning is explained [here](#). Besides implementing the Pareto principle, doing things near the last-minute is one of my talents. I work very well under stress.

As a result for producing A+ papers right before they were due, I was labeled the King of Bullshitting Papers.

The title is far from accurate so it's time people understand the different types of smart people that get made in spite of school. I am one of three types of scholars. Can you pick which one **you** are most like?

- 1. The Valedictorian:** Reads the entire book, takes notes, reviews the book again and then writes the report.
- 2. The Bullshitter:** Reads a review of the book online and adds unrelated information into the report as filler.
- 3. The Unnoticed Genius:** Scans the entire book and takes the most important parts and writes a report based on the important factors, previously learned content, and personal experience.

If you are a Valedictorian, you are the best at following orders, listening to directions, and having zero creativity. The Bullshitter of course, may not even read a review of the book. It's likely that the Bullshitter just reads the back of the book or only the introduction. The last type of smart person is the one most wrongly assumed as being the Bullshitter. The Unnoticed Genius takes the core of both the Valedictorian and the Bullshitter, squishes them together and with a bit of creativity, forms art.

Understand that knowing an idea and elaborating on it quickly, based off of both research and experience, is not bullshitting. Trying to act like you know the idea and pretending you are expert enough to elaborate on it – that is bullshitting.

The unnoticed genius can be exploited and multiplied. It defines the initiative, the inquisitiveness, and the self-motivation that goes into making innovative and creative people who make a difference in the world. School picks the valedictorians and makes sure they get there. All the while, school pushes down the Bullshitter and chastises her for not doing as she is told without even wondering why.

Let me tell you, there are *a lot* of unnoticed geniuses in school which get falsely labeled Bulshitters and are kicked back and ignored for their supposed wrong way of producing results.

102. Dissertation daydream

When I was 16 and daydreaming in my sociology class while I was waiting for other students to finish taking their test. I scribbled on some scratch paper to write my dissertation on the school systems worldwide, on a national level, and relate it to economic status of the country.

I figured if we can predict the outcome of successful students based on socioeconomic status then we can bring it to a larger level and base it on the countries entire economical status and find a direct relation to the amount of schools, amount of charter schools, how the school systems are created, upheld, etc, so that we can duplicate that process in other areas.

I am sure you could Google the socioeconomic status of any city, state or country in the world and find out how great a school is. Unfortunately, their calculation of a great school is based off of what makes a college famous and you know how invalid that data is. The reason this dissertation would be so incredibly difficult is how we would define successful students. Will we define it the way we are now with rejection and retention rates? Or will we have to set a new definition for school?

Maybe this is the dissertation I will write, maybe it isn't. Nevertheless, it is one I hope to write and when I do, all I can wish is that I find out socioeconomic status is meaningless (it is), that the potential resides specifically in each student (it does) and it turns out – again, by the time I write the dissertation – that school has been changed (it will).

103. Higher education has no higher purpose... yet

Higher education is just a means to an end. Study the facts, take the test for this class so you can take these classes so you can take the other classes to get a degree to hopefully get that good job so you can afford a good house and eventually raise a good family. There is no “end” to every “mean”. There is no real goal of each level or understanding that does not lead to the next fact, the next class or the next thing.

Let's take the time to challenge the facts, to understand them, to create some of our own. Let's have a huge goal right away related to the conclusion that could come from taking the time to philosophize over the facts. Instead of taking a test for a class, let's make a goal to ship something remarkable at the end of the semester or year. Let's use the class to make something that can be given to friends, family, the community, the world *right now*.

We, as taxpayers and revolutionaries of education, we have the ability to creatively morph and form a purpose for every class, for every lecture, for every sort of test. We can challenge every class to have a real means to an end, an end which benefits everyone but most importantly, intellectually and artistically benefits the student.

School needs a higher purpose and with no purpose currently being provided, we have the chance to shape one whichever way we want. We have an idea, a great one, actually, we have a lot of great ones. Let's use them. Think of the purpose of education as a cup, it's a lot easier to fill the cup with something new than it is to keep filling a full cup. Lucky for us, the cup is already empty.

104. Try failing to get an A

The A paper is trite, unless you had a teacher like the one I had (of course, the same teacher as I mentioned before,) I poured my heart into the papers I wrote for his class. A majority of the time, I bordered and completely crossed the guidelines and requirements he had set for the paper. I made it mine. I made it a paper I would want to keep, one that I was proud to have my name on. I only ever got a couple of points docked because of grammar and spelling, but never chastised for writing it my way. Likely because it was too entertaining to notice that I didn't follow the prompt. It was interesting to him because it was my art.

See, you don't always have to worry about teachers failing you for not following the guidelines because deep down, they know as well as you, that creativity means so much more than following instructions. Don't be surprised if you still get an A when you turn a paper, a math problem, lab result or a short answer response into art.

In any case, if you don't have a teacher like the one mentioned above (it's unlikely); if you have a rough, brainwashed teacher, then understand that the D you will get is worth way more than the letter represents. Keep the paper and send it to anyone that questions why you got such a low grade in class and see what happens.

105. Average academic excellence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ)

In sports, athletes can find people of similar great talent. There is an average of excellence and as a result, there are very few outliers. The same is with a student's IQ. There is an average of excellence (a range labeled genius), but only a few surpass it.

When becoming a linchpin, following your passion in a particular field that has an average of excellence and specialized creativity means that you need to focus on your emotional intelligence. Being aware of yours and others feelings, building a relationship, people problem solving and eliminating stress makes all the difference because it's nearly impossible to get a higher IQ, but an EQ on the other hand has no limit.

It's a harder game to play when you're surrounded by average excellence but if you put forth the emotional intelligence, the more you work at it, the higher your EQ matters and those with the highest EQ in a group of average excellence, they are the ones who become the linchpins, the outliers, the irreplaceable, and unbeatable people. You can only get so excellent at something until all that matters is that people like you (emotional intelligence).

Now apply this to the school setting. What sets students apart from the average? What makes them indispensable? They care, they work with people, they lead, they mediate, and exert the emotional labor necessary. They don't just do it to surpass the average excellence, but because they can't help but care and act on that feeling. We can leverage this.

106. Emotional intelligence continued

Maybe you remember getting a thank you card, being sent a gift, being told by a random person that you are doing fantastic, and maybe you don't.

What you can more likely remember is a time you gave someone more than a 20% tip, when you sent a thank you card or even in a work situation, asked to talk to the manager about the employee who gave exceptional service.

This is the result of being remarkable, a trait of an indispensable person. This is the emotional labor put on overdrive by someone else. And you know what? At the end of the day, servers, flight attendants, waiters, etc. don't think or care about the money they made, they care about the results of their emotional labor. At the end of the school day, students don't care what grade they get but that the teacher appreciated their effort, helped enhance their art, and gave them a challenge to increase the strength of their emotional labor.

107. Idol study

A common question that is asked in elementary school is "who is your hero?" It makes you think about who you look up to, who you admire, who you take after. They have children already thinking about how to emulate the successful but then middle school, high school, and higher education never asks it again, never follows up, and never checks in to see who students are paying more attention to than the teachers.

Could you see anything wrong with a class that is centered on emulating the previously successful? As the saying goes, you can't do the same thing and expect different results. But why would it matter when the results of legendary people are already that, legendary. See, these

heroes, these role models, these idols we look up to and attach ourselves to, they produce more inspiration than all the teachers combined.

The worst that could happen in a class focused on emulating these inspirational idols is that the student falls short. Fortunately, falling short of being legendary is still better than the breadth of success students are attaining now.

108. The type of book to teach from

The type of book that is okay for teachers to make a requirement is one that you can't come up with multiple choice questions for.

The Tao Te Ching is a perfect example because there are no dates, no names, and no real places that you can come up with a quiz for. Sure you could ask what Chapter number went with the writing but no teacher would waste their time doing that. – Knocks on wood – The only thing you can do with the Tao Te Ching is to read each chapter, meditate on the shape of the calligraphy and the meaning of the writing and then discuss it. The Tao Te Ching is meant for readers to ruminate on its meanings, its life lessons and ways of life. It would be a class dedicated to the study of positive perspectives and cultural knowledge. You don't get a degree for studying the Tao Te Ching, but you still get life success because the lessons it has to teach can be exploited throughout the rest of your education, through your career, through your business, your relationships and every other corner of your life which is much more important than knowing the year William Henry Harrison died or how to calculate asymptotes.

109. The free library and gift shop

I have recently finished reading a book and deposited it in a "Free Library". These free libraries are giant bird houses with doors instead of holes that you can put books in or take books out. There is no need to get a library card, put your name down, or even return the book. There are three of these free libraries on the bike path I take to work each day. Originally, I expected that the books in which the little library contains would be old, worthless, and packed with useless pages. What better place to toss that book you would never touch again and feel like you're not wasting it?

On the contrary, the free library contains the best of the best books. I reached the conclusion after I decided to deposit my book I read into it. When a person reads a great book, a really great book, they can't help but want to share it. Word of mouth is great. Combine it with actually putting the book in someone else's hands and it is even more promotional.

With the free library, there is this inspiring sensation of anonymity. It's just like the time when I put a five dollar bill on the bottom of my chair in my Speech class. Who knows who will find it, but I know someone will make great use of it. A place which serves the same purpose as the free library is the internet. However, there is a discrepancy to notice when making the connection.

You can only fit about 20-25 really great books in the free library I pass on the bike path. The online free library already contains over 250,000 eBooks that are free for people to download. Libraries are supposed to be a quiet place of seclusion and study. When you visit the online free library, there is noise. A lot of noise. Thankfully there is a combination of new online librarians popping up to monitor the significance of the books and a community of millions of people writing reviews on the books to make sure everyone views the top 25 and never attempts reading the worst 25,000.

The free library on the bike path isn't new though, there is already one similar to it, and it's called a bookstore, or soon to be named, gift shop. Bookstores are turning into gift shops in the sense that they will only begin carrying the top 25 online books in paperback, thus turning it into a gift shop. A place you can go that is void of noise and only supplies the best titles so there is no risk. Not having a risk is something people pay for. The same goes for school, you pay so there are no risks – except it turns out that the top 25 students don't typically reach the top 25 by not taking a risk and Amazon makes more money from their books than a gift shop.

110. Think on these things

Think On These Things by Krishnamurti is the book I deposited in the free library. Here is what Krishnamurti has to say about education.

“You see, if we could have right education from the very tenderest age, it would bring about a state in which there is no contradiction at all, either within or without; and then there would be no need for discipline or compulsion because you would be doing something completely, freely, with your whole being. Discipline arises only when there is a contradiction.”

There is no contradiction in following ones dreams when one is taught early on what they are and is nurtured through the journey until they can do what they love, their passion, and do it freely. This is the right educational vehicle that children are meant to enter. You see, it must begin at a young age before it is tainted, before tradition and status-quo influence their entire lives and trap their minds.

Have you visited any blogs whose author writes a lot about their children? There are millions of lessons that children teach us: how to be free, how to risk, following instincts, spontaneity, curiosity, how to have an open mind and so much more. Education has made it so adults now view children as their heroes, not the other way around.

If we could channel the children's excitement, their energy, their zero hesitation qualities, their creativeness, their hearts and minds into education and use their imagination, think of what would happen!

Imagine what would happen if we did that instead of closing their minds, chastising them for playing, labeling them for being different, reprimanding them for being creative and failing them for following their intuition, essentially limiting them from ever achieving their dreams.

111. What school teaches about success

The current education is not just decaying, it's in its final state of decomposition, yet we continue using what is rotten. We are using poisoned, dead matter in hopes that flowers will grow from it. We are so focused on getting students to succeed in class, to succeed in getting a degree and a few letters from the alphabet after their name, and then to succeed in getting a risk-free, factory like job and then succeed in accumulating thousands of dollars more in debt (after going to a famous school) to get a house and to raise kids that will meet the same fate.

School is all about success; it's taught us to love success instead of teaching us of what we are doing. School has said, "Here is success, follow this curriculum to get it." When school really needs to be saying, "Where is success? How will you get there? How can I help?"

In school, the result holds significance, it's more important than the actions taken. At the end of life though, is it the results we have attained that makes it a life worth lived, a significant life, one that was lived to the fullest? Or at the end of life, is it the journey, the actions we took, the decisions we made, the experience we accumulated, the adventure we enjoyed and the understanding of it all that makes a life worth living and handing that down to the next generation to live and discover as well?

School teaches nothing of the latter. The definition they have had us memorize for "success" is all too wrong.

112. The three other types of learning

It's common knowledge that some people learn better visually, some better through audio and others better kinesthetically. Schools say they take this into consideration, but they don't. The curriculum is made to support 33.3% of each type of learning in hopes to keep balance. In this *balance*, the standards are set low because the effort for balance is holding back 66.6% of each person's potential if they are natural learners to one specific process, as most are.

It is not that students can't learn the way they do best, but they are too busy having to memorize equations they will never use, listening to the music on their iPods instead of a lecture, and reading spark notes instead of the actual book.

also believe that if you are only one type of learner, you won't be the best you can be if you don't learn from the other types. What I am saying is that school doesn't need to break up the student body by the type of way in which they learn best, they merely need to give them freedom.

Freedom to listen to the audio version of a book that the teacher has taught the student to care about reading. Freedom to participate in the lecture. Freedom to destroy a project only to build it again. Freedom to take their best learning process, exploit and expand it into something that produces much more significant results than what is currently being achieved.

Can you imagine what science fairs would turn into if there was this freedom in learning? It's scary how smarter, more inspired, and truly innovative people could be if given freedom in learning and a reason to care.

113. A loss of confidence in art

“Words are, in my not-so-humble opinion, our most inexhaustible source of magic. Capable of both inflicting injury, and remedying it.” – Dumbledore

I was at a Toastmasters meeting the other night and education was the center point of the Table Topics discussions. When a member was asked what her favorite subject was in school she told a short story about how art was her favorite subject until her teacher had shown and said that she didn't like her art. As a result, she changed majors, letting go of art except for in her free time.

I was verbally chastised by peers for my writing, the one thing I love to do most in the world. Unlike in the previous story, I didn't change or put it on the backburner. I had enough people telling me that they loved my writing, I had teachers using it for future examples, and I had private messages from readers telling me otherwise.

Understand closely, there will always be people that criticize, you and your art, no matter what your art is. Although, the last person in the world to have the authority to criticize a student's art is the teacher. They are not placed to judge, to interpret art by their standards or to verbalize words of discouragement. They are there to instill confidence in art, to learn how the student interprets it and expand on that interpretation, to build self-assurance in their art.

If there is to be any restriction on education, let it not be on the art of the students, on their ability to grow, but in the use of words, in the employment of teachers that are not fully prepared to pour their own hearts into building the confidence of students and assisting them into turning their art - which may not look pleasant to some - into something remarkable, into something that makes Picasso give a double take.

114. If you're going to still tell a student their art stinks

Let's face it, some art really does stink. My drawings are guilty of the label and sometimes even a harsher one.

But don't just come right out and say it to a student. Challenge them.

Something interesting about students, about kids, is that if you tell them *not* to do something, they do it out of spite.

Now, if you tell them they *can't* do something, they do it out of spite, but with all the passion they can muster.

"The great pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do?" - Walter Bagehot

In a world dictated by the scientific method, nothing gets students' passions burning brighter than challenging them to prove you wrong and themselves right. This method, fortunately, can be implemented in the learning process to eliminate the "out of spite" variable, the need to prove anything, and the search for control.

The true greatest pleasure in life is doing what you didn't think you could do, what you dreamed of doing, what no one has ever done before. Doing what others say you cannot has its place, but using it as a foundation only sets a student up to be dictated by others and a lack of the feeling of true achievement. Teachers are meant to inspire the former.

115. When you ask a question in class

Sometimes I did break away from asking questions I knew my teacher couldn't answer. What wasn't rare is that I would get an explanation - a nice, long, straight from the book answer.

Thank you. I was well aware of how the book said to solve the problem, but I just didn't understand it. Nor was I the only one; yet again, I just had the guts to ask how to solve the problem. As a result of asking the question and getting an explanation of how to reach a preordained answer, I never reached the solution.

Now, asking a question, trying to find a solution, whether preordained or not, is what students need to be doing. On the other hand, the teacher is supposed to, not read the process out of a book, but to get the student to experience the process herself. Maybe it is done by throwing another step in the process, maybe it is working on separate formula that can be applied to a part of the process, or maybe it is about tossing out the process the book says to follow and discovering how to apply the problem to a current scenario, to experience it hands-on, to have an emotionally kinesthetic approach.

As a result, the problem may be solved, it may not be, but at least there will be an understanding. And an understanding is far more important in life than getting the answer right (especially when you can do that by guessing one of the four answers you have to choose from).

116. Life is learning

Higher Education is telling you that you have to wait until after you graduate to take continuing education courses. Sure you could take some courses here and there, non-credit ones during college, and that's great.

If we can't start by giving these options while school is in session, why don't we give students, no matter which year they are in, a chance to continue their education when school isn't in session. For free.

With the current educational system, if you made continuing education workshops available outside of school, programs for students do try different things, different fields of interests or to dive more deeply into something they already enjoy, I am sure you would give the guarantee with me that they would do it.

It's a chance to test new fields without a worry about a grade, following orders, dropping out, trying over again or losing their passion due to restrictions.

I have no interest in promoting the exile of public education, but I do have an inclination to have what "education" means, redefined and to implement the idea of continuing education courses inside the current academia programs. A chance to teach children to dream and to give them the courage, conviction, and resources to go after those dreams by simply letting them try new things.

117. Parkour and the promise you want

I'm a fan of Parkour, it's unique and a mentally stimulating sport that takes serious concentration. Some parents, actually, many parents hate the sport because everything is a risk to them. They won't let their kids walk on top of a 3 inch wide stone hedge, they won't let them do a handstand on the edge of a box with a four foot fall, nor will they let them climb a tree higher than the lowest branch. Their persistence in worrying is endless.

This is a serious factor in the dullness of kids. It's the loss of their appetite for experience, for trying new things, for learning the ways of life and success. And it's the reason why you don't want to stand up and speak out to change what school is for and how it's taught. Since worry is derived from fear, it's logical to state that you have many fears about accelerating the speed of this educational revolution.

What if it doesn't work? What if we toss away a system that we know is unstable, but at least works and replace it with something that is even more broken? What if you can't school dreams?

You want a promise that it will work, that it will make things better, that a world can be supported by people living their passion. You want a promise that will never come.

Once you realize it, when you accept that there will never be a promise, there will be no more "what if's," there will be no more fear in change, or worry. When you understand that there is no promise, that you are going to have to take the risks the kids of our generation and the next want so badly for us to take and learn from, you will notice that anything (anything!) is better than the education we have in place for them now. Eliminating the promise of what works sheds a light on everything that doesn't.

118. What sports really need to be teaching (not winning)

If you want to be good at sports, as in anything else, you have to know the fundamentals, the basics. Take basketball for an example, you have to know how to square up your feet, point your index finger when you shoot, and reach into the cookie jar after the ball is released.

I don't know of any experts in sports or in life that didn't first have to learn the basics. Now the great part about learning the basics is that there is no prerequisite for it other than having the will to try. - Will to try. Noted. -

The second lesson is a mind game, it's strategy. You have to be able to read signals, reflex accordingly and make adjustments to your plan. - There are always setbacks, flexibility and having an open mind is key. Noted. -

The last point I learned the hard way. Going up for a rebound in high school basketball, the person in front of me jumped up and backwards after I was already in the air reaching for the ball. He ended up smashing me in mid-air, knocking me over (and the ball) and I landed hitting my knee on the floor. Screaming for help before I even looked down, my knee cap was extended about 5 inches out to the side of my leg, definitely not where it's supposed to be. All my years of rebounding, since I was always the tallest, I was practicing to prevent this moment instead of learning how to be knocked down, crashed aside or tripped up.

Ever since that day, I learned how to risk more because I learned how to fall better. I not only learned how to safely get knocked down but I had the determination to get hit and that made all the difference.

I feel that these lessons are far more important to learn than numbers on a scoreboard, how to warm up a bench or to deposit these lessons and focus on becoming part of the 1.2 percent of NCAA male senior basketball players that will get drafted by the NBA. We have to be teaching kids to have the will to try, to keep an open mind and understand that things always have periods of difficulty. Just as importantly, we have to be teaching them how to get hit because it will happen. These aren't lessons that can be learned in the classroom, they are learned on the playing field and if they are not taught there, they learn them the hard way, in life. They may hate getting hit, but will thank you later.

119. Which came first, the map or the mapmaker

The mapmaker, of course but that's not what it feels like. It feels like everyone believes that the map came first, that it is set in stone, that it can't be rewritten, and that another can't take its place.

Maps get thrown out every day, blueprints of buildings get trashed, networking maps get shredded, and yet school still follows the same map. The map that has us churning out factory

workers, destroying children's imaginations and intelligence, a map we really don't need. What we need is a map that turns out creators, inventors, and people for change and improvement.

As a student, it's hard to ask questions, especially hard ones, ones that challenge tradition. So many students are scared out of their wits (pun intended) about asking these questions. It's going to be just as hard as another student, as a parent, as a taxpayer, teacher, administrator or someone on the board of education to ask these questions and challenge status-quo. But to put your mind at ease, to make asking the question sound easy, imagine, just for a moment, if you were the one that had to answer the questions you are setting out to ask.

Do you realize how difficult it is going to be for someone to fight to keep the map school is using, to say that engineers and creative people are pointless, that the industrial concept of churning out factory workers is so much better? They can't say that, they won't say that, all they can do is ignore your question for a limited time. Their time is now running out.

The wrong questions aren't being asked, the problem is that not enough questions are being asked. Look. Education is in chaos. We have nothing to lose. In fact, I have the guts to say we already won the race to the bottom. Congratulations. Now toss the trophy and the map and let's see if we can win the race to the top, with a new map, a better map, one made by people who care. Everyone has the capacity to be excellent at something. Can we manifest that excellence? You freakin' bet.

120. Freedom from tradition > fearlessness > revolt > living in understanding and passion

Let's work backwards on this.

Passion: It takes a great amount of skill, experience, and tests to discover what your passion is. It is something that has to be done, tried over and over and failed at even more so because if you are still willing to continue doing it, that is passion. Passion is the willingness to be arrested for what you do, to be criticized for what you create, yet continue creating. Your passion is something that you must do to reach your dream, the impossible, the ether.

Understanding: The source of where passion comes from, where the willingness and confidence you have to continue making your art is in understanding. To understand is to take in everything associated with your dreams and interests. It's not about keeping what you think someone says is true, or about discarding all that is irrelevant. Understanding is effortlessly challenging everything and building off of each challenge, your success in every understanding is your building block to realizing your passion and achieving your dreams.

Revolt: Understanding and passion would be very easy to come by if dreams were taught in school, if instead of learning calculus 1, 2 and 3, you learned how to look at things, how to observe your thoughts, how to find what you love and ignite that passion. But it's not taught. The opposite actually is, which means that in order to achieve dreams, to understand and build your

passion, whatever it may be, is to revolt the current system. You have to create your own revolution amongst a million others doing the same, revolting for the same reason.

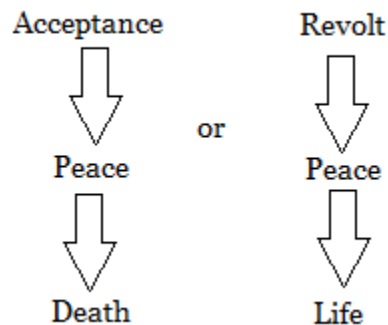
Fearlessness: Yet, you can't revolt unless you do not fear the transition, unless you do not fear the criticism and the pulling of the chains on your legs (and your mind). Fear is not absolute. Fear can be tampered with, you can switch the wires or pull them out entirely. Fear is a bomb which will explode but cause no permanent harm, in fact, it will cause the exact opposite: permanent freedom, permanent bliss, permanent harmony within ones realm of art.

Freedom from Tradition: In order to become fearless, to have the courage to revolt, to excel in this revolution that so many have already started and which is inevitable; in order to live in understanding of all things and have the capacity for innovation, inspiration, and inventiveness in your art, you must start by becoming free of tradition.

What is the one dictator of tradition, the one which enforces tradition and the status-quo more than the Bible, more than your origin, your ancestry and more than all Asian religions combined? School.

Freedom from tradition > fearlessness > revolt > living in understanding and passion

Reading this from the beginning then means that we must do away with the education we are giving our kids now, so they can become fearless, which gives them the ability to revolt, and in this revolution which does us absolutely no harm, they can live in understanding and passion, in harmony and happiness, in their art, their muse, in what they care more about than life itself. Is that not important?



121. What it takes to change an institution

It's going to take group work.

Funny how all throughout education, we are never taught about group work; apart from the occasional type of group project that one person ends up doing all of.

Robert M. Diamond, President of the National Academy for Academic Leadership and Professor Emeritus at Syracuse University has this to say about school reformation,

*“It is a combination of external and internal forces that are required before a majority of individuals on any campus will be willing to address many of the issues being raised in these reports. Leaders must keep in mind as they plan new initiatives that *in many instances it will be individuals outside of the institution who will play a major role in developing the personal priorities of their faculty, administrators and staff, in establishing the priorities of their institution and in determining whether or not a climate of innovation can be fostered.*”*

What it is going to take is group work, done by people who care. Do you remember the last time you had the “giving” bug. Someone did a good deed for you, and you felt the need to hold a door open to someone, give a compliment or share a smile. When you do, that person has the giving bug and does the same for someone else.

Or do you remember when you we’re laughing so hard, and everyone you talked to ended up laughing too, and then you just laugh at the fact you can’t stop laughing and it makes someone else laugh even more?

Caring is a similar virus. Students need to know that other students actually care about the kind of education they are getting, parents need to know that other parents care that the teachers care about the students, the teachers need to know that other teachers care about their students caring about their education and most importantly, the administrators, the boards and all tax payers need to know the we care that everyone else truly does care about what school is for.

Our job is obvious, we need to make it known we care, we need to make videos that go viral about how we care, we need to send letters that we care, we need to tell our teachers that we care, tell our parents we care. More importantly, we need to tell those who do care, to do something about it. We need those who care to empower others to care and to empower this generation and the next and the next to revolt against compliance, to throw out the map, to give the students authority, to allow and nurture creativity, and to manifest the impossible.

122. Everything counts

The more I have been researching, the more organizations I am finding that are fighting all of this inequality. You can simply Google "Equality Organizations". I suppose what gets me going is the fact that the people who are fighting for equality, are far outnumbered by those who use it to their advantage. Sometimes I forget myself, that these things are this way because so many people stand by and ignore it. Ignorance is **not** always bliss and our schools need to make this known.

While there are many groups, organizations, and traveling speakers, that are out fighting inequality, fighting tradition, and fighting status-quo, our schools need to do a better job. Schools are letting us be ignorant of all that is going on in the world by not telling us how to solve any

problems or what we can do. We are not even taught how to register to vote in our community or how/where to vote. And everyone wonders why high school and college kids are the least likely to vote.

This is the same with any real current issue. We are taught about the issue, but not taught how to solve it. See, this isn't about changing school for the students sake, so that people can do what they love and forget about all the really needs to be done. It's about raising kids to use their passion to balance the rest of the world, to take a larger step towards peace and equality.

We can only keep trying to improve what we have now with extremely minimized results, results so insignificant that it wouldn't make a difference if we tried improving (racing to the bottom) at all. We need to change the way school is taught so kids can grow up wanting to change the world for the better through their muse, to have an understanding of life and success, and what it means to be truly educated. I am sure that there are many other ways that society and school can survive rather than the way it is now. Are we really surviving though, or just buying more time?

123. The hardest choice a kid needs to make

The biggest choice to make is how early you want to start learning, to start caring, to start trying, failing and finding your passion. Do you want to play video games or would you rather control your life, because with this educational revolution. You have this option.

124. Everyone's different

Everyone's different, unique, an individual. Everyone has different aspirations, passions, interests, and dreams. Some may want to be the greatest singer songwriter while another simply wants to track across the Rocky Mountains and have her journal published. Others want to excavate a piece of the earth in search for a historic artifact and others want to build something similar to the Eifel Tower while others only want to become a simple electrician or study the lifestyle of rats. That's perfectly okay!

Paul Harrington in his book, *The Secret to Teen Power* has this to say,

So there's really no need to stress because as long as people around the world remain unique and diverse, with different dreams and different desires and different aspirations, there won't ever be lack or limitation. And as long as you know that we can all have or do or be anything and that we create whatever we want through attraction, you'll be helping to bring an end to all jealousy, and greed and hoarding and coveting and fear of going without.

So you see, there is no cause to worry what would happen if everyone was given the freedom to fulfill their dreams, it won't cause a limitation of resources or further conflict because honestly, very very few people actually want to become President, very very few people actually want to take on the most powerful roles in the world. And those who do, are passionate about it, so

passionate that instead of only them leading, they would be more than happy to work with other similarly passionate people.

And if all this freedom creates something that fails in a world-wide destructive sense, if a truly serious problem is risen from someone experimenting with their passion, it does well to remember that there is always a braniac that uses cutting-edge science and technology and ingenuity to deal with it. There is always someone, when a line is crossed, to act or invent something to push the monster back behind the line. The potential of people can be scary but the potential of people will always be great enough to control it.

125. Start schooling dreams

Have you ever come across an old school exercise book, or something else you once wrote and, on leafing through it, been amazed at how much you have changed in such short time? Amazed by your mistakes, but also by the good things you had written? Yet at the time you hadn't noticed that you were changing. Well, the history of the world is just the same.

How nice it would be if, suddenly, heralds were to ride through the streets crying: 'Attention please! A new age is beginning!' But things aren't like that: people change their opinions without even noticing. And then all of a sudden they become aware of it, as you do when you look at your old school books. Then they announce with pride: 'We are the new age.' And they often add: 'People used to be so stupid!' – E.H. Gombrich

This manifesto isn't about starting a revolution, it's about excelling the educational revolution we are already in, whether you noticed there was one or not. The Newspaper industry is nearly dead after a decade of people saying it would never die. The same is happening with the current educational system because there are people like Daniel Quinn, Seth Godin, me, you, thousands of bloggers and teachers working to change it and quickly.

"If you think you're too small to make an impact, try going to sleep with a mosquito in the room". - Anita Roddick

We used to dream of making huge changes, of solving world hunger, of creating world peace and everything alike. Then, for some reason, we began to feel that we couldn't make a difference, that we we're dreaming too big, that it's not worth it. So we began schooling safe dreams. Dreams of being just good enough, of getting a good education, a good job, a good house and so on. These are supposed to be good dreams but they are directed by conformity, obedience, and the use of traditions that have been rendered meaningless. These dreams are a downright insult to every student's potential.

Thankfully, there's a middle ground. A ground in-between being good enough and doing the impossible. This middle ground consists of billions of dreams for creating new problems and new solutions. Billions of dreams that we can hardly imagine our kids are able to achieve. Billions of dreams that can only be succeeded when we quit conforming students in the direction

we want and start teaching them self-direction, start giving them the resources and lessons to get unstuck, and start schooling their dreams, their passions, and their interests.

So where do you come in? – Raise your hand when you have a question -

This revolution is just as excited by asking questions and letting people know that you care how school is taught as it is by deciding to start teaching yourself, to start schooling dreams with your own kids, and to start inspiring everyone you meet to dream.

If you have a problem with picking yourself, forget it, I pick you. I pick you to lead this revolution, to teach others who remain ignorant of what they are letting school do, to practice with them what it takes to change it and most importantly,

to Start Schooling Dreams.

126. A String Of Bonus Content:

The following are really random notes I have taken throughout school, ideas that have popped up or shorter experiences that I would like to share.

- If you get me (the teacher) behind schedule with educated questions that challenge what I teach you, then you don't have to take a test.
- My favorite interview question "how many pieces of gum are on the planet?"
- Teaching skill: quiz and discussion on the first few chapters of a book to get them interested then it's their choice if they want to read the rest or it's your choice to try a different book.
- They say "no child left behind." I say, "every child pushed ahead."
- They say "every child matters." I say, "everyone matters."
- Ever notice how there are never any windows in classes?
- We can deal with one job for our entire lives. We can deal with drinking nothing other than milk, water, and orange juice. We can wear the same hat for years. We can stick with one thing in so many different situations in all of our lives. We can't however, keep educating kids the same way for years. School is the only thing that can never stop changing.
- Teaching through technology, more specifically, through games provides hundreds of benefits: problem-solving skills, memorization abilities, hand-eye coordination, increased reflexes (mental and physical), observation, logical thinking and so much more. The reason they work so well is that, if you don't learn, you die.
- When you have an outrageous idea, believe it will work or someone else will.
- People want you to succeed. Those who it may seem that they don't, are just the ones who are better at preparing you for the success.
- Anyone can show you the "right way" of achieving what you want, but you will not feel the power of having succeeded if you did not jump through the flaming hula-hoop that is spinning in air above a tank full of sharks yourself.

127. Bibliography, further reading and resources

[Born To Win](#) – Zig Ziglar

[Linchpin](#), [Stop Stealing Dreams](#) and [More](#) - Seth Godin

[Think On These Things](#) – Krishnamurti

[The Secret to Teen Power](#) – Paul Harrington

[A Little History of The World](#) – E.H Gombrich

[Ishmael](#), [My Ishmael](#) – Daniel Quinn

[The Wave](#) – Todd Strasser

[Tao Te Ching](#) – Lao Tzu, Translated by Stephen Mitchell

[Tom Robbins](#)

[The Chronicle of Higher Education](#)

[The National Academy for Academic Leadership](#), [Robert M. Diamond](#) and many others

[Higher Education](#)

[GarthBox](#)

128. Afterword

Possibly like you, I started by thinking there was nothing I could do to change school. I thought that I had to follow the assembly line, the poorly structured system, to get a degree and to make a living. I went on thinking that I wouldn't have time or a way to change school. I thought that if I was going to be able to change school, I would have to be picked by someone who was already trying to change it. I thought that would be scary, to step out of my box and really challenge something, really stand up for something. I thought I never stood a chance.

Now here I am, looking back at the brouhaha I created in school, reliving all these different experiences I had in challenging the status-quo and the efforts I took to change what school is for. I'm thinking, does it really end here with this eBook? I couldn't live if it did and that is why I will ask one more thing from you.

I will be uploading my project for a sequel to this book on Kickstarter in May. As you will read on the project page when it's up, I am hoping to fund a continuation of this experience and the book that tells it all as I head into another four years of higher education in a top 10 school to see what it's all about. I admire you for even looking at the project even if you don't back it up with a dollar amount. Then again, I'm not sure you can deny the great rewards like a signed

photograph of me causing a ruckus in class, two weeks of tutoring for your children, a one-on-one interview or the biggest award I can't wait to give away!

Lastly, I want to say thank you, for reading, for being interested, and for caring.

Special thanks to: that one teacher, my parents, my hacker friends, Seth, my coworkers and all the students that went through the years of education by my side.

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