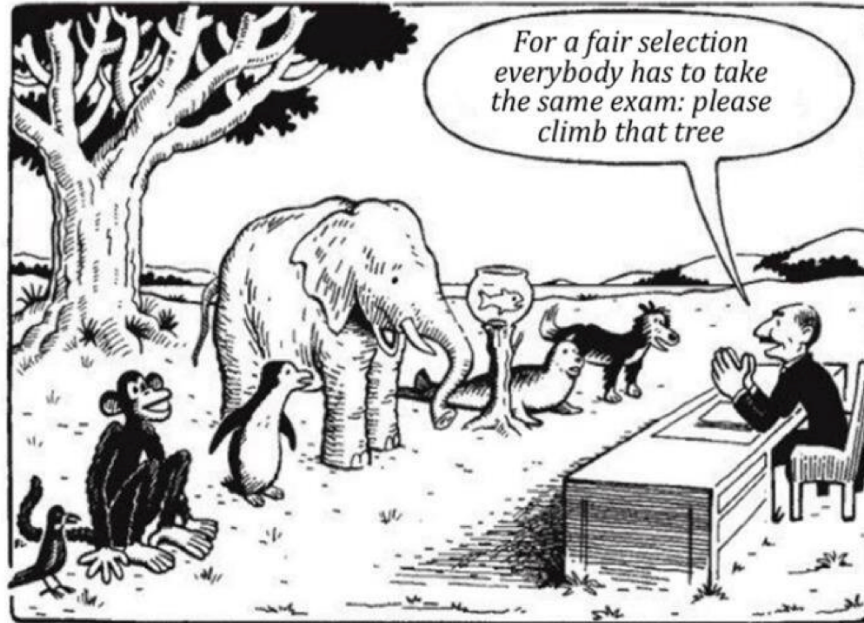


Why You Should Drop Out of School

By Leo Crown (Yale Dropout)



Our Education System

"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

- Albert Einstein

School sucks. Even when it's free. But it becomes borderline criminal when Universities require students to embrace a lifetime of suffocating debt in exchange for an antiquated education that is arguably worthless in a modern society. You don't need to have read *The Art of the Deal* to know that somebody is getting screwed in that exchange. Think about it. If higher learning really worked, and effectively equipped us with the knowledge and knowhow to pursue a productive life, then why do American's still owe over \$1 trillion dollars in student loan debt? Even an uneducated man can reckon that if you pay for school in order to get a higher paying job, but no job you get actually pays you enough to ever repay your student loans, then perhaps the entire model is broken.

Actually, that should be the new college entrance exam. The true litmus test of a student with real potential. Not begging a school to admit you via a two-thousand-word essay about a time you overcame adversity. Rather, if you have the acuity to spot the flaw in our system and the audacity to question if it's actually worth your time and money, then I would argue that you're already smarter than most. Ironically, that's exactly who the top Universities should be recruiting. Those who question the status quo. Not follow it. The innovators. The dropouts. The Steven Spielberg's, the Howard Hughes', the Frank Lloyd Wright's of the world. For the rest are simply sheep. Safely following a two-hundred-year-old farce because society has brainwashed them into believing that school is an honor and a privilege to attend... and a prerequisite to success.

But what if I told you that was actually the entire point of our malevolent education system? To wash brains... not empower them. To train us from day one to sit, stay, and obey. Like dogs. The terrifying reality is NOT that our education system doesn't work. It's that our system is actually succeeding in accomplishing exactly what its architects originally intended it to... to groom an entire society of compliant and submissive slaves that don't think twice when asked to subsist in a vapid environment and perform mindless tasks for hours on end in exchange for minimal pay. Slavery wasn't abolished in 1865. It merely evolved to include everyone. Sound like a dystopian conspiracy theory or an episode of Black Mirror? Don't take my word for it. I'm just a college dropout. But consider this...

It's no coincidence that schools and factories are both governed by bells and whistles. Homework was only invented to normalize bringing your work home with you as an adult. We've been conditioned to gladly swap school desks for office cubicles and uniforms for costumes with your nametag on it—or a suit and tie if you're lucky. Sadly, school is nothing but a mind-numbing entrée, deliberately designed to prepare your palate for a lifetime of vanilla monotony.

As students, we are waterboarded with curriculums full of half-truths and complete distractions devised to consume years of your youth and your entire enthusiasm for life. Exercises in futility

like balancing chemical equations and memorizing quadratic formulas. I will never forget when I asked my 9th grade math teacher why we couldn't use calculators on the final exam. Her response was, "In real life, you don't walk around with a calculator in your pocket." Oh, the irony. But iPhones and calculators aside, I craved practical knowledge. On paper, I was technically a millionaire at sixteen. So, teach me how to buy real estate and file my taxes. Teach me about the stock market and compound interest. Teach me how to win friends and influence people. You know, skills to help tackle the actual obstacles we all face in that real world my math teacher was talking about.

But eventually I discovered that school alone would never teach me how to live a rich life or become wealthy. Because most schools don't want the masses to genuinely understand money, or politics, or influence. Sadly, I discovered that most schools are literally designed to pump out spineless employees who blindly take direction and follow orders.

If you look at school, it's the opposite of what it takes to be successful in life. We're inoculated from day one to avoid making mistakes. To do as your told. To take tests by yourself and that there is only ever one right answer. There's no synergy encouraged. No brainstorming allowed.

So, eventually we leave school and enter the world completely paralyzed. Scared to death to make a mistake. Terrified to ask questions. We try to do everything on our own and lack the skills necessary to effectively collaborate with others. They pretend to want to empower you or protect your right to protest, but only because they know deep down inside that only a handful of outliers actually possess the capacity to band together or the courage to ever speak up.

It's sinister how quickly school will kill a child's confidence and curiosity. We enter school filled with enthusiasm and excited to learn. Then the teacher says sit down and shut up. Don't talk. We don't care what you're interested in. And God forbid you happen to be an extra curious, energetic eight-year-old like I was. Incapable of sitting still, chained to a desk for six-hours a day. They will say you lack focus or suffer from attention deficit disorder and prescribe a concoction of

pharmaceutical tranquilizers as if you posed a risk of inciting a riot inside the classroom. Do you know who else gets thirty-minutes a day to play outside? Prisoners. Fortunately for me, my mother told the school exactly where they could stick their pills. But many of my classmates weren't so lucky.

Do you think it's an accident that teachers are barely paid a living wage? The system doesn't reward teachers because they don't want to risk attracting anyone worth a damn that may poison the well and accidentally inspire kids to have a dream of their own. Instead, school teaches you how to help build somebody else's dream. How to help the rich stay rich at your own expense.

How do I know this? Well, for one, I attended some of the best private schools in the country where professors drove foreign sports cars and secret societies groomed future Presidents and Fortune 500 CEOs. And in between parties and lectures they all shamelessly gloated about how they would inherit the earth. I had a business ethics professor at Yale who told our class, "When starting a new business or creating a new product, consider this... Walmart makes one-hundred times more money than Saks Fifth Avenue. Toyota makes ten times more money than Mercedes. And Anheuser-Busch will drink Moët & Chandon under the table every time. You don't get rich off rich people; you get rich off poor people." I dropped out of college the next day.

But mostly I know this because my family is repulsively rich and a walking epitome of this epidemic as they openly endorse the systemic spiral of silence. I will probably be disinherited for penning this, but as my father loves to criticize The New Yorker for its liberal agenda, I suppose there is a strong chance he may never even see it. But as the CEO of a lucrative public company, my father also loves to shamelessly quote the OG republican himself, Mr. John D. Rockefeller, anytime he catches an employee trying to escape the crab bucket. I've heard my father on multiple occasions say, "I don't want a nation of thinkers; I want a nation of workers." Yes, John D. Rockefeller—the grandfather of modern education—actually said that.

Now, I wouldn't be as concerned if the Rock was just another run-of-the-mill rich old white dude like my dad. But Rockefeller was arguably the wealthiest man in American history, and unlike my father, he actually had a disturbing agenda. Hiding behind the cape of philanthropy, Rockefeller utilized his immense wealth to shape and influence the early archetypes of our entire education system. After donating \$80 million (~\$2 billion today) to help establish the University of Chicago in 1900, the Rock spent another \$130 million (~5 billion today) to start the General Education Board in 1903. Rockefeller claimed he created the board to help enhance education at all levels throughout the country. Now, do you really believe the same man who openly asserted his desire to build a nation of workers, not thinkers, would also pledge the majority of his massive wealth to benevolently educating the less fortunate? I call bullshit. So, what was his angle?

One of my favorite authors and seriously rad futurist, Alvin Toffler, exposed Rockefeller's nefarious motives in his 1970s book, *Future Shock*. In his book, Toffler writes:

"The American education model that Rockwell endorsed was copied from the 18th-century Prussian model designed to create docile subjects and factory workers. Mass education was the ingenious machine constructed by Rockefeller and his wealthy cronies to help produce the kind of adult employees their growing industries required. Rockefeller's mission was to precondition children for a new world—a world of repetitive indoor toil, smoke, noise, machines, crowded living conditions, collective discipline, a world in which time was to be regulated not by the cycle of sun and moon, but by the factory whistle and the clock.

The solution was an educational system that, in its very structure, simulated this new world. The whole idea of assembling masses of students (raw material) to be processed by teachers (workers) in a centrally located school (factory) was a stroke of industrial genius. Children marched from place to place and sat in assigned stations. Bells rang to announce changes of time. The inner life of the school thus became an anticipatory mirror, a perfect introduction to industrial society."

Built on this oppressive factory model, Rockefeller's agenda for mass education taught basic reading, writing and arithmetic—the overt curriculum. But hidden inside the Rock's Trojan Horse of mass education was a covert curriculum that was far more elementary and even more sinister. It consisted of three courses—punctuality, obedience and repetitive work—the basic training blocks to build an army of reliable, loyal factory workers.

Sound familiar? The terrifying similarities between school classrooms and Rockefeller's factory model are uncanny still to this day. We are no longer living in the industrial age, but in the age of technology and A.I, where this prehistoric model is more irrelevant than ever. A world where you can google any fact on demand and learn almost any skill on YouTube, yet we still peddle the importance of memorizing all 44 U.S. Presidents in chronological order and rely on racist relics like the SAT to define potential. FYI the SAT was invented in 1926 to help Ivy League schools weed out colored applicants.

Don't get me wrong. It's admirable to seek out knowledge. But it's downright stupid to seek out debt in exchange for a toxic education when you can learn anything you want for free online. Education must evolve with society. Sadly, with the serious lack of enlightened options, the number of homeschooled children in the U.S. has more than tripled, from 850,000 in 1999 to over 3 million in 2016. If I had children of my own, I would feel compelled to craft an entirely new regime of truly modern education. To build a system that celebrates creativity and teaches the tangible as well as the intangible. A curriculum saturated with critical life skills, problem solving skills, and people skills. Not punctuality, obedience, and a mindless work ethic. And rather than waste years teaching kids to memorize facts they can now google in seconds, or peddle half-truths about the past, we could focus on preparing kids for the harsh reality of the future they are destined to inherit. A future where multiplanetary existence is not science fiction, but sadly a necessary conversation as overpopulation and overconsumption has fast-tracked climate change and our catastrophic lack of natural resources. A future where, thanks to the exponential impact of technology and artificial intelligence, soft skills and actual intelligence will be more important

than ever before. A future in which artists, philosophers and psychiatrists will have far more influence than computer programmers, coders, and the Kardashians.

There is a reason why so many college dropouts go on to be so insanely successful. They are the lucky ones who managed to escape the system with their right brain still intact. They saw the glitch in the Matrix and refused to waste another minute being brainwashed by a model that is blatantly designed to crush creativity and breed obedience. So, the next time you laugh at someone for suggesting you “turn on, tune in, and drop out,” remember this... The top ten wealthiest college dropouts—a group that includes guys I surf with like Ralph Lauren, Mark Zuckerberg, and Richard Branson—could pool their wealth together tomorrow and collectively afford to pay off the over \$1 trillion dollars of student loan debt carried by over forty million Americans. Think about the disgusting disparity of that reality... $10 > 40,000,000.00$.

Finally, I leave you with a profound plea to parents written by a teacher at my nephew's high school. He's clearly one of the good ones.

"Final exams are just around the corner and I know you are anxious for your children to do well. But please remember, amongst the students who will be sitting for exams there is an artist, who doesn't need to understand math... There is an entrepreneur, who doesn't care about history or English literature... There is a musician, whose chemistry marks won't matter... There's an athlete... whose physical fitness is more important than physics... If your child does get top marks, that's great! But if he or she doesn't... please don't strip them of their self-confidence and dignity. Tell them it's OK, it's just an exam! They are meant for much bigger things in life. Tell them, no matter what they score... you love them and will not judge them.

Please do this, and when you do, watch your children conquer the world. One exam or low mark won't take away their dreams and talent. And please, do not think that doctors and engineers are the only happy people in the world."