THE AURAVANA PROJECT

DESIGN SPECIFICATION

the lifestyle system

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entraining a higher potential

WEBSITE URL
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THE AURAVANA PROJECT
THE EMERGENCE OF COMMUNITY
THE AURAVANA PROJECT EXISTS TO COLLABORATIVELY DESIGN, DEVELOP, AND IMPLEMENT THE IDEA OF AN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY WHERE PURPOSEFULLY DRIVEN INDIVIDUALS ARE FULFILLED IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT TOWARD THEIR HIGHEST POTENTIAL STATE OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE FOR THEMSELVES AND ALL OTHERS.

In an effort to provide the greatest possible clarity and value The Auravana Project has formatted the blueprints for the proposed community into a series of 'design specification' publications. Each “living” publication is both a component of the total blueprint as well as intended to be a basis for deep reflective consideration of one's own community [or lack thereof]. Together, the publications represent a replicable, scalable, and comprehensively “useful” model for the design of an intentional ‘need-fulfillment community network’ spanning the world. These formal publications are “living” in that they are continually edited and updated as new information becomes available; the community is not ever established. The community's design exists in an emergent state, for it evolves as we evolve, necessarily for our survival and flourishing.

The designs, models and conceptual descriptions contained within these blueprints represent a potential solution to the issues universally plaguing humankind, and could possibly bring about the greatest revolution in living and learning in our modern time. Change on the scale that is needed can only be realized when people see and experience a better way. The purpose of The Auravana Project is to inform, to design, and to create a more fulfilling life experience for everyone.

Cooperation and learning are an integral part of what it means to be human (i.e., they are components of our nature). The community environment herein has been designed to nurture and support the experience and evolution of this understanding. In this community individuals pursue life and learning at their own pace and according to their own interests, passions and preferences. The design for this community provides an entirely different way of looking at the nature of life, learning, work, and human interaction; it represents the encoding of a different form of organization, and hence, a different lifestyle. The designs seek to maintain an essential alignment with humankind’s evolving understandings of itself and the world of which humans are a regenerative part.

The general vision for this form of community is an urgent one considering the myriad of perceptible global societal crises. We can create the next generation of regenerative and fulfilling human environments wherein individuals develop toward their highest potentials through pursuits that inspire and engage.

Thank you for taking the time to read and evolve these designs, and let us all learn our way forward.
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Community represents one common and extended family. We recognize life as an internal and external journey, and so we have created an environment where living and learning have become one and the same. Curiosity flourishes as nature intended, and as self-directed individuals are supported in the pursuit of their interests and their highest potentials. Through common and accurate organization an environment of universal benefit and mutual fulfillment arises. Herein, individuals become continual benefactors of contribution in a community that facilitates their self-directed, flourishing-oriented lifestyle.

In community, we enjoy a fulfilling lifestyle that simultaneously makes the world a better place for everyone.

The Community, itself, represents an environment where individuals learn and share and grow from one another, while they pursue their interests with limited stress, meaningful desire, and empowering challenge. Community is the realization of an evolving individual potential among a larger unity of evolving potentials.

The Auravana Project exists so that those who seek to continuously and consciously evolve toward a higher dynamic of life experience have the lifestyle (including space, knowledge, and architecture) to do so.

LIFE IS OUR CANVAS AND THE COMMUNITY IS OUR SUPPORT SYSTEM. OUR LIFESTYLE IN COMMUNITY FULFILLS A PURPOSE IN THE COORDINATION OF A HIGHER POTENTIAL STRUCTURING OF OUR FULFILLMENT.
The Lifestyle System Specification describes the common behavioral orientations and activities of individuals among community, while identifying the cycles to which they entrain that make up the daily motion of their lives. A ‘lifestyle’ is how we spend our time; it is our pattern of living in the world as expressed by our activities, interests, and understandings. This specification provides a reasoned reflection on our way of life, how we live our values, and the ways in which we express our world view. It logically derives and discursively argues for the life experience that we all have in common: we all participate in communities of practice, we all have interests and needs, we all contribute through our participation, we all seek self-integration and self-development, we are all active sometimes and inactive at other times, we all discover and adapt through our experiences, we all have routine patterns of behavior, and we all entrain to a cycle. Hence, this specification describes that cycling ‘life space’ in which we all experience our lives in a commonly fulfilling context. It is important to note that this specification does not codify a lifestyle. Instead, it provides context for the lifestyle of individuals in community, including a description of how the lifestyle is possible, and why it is preferable over other possible lifestyles. Among community, we share a set of common behavioral and lifestyle characteristics that sustain to our fulfillment, our longevity, and the well-being of our ecology.

This Specification is divided into four principal sections. The first section describes the flow cycle to which we entrain that facilitates the sustained expression of our highest potential. The second and third sections are dedicated to learning. Learning is an important part of a lifestyle oriented toward fulfillment and self-development. It is something we do through life experience, and something that influences life experience. The final section describes work in the context of human fulfillment.

Our community lifestyle is possible because of a comprehensive understanding of what is required in order to maintain optimal human well-being and sustained movement toward a higher potential dynamic of lived experience. Here, an information ‘lifespace experience’ is formed of tasks that are repeated to maintain the construction of a lifestyle. There are requirements for maintaining our ‘lifespace experience’ (we call these ‘needs’), and there are ‘decisional action mechanisms’ that maintain the required constructions (we call these ‘tasks’ or ‘task resolutions’). A simple illustration may be the relationship between nutrition, survival, and the behavior of eating: humans require nutrition through eating for the maintained construction (e.g., cellular repair and replication) of their bodies, which are complexes capable of performing more precise action-tasks, such as, the construction of ‘fire’.

Of note, through advancements in scientific understanding and technology, our lifestyle reciprocally changes. This has been the trend of history.

What do we have other than our experience? When life isn’t about fulfillment, then it can all too easily become about something else.
A ‘lifestyle’ is a way of living in the world; it is the collection of activities we do for ourselves and others on a daily basis with the acknowledgement of an attitude and orientation to life. It is where someone lives, and the quality of life available to them. It is a component of the total information set that describes our routines and our reasoning for them. In other words, it is a description of the routine behaviors of our lives. A lifestyle is how we “spend” our time; it is our “pattern of living”. It is those things that we equate with living a life, at the present. Primarily, lifestyle involves behaviors that make sense to oneself and others at a given time and place. A lifestyle is a person's pattern of living in the world as expressed by their activities, interests, and understandings. Our lifestyle is how we live our life; it is what happens on a daily basis, though there is more to it than just the characteristic of momentary presence. A lifestyle is also access to something that is emergent and generational, something that provides a potential of opportunities.

What facilitates a higher potential of access to a fulfilling system? There is a simple saying, “When knowledge is accessible, then people will use it”. Similarly, “when time is available, then people will play”. In community, we use what is available on a routine basis to meet our needs, and this is organized for. Sometimes we are available to contribute and other times we are not. And, when we do engage with the community the system is designed to enrich all of our lives, incentivizing further contribution.

If we are “free”, shouldn't all of our time be discretionary? And, with our discretionary time we would naturally want to volunteer and support the community in completing necessary and scheduled tasks in teams; for, it is these teams that give us all of our discretionary time. When our time is our own then we are likely to be more authentic, being authentic to ourselves and others: there will be times when we will be available and be applying effort to facilitate the community’s existence; but, let us not let these activities alienate us from our truly connected selves. See Figure 1-1 on page 7 and Figure 1-2 on page 8 for an example of how we understand our lifestyle at a conceptual level. One day we may all come to see work not as “employment”, but as taskful effort in the construction of a space that allows for the expansion of our experience into information space of a higher potential [of creation]. In other words, we work at something because it is fulfilling. And, those things that facilitate all of our fulfillment, we work at those together.

NOTE: Our lifestyle is serviced by our constructions.

One could say that a lifestyle in community looks like a cycle of experience that generates ever greater states of itself and those experiential dynamics are so enjoyed that they are sought after. Here, we become what we chose and what we are exposed to. We live lives that are fulfilled by [self-]organizing for our fulfillment. What we do on a daily basis depends upon what we desire to do on a daily basis. And, we realize that what we do on a daily basis influences our desires. And, what we do on a daily basis impacts not only ourselves, but others on an iterative and generational basis. Hence, in community we think about what behaviors, systems, and thinking patterns might facilitate access to an intentionally fulfilling lifestyle.

When we have access we don't need employment. Employment is giving your time and efforts over to someone else for their benefit by [extrinsically] rewarding into the monetary market cycling system on "your behalf" and for "their benefit". The employment based lifestyle is a rigged system. There are benefitters, and then there are those who are awarded for benefiting the benefitters. These are different lifestyles between themselves, and also separate from the lifestyle of those in community. The notion of employment as working for an owner in the market in order to remain a consumer in the market creates a specific pattern of lifestyle. It is the notion of collecting something from ownership, and then, rewarding others who have been of benefit to you because they want the reward.

In order to understand a different lifestyle altogether, we might ask some different questions. We might ask:

- What would a lifestyle designed for our fulfillment look like?
- What does it mean to have a life based on the “style” that fulfillment brings?
- What is a healthy lifestyle?
- What would a lifestyle unconstrained by financial affordance look like? What if a highly curated lifestyle wasn't a “luxury”?
- What would the lifestyle of a population that synergized its efforts look like?
- What does it mean to have a life based upon being in a state of ‘flow’?
- What does intrinsic motivation look like at a coordinated societal level?
- What is a lifestyle that we want to live and share
with others?
• What does a lifestyle constructed through a recognition of emergence look like?
• What does a learning community look like at the scale of a society?
• How can we create a community at scale to facilitate our accessing of our higher cognitive, physical, and emotional potential?
• If you won the lottery would you still do the “work” you do now? Do you only believe in work up until the time you no longer need to do it to earn money? What if money was taken out of the equation for your fulfillment, as well as your opportunity to learn, create, share, and explore?
• How do we construct/accumulate a set of conditions ideal to our health, happiness, and longevity?
• What does a lifestyle of access abundance look like?

Philosophically speaking, a lifestyle is a patterned derivative of a set of former conceptions. In philosophy, ‘ontology’ is that which is said to exist and is a view on the nature of reality. In other words, ‘ontology’ is the study of the ultimate nature of existence where existence is defined as that which consciousness is conscious of. Therein, an ‘ideology’ is a system of ideas that [recycle] the way people conceptualize the world. And, a ‘lifestyle’ is those ideas put into practice and describing the routine behaviors of our lives.

*“EITHER WE THINK GLOBALLY OR WE PERISH INDIVIDUALLY.”*  
- JACQUE FRESCO
Figure 1-2. The “primitive” [constructor] experience of our lifestyle in the information construction hypothesis. This is an ontological primitive in the form of a hypothesis. An ontological primitive is a “thing” that simply exists; something that simply is discoverable. Different worldviews postulate different ontological primitives; this is how we know who we are in the world and it is the information field(s) by which we to reason our lifestyle. Our community facilitates our fulfillment and so we naturally desire to give of some of our experience to the persistence of this system of fulfillment. We apply our effort toward contributing to the community and to our own self-development through ‘tasking’. A task is a process that leads to a novel structure, a “construction”. These structures facilitate the experienced fulfillment of real needs. There are many structures which have come before and there are many which may come after, and we construct with regard to this ‘iteration’ of how we might experience more fulfillment in the next [>] iteration.
Figure 1-3. Here, we see a constructor, a process of different [field] information sets that form our lifestyle. In community, our lifestyle is an emergent construction formed through our intentional entrainment to a natural and optimized [flow] cycle. Through experience, we may align our tasks to create more fulfilling constructions as our information [field] set develops. The integrated city system hubs our lifestyle as an salient part of our social existence.
THE 'FLOW CYCLE'

[a lifestyle integration]

Among community we seek a lifestyle that increases the potential-actual ‘flow’ in our daily lives. We recognize that the people with the most flow in their lives score off the charts for life fulfillment and well-being. Hence, the Community represents an intentional and informed lifestyle, designed to sustainably increase the amount of flow in our lives. Herein, inquiry into flow represents discovery into how we become a fully integrated consciousness, alive and alert in these bodies and brains of ours.

FLOW FOLLOWS FOCUS AND IS ESSENTIALLY A STATE OF MASSIVELY HEIGHTENED FOCUS.

‘Flow’ states are defined, technically, as optimal states of consciousness where we feel our best and we perform our best. In flow we become so focused on the task at hand that everything else experientially disappears. The experience of the state of flow maintains the following characteristics: action and awareness start to merge; our sense of self disappears completely; time dilates (sometimes it slows down and there is a freeze-frame like effect, and other times it speeds up such that hours pass in what seem like minutes); and throughout, all aspects of performance, both mental and physical increase rapidly. Most people in a flow state come to a point in time where they can no longer separate past from present from future, and they are plunged into what psychologists call the “elongated now” -- the merging of action and awareness. The flow state is a state of experiential “heightening” where individuals experience measurably higher awareness, creativity, learning, and productivity. In flow we can process complex multi-variate information faster and then act on that information more efficiently. Literally the state of flow surrounds creativity and research suggests that the state actually trains the brain to be more creative. Decisioning in the state is highly optimized. When you are in flow, every decision, every action leads seamlessly and fluidly from the last. Flow feels “flowy”, it just kind of “rolls”. In a sense, flow is the ultimate form of the strategy of “learning through doing”. Flow is a dynamic that facilitates emergence into a “higher potential” and we can entrain our lifestyle to its cycle.

CLARITY: Flow is conscious immersion in self-directed effort. If you can access the flow state your task precision will be better, you will solve problems faster, you will get more done, and you will make connections faster in your brain. In flow, everything just becomes easier.

The research shows that we are not only significantly more creative when in flow, more precise and efficient with our movements, but we learn significantly faster than normal while in flow. Hence, Martin Gladwell’s famous 10,000 hours to mastery rule can be cut significant through the experience of flow.

Flow is also sometimes characterized by the term, ‘deep embodiment’. ‘Deep embodiment’ means paying attention to all streams of sensory information at once. In flow we shut off the active chattering mind and detach from that which limits the unhindered flow of awareness into creation. While in the state, the self-editing part of consciousness is not active, and there exists free association without filter.

While researching peak experiences the historic psychologist Abraham Maslow found that highly successful people were using massively heightened attention that produced altered states of consciousness that allowed them to do some of their best work. Essentially, Maslow was looking at flow and he found it as a commonality among all successful people. It should be noted here that depending upon the definition of the term ‘peak experience’ what is known scientifically about the flow state may not be its equivalent.

Anyone can use what science now understands of the flow state to create these experiences for themselves. The state will show up in anyone provided certain initial conditions are met.

NOTE: When you are not in a ‘flow state’, then you could be said to be in a ‘steady state’.

In the book entitled, The Rise of Superman: Decoding the Science of Ultimate Human Performance (2014), Steven Kotler provides a relatively comprehensive description of what the flow state is and how to achieve it given what science presently knows. Therein, he describes that which is known about the cycle itself, those preconditions that facilitate flow, and provides a warning concerning engagement in the state. The following three sections are summarizations of these three elements of flow.

Here are the three basics of flow:

1. Flow creates powerful intrinsic motivation -- by releasing the most addictive neurochemicals in our bodies. In other words, it is the source code of intrinsic motivation reinforced with the most potent

“FLOW SHOWS UP WHEN WE PUSH OURSELVES TO BE OUR BEST.”

- STEVEN KOTLER

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neurochemical set we have access to.

2. Flow shortens the time it takes to learn something. Flow cuts the path to mastery (a.k.a., 10K hours) in half and accelerates performance measurably by hundreds of percentage points.

3. People with the most flow in their lives are the happiest people on earth.

/ THE FLOW CYCLE

The flow cycle functions as a map for the experience of flow. The flow cycle is a four stage process, which may be used like a map to navigate the regeneration of the state of flow. It is important to recognize that not all stages of the flow cycle feel “flowy”. This understanding is particularly important to remember when feeling uncomfortably out of the flow state.

Here, a named definition is given to each of the steps of the method so it can be used systematically. The stages of the flow state are:

1. STRUGGLING (THE FRONT END) - a period of struggle where the individual overloads the brain with information. This is a “loading” phase where the self is loading the brain with information. Here, we are “pulling in” a great deal of information while persisting despite a degree of struggle with comprehension and integration (of the information). It would be somewhat inaccurate to refer to this part of the cycle as a state of “stress”, and more accurate to refer to it as a dynamic of tension. Growth requires some degree of tension.

“I can almost assure you that you will work through your frustrations yourself. And only by working through them yourself will you learn anything.”
- Clark Aldrich

2. RELEASE - once the mind is so overloaded such that it is at the threshold of frustration, then the self (i.e., you), removes the aware mind from the tasked problem so that subconscious processing may be allowed to occur. The experience of “dance”/relaxation. Here, it is best not to entertain oneself with television or movies. Flow involves the trading of the conscious mind for the subconscious mind; we are handing over information processing [duties] to the subconscious. The technical name for this is transient and temporary hypofrontality of the prefrontal cortex. And, this is done for a number of reasons: the conscious mind is very energy expensive, it is relatively slow; the subconscious is much faster and more energy efficient. Herein, we must remember that the brain is always trying to conserve energy. This release period triggers the flow stage which is the third phase of the cycle.

Remember here that the brain has to be filled with enough ideas to start pattern matching. One could say that flow doesn’t begin until the brain reaches a threshold of novel sensory information (or ideas). So, if someone were having a difficult time entering the state of flow, then one solution might be to load the brain up with even more information. Simultaneously, if it is not “clicking” even while the brain is sufficiently loaded, then one must understand that pattern recognition is fundamental in the brain: it is what neurons do at a basic level. And, we can enter the state more effectively and efficiently by using a “active dialogue” training approach. Lee David Zlotoff details his approach to developing an active dialogue between the conscious and subconscious minds in his lecture on YouTube (2013).

3. FLOW (“the deep now”) - into the flow stage where new connections are made. This is the stage of abundant creativity where attention is brought into the now and optimization of ‘pattern recognition’ is simultaneously occurring. ‘Pattern recognition’ is the ability to connect previously unconnected flows of information (i.e., to link ideas together in new ways). Here, creativity is often (though not always) recombinatory - the result of something novel “bumping into” something old (i.e., a new experience connecting with an old thought) to create something new. And, for the novel thought to bump into the old idea there needs to exist pattern recognition.

The neurochemicals that are released during flow heighten our attention, which we may use to focus our intention. When focus is increased and we are paying more attention, then we are taking in more information, which essentially heightens our access to novel information. In other words, when we pay more attention to the totality of our world we have greater access to novelty, greater access to the “front-end” of the creative process. So, not only does someone in flow take in more ideas (or sensory signal information), but the brain is heightened in its

EVERYONE IS WIRED FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE, IT IS HARDWIRED INTO OUR BIOLOGY AND, WE UNDERSTAND FLOW (IN PART) THROUGH EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY
ability to link these ideas together and to perform. When we are highly attentive and pattern recognition is “jacked up”, then one idea can quickly lead to the next, and so on creating a novel synthesis and a heightened enjoyment of effort expenditure. In flow there is a massive amplification of learning and memory and work; wherein, effort toward a goal feels almost automatic and effortless.

Neurology (neuroanatomy, neurochemistry and neuroelectricity) while in flow: During the state of flow the brain releases five potent performance enhancing reward chemicals that drive focus into the now and reduce the signal to noise ratio in the brain so that pattern recognition is enhanced. Dopamine is one of the neurochemicals that is released during the state of flow. Dopamine enhances cognitive pattern recognition and heightens focus (norepinephrine as another one of the neurochemicals does similarly). Effectively, dopamine lowers the “signal to noise” ratio providing more access to new and old ideas while improving pattern recognition (i.e., the linking of similar ideas together). In other words, dopamine allows the brain to see more patterns and make more connections between ideas. Anandamide is another neurochemical released during flow. It is known to increase lateral thinking (i.e., thinking “outside the box”), which is our ability to link tangentially and disparately related ideas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Cycle</th>
<th>Daily Activities</th>
<th>Phase of Cycle</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Struggle</strong></td>
<td>Activities associated with the overloading of the brain with information. A brief list of examples include: practicing /learning a new skill, experiencing a new context, lifting weights, trying to figure out a new structure, some forms of meditation.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Flow</strong></td>
<td>The experience of being in the moment in an activity where connections and relationships are streaming into consciousness and work becomes nearly effortless. We can move into the flow [of connected experience] for any activity.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Release/Relax</strong></td>
<td>Activities associated with the relaxation response; the mind is taken off the problem: walk, run, chat, read, do something else, something that “shuts the mind off” or “takes the mind off the struggle”, some forms of entertainment, build something easy and fun, do simple work, meditate.</td>
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<td><strong>Recovery</strong></td>
<td>Instead of jumping back into flow, we need time to physiologically recover. Physiological recovery activities include sleep and deep states of meditation where certain brainwave dynamics are more active. Take a nap.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sleep, solitude, stillness, restoration, readjustment, reconstruction, replacement, reformation, recuperation, convalescence, consolidation</td>
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together. Endorphins are released, which are powerful pain killers and powerful social bonding chemicals. Norepinephrine tightens focus so that the brain is capable of taking in more information per second while heightening access to novelty. And, Serotonin keeps the individual calm throughout the experience.

These neurochemicals exist [in part] to tag experiences. Hence, a quick shorthand for learning and memory: the more neurochemicals that show up during an experience the greater the chance that experience moves from short-term holding into long-term storage. In other words, neurochemicals are essentially a big “tag” (as “this is important, save for later) on an experience. Flow has a radical impact on learning. Researchers have found that the time it takes to get from novice to expert can be cut in half through the flow state.

INSIGHT: Flow encodes and rewards us to do more of it. And if we can unlock that, intrinsic human motivation, then what is possible next?

FLOW TRIGGERS

FLOW FOLLOWS FOCUS AND PASSION DRIVES FOCUS.

The brain can be trained to go into flow and an environment can be organized to make flow more likely. Flow triggers are pre-conditions that bring on more of the state of flow. Essentially, all flow triggers are simply playing with ways of driving attention into the ‘now’ in order to optimize performance. In “The Rise of Superman” Kotler describes 17 flow triggers [and the categories they fit within] for an optimal state of consciousness. The categories of ‘trigger’ are: creative triggers, social triggers, environmental triggers, and physical triggers. And, within the categories Kotler defines the following 17 triggers: 9 social triggers; 1 creative trigger; 3 environmental triggers; and 4 psychological triggers. The flow triggers are identified over several following pages.

FOR INSTANCE: Both passion and the risk of consequence drive focus into the now. Hence, we need to pay attention to the things we are passionate about, and we need to remain attentive to situations and experiences of high consequence.

One of the easiest ways to drive attention into the now is the ‘challenge / skills ratio’ (see Figure 1-5 on page 16) - when you approach a task, the challenge of the task should be slightly harder (or slightly exceed) the skills (or information) you bring to complete it (i.e., to bring to bear). Here, to find flow frequently, “you” want to constantly be putting yourself into situations where you are stretching, but not snapping. It is a slight gradient, but a gradient none-the-less. However, by doing this someone is essentially climbing the metaphorical ladder

QUESTIONS:
HOW CAN WE ACCESS THE FLOW STATE SAFELY AND FREQUENTLY?
HOW MIGHT WE STRUCTURE OUR DAILY ACTIVITIES AND INACTIVITY TO FACILITATE THE CONTINUOUS FLOW OF OUR FULFILLMENT?
WHAT IS A [BEHAVIOR] ECOSYSTEM THAT MAKES FLOW HAPPEN?

//Human beings do not realise the extent to which their own sense of defeat prevents them from doing things they could do perfectly well. The peak experience induces the recognition that your own powers are far greater than you imagined them."
- Colin Wilson

Knowing that there is a cycle and having the emotional control to deal with it is the best thing you can do to start producing more flow in your life. We must recognize that we cannot live permanently in a state of flow; or, at least we do not yet know how to safely maintain the state indefinitely.
of escalating risk. As we push ourselves slightly farther day after day we eventually get to the edges of real physical boundaries and potential social consequences [in context]. As we seek greater challenge we encounter (or “run up against”) capacity. Hence, one of the dangerous of flow is this escalating ladder of risk. But, the risks we take do not have to be physical risk, we can also take emotional risks, creative risks, and social risks. The brain itself does not differentiate.

NOTE: From a design perspective these triggers may be seen as the principles of designing an environment where the state of flow is likely to occur more often and regenerate more quickly.

Of note, there are three major contributors toward the conscious mind's instability to define an element or solves problem. The three contributors are: conflicting information (psychological confusion); sensory overload (too much going on); and, the intellectual stifling emotion of fear. These are contributors to our inability to solve problems and define elements of problems. Oddly enough, a degree of frustration, sensory overload, and risk are also conditions that facilitate a movement into the state of flow.

// HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE IN FLOW?

1. Completely involved in what we are doing - focused, concentrated. 'Absorption' as a narrowing of awareness down to the activity itself.
2. A sense of ecstasy - of being outside everyday reality.
3. Greater inner clarity - knowing what needs to be done, and how well we are doing.
4. Knowing that the activity is doable though difficult - that our potential is adequate to the task.
5. A sense of serenity - no worries about oneself, and a feeling of growing beyond the boundaries of the ego as we feel part of something larger. A loss of the feeling of self-consciousness: the merging of action and awareness.
6. Distorted sense of time (i.e., time dilation) - one's subjective experience of time is altered; time either slows down or speeds up.
7. Intrinsic motivation - that which produces flow becomes its own reward. The activity is intrinsically rewarding, so action becomes effortless.

// DANGER

Flow is a little dangerous. We now understand to a reasonable degree the neurobiology of what is occurring when people enter flow states. One of the occurrences in the brain during a flow state is that of a large neurochemical release (or “dump”). In a state of flow the brain releases five of the most potently addictive reward neurochemicals it can produce. When these neurochemical flood into your brain it produces an extremely addictive or “autotelic”: an end in itself) experience. And, generally speaking, flow is the only time you get all five produced at the same time, all at once. Someone in flow is essentially getting a very potent and very addictive cocktail of neurochemicals. Once a person starts producing flow s/he will go extraordinarily far to get more of it.

“When you are looking for flow you are climbing the ladder of escalating risk [given what we know].”
- Steven Kotler

When working with flow it is important to know what you are doing because you are essentially playing with very fundamental biology, and it can go wrong, disastrously so. These neurochemicals are not only addictive; they are also “expensive” for the brain to produce.

If you get a dump of these chemicals, and then that tap gets shut off because you don't know what you are doing, then it can be like coming off of hard drugs; there can be serious withdrawal symptoms and depression. The state may be said to “catch your brains attention and hold it”.

NOTE: Dopamine is not about reward, it is about the anticipation of reward.

Flow researchers state that, “flow is the source code...
of intrinsic motivation”. In other words, once you start producing flow you are compelled to do more of it [and, there is at least a regenerating biochemical process that allows for it]. Fundamentally, we are hard-wired to have access to the state, we just need to know what we are doing.

It is important for us to give ourselves time to recover; it is important to go through periods of “chill out”. Flow feels like a quickening. Quickening the body is one thing, but quickening the mind is entirely something else. The process requires wisdom so that one doesn't lose conscious coherence in the seat of the mind, where it all comes together as a point. It takes time, patience, and practice to build up this capacity, and when it comes to quickening (flow) it is like surfing well. The world slows down as you speed up. Accelerating your processing of information pushes your speed of thought to match the stream of incoming information bringing you into greater coherence with reality.

/ ONLINE LINKS

- Flow state triggers: how to learn anything, Ben Austin Blog
- Flow Genome Project - The Documentary, Vimeo
- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: Flow, the secret to happiness, YouTube
- The Flow Genome Project, flowgenomeproject.co; also see the interesting concept of a flow dojo
- The science of flow: Unlocking better creativity and happiness (part 1) on mattyford.com/blog (11 September 2014)
- See the Flow Genome Project's recommended reading list as of 2014 (link goes to a post by the project on Facebook).
- The longevity deception (part 5 of 5) on the Hipcrime Vocab blog (7 November 2014)
- The rise of superman with Steven Kotler (transcript #109) on Bulletproofexec.com
- The sweet spot for achievement published in The brain and emotional intelligence (29 March 2012) by Dan Goleman.

/ BOOK REFERENCE

- The Rise of Superman: Decoding the Science of Ultimate Human Performance by Steven Kotler

Figure 1-5. Two graphs representing two different perspectives on the skills / challenge ratio and the "zone" in which flow is most likely to occur.
PSYCHOLOGICAL FLOW TRIGGERS

Psychological triggers are internal strategies that drive attention into the now.

★ INTENSELY FOCUSED ATTENTION (DEEP SINGULAR FOCUS)
Producing flow requires long periods of uninterrupted concentration. Deep focus on a particular and intrinsically motivating task. Flow demands singular tasks (which may involve multiple subtasks) and solitude. A quiet and distraction-free workspace is essential. Flow takes time to build, and tiny distractions can “snap” someone out of a flow state.

★ CLEAR GOALS
Know what you are doing and why you are doing it - that’s the point. A goal/purpose directs attention. When goals are clear, the mind doesn’t wonder what it has to do next, it already knows. Through the setting of a goal our concentration tightens, motivation heightens, and extraneous information gets filtered out. Our focus can stay pinned to the present moment and the present action. Clarifying the reason behind what you’re doing will keep your mind from wandering and from distraction. Clarity gives us certainty; we know what to do and where to focus our attention while doing it. It is important to realize that sub-goals/sub-tasks may emerge naturally over time.

IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK
As a focusing mechanism, immediate feedback is something of an extension of clear goals. Clear goals tell us what we’re doing; immediate feedback tells us how to do it better. Herein, feedback refers to a direct, in-the-moment coupling between cause and effect. If we know how to improve performance in real time, the mind doesn’t go off in search of clues for betterment; we can keep ourselves fully present and fully focused and thus much more likely to be in flow. Tightening feedback loops enhances self-awareness of existing relationships.

★ THE CHALLENGE/SKILLS RATIO
Flow exists near (but not on) the midline between boredom and anxiety. The idea behind this trigger is that attention is most engaged (i.e., in the now), when there’s a very specific relationship between the difficulty of a task and our ability to perform that task. If the task is too dull or easy, attention disengages (i.e., we stop paying attention), and action and awareness cannot merge. If the task is too hard, fear starts to spike and we begin looking for ways to extricate ourselves from the situation. Flow appears near the emotional midpoint between boredom and anxiety, in what scientists call the “flow channel”—the spot where the task is hard enough to make us stretch; not hard enough to make us snap. Essentially, the challenge needs to be slightly greater than the individual’s present skills (or proficiencies). If someone can keep themselves in this state of dynamic tension then s/he will be most likely to drive attention into the now and maximize the amount of flow in his/her life.

★ THE STAR INDICATES THE 5 MOST POWERFUL CONDITIONS; OF WHICH, AT LEAST ONE MUST BE MET TO PRODUCE FLOW.
ENVIROMENTAL FLOW TRIGGERS

Environmental triggers are qualities in the environment that drive people deeper into the dynamic of flow. As a community, we can create environments and practice activities that maintain these qualities.

★ HIGH CONSEQUENCES / RISK
The elevation of risk drives focus. As risk increases, two important neurochemicals are released from the brain that help us focus and perform better (i.e., they optimize focus and performance). Yet, in order to make progress, the risk needs to be perceived as a challenge [to be enjoyed] instead of a danger [to be recoiled from in fear]. There are mental (intellectual) risks, emotional risks, creative risks, social risks, as well as physical risks. Since survival is fundamental to any organism, our brain’s first priority is to scour all incoming information for any sign of a threat and focus intently upon it. To reach flow one must be willing to take risks.

★ RICH ENVIRONMENT
Flow can be triggered through a rich and sensory stimulating environment. A rich environment involves a combination of novelty, unpredictability, and complexity, all of which attract and hold our attention in much the same way as risk. Novelty means both danger and opportunity. To our forbearers, a strange scent in the wind could be prey or predator, but either way survival required paying attention. Unpredictability means we don’t know what happens next, thus we pay extra attention to what happens next. In other words, if we don’t know what happens next, then we are likely to pay more attention to the next. When we are in a complex environment where there is a lot of salient information “coming at us at once”, then our attention is more likely to be held upon the incoming sensory information.

DEEP EMBODIMENT
Deep embodiment refers to the experience of total physical awareness. There are very few words for this experience other than the sensation of literally becoming a part of the flow of the surrounding world/environment. We can experience deep embodiment by paying more attention to our sensory nerve inputs. Various types of meditation, agility training, video games, and awareness arts (e.g., martial arts) facilitate the development of a greater sensitivity to nerve stimulation.
SOCIAL FLOW TRIGGERS

There is also a collective version of a flow state known as “group flow.” Social triggers are ways to alter social conditions to produce more group flow.

**SHARED, CLEAR GOALS**
Groups need to be clear about what their collective goal is in order for flow to happen. The key to group flow is a balancing act: creating a goal that provides enough focus so the team members can tell when they are close to a solution, but one that is open enough for creativity to exist.

**SERIOUS CONCENTRATION**
Entrainment between members of the group and an awareness of their needs as performance is made toward the achievement of a goal.

**EQUAL PARTICIPATION (AND SKILL LEVEL)**
Flow is most likely to happen in a group setting when all participants have an equal role in the project. For this reason, all members should have similar skill levels.

**SENSE OF CONTROL**
Combines autonomy (being free to do what you want) and competence (being good at what you do). It is about getting to choose your own challenges and having the necessary skills to surmount them.

**RISK**
The potential for failure. Growth and frequent failure go hand in hand. There is no creativity without failure, and there is no group flow without the risk of failure.

**FAMILIARITY**
The group has a common language, a shared knowledge base, and a communication style based on a set of clear understandings. It means everybody is always on “on the same page”, and when novel insights arise, momentum is not lost due to the need for lengthy explanation.

**GOOD COMMUNICATION**
Constant communication and feedback is necessary for group flow. Even while deep listening, the conversation must move forward. This follows the most important rule of improv “Yes, and . . .” Listen closely on what is being said, accept it, and build upon it. Nothing blocks flow more than ignoring or negating a group member.

**CLOSE LISTENING**
Playing with the group dialogue - joining and leaving the dialogue with cohesion through comprehension of the emergent thought stream and intelligent responses (or additions) to that stream. Herein, individuals in the group generate real time responses to the dialogue as it unfolds.

**ADDITIVE (“ALWAYS SAY YES”)**
This means interactions should be additive more than argumentative. The goal is the momentum, togetherness, and discovery that comes from amplifying each other’s ideas and actions. The “always say yes” statement is a trigger based on the first rule of improv comedy. If I open a sketch with, “Hey, there’s a blue elephant in the bathroom;” then, “No, there’s not,” is the wrong response. With the denial, the scene goes nowhere. But, if the reply is affirmative instead: “Yeah, sorry, there was no more space in the cupboard” - then, the story continues with interest.
CREATIVE FLOW TRIGGER

Creativity triggers flow; then flow enhances creativity.

CREATIVITY

At a conceptual level, creativity is composed of pattern recognition and risk-taking. Pattern recognition is the brain’s ability to link new ideas together. Risk-taking is the courage to bring those new ideas into the world. Both of these experiences produce powerful neurochemical reactions and the brain rides these reactions deeper into flow. Instead of tackling problems from familiar angles, go at them backwards and sideways and with style. Go out of your way to stretch your imagination. Massively up the amount of novelty in your life—the research shows that new environments and experiences are often the jumping off point for new ideas (more opportunity for pattern recognition). Most importantly, facilitate an environment where creativity flourishes.
OPTIMIZED WELLNESS

There are places on the planet where people live happily and healthily for a very long time. A long-lived population is defined as a cohort of individuals who share racial, environmental, or socioeconomic characteristics that facilitate aging for over a century. These locations and their common lifestyle habits were popularized by Dan Buettner in his 2008 book, "The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer from People Who've Lived the Longest." Therein, he identified five places in the world where there is a high concentration of humans over age 100, and who express disability-free and disease-free life expectancy. Note that the word “blue” in the term ‘blue zones’ has no relevance – blue was simply the color ink initial researchers used to identify these locations on their map. The term ‘blue zone’ has come to mean a demographic and/or geographic area of the world where people live measurably longer lives in excellent health and happiness. “Blue zone” populations consist of individuals living in a defined geographical region who achieve extreme longevity in comparison to the average human lifespan. Identifying long-lived populations, such as “blue zones”, can assist in highlighting factors that promote longevity. The people inhabiting ‘blue zones’ share common lifestyle characteristics that contribute to their longevity. The geographic locations themselves, besides being outside of industrialized regions, are relatively unimportant. However, it is the case that genetic, socioeconomic, geographical, climatic, dietary, sociopolitical, and other general lifestyle factors all have been identified through observation as being associated with longevity.

Longevity, health, and happiness are phenomena related to individuals, as well as to populations as a whole. By identifying areas where people live the longest, Buettner and other researchers identified a set of common lifestyle-oriented longevity determinants/factors.

INSIGHT: As humans, we are not biologically programmed for longevity. We are programmed for procreative success.

Those with health and longevity in these locations had some of the following factors in common during their lifetimes. Not all locations had all of the factors in common, but all locations had some of the factors/determinants in common:

1. Natural movement – Throughout the course of your day, do you exert yourself physically without having to plan for exercise? In general, movement is a natural part of their day. The world's longest lived people create an environment that guides them into moving without having to think about it. They do not have to seek out other sources of regular daily exercise; rather, in order to live their lives, they have to do physical work. In other words, most of them enjoy physical activity incorporated naturally into their daily lives (like gardening or walking). None of them were found to exercise. They setup their lives so that they are constantly nudged into physical activity. Significantly, they walk through the majority of their life space. When they do intentional physical activity, it is things they enjoy. Presently, walking is the only scientifically proven way to stave off cognitive decline.

2. Life purpose - Why do you wake up in the morning? Do you engage in meaningful work and find purpose in what you spend your time doing? In general, those with long and healthy lives wake with a purpose (larger than themselves) every day, such as caring for grandchildren, volunteering, or other forms of social contribution. They know how to setup their lives so that they have the right outlook; they have a purpose in life. Further, they have vocabulary (a linguistic orientation) for a sense of purpose. They know their sense of purpose, and it is active in their life. The whole idea of getting up and living each day in a meaningful way is driven by this sense of purpose.

3. De-stress and relax (down shift) – Do you spend time every day relaxing and de-stressing? Stress leads to chronic inflammation, associated with every major age-related disease. In general, the world's longest lived people have routines (or, strategies) to shed that stress (a.k.a., “down shifting”). There is a very clear moment or time when they “down shift” in their mental and physical exertion, which happens daily. Longer lived individuals utilize different ways to “shed stress” (to relax, rest, and rejuvenate), and each society has had its own traditions that translated into community embraced habits. These have varied from the religious who pray, to the Ikarians napping, or the Costa Ricans staying in synch with their natural peninsula habitat, the Sardinians enjoying their alcoholic “happy hour”, or the Okinawans intentionally remembering (i.e., meditating on) their ancestors during specially set aside time each day. Typical de-stressing activities include: alcoholic happy hour; a daily nap; daily meditation/prayer/contemplation; and spending time in nature (e.g., forest bathing).

4. Mindful eating and the 80% feeding rule – With each meal, do you eat mindfully and stop when 80% full? In general, the longest lived people eat mindfully/wisely, and stop when 80% full. They engage different strategies to keep from overeating. In other words, they stop eating when stomachs are 80 percent full (primarily, due to the way in which they interact and/or arrange their environment). Different societies use different strategies to keep from
overeating. The Okinawans say the “hara hachi bu” mantra before meals as a reminder to stop eating when their stomachs are 80% full. Other societies serve themselves on reasonable sized plates (not large plates), and then put the food away for storage so as not to return for another serving. Those who live long lives enjoy their meals and do not rush the feeding process. They eat with a sense of appreciation and enjoyment. As a result of this mindfulness, they realize while eating when their hunger has been addressed, and they stop themselves from pushing the limits of eating. It is estimated that they stop when ~80% full. They are comfortable disposing of food that remains on their plate after they are sufficiently fed (this food is composted). In addition, these groups eat their smallest meal in the late afternoon or early evening, largest meal midday and they don’t eat after the evening meal. They fast for the rest of the day and overnight, until they break their fast in the morning (with break-fast). While it may not be necessary to follow this exact pattern, it speaks to the importance of fueling oneself well during the day and honoring hunger and fullness levels. Avoid skipping meals, which can lead to getting overly hungry and possible overeating.

6. Whole, nutrient dense foods – Do your meals consist primarily of a diversity of whole, nutritionally sufficient foods? It’s estimated that about 75% of the food of these people comes from the ground. They eat high fiber meals that are rich in antioxidants, phytochemicals, vitamins and minerals. They consume a whole foods diet with sufficient diversity to ensure sufficient nutrition. They follow a flavorful and healthy dietary pattern. Virtually all food is grown in the locale, or harvested/cultivated nearby. The diet is characterized by moderate caloric intake. They consume a lot of plants and fish, and the meat most often consumed is pork. Of note, they do not take any supplements or track their food/calories in any way. They aren’t overly preoccupied with what or how much food they consume. Also, meals are a time to rest and connect with food and loved ones; they aren’t rushed through or multitasked. These dietary patterns tend to be high in anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory substances. The Sardinians and Ikarians have embraced some version of a (valid) Mediterranean style diet.

7. Social/familial engagement including belonging and social integration – Do you spend a significant amount of your time nurturing and supporting those who you love? Spend time and expend energy with those who you consider love. Put your family ahead of your egoic/subjective concerns. Strong family and community connections. Ultimately, feeling a part of something bigger than yourself can increase quality and length of years. They “invest” time and energy in supporting and nurturing those they love.

8. Healthy behaviors and support – Do you surround yourself with people who are also oriented toward their highest potential selves? In general, those with the greatest longevity engage in healthy behaviors while surrounding oneself with people who support, and also engage in, healthy behaviors.

9. Aesthetic environment – Maintain a beautiful environment that includes a garden.

The data we have on “blue zones” shows us that we can create our own “blue zone”. It shows us that health and vitality is multifactoral and encourages a holistic approach.

/ FUNCTIONAL SEPARATION

In community, we plan for our well-being. We create a setting that is conducive to better flow and use. Here, spaces with different lifestyle-functions that could create discord are separated by time and/or space. For example, space for noisy social interaction is separated from quiet space. Not only does this separation facilitate natural movement between spaces with different lifestyle-oriented functions, but it reduces disturbance for those using particular spaces with set functions.

Putting the responsibility of curating a healthy environment on an individual amongst an antagonistic environment is highly unlikely to create long lived wellness for the individual. It is the determinant environment of community that increases wellness, and consequently, life expectancy.
LIFE RADIUS

We spend the majority of our time in the same places, and that environment dictates how easy it is to make healthy choices, or how difficult. A 'city' in community is essentially a demarcated architectural "life radius" within which we sustainably control environmental variables and optimize human fulfillment. The term “life radius”, itself, describes the space where we spend the vast majority of our lives (~80 - 90%). Everything we do within that life radius is considered to have an impact on everything else. When we have to drive a car that radius can be quite large. But, the ideal life radius is much smaller than city arrangements where cars are necessary. In community, we design cities at a scale based upon the human being, and not the motorcar.

NOTE: We entrain to our environment. If we live in a depressed environment, we are likely to be depressed (or, become desensitized to the depression). If we live in a happy environment we are likely to be happy, and become sensitive to the happiness of those around us.

Community is designed in a people-oriented way. The average human being walks two kilometers in approximately twenty minutes. What if that two kilometer walk was beautiful, attractive, safe, enjoyable, and you could meet your needs, contribute, and develop yourself, with others who are doing similarly. A bicycle extends the radius, or makes movement in the radius more efficient. But, the point is that you want most of the things you are going to do, for some large percentage of your time, to be inside that radius. Having access to what is needed within a walkable radius is strongly correlated with well-being. Think about your own life for a moment: Where are your friend's homes, your enriched gathering and relaxation spaces, and the locations that produce and distribute your material necessities? Of those key things that compose your life radius, how many can you access by foot or bicycle, and is the experience safe, comfortable, and enjoyable.

In community, the life radius is designed to:

- Generate a social and economic decision structure, an environment, where it is it easier to get up and move, eat healthy, make new friends, find a reason for being, and live longer, more optimized lives.
- Create an environment where people move naturally each day without thinking about it. Community makes it pleasant and enjoyable to leave ones dwelling and participate in activities.
- Facilitate healthy food choices while bringing attention to foods that are more nutritious (and hence, flavorful).
- Support personal interconnectivity—between individuals and community activities, teams, and groups.
- Facilitate mindfulness in action and purpose in daily life through abundant access to opportunities for self-development and contribution.

ONLINE LINKS
- Bluezones.com
- Blue Zones Project

BOOK REFERENCES
- Thrive by Dan Buettner

JOURNAL REFERENCES
WHAT IS LEARNING

Learning is a lifelong process that originates from within each individual and may be nurtured or hindered by an environment. Learning is natural and innate in us; it is an intricate and complex process for which we are all [neurologically] wired. Learning is [an ability] implicit to embodied consciousness. Practically speaking, learning is the product of the activity of learners and it is the result of living a rich and engaged life.

Learning is an intrinsic and active process in which someone is interested and engaged. It is a self-directed process for it originates from within the individual (i.e., learning is the self-integrating and structuring of the contents of our own minds). As a self-directed process, learning can be interfered with and entirely dismantled by external forces (including other individuals and extrinsic processes).

**PRIMARY: As an individual, I have the capacity to learn for myself.**

Learning is an individual, internal process that takes place in [at least] a person's brain as information is sought, integrated, and applied, and connections are made. For the process of learning to occur the learner must be able to classify his or her own interactions with an environment, which most often takes the form of changing its structure (i.e., by interacting with it). Hence, learning necessitates a relationship and a novel experience -- it requires some degree of action, interaction, and reaction. It could be said that learning is the state of active participation in a relationship.

Fundamentally, if "you" don't do anything, "you" are not going to learn anything. Knowing what something is, is not the same as experiencing something for oneself. Seeing and experiencing makes everything seem obvious. Fundamentally, learning is up to "you" and when "you" make it up to "you" it makes a huge difference in "your" life and the lives of others in "your" social environment.

**NOTE: We come to know things through their verification by our [conscious] experience [of existence], which may proceed a hypothetical inquiry. The answers to our existence come from our interacts with the universe.**

Learning is the process of taking every new experience and encounter as an opportunity for investigation and illumination. We learn by experiencing, remembering, and evaluating. Among the many processes that the concept of learning encompasses are: discovering; connecting; integrating; adapting; designing; constructing; and creating. Effectively, learning becomes about openly inquiring and actively integrating our experiences into a referential information set [so that we may more greatly focus our intent on that which is most meaningful]. Hence, it involves trust in the human capacity to be curious, to integrate, and to verify existence for oneself. Learning is thus experienced as the self-integration of mind, body and existence by consciousness; it is an emergent phenomenon and a self-organizing process. It could be said that learning is a dynamic function of consciousness in the awareness of a relationship with existence. Summarily, learners become (or "learn from") their experiences and they follow their passions while they self-organize and self-integrate.

The most important thing that promotes learning is your own motive interest in wanting to learn something. As long as "you" are interested that is really the only criteria to learning. Learning is a playful adventure. The world is a learner's playground where every connection (action, interaction, and reaction) is an opportunity for learning. Learners explore and experiment; they experience and partake; they engage and discover; they restore and recover; they struggle (or "load") and process; they consolidate and make new connections. Note that when learning takes the form of the flow cycle, then it has different experiential and neurophysiological stages (struggle > release > flow > recover).

**NOTE: These value orientations are unlikely to be maintained in an environment intrinsically hostile to the exercise of mindfulness, which is inherently self-directed. Learning is not something imposed upon a person; it is something that happens naturally.**

Learning is a universal consideration. If we have no reference point, no stable point from which to work from, then we cannot run effective experiments and optimize decisions, which is the basis for all learning and the organizing of fulfilling environments. An individual needs a point of reference from which to measure the departures, and then to come back and ask if those departures are adaptive to its purposes or not. Hence, if you don't learn, then you can't adapt. And, if you can't adapt, then [evolutionarily speaking] you won't survive.

**SCIENCE: The brain is adaptive; it is an adaptive learning machine. The brain re-wires its connections upon experience and the learning of new tasks (the umbrella term for this in neuroscience is 'neuroplasticity').**

When we experience the connections and can verify our experiences, then our lives become an authentic representation of reality. But, when we are given abstractions void of experience, and hence, verification,

**LEARNING IS EMANCIPATORY. it is a “liberating dance”.**
then our lives become an opinionated representation of reality. If you can't verify information then you can't learn.

A learner attunes his or her sensitivities to the world. Herein, learning a new feature of an environment allows someone to build a model. Once “you” have a model “you” can test it and identify exceptions which engages curiosity and facilitates going deeper (i.e., learning new features and building more / newer and more accurate models). Once we have a model in our minds, then we can start testing it. The way someone develops a grounded understanding is by going out in the world and playing with things; being “told” something is not its equivalent.

We learn through experience and the developing of our sensitivities to real patterns in an existence that can be identifiably experienced by our consciousness. Herein, curiosity brings fulfillment that we do not find by chasing achievement.

Humans are naturally curious. In community we discover our interests and then master them to our desired potential. The only learning that ever counts is when the learner drives their own learning (i.e., has passion) and is fully responsible for their learning, and not forced by some authority. Responsibility means that “you” make your own decisions and are not protected from the consequences of your actions. In community, we facilitate an environment where we as individuals can make our own mistakes and learn from them. Learners ought not to be protected from failure since failure is feedback and represents an opportunity [and may provide incentive] for growth.

**INSIGHT:** Learning is the process of figuring out how to do something while you can't do it. You are likely not growing unless you are pushing yourself beyond the boundaries of what you are comfortable doing, and therein, messing up and failure (without injury) is the best indication that you are pushing yourself in the way you need to push yourself so that you can grow. Embracing failure as a key to learning is a necessary approach (i.e., “attitude”). Learning is a “fail forward” mindset.

When we set our own learning outcomes and self-correct our measures, it frees us up to explore higher order cognitive skill development. Instead of just memorizing we can begin thinking creatively and [re-] solving problems. And in doing so, we can feel like we are playing (as children) and in the process of flow (as adults). Learning is supposed to be fun; and if it is not fun for you, then maybe there is a problem with the context within which others say you are supposed to be learning.

We are all natural born learners. The efforts of Sugata Mitra, Dr. Thomas Alan, Dr. Peter Gray, John McKnight, John Holt, and John Taylor Gatto provide several examples of work and research in this area that convey some remarkable evidence about our [obvious] abilities to learn without formal institutions and teaching methods.

If learning is a self-organizing practice, then it is a practice we are all pulled toward in order to be the love and the oneness that we awaken to through the intended emergence of organization by changing our structure to one of ever greater fulfillment.

**APHORISM:** Learning is as long as a length of string (i.e., you can never stop learning).

/ LEARNING AND EDUCATION

Learning is an iterative process. In other words, you get many chances (or experiences) to get it right [and to refine your precision]. Alternatively, education is an accumulative process. In other words, your experiences build upon one another [toward the development of greater wisdom, creativity, and automaticity]. Over time, the brain knits together a wealth of new circuits that eventually allow someone to execute a skill automatically, without consciously having to consider each action [in isolation].

“Education is a self-organizing system, where learning is an emergent phenomenon.”

– Sugata Mitra

A REAL WORLD EDUCATION IS INTRINSICALLY MOTIVATED AND SELF-DIRECTED.

If success is the progressive realization of a worthy purpose, then education is the development of knowledge and skills to help us achieve that success. Herein, an education is a set of experiences that helps someone discover who s/he is and who s/he wants to be in the world. A good educational process is one that helps "you" think about information in a way that is connected to a sense of purpose and in a way that relates to what "you" want out of life. Hence, it is easy to help others make changes in their behavior if we can facilitate the acquisition of self-knowledge and a sense of life-directing purpose. We get the "lessons" that others feel are so important to "teach", automatically, when we have that conducive environment.

We are born curious, and given a supportive environment nearly all human beings will blossom (through their curiosity). Herein, learning that results from self-directed education is more profound, powerful, and rewarding to ourselves and others than what is seen within the education systems of modern society, which use coercion to acquire compliance.

There are two different Latin roots of the English word “education.” They are ‘educare,’ which essentially means to train or to mold, and ‘educere,’ meaning to “lead out” or “bring out” (from ex- “out” + ducere “to lead”). While the two meanings are different, they are both represented in the word “education” as it is applied throughout most of modern society. Thus, there is an etymological basis for many of the debates about education today. The opposing views often use the same word to denote two very different concepts, which...
become even more separated when learning is viewed from the perspective of neuroscience and the individual.

“Education draws out our potential.” - Mathew Abrams

The term ‘educare’ uses education to essentially mean the preservation and passing down of knowledge through the shaping of a population in the image of those with power (e.g., parents, leaders, teachers, and other “professionals”). Here, ‘educare’ may be used to mean the equivalent of “to pour in” and “to teach and to educate.” The other view, ‘educere’, effectively sees education as a process of facilitating others as they “draw forth” toward a greater and more integrated understanding of themselves in an emergently discoverable world. The first view, nearly ubiquitous in modern society, calls for rote memorization, compulsory attendance, grading, and being a “hard worker”. The other requires questioning, thinking, and the facilitation of an environment where individuals have the space and opportunity to explore and verify for themselves. The first view sees education as the equivalent of indoctrination and the second as a process of drawing forth from within and bringing out one’s own highest potential. The two concepts can be more clearly separated by asking the question, “What is the purpose of education?” Is it turning people into disciplined “professionals” and functional “citizens” through obedience and namelessness conditioning; is it ‘educare’? Or, is it the process of self-organizing for one’s own self-development within an environment that facilitates all aspects of self-development: is it ‘educere’?

“Education draws out our potential.” - Mathew Abrams

“Whatever an education is, it should make you a unique individual, not a conformist; it should furnish you with an original spirit with which to tackle the big challenges; it should allow you to find values which will be your road map through life; it should make you spiritually rich, a person who loves whatever you are doing, wherever you are, whomever you are with; it should teach you what is important, how to live and how to die.”

– John Taylor Gatto

Education could be viewed as a spectrum: at the one end of the spectrum lies the accumulation and integration of information that has great hold on the mind and allows for complexly creative thought for it was acquired through passionate inquiry; and at the other end is a disintegrated mind with little hold on understanding for it was rote memorizing and temporarily accepting to pacify or please an external other. In fact, the very concept of ‘education’ begins to divide along this spectrum into something which is meaningful to the self on one end, and something (i.e., a product) that is useful to human managers on the other.

Education is powerful a concept in its encoding into a society, and it can be viewed from [at least] two divergent perspectives: it can be seen as the recycling of knowledge and culture through schooling; or, it can be viewed as facilitating the continuous emergence of understanding and creativity through self-directed learning.

To remove the concept of learning from the directed intention of a learner is to remove learning from education altogether, which is likely to generate disempowered individuals who have lost their curiosity and their will to search for integration about life.

Today, we know that learning is a lifelong ability that originates from within the individual. Alternatively, schooling is a finite process done to someone. Hence, a truly meaningful education is not intellectual management; that is the system of schooling. You aren’t going to learn and evolve and adapt without taking in more accurate information and novel experiences through your own directions, and that, is education. In other words, at the one end of the spectrum is the notion of an actual education and at the other end is the notion of human management by something called “education”. The later form of “education” may be more accurately known as schooling, which is a process with a divergent purpose from the former.

“To save man from the morass of propaganda, in my opinion, is one of the chief aims of education. Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from the fiction.”

– Martin Luther King

It should be noted that educere, “to lead out” or “bring forth”, does in a way denote the molding and shaping of an individual by the usage therein of the root word “to lead” (Read: “ducere”). Someone who is being “led out” is essentially following. Hence, etymologically and semantically speaking, one could interpret ‘educere’ to mean something similar to ‘educare’. But, when the concepts of ‘learning’ and ‘authority’ are coherently and meaningfully defined, then the concept of ‘education’ begins to separate quite dramatically from ‘educare’ as well as the pejorative (leading & following) interpretation of ‘educere’. In community, we understand the necessity for the individual to take the “lead” in his or her own learning, which represents the only way we know of to truly become educated.

“Whatever an education is, it should make you a unique individual, not a conformist; it should furnish you with an original spirit with which to tackle the big challenges; it should allow you to find values which will be your road map through life; it should make you spiritually rich, a person who loves whatever you are doing, wherever you are, whomever you are with; it should teach you what is important, how to live and how to die.”

– John Taylor Gatto

Therein, education is the understanding of concepts and their logical integration into the building of highly

“THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIVING AND LEARNING. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE AND MISLEADING AND HARMFUL TO THINK OF THEM AS BEING SEPARATE.” - JOHN HOLT

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complex structures. Education should bring about the integration of life's complexities, which can be demonstrated and verified by us. Without integration life becomes a series of conflicts and sorrows. Education involves the evolution of our thinking and the weaving of new paths to well-being, happiness, and fulfillment. Pragmatically, education is the development of an information network of connections and association that may be referenced for decisions and actions.

NOTE: If education is being able to identify tools and have a tools inventory, then it is useful.

Today, the facts can be looked up; hence, it is important to understand deep principles and the particulars of inquiry. Today, a useful education is knowing how to inquire, where to inquire, what to inquire of, and why you are inquiring. In an information system, the most useful skills are information discovery (i.e., finding and searching) as well as information analysis and synthesis (i.e., processing for integration, application, and communication). The quicker these things can be done, the more efficiently users will deal with the world by themselves. In other words, the more truly educated someone is the more easily they will cooperate for mutual benefit and the more quickly they will solve complex real world problems for everyone's fulfillment.

"Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think."
- Albert Einstein

The schooled thinker might ask, “How are people going to be educated [if not through school]?” Firstly, the question assumes that people are becoming educated in school now. Regardless, it is not the right question to ask. It is very much like asking, how are babies going to learn how to walk and talk if we don’t attach this mechanical structure to them that moves their limbs in the way it knows they ought to. We learn to walk, it’s self-motivated and doesn’t require manipulation. If a government were to establish compulsory evaluation of babies to determine whether they were walking on schedule, everyone would reason that as absurd. We understand that healthy babies walk eventually, and that it would be futile and frustrating to attempt to speed up that process.

There is a critical period for learning language, but other than that there is no critical period for anything. There is no scientific basis for the schedule of “learning” taught in school.

It seems as if those in modern society look upon education as something that is external, something that needs to be imposed, in the way you make a gingerbread man by putting the cookie cutter onto the dough. The question presupposes that education is something that needs to be imposed from outside. In fact, the question imposes upon itself. The very premise of the question is to be rejected for it assumes upon itself (i.e., the question is fallacious). It assumes that school is the golden standard for education. Because the automatic assumption in the question is, if people don’t go to school, how are they going to learn – school is the only place where people can learn. We have an entire society of people who are indoctrinated into believing that school is the golden means; that it is the only opportunity we have for learning and becoming fully functioning and participating adult human beings. We have become accustomed to the idea that education is something that has to be done to people; potentially even that humans are born flawed and that they have to be fixed by putting (or pouring) information into them like filling a jar with beans, which a trained and “professional” bean pourer can do all day. You can take a child and fill them with all sorts of dates and facts and skills, some of which they may have an intrinsic interest in learning and may be useful, and many others of which are not. But, this is not learning. Learning is something that a human being does naturally from the moment they are born.

To a learner [who has not been schooled] it sounds quite strange when asked, “At what age should I teach my child this subject or this skill? Or, at what age should our policy dictate, and teachers enforce, knowing this subject or this skill?” Someone who recognizes what learning actually is might respond with, “I don’t know; at what age should your child wear a size 5 shoe? And, if s/he is not ready for it, should you force him/her into wearing it anyway.”

They, the “schoolers”, usually then express concern that children will not learn what “they need to” if they have a choice. To which any learner would have a hard time not laughing out loud at. People just simply do not resist

SOMETIMES, THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS NOT THE ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT YOU ACHIEVE, BUT TO GO BEYOND YOUR LIMITATIONS.

KNOW WELL WHAT MOVES YOU FORWARD AND WHAT HOLDS YOU BACK.
information that is truly valuable to them, unless for the sake of rebelling against some coercive authority. It would be self-destructive to do so; it would be unnatural. And, healthy and non-traumatized kids are not naturally self-destructive.

**INSIGHT:** No-one can prove that any type of discipline helps a child grow and learn any faster than he would naturally, with lots of love and support and gentle guidance. Is it possible that the ubiquity of child-discipline methods, punitive, manipulative ways to train children in the ways of the world, have made us forget to question whether they are necessary at all?

It is also an erroneous assessment to say that school is the only environment that can cultivate the acquisition of self-discipline in the mind of an individual. To make such a claim would be underestimating the potential of the individual learner among a community of learners.

**NOTE:** There is no such thing as being “behind in a subject”, in community.

Five general principles of education are:

1. Cultivate the self. Come to understand who we are and why we are the way we are.
2. Cultivate and explore volition. Become authentic[ally driven] versus someone who simply follows [instructions].
3. Create from a place of need, passion, and preference.
4. Verify existence. Through experience and verification we become capable of maintaining the intentional alignment of our creations.
5. Challenge oneself. Learning and growth require tension and challenge. It is wise to discover and to place oneself in new contexts of information which may present an initial tension, but through integration there is growth and self-development.

**THE NEUROPHYSICAL PRINCIPLE IS:** Don’t lock into a conclusion too quickly; keep some degree of neuronal plasticity so that you are always open to a new idea that might actually be a refinement of an old idea.

If the process of education is lifelong learning, then we are resilient in community. But, if the product of “education” is an obedient worker (a potential employee), then there is not the resiliency of community. And, these two different ways of perceiving the individual will result in two entirely different social and economic environments. A lifelong learner does not “aspire” to become just one [professional] thing.

Specialization tends to give a person tunnel vision and a narrow perspective about the actual interrelationships of all physical phenomena. Today it is often difficult for someone schooled in one field to communicate in depth with members of different professions. Among community we encourage each other to view the world in a more holistic manner. Rather than educating toward specialization for a slot in a soon to be obsolete job market in which most people hate their jobs anyway, a holistic perception is valued and emphasized [in the design of our information systems]. In community, learning flourishes absent the use of grades and compulsory testing.

**INSIGHT:** What is a greater ‘physical education’ than understanding your own body’s signals and integrating social signals so there is less conflict.

If neuroscience is correct and we are all natural learners, then it doesn’t make sense to force anyone to learn anything just because “you” or someone else thinks they are important. We now know scientifically that this behavior tends to extinguish the natural desire [and ability] to learn. The more you [are] school[ed] the more the other paradigm becomes self-fulfilling. In other words, the more someone is schooled the more likely it is that someone will lose their interest and ability to learn spontaneously and need to be forced and externally motivated more and more. Hence, the choice for a community becomes obvious. Oddly enough, a lot of people think they understand what is being discussed here, but they do not because of all the training and conditioning they have gone though. They say things like,
"well, if there isn't some force then someone is going to miss something", which is an indication that they don't actually understand.

If education is about more than access to educational resources and involves the purchase of a ticket to a job, then we need to ask not only how such an education might be delivered, but what the values and purposes of such an education might actually be.

Notice here that in modern society the product of a schooled education (i.e., an education done to someone through schooling) is employment or ownership in the market (or, unemployment and poverty equivalence). Teachers, themselves, are employees in a market turning out other employees. Herein, we begin to see the emergence of the industrial schooling model where "education" becomes a matter of policy as the design of a socio-economically engineered separation of society. In the real world, education is a lifelong investment in oneself, which is also an investment [in trust] in others; conversely, schooling is a lifelong investment in the current status quo (as in, the State and the market).

We are all natural born learners; hence, school is an aberration. In reality, we don't need a special place with a special set of people and a special policy to do that which is natural. There are natural learning experiences in this world (i.e., not schooling), and a society ought to facilitate them, cultivate them, and integrate them in a continuous and synergistic manner for everyone's benefit. Neither learning nor memory occur in isolation. Herein, we ask, "What is the greatest context of our understanding, and how might this be changing as we change our attitude and re-orient toward a direction of greatest fulfillment?"

The more time you spend being educated [by others] the less time you spend living. In truth, learning is life and life is an open investigation. The less you investigate the more likely you are to become investigated.

Notice the difference in meaning: instruction is meant to engage you and learning is your engagement with something. Learning is akin to an investigation by you and instruction is an investigation of you by an authority [who defines your socio-economic access]. A "great school" represents the latter and real life represents the former. Nothing is quite as simple as "they" instructing "you" [in school and through the industrial media]. Similarly, when there are "lessons" we are likely to become bored and our willful integration fractured; conversely, when there are real problems and intentional relevancy there is the potential for engagement.

“When training beats education, civilization dies.”
- C. S. Lewis

You see, school shapes the outlook of individuals for what education should be; it shapes the meaning of fulfillment and the purpose of our lives. It re-purposes our intent. Practically speaking, schooling and learning are opposites. A student might say, “I go to this place from 8-3 where this thing called learning is said to occur; then, when I am not learning, I do stuff I like which is odd because that is when I appear to learn best and when I am truly engaged with my environment.” Learning is not a finite process done to you. Instead, teaching is an imposition and learning is not.

Schooling implies that when someone becomes “of school age” that they somehow learn in a different way to the way they were learning previous to “school age”. The undisputed assumption in modern society is that young humans who have been learning with great vigor and delight and self-direction have suddenly reached an age where their brain has apparently changed drastically and they are no longer capable of learning in that delightful way. Now, they learn by way of teachers, experts, authorities and others with degrees, certifications, accreditations, and voted power. Suddenly, someone else knows better what that [young] person is supposed to learn at that moment. Suddenly the R’s of reading, writing, and arithmetic come in as though they are separate from life . . . which they are not. At this time, the individual is [often] forced and scared into learning what other people think s/he ought to be learning. It goes downhill from there, because the individual loses interest, because s/he is not learning what s/he wants to learn, and possibly, because s/he doesn’t want [necessarily] to learn what s/he is being forced to learn. It is an unfortunate situation that often results in the individual losing interest in learning in general. And then, when the individual doesn’t want to sit still and be dumped on with content the individual is labelled as someone who has a learning deficiency (and is possibly medicated, followingly).

Learning is not equivalent to the closed system of schooling to maintain the State, nation, or any other statically recycled institution (Read: an organization that is not open to evolving its structure based upon new and more accurate information).

When education is free then there is likely learning, and when education is compulsory then there is likely schooling. School does not afford natural learning processes. Learning involves discovery in place of debunkery. Learning necessitates study instead of assumption. It requires directional participation (i.e., self-direction) and not extrinsic separation (i.e., extrinsic punishment and rewards). Learning becomes play instead of dictation. Learning is fulfilling and not
indoctrinating. Summarily, schooling is unnecessary for learning and harmful to an intrinsic education.

**INSIGHT:** Reward moves the focus from the ‘task’ to the ‘reward’; hence, their studied hindrance of creative work.

There exist many paths to the acquisition of the same piece of understandable knowledge or skilled movement. At the present, it is impossible to build a one-path technological learning solution that fits the needs, wants and preferences of all learners, although this is to a large degree what schooling environments are like. Real complexity and practical experience are a requirement for “real learning” (i.e., learning about that which exists in reality). Learning about the real world requires a dynamic process involving a complexity of interactions because the real world, itself, is a complex set of interactive and dynamic relationships.

**THE PRECISION OF LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT:**

Learners “make” subjects relevant to themselves; when someone else “makes” a subject relevant, then there is likely coercion present.

There are no classrooms or paid teachers in nature; everywhere is a classroom and every experience is a “teacher” (or “opportunity for learning”).

The dichotomy between school and no-school is an illusion when intrinsic motivation and human fulfillment are introduced. Intrinsic motivation is evident when people engage in an activity for its own sake, without some obvious external incentive present. We must entrain to natural rhythms ourselves; no authority figure can do this for us.

“I never let my education interfere with my learning. [In other words,] I never let schooling get in the way of my education.”

- Mark Twain

Learning is a natural process; schooling is not. Learning and schooling are opposites. Learning and living are synonymous – learning is the process of fully living. Through living we learn. Through schooling we learn to be that which is not whom we could be.

As a society, we do not have to channel learning into some sort of framework that resembles what we have in school: learning is an instinct; it is an instinct that can be conditioned out of us. Learning is not necessarily the absence of a routine or schedule; it is the absence of an authority figure directing the process by which we engage with our world.

Here, we return the focus of attention to the individual experience. We have been slaves to ideology transmitted hierarchically and based on a tremendously alienating instrumentality. What we need to do is to “decompress”, to release the traumas from authority that haunt our dreams, and to re-connect with our self-esteem and self-empowerment.

**NOTE:** Every healthy human has within them the capacity to be creative and systematic and to take information and translate it into usable knowledge and wisdom. The belief that only a graduate of school has this ability is utterly spurious, and the predictable truth is that most graduates of school have neither wisdom nor the ability to think systematically for they have been processed through a system of conditioning and of sheltering.

In community learners have the opportunity if and when they so desire to interact with the world at large, gaining experience with everyday activities and situations. In community, learners draw from worldwide resources as they help one another pursue interests and goals. In truth, it is schooled children who are being sheltered. Students in the schooling system spend a good part of their days set apart from society, sheltered in schools, information typically provided by one textbook per course of study, in a singular environment that doesn't represent the real world, which they become ever more separated from. So, when we speak of physical spaces, schooled children seem more sheltered than learners among a community of learners. The consequences of being sheltered reach beyond physical location. In some cases, maybe many cases, the conventional school lifestyle shelters students from exploring and learning how to get along in the world-at-large.

It takes a special kind of system to make learning boring. Most government education exists to rob the youth of a love of learning, to rob them of a love of reading, to rob them of a love of thinking, and to rob them of experiencing things that are outside of the accepted scope [of history and the cultural ideology of the time].

**MAXIM:** The greater the need the greater the result. Some “educational systems” mask this experiential

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**WE NEED CHALLENGES, AND IF WE DON’T HAVE CHALLENGES IT IS A PROBLEM.**

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THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

IN COMMUNITY WE CULTIVATE LEARNERS AND WE LEARN FROM OUR EXPERIENCES.

A great learning environment is one in which the learners have the opportunity to tune into and become attentive to their own needs [as learners]. It is an environment that facilitates self-directed education, which is ultimately the only educational environment worth having. Wherein, a self-directed education is the only “degree” worth having. Among community, we create an environment where natural learning can flourish and we learn from experience, asking questions, following interests, exploring existence, and being. In a sense, the Community [itself] represents the [organized] act of learning.

At the scale of community, education becomes the structuring of an environment to bring out and facilitate the highest potential [creative] expression of the individual. A voluntary system is a system that is itself “invested” in individual’s self-development and life-long learning process – a user-centric system

INSIGHT: Choice greatly improves motivation. Or, said another way, choice represents the motive opportunity for the expansion of ourselves into ever greater folds of understanding, integration, and creation.

A community of learners requires a particular structure. Although we are born learners (i.e., it is an innate characteristic to all human beings), the instinct to strive, develop, and grow can be quickly derailed by the kind of structures a human encounters early in life (and by uninformed and irresponsible social interactions throughout life). For example, take the issue of praise (as operant conditioning): those praised for being “smart” learn that intelligence is a fixed, innate, effortless gift, and they often fail to reach their full potential. If a society chooses a culture of praise, then it is much wiser to praise effort rather than outcome. Effort is salient to life-long learning and the exceeding of initial expectations. Such are the findings of social psychologist Carol Dweck who has conducted extensive research into the “fixed mindset” versus the “growth mindset.” In one study, young students take a simple non-verbal test. Later, those praised for being “smart” or achieving a “good score” showed less confidence and enjoyment than those praised for effort. Effort performed better on the next test. The performance of those praised for intelligence declined, and they even lied about their high scores later.

Figure 1-6. In a habitat community it is everyone’s “birthright” to learn how to thrive here (in an integrated city system) and here (in nature).
Another study of older students had similar findings.

**INSIGHT:** When someone seeks approval, then there is condemnation at the other end of the barrel. And we know from the scientific literature that praise creates approval seeking.

Effectively speaking, praise is a form of feedback and the structure / type of feedback someone receives can help or hinder their progress. If a culture chooses to praise, then there are certain principles to which it would be wise to adhere. These principles make it less likely for praise to reduce performance and long-term pursuit of the individual being praised, which may be the consequence of the misapplication of praise: praise effort; do not over praise; be clear and concise; do not praise by comparison; and, be cautious of sarcastic praise.²

**INSIGHT:** Learning is essentially who we are and not what we are forced to do.

One might not think that the positive things one says to others can be as destructive as negative labels. But, there are times when this is true. Rewards and praise can quickly condition others to seek approval such that they end up doing things to impress, instead of doing things for themselves. We must use discernment and examine experiences critically if we are to maintain the commonly possible experience of fulfillment.

Fundamentally, not all structures will facilitate the continuation and sustainment of lifelong learning. A community that neither acknowledges the value of learning, or worse, structures itself against its continuation is unlikely to sustain a fulfillment orientation and a meaningful direction of development. A learning-oriented community is respectful of the individual, and is a natural extension of a supportive social network of relationships. One of the continuing goals of a learning community is to facilitate an environment where learners are more likely to become or remain intrinsically interested and curious about life, which is a curiosity of ours. In a highly 'thought responsive' (i.e., an environment that responds more quickly to thought) social environment we need congruent community support to maintain our focus along lines that facilitate our life development [as we rapidly iterate our consciousness].

**NOTE:** A structure that regiment education leads to the regimentation of society. A society that encodes the value of freedom in the meaning of education as an orientation to our learning is more likely to maintain our individual fulfillment.

If we are to cultivate any culture it ought to be one of intense curiosity and inquiry. In an effort to facilitate self-directed experience the community maintains structures that allow people the time and space to reach their desired level of mastery and enjoyment. A community can provide resources and maintain structural environments that facilitate learning, which may include challenges and other opportunities.

A learning community is a "nutrient rich" environment. As such, it ought to facilitate a foundation of self-directed explorative education for its next generation where passion and an abundance of opportunity represent a system for learning. Necessarily, in community, we create environments where failure is recognized as an opportunity. After all, failure is the greatest of all "teachers" (i.e., failure is the only real "teacher"). One of the greatest scientists of the 20th century once said that the secret of his repeated breakthroughs was that he had made more mistakes than anyone else. Individuals with their self-esteem intact will always find ways to benefit from their failures as well as their successes. Herein, success means achieving a temporary goal that someone set for oneself.

A learning community works when we are committed to doing absolutely everything we can to provide a healthy, interesting, and nourishing environment for each other, though particularly, for the young. And, in that environment a young person will not be able to help, but learn. In community we are responsible for our own education and we caretake an environment responsive to our interests. We provide the conditions that allow us to educate ourselves. We learn from others of all age groups quite naturally.

**A fulfillment-oriented community is emergently designed by individuals who are self-sufficient in their living and effortful in their learning. A truly educated population needs no external controllers.**

When the adults in a society are continuously learning and acquiring new knowledge, understanding, and skills, the younger generation sees this as a good example of a lifelong learner and a value orientation toward self-development becomes commonplace.

In community, we learn that which we are eager to learn, we pursue that which we have a curiosity in, and we apply effort toward that which we desire. Here, we learn that which we desire to learn on our own initiative. We are free to choose our own materials, mentors, facilitators, and environments. The only learning that ever counts in life happens when the learner has thrown himself into the subject on his own without coaxing, bribing, or pressuring. The drive comes from the individual with the community responding to the individuals drive.

There are no required studies at any age, ever. Individuals learn of their own accord and discover that which they need in order to get where they want in life. Here, we experience the full meaning of responsibility from everyday experience. No one is thinking for you, and no one should be protecting you from the consequences of your actions. This is essential if we as individual among community want to be self-directed and the "masters of our own destinies".

**NOTE:** Today, we do live in a world with traffic and fires and disease, and hence, the clarity and
rationality of our communication is invaluable as is the respect we show toward less experienced and informed human beings (i.e., younger human beings) who would not knowingly harm themselves or otherwise place themselves in grave danger.

In community we learn according to our own needs and what is relevant to our lives. Herein, learning “works for us” (vs. for some authority) for it is authentic, it occurs in context, and it happens exactly when we are passionate and developmentally ready for it.

To fully understand a learner-oriented community one may go through a few of the principles that need to be “unlearned”:

- Unlearning the culture of blaming others, in order to be honest with our own mistakes.
- Unlearning the school- and media-induced embarrassment of using our bodies to do real and authentic work (i.e., physical tasks).
- Unlearning our modern and urban disconnect from nature.
- Unlearning the deference, submission, control or oppression which defines institutional relationships.
- Unlearning our own biases.
- Unlearning the belief that we can't build a new system to make the old system obsolete.

All of this unlearning is important, if we are to recover our innate capacities to nurture healthy relationships with one another, and to give and receive with authenticity and integrity. Be cautious, generations of government school graduates are running modern society.

**QUESTION:** How do we make sense of our social environment to build a community that facilitates our natural desire to learn about ourselves and our environment?

**FACILITATION**

*When we know and trust that our community doesn't judge, then we will get more from our community. Fundamentally, in a social environment we have to help others to ultimately help ourselves.*

There are many ways to help others learn, and one of the most effective ones is the facilitation of another's learning. The term facilitation has a liberatory connotation. Herein, facilitation refers to the process of being someone who shares in another learner’s learning process by actually helping them. Additional descriptors of facilitation include assisting, freeing, aiding, guiding, and empowering learners in their learning process. Put simply, facilitation is the process of helping other human beings learn when they want or otherwise need help learning.

**NOTE:** In order to “facilitate” a facilitator must be knowledgeable of the subject (or experienced in the practice) the learner is inquiring into or having difficulty with. Herein, facilitators use data to diagnose what the learner is having difficulty with. Practically speaking, you can’t help someone get up a hill without getting up the hill yourself.

Generally, the three skills necessary for effective facilitation are: **ATTENDING, RESPONDING, and UNDERSTANDING.** Attending involves the development of a physical and psychological relationship where full attention is given to the learner. Responding refers to a showing of empathy, respect, genuineness, and concreteness for the learner and the learner’s needs. The third skill, understanding, involves the communication of a refined understanding [and possibly a reciprocating communication of understanding]. Taken together, these skills suggest ways facilitators can build a more meaningful and efficient learning environment.

**CLARIFICATION:** The definition of facilitate is “to make easy” or “ease a process”. Literally, the word ‘facilitate’ means to make something, usually a process, easier or less difficult. Facilitators in the Community seek to make the learning process more efficient and effective while supporting each other in their progression toward a higher potential.

Practically speaking, facilitation involves providing support, guidance, and direction. A facilitator is thus an entity (human or computer) who helps, guides, and supports the learner where necessary or requested. In some cases this direction and guidance may be as simple as providing answers to questions and clarifying confusion. Generally speaking, the specific responsibilities and tasks of a facilitator will vary depending upon the learner’s needs and those learning activities the learner is involved in, and the degree of “experience” of the facilitator.

In other words, a facilitator helps another accomplish a goal. Facilitation is a relationship between someone with...
experience and someone who wants to learn.

Facilitation requires orchestration of a meaningful interaction for the learner. Effective facilitation is about the learner, not the facilitator. Although, in facilitating, the facilitator may be practicing what they have learned while maintaining a shared connection with another human being. Facilitation is learner-centered, and not self-sacrificing.

"You" have the potential to see your way out of any challenge. Facilitators are there to help and support you when you ask (possibly to be a "coach"), or when you may have put yourself at risk unknowingly, accidentally. Essentially, facilitators are responsive and helpful guides; they are more experienced learners.

**INSIGHT:** *Education is the freedom to explore and to learn through self-direction.*

In the context of the learning community as a whole it could be said that facilitation is the structuring of an environment to meet the needs of learners, while maintaining a safe environment for inexperienced learners, as well as fostering the creativity of all learners' self-expression.

In the facilitation of others’ learning it is often said that the best kind of guidance is modeling (Read: showing an observer through example and by multiple sensory relationships). When an experience interfaces with more of our senses, then we are more likely to recall that experience later (i.e., our technical recall of information increases when more sensory content is connected). Something as seemingly innocuous as spanking provides a moral model of relationships [for a young person that may last throughout their entire life].

If facilitators create anything, they create nurturing and fulfilling environments wherein life, and our coherent relationship to it, becomes experience. A responsive facilitator is sensitive to the needs of the learner in the context of the learners request for facilitation.

Herein, the facilitated learner overcomes a temporary learning hurdle and the facilitator practices and reinforces (Read: lays down additional myelin) their learning.

A learner says to a facilitator who is also a learner, “If you would kindly help me discover when I inquire.”

Facilitation represents the power of helping others through a variety of strategies to realize that they have a much greater potential than they might have initially thought. Facilitation represents the potential of helping others to realize their internal confidence for themselves. And, the amazing thing is, as soon as we start feeling confident in our own abilities we naturally help each other [under the environmental condition of cooperation]. It’s called “trust.” The basic navigational attitude that underlies the foundation for a self-directed learning community is trust -- we trust the intelligence, competence, and innate organizational capabilities of each other.

**INSIGHT:** *To understand the true nature of the universe it must be experienced and explored first hand.*

Herein, one-to-one facilitation is a temporary interaction of one experienced learner to one inexperienced learner for the purpose of assisting the inexperienced learner in overcoming a short-term, temporary learning challenge. The facilitator may provide guidance, direction, feedback, and most importantly, concrete assistance to another learner who is in need. The learner who is being facilitated has come upon a difficult and/or challenging learning problem and is in need of and requesting assistance. In effect, the experienced learner is “facilitating” the inexperienced learner on a subject or problem with which they themselves have demonstrated experience.

A teacher is a pre-selected content transmitter

**“CHILDREN DO NOT NEED TO BE MADE TO LEARN ABOUT THE WORLD, OR SHOWN HOW. THEY WANT TO, AND THEY KNOW HOW.”**

~ JOHN HOLT
regardless of the learner; whereas, a facilitator may transmit content if asked by the learner. A teacher controls the “learning” experience; whereas, a facilitator is a guide and recognizes that the learner directs their own experience. A facilitator is learner-centered and removes obstacles to learning; whereas, teachers are institution-centered and often put obstacles in the way of learning. Facilitators do not stand over you like authority figures. Facilitation is only “required” when the learner asks for it. Or, when an inexperienced learner may unknowingly be putting themselves in danger. For example, a young human needs facilitation prior to crossing a trafficked street, which they are unlikely to request – if someone doesn’t look both ways before crossing there is a significantly increased likelihood of them getting hit by an automobile; any mistake at doing this puts your life at risk on every trafficked street.

**INSIGHT: If I/we never get back to my experience then there is not integration.**

In the context of formal knowledge or skill acquisition, to be a listed facilitator for a subject, an individual must have completed the module (or socially demonstrated acquisition of the information) that the learner is presently having difficulty with. Note that community learning modules are discussed later in this document. Here, inexperienced learners have an awareness of whom has previously or socially demonstrated that they are informed and possibly able to help. Whereupon, a learner may pick/schedule an open facilitator based upon their own preferences and the feedback / reviews others have given about their facilitation.

Also, the system maintains an dynamic database of individuals who have openly selected for their names to be listed as someone interested in a topic for cooperative discovery/learning. Learning through discovery and equal peer relationships has the potential for increasing the rate of learning of all participants through a synergy of peer relationships. It is further relevant to note here that on the "cutting edge" of knowledge discovery there are not yet sufficient answers to questions, and so, self-directed and cooperative discovery will be the only way to find answers.

When learners work in an open, supportive and caring environment alongside each other day after day, even the most inexperienced, shyest learners become comfortable asking for help from other more knowledgeable learners.

Thanks to the Internet millions of people can have their say. This is, however, a double-edged sword. The opinions (Read: neither reasoned arguments nor evidence) of millions of individuals litter the Internet and create huge discord, confusion, and entrapment of time. When ideas and content are pooled, organized, and assessed for evidence and reasoned clarity, then the process of content acquisition (as a part of the learning process) becomes more efficient.

Those who refer to themselves as facilitators in schooling-oriented environments appear to have seized upon the sudden rise of the Internet and its abundance of material to transition from the role of “teacher as content provider” to “teacher as facilitator”. For many people, facilitation is just another way of teaching. The teacher behaves in a different way, encouraging the class or group to contribute, but ultimately tells them what to “learn”, how to “learn”, and how it will be assessed.

The type of facilitation that a teacher might provide in a schooling environment is not equivalent to facilitation among a learning community. Altogether, schooling ignores the personal nature of learning.

In the Community, facilitators exist to facilitate learning; they are there for the learners to answer questions, provide guidance, and convey/pull in resources. Here, a facilitator facilitates learning [and is respectful of the learner's direction and autonomy] rather than telling someone what to learn (teaching).

**Facilitators share in the potential social impact of a learning experience. In community, our individual learning gets tied up with the learning of all others and a synergy occurs.**

A facilitator who wants something from “you” is not someone “you” want as a facilitator. A facilitator's reward for facilitating is principally intrinsic — meaning s/he is getting just as much if not more out of the interrelationship as “you” are, because s/he is enjoying the process of helping another. The second reward is self-refining - the laying down of more myelin along a circuit by practicing what they already know.

**QUESTIONS: What facilitates inert behavior versus exploratory behavior? What generates passivity vs. curiosity behavior? How ridiculous it is to force people to do what comes naturally.**

Additionally, it is important for learners and facilitators alike to remember that removing symptoms of discomfort is not always the best action. Often, the symptoms are necessary. The symptoms are our feedback, and they help us learn and grow and recover. Take the human body for example: Inflammation is the body's attempt at self-protection; the aim being to remove harmful stimuli, including damaged cells, irritants, or pathogens - and begin the healing process. Inflammation is a symptom, and it is an essential part of the body's attempt to heal itself. Inflammation is also an indicator of injury that alerts us to take more care [with the location of injury]. The reality is that a learning environment fails its purpose when feedback is removed (i.e., when feedback becomes uncontrollable, or when there is "sheltering behavior"). In the real world if you touch a flame, you get burned. You experience physical pain that conditions you to avoid contact with flame in the future. Touching something which will burn is a great natural example of consequence, since the consequence is the same no matter how many times you experience it, and no matter how many people encounter it.
TEACHING

INSIGHT: Learning does not require mediation although the process of education can be made easier through facilitation.

Sugata Mitra speculates that education is a self-organizing system, with learning as its emergent and phenomenal outcome -- just let consciousness self-organize and wait until the learning happens. There is nothing else "you" can do. Facilitation is like gardening; the plants grow themselves. You plant the seeds, water and wait. One might then ask the question, "Can the young learn to read by themselves?" If the answer to this question is yes, and Sugata's speculation is correct, then "primary education" comes into question, for suddenly there is the realization that society doesn't need the role of a "teacher"; there are very few things needed besides the individual and access to a nutrient rich information environment.

Hence, teaching is not an action that exists. When a teacher thinks s/he is teaching, what s/he is in fact doing is, for example: verbally explaining; writing; visually demonstrating; drawing; dancing; or possibly even singing. But, s/he is not 'teaching'. A teacher who thinks s/he is teaching is actually reviewing for oneself something already known while presenting information into an environment and generally collecting a paycheck. If someone were to walk up to "you" with a question about a linguistic punctuation issue they were having, and "you" knew the correct linguistic punctuation rules, then "you" might show them or write them out. If the inquirer didn't understand then "you" could draw a picture or give other examples. When "you" perceive that they have learned the thing they wanted to learn, then the action is completed (i.e., "you" have facilitated their understanding for which they likely showed acknowledgement, and everyone can go back to what they were originally doing). They learned. "You" helped them learn (i.e., facilitated their learning). "You" were "the teacher", but "you" didn't do the work that resulted in learning. The learner did that in his/her own head. Anyone can put ideas in the air, but without another's active work no "teaching" can possibly take place. The term is not reflective of what we empirically know about that which we have identified as 'learning'.

So, if "teaching" means competently and compassionately facilitating learning, then teaching does exist, no? Here's the truth: teaching has no action to show for itself that is "teaching". You can't pour useful information into anyone else's ears or eyes against their will. We as individuals have the potential to direct the structuring of the contents of our own minds. You can learn, but we can't make you learn. And, if we try to make you "learn" through coercion and constriction, then we harm you; we harm your development toward your higher potential.

CLARIFICATION: Effectively, teaching is just the presentation of information, and tutoring is a more individualized and interactive one-to-one presentation of information.

When someone is "teaching" someone else how to do something and the individual being "taught" is thinking of something else or is only paying attention because there is a threat or bribe being applied to them, then what is the "teacher" actually doing? A "teacher" who thinks they are teaching is actually playing with, and otherwise fooling, themselves.

INSIGHT: Teaching isn't a thing you do to someone else. Rather, learning is something that you might, if you're lucky, get to assist with. When "you" are looking to help someone "you" might want to ask someone what help they actually need.

"Teach" has inherently negatively objectifying connotations. The word "teach" is a verb which places the teacher in the active role (subject) and the student in the passive role (object). It implies through the grammatical structure of any statement made using the word that the "teacher" is doing the work and the "student" is merely acted upon. The "teacher" has planned and prepared something, and the "student" has arrived to accept it. Whereas the concept 'learn' makes the "student" the

THE TERM 'AUTODIDACT'
The term ‘autodidact’ means “self-taught”. Generally, the term is applied to someone compelled to learn for himself/herself what s/he needed to know in life. In this sense, it indicates passionate motivation for learning which, in truth, is the only necessary ingredient. However, the term is still something of a misnomer. Firstly, it applies the concept of “teaching”. Yet, it may possibly be the only appropriate application of the verb "teach", for an autodidact is essentially someone who teaches oneself. Second, the term “auto” could imply that learning happens in isolation, which is almost never correct. Learning generally occurs in the context of a social and larger ecological environment. It does, however, accurately imply that learning is [in part] a meta-self-cognitive process. Also, the term might be useful in facilitating a shift in someone's perception of learning away from something someone gets given to something someone selectively takes (Read: chooses). Two possible synonyms for the term ‘autodidact’ are ‘self-education’ and ‘self-development’. In truth, we can (including children) “teach” ourselves complex knowledge.

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subject of the statement rather than the object. S/he is doing the work, not merely showing up and being the passive recipient of another's knowledge. And hence, there is no need for either the concept "teacher" or "student". They are unnecessary at best and divisionary at worst.

To most school teachers, knowledge is regarded as a substance that can be poured into the students' minds. Thus, "education" is seen as the process by which knowledge is transferred into the learner's minds (and to constructivists, "education" involves prodding and assigning so that individuals construct "their own" knowledge). Wherein, "teaching" is the packaging of knowledge for efficient transfer (and to constructivists, it is the evaluating of the quality of the constructed knowledge). Individuals become regarded as 'empty vessels', and the range of knowledge and central experiences that they come with is hardly acknowledged. Effectively, school becomes a mass production factory. And the lifestyle that it creates is one devoid of fulfillment. Alternatively, in community, we nurture our own and each other's inherent potential; herein, we carefully think about the structures we place ourselves in and we create for each other.

The reconciliation of the teacher-student contradiction is learning [that there is neither a teacher nor a student among community]. True education must begin with the resolution of this contradiction. Education within the institution of schooling maintains and even stimulates the contradiction through the following attitudes and practices, which mirror oppressive society as a whole; wherein, an oppressive society generates and oppressive lifestyle:

The teacher teaches and the students are taught. The teacher assigns and the students construct. The teacher knows and the students know not. The teacher thinks and the students are thought about. The teacher chooses and the students adapt. The teacher talks and the students listen. The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined. The teacher chooses and enforces, and the students comply. The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher. What does the teacher do? The teacher confuses the power of self-verification with his/her own "professional" authority, which s/he sets in opposition to the freedom of other human beings.

Here, one might come to ask themselves whether one has been repeatedly sold the story of a "powerful and great teacher"? To be sold "the power of the teacher" is to not realize that we are all learners; that we are [at least] self-directed and goal-oriented consciousness. We can self-organize and self-integrate without some external authority doing it for us. In practice, teaching disrupts the internal coherence of the intrinsically motivated individual, who may become worn down and psychologically crippled over time.

**INSIGHT:** "You are not telling me anything; you are allowing me to think. Don't set out to free the world if you have a cage in your head."

In understanding that we learn through experience we might come to realize that the ultimate "teacher" is our relationship to our environment. If the term "teaching" is to be used at all, then it is the process of self-reflection upon one's [past] experiences of and through an environment; it is not an entity. In other words, we can learn from that which has happened to us in life, and from it we move forward, letting the past guide and teach us. Therein, the environment and our responses to it are the actual opportunity creators for our learning.

**INSIGHT:** From the perspective of a learner there is no such thing as [the notion of] "teaching another". A "teacher" who thinks s/he is "teaching" is in fact not "teaching" [what s/he thinks s/he is "teaching"].

Fundamentally, learners are not dependent upon "teachers"; though ironically, the "teachers" are dependent upon the students for their income.

In general, modern society sticks individuals of all ages, though particularly the young, in classrooms where they have to sit, stand, and be quiet most days at the behest of an individual who has been told, typically speaking, that all individuals learn and think the same and should do so according to the ethics and principles and standards and procedures and paradigm of their institution. These people are enculturated to believe that this type of system is one of "progress", and that those who are opposed to it are to be codified as oppositional, and they must therefore be ostracised, shamed, and if need be, drugged for their opposition.

If there is something called "classroom control" or

**"WE MUST DO AWAY WITH THE ABSOLUTELY SPECIOUS NOTION THAT EVERYBODY HAS TO EARN A LIVING. IT IS A FACT TODAY THAT ONE IN TEN THOUSAND OF US CAN MAKE A TECHNOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGH CAPABLE OF SUPPORTING ALL THE REST. WE KEEP INVENTING JOBS BECAUSE OF THIS FALSE IDEA THAT EVERYBODY HAS TO BE EMPLOYED AT SOME KIND OF DRUDGERY BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO A MALTHUSIAN-DARWINIAN THEORY, WE MUST JUSTIFY OUR RIGHT TO EXIST."**

- BUCKMINSTER FULLER
“teacher control” in a society, then maybe individuals in that society need to go back and check their premises. For, if there are “learners” then there is neither “classroom” [control] nor “teacher” [control], and if there is either of these things, then there is not a [factual] understanding of learning. “Classroom management” is a euphemism because a classroom is a group of static items: a room; desks, maybe a whiteboard and computers. The classroom manages itself. “Classroom management” is really human management.

**NOTE:** An urge to control others is bad for our relationships, and that which is bad for our relationships is bad for learning, and that which is bad for learning is bad for our lives.

A community is built on trusting relationships. The urge to control what others learn is still a form of the urge to control others.

**NOTE:** What do many teachers often want to say, but usually do not? “If you just shut your little face, I will give you the gift of education; I will dump some knowledge on you.”

All schools, by spectral degree, are based on the notion that all kids are lazy and need to be forced to do this thing called “learning”. The emergent and experiential view is that we are all natural learners, which modern brain research does confirm. Worst of all, most school teachers in modern society believe that “their kids/students” are dependent upon them for their education. Not only is this untrue, it is harmful to both the “teacher” and the “students” (i.e., it is harmful to all learners). It is wise to continuously ask ourselves whether we see each other as self-directed humans with desires and needs, or do we see each other as storied roles?

The teacher says,

“You ask me why and I tell you: Because I said so, because I am your mother, your father, because I am the teacher, the principal, the authority figure. So by definition because of this role you need to obey, you need to conform, you need to comply, you need to be obedient and do as you are told. You need to do what I think is best for you.”

The person who has adopted the role cannot make a mistake; with a façade of being perfect, the protector, the legitimate authority, the saviour, the hero . . . the great and powerful teacher. The role of an authority [nearly] always comes coupled with infallibility, which creates a dangerous environment for everyone, which doesn’t necessitate tyranny, but it can certainly sow the seeds.

**QUESTION:** Who makes the choice about our own education with others around us acting as facilitators and helpers instead of being teachers? In your society, do “experts” present themselves in front of a classroom and then “give” students the knowledge of a subject? Contrast the resulting behaviors from time in a class environment with individuals who are facilitated and rarely if ever coerced in learning for themselves. The evidence is clear.

The understanding put forward herein is expected to be fairly foreign to traditional “educators” that are taught to select a pre-defined curriculum, pouring knowledge into individuals, and then subsequently testing them. In reality, many people don’t want to let go of the word because it takes the focus off of them and their marketable profession. By using the word teach (teaching, teacher, etc.) they can give themselves a pat on

**BUSINESS IS A LIFESTYLE**

One of the attributes of this lifestyle is the ‘work cycle’ (i.e., workday and work week). The work cycle is the allotted amount of time the worker is supposed to spend on work in a set cycle for which is received, in return, an agreed upon reward. The ‘workday’ is profitable for business, not because of the amount of work people get done in eight hours (the average worker gets less than three hours of actual work done in 8 hours), but because it [in part] makes for such a purchase-happy public. Keeping free time scarce means people pay a lot more for convenience, gratification, and any other relief they can buy. It keeps them watching television, and its commercials. It keeps them unambitious outside of work. We’ve been led into a culture that has been engineered to leave us tired, hungry for indulgence, willing to pay a lot for convenience and entertainment, and most importantly, vaguely dissatisfied with our lives so that we continue wanting things we don’t have.

We buy so much because it always seems like something is still missing and so we ought to be working. The culture of the approximately scheduled [eight-hour] workday is business’s most powerful tool for keeping people in this same dissatisfied state where the answer to every problem is to buy something from business. The work-week is a lifestyle choice more easily accepted through the school-week. What could your life look like without the lifestyle of business hanging around and without having been normalized to the cycle through schooling. In community we are not forced to be with one another because we are dependent upon one another. A job is not an ends, a job is a means to an ends. Careers don't just “work out for you in the end”; what works for you in the end is fulfillment, not a career Jobs are a consequence of a feedback loop between customers and businesses. In the community, the producers are also the users (i.e., “prosumers”), which establishes a different type of everyday lifestyle. Possibly, the revolution of money around the market cycle of owner > laborer > consumer creates a particular type of lifestyle; one that divides socio-economic access into social and economic classes of lifestyle (e.g., 1st class; 2nd class; and poverty class).
the back (and continue to feel good about the pay-checks they collect) for all the learning someone else does. It gives them the sense that they are doing something good for another. In community, there are no teachers there are only those who share in the process by which we are all learning and growing.

**NOTE:** The reality is that those who call themselves "teachers" are in fact just other learners who have adopted and adapted to an unfortunate set of socio-economic circumstances. Learning is not the product of teaching. Learning is the product of the activity of learners.

Teachers want attentive students. Learners are free to come and go when they choose. Teachers would not appreciate people randomly coming and going from their class. Conversely, there is no expectation or coercive reinforcement for your presence in a free presentation environment.

School is often the experience of sponging up information which is jettisoned when it is not needed for tests anymore. School is NOT designed to facilitate self-directed learning; self-directed learning is fundamentally NOT the experience of schooling. No school board or governance committee is in a better position to determine a course of study for another human being than that human being is for himself/herself. Teachers are not necessarily the benevolent providers of wisdom we are told they are. Don't accept something as the truth just because it comes from someone you respect.

**MAXIM:** What is TAUGHT and what is LEARNED can be two completely different things. For instance, parents think that they are TEACHING respect and obedience by spanking their kids. In reality, what the children LEARN is that the bigger and meaner you are, the more power you can wield.

One technique for finding just the right level of challenge for each “student” is so simple that few of us think of it: let the learner choose their challenges, and facilitate a value-oriented environment where they choose challenges wisely.

**IDIOM:** Those who can, do; those who can’t, teach (i.e., those who can’t do, teach).

Essentially, the above idiom implies that people who are able to do something well can do that thing for a living, while people who are not able to do anything that well make a living by teaching. In modern society there are many people in the market who are relegated to teaching because they didn't “make it” in their initially desired career field. However, the idiom is short-sighted, in part, because it doesn't recognize that teachers become victims of the system too. It is interesting to note that most people who end up teaching, even those to whom the idiom might apply, claim they did so because they want to “make a difference”.

In a socially governed school the teachers might say, “You kids, don't bully and don't use force against each other; you kids, you follow these rules”; but, we school teachers are going to force other people to pay our salaries. In truth, regardless of what we think we are teaching, we teach what we are and how we behave. If you did not before, do you now see the process of enculturation replicating itself among our species?

**NOTE:** Those who care too much about right answers can very easily slip into teacher mode and start instructing and commanding rather than just letting the conversation flow naturally. In community, we have to stop seeing ourselves as “teachers” (if we have started) because we are not. We are facilitators and co-explorers; we are co-learners.

Someone might then ask, “Isn’t teaching the best way to learn? This is just common knowledge.” No; and, it is unfortunate that it is considered “common knowledge”. A common saying in modern society is, “the best way to learn is to teach”, but in community we are all learners, creators, and sharers wherein our shared creations and communicated learnings have the potential of facilitating the learning by others.

**APHORISM:** Take kids and bore them to death and they will entertain themselves at your expense.

It is interesting to think about who wouldn't flourish in a loving, supportive, interesting, fun, nurturing, resource rich, and stimulating environment? In other words, every young person would flourish if the “parents” and “community” were morally aligned with fulfillment, so to say.
SCHOOLING

“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will spend its whole life believing that it is stupid.”
- Albert Einstein

School is a process (i.e., schooling) represented by an institution in the market and/or in the jurisdiction of a State. School is a process (i.e., schooling) organized around final results, rather than "commercial entity". Therein, schools are represented by the roles of "parent", "the State", and "commercial entity". Therein, schools are organized around final results, rather than continuous and life-long processes.

QUESTIONS: What are the characteristics of schooling? What is school for? What does schooling produce? What are the attributes and qualities of schooling? How does school influence our potential?

Schools are institutions in which learning is taken to mean "being taught". In other words, schooling is the idea that someone with training is doing something to someone. You want people to learn? Teach them. You want them to learn more? Teach them more . . . and more. Work them harder. Drill them longer. Keep them longer. And when a new technology comes along, just reorganize the structure with the same variables (i.e., do assignments in class and watch presentational videos for homework, or the opposite). Unfortunately, the advocates for such a system do not realize that learning is a process "you" do, not a process that is done to "you", which is true for everyone. It is basic. Learning, thinking and actively using your mind is the essence of being human. It is natural. With that said, some people have specific functional disabilities that affect their drives and others have specific mental impairments. These must be dealt with in special, potentially therapeutic ways.

INSIGHT: When the cure is more programming, then the "solution" is a 'problem'.

No one sticks people's faces in bowls of food several times a day to be sure they'll eat; no one closets people with mates

WHAT ABOUT BEDTIMES?

I am a parent; what about enforcing bedtimes in my children?

One ought to ask oneself what the meaning of a "bedtime" is when there is the understanding that our bodies have naturally evolved rhythms. What are you actually enforcing when you enforce this thing you refer to as a "bedtime"? We now understand that modern technologies, particularly lights and televisions that emit photons of blue and green light will interrupt or offset sleep cycles. In nature void of modern technologies, when the sun sets our bodies naturally begin shifting toward sleep, with the exception that ancestrally, those younger in age might still be active for several hours after the sun goes down. There is a natural timing cycle which we can entrain to, and the entrainment can be interrupted through modern technologies and practices. Using red and amber lights at night and shifting television screens and monitors toward a lower kelvin value can help mimic the light cycle we have evolved with. We might ask ourselves, how can we facilitate a change in the environment to ease us more naturally into sleep [so that we drift off to sleep when our body is ready instead of forcing a schedule or agenda]? Fundamentally, you can't force someone to sleep. Of note, exposure to sunlight for at least 15 minutes first thing in the morning is also fundamentally natural, and it helps to set the circadian rhythm. Clearly, we evolved to wake up and walk around outside wherein our retinas [at least] would be exposed to sunlight. Further, the foods that one consumes throughout the day, though particularly in the afternoon and evening, play a role upon when we begin to feel 'sleep pressure'. Temperature is another environmental factor. Goals and values also play a role. If we have more conscious awareness during the process of sleep, then we might be keener to sleep. In other words, do you dream and do you enjoy your dreams? Are you possibly practicing 'lucid dreaming'? And finally, the knowledge of what you dream and do you enjoy your dreams? Are you possibly practicing 'lucid dreaming'? And finally, the knowledge of what sleeping is and its value to performance is another factor. Sleep is when we build, cleanse, and consolidate our tissues (and memories). Hence, it is empowering to know that we can do things and know things which may facilitate sleep and reconnect us with our natural cycles, which will improve our waking-life performance. Here, guidance and a restructuring of the environment are significantly useful; imposing rules and arbitrary consequences are probably unhelpful and possibly hurtful, certainly disrespectful to the individual and to the individual's self-directed rhythms, which can become offset and disrupted by technology and may be different than one's own, naturally. The real question is, how do you as a "parent" seek consistency between your knowledgeable understandings about how individuals learn and have evolved to thrive, and your actual practices (i.e., your approach to connection) as a "parent"

Unschooling Means Giving Up the Power to Control by Wendy Priesnitz, Life Learning Magazine

Note: When someone goes from years of a strict bedtime to no externally set bedtime, then sometimes they binge; they go crazy and don't want to go to sleep. It can take time to reset natural cycles.
to make sure they'll couple. How ridiculous is it then
to force people to do that which above all else comes
most naturally to them. Ironically, everyone knows just
how widespread and overpowering curiosity can be.
If a person is determined to learn, they will overcome
obstacles and learn in spite of everything. Support, help
and facilitation just makes the process of learning more
efficient.
But, if “you” bother a person, if “you” insist she or he
stop his/her own natural learning and do instead what
“you” want him/her to do between 09:00 and 09:50 and
10:00 and 10:50 and so forth, not only won’t s/he learn
what s/he has a passion to learn, but s/he will also hate
you, hate what you are forcing him/her to do, and often,
lose all taste for learning, at least temporarily. Every time
you think of a class in school, just imagine a “teacher”
forcing carbohydrates, lipids, and proteins down each
student’s throat with a giant ramrod. It is an arcane form
of torturing ourselves.
School has very little to do with learning and although
some actual learning may happen in school the schooling
system was not designed to facilitate either the non-
contradictory integration of a more accurate model of
reality or an area for playing with a set of tools that
might be useful in the integration of understanding and
the solving of real world problems. Instead, schooling
is designed to facilitate conditioning. Fundamentally,
the ~15,000 hours of [primary and secondary
school] conditioning runs completely counter to the
propagandistic message that school is designed to help
“you” achieve your highest potential.
School is [in part] about feeding information into empty
vessels that was relevant to the work force at the time. In
a very real sense it is an institutional system for the
creation of robotic workers.
School is also a form of social [design] engineering
for moulding a population toward a particular end. In
other words, we know the historically designed purpose
for school as modern society sees it: John Taylor Gatto
outlines the history of the modern schooling system in
many of his works, and its distinctly structured purpose
is to make everyone the same for management purposes.
School is a Skinner box; it is an institution of operant
conditioning. It is designed to reinforce the artificial
limitations of ongoing social conditions and conditioning.
It is now public record that the school system has been
manipulating our minds for the agendas of entities and
establishments that do not serve our highest interests
and fulfillment. School achieves exactly what it is
designed to achieve: obedient employees; power hungry
leaders; and an underclass of dis-empowered followers
and prisoners.
School is a programming machine [for the mind
of the future generation – it is one of the principal
interconnections one might have when they are
plugged into an artificial limitation “matrix”]. One of the
greatest things young people can do is to reject it [as
a process]. Unfortunately, without a support structure
and a foundational approach toward integration many
who reject it end up in a state of limbo. If you go into it
without the awareness of what it is trying to do to you,
then you are likely to end up in a damaged state. If you
go in with your guard down, thinking that it is trying
to serve you and make you cleverer, then figuratively
speaking, “you are a lamb to the slaughter”. If, however,
you enter it with an awareness of its structure and
behavior, then you are more prepared to repel it.
Effectively, school is a system of coercion, by contextual
degree. It is the assimilation and conformity of someone
else’s mis-associated needs and desires. It is a system
that teaches you how to be a cog in the machine, another
“brick in the wall”.
In general, the practice of school is the performance of
unaided work and the arbitrary “learning” of irrelevant
and uninteresting facts. Do you remember this?
The schooling experience has a major and potentially
lifelong impact on an individual’s ability to learn and
one’s feelings of self-worth. There are serious and
potentially life-long consequences to going through the
process of schooling; and, they are most serious when
one doesn’t realize what it means to be a self-directed
learner, and hence, aware of how schooling is not
learning.

NOTE: The education system, despite its rhetoric to
the contrary, is a completely [industrial] time-based
institution. Virtually all of its major features are
formally/legally defined by and structured around
predetermined blocks of clock and calendar time (the
Industrial Age).

// RESPONSIBILITY AND PUNISHMENT

“School is indeed a training for later life not because
it teaches the 3 Rs (more or less), but because it
instills the essential cultural nightmare[:] fear of

WATCH JOHN TAYLOR GATTO
THE PURPOSE OF SCHOOLING,
(YOUTUBE)

www.auravana.com  |  the lifestyle system  / page 41  |  CDS-LS-002.2
The denial of self-responsibility in schools is threefold: freedom of choice; freedom of action; and freedom to bear the results of action. In other words, schools do not allow individuals to choose their own course of action fully, and also, they do not permit individuals to suffer the natural consequences of a course of action once taken outside in the real world. Schools as a matter of policy restrict freedom of choice and action, and as such, inhibit the integration of feedback through natural consequences . . . in the real and relationally meaningful world. It is the tenant of modern education that the psyche of a student suffers harm to the extent that it is buffered by the twin “evils” of adversity and failure, which effectively generates the psychological states of entitlement and helplessness.

CLARIFICATION: Discipline in the context of an authority is punishment by another name. In English, the term ‘discipline’ has different categorical meanings, it can also refer to someone who eagerly embraces various hardships and is working to “master” a skill. For example, you might take ice baths to develop courage and to gain the physiological (possibly epigenetic) benefits of cold adaptation and stress recovery. At a social level, this discipline [of mind] generally comes from a particular value orientation (which maintains social norms and societal expectations). Notice that we don’t call those individuals who help us clue in on various challenges (or the ways they were/are helpful) as “disciplinarians” – we call them mentors, possibly coaches, and always facilitators. Remember from the Social System specification that for every “behavior” we encounter, there’s an underlying want or need for which someone is aiming. Also, in English, the term ‘discipline’ is used to identify different fields of study, such as the discipline of writing, the discipline of geography, or of biology, for example.

Fundamentally, mistakes can contain loads of valuable information. However, through the process of schooling mistakes become associated with punishment. Eventually, learners end up in a situation of mistakes becoming something to avoid (and if not to avoid, then to sacrificially internalize), which induces trauma.

CLARIFICATION: Punishment is used by an authority to get someone to do something they don’t want to do or to stop them from doing something they want to do; and, it is often used to “teach a lesson”, which effectively degrades mindfulness in both the punished and the punisher. There are enough “natural consequences” in life; only an artificial and arbitrary ego imposes artificial or arbitrary ones. Punishment to alter behavior is destructive to all.

Punishment is a familiar practice to those who go through schooling. The school model penalizes you for failure. It demonizes failure; it is something that should be dramatically avoided. Therein, a failing mark or grade is a form of punishment. A poor evaluation by a teacher is a form of punishment. Discipline by an authority is punishment.

QUESTION: What does someone (e.g., a young human) learn from punishment? Punishment conditions fear. It programs people to fear being wrong (i.e., to fear failure or to fear potential), and hence, learning. Also, punishment and authority-driven discipline encourage covert behavior, which becomes an emergent behavior at the socio-economic level of a society.

In truth, your failings serve you, but we are so conditioned with the unpleasant and downright retributive consequences of failing in modern society, particularly in schooling, that we adamantly avoid failing, and thus, avoid the greatest opportunities for learning. So, we shy away from learning because failing is painful. In the real world, failure is simply feedback [to a learner who is able to remain objective].

INSIGHT: Neuroscience shows that the brain is changed through active experimentation, not by teacher-centered pedagogy. Our brain physically forms new neural connections when we look at our mistakes – your brain will actually “grow”. In a sense, failing is just another word for growing if you keep learning.

In community, we do not punish. Instead, we restructure our environment and our values where applicable, and we facilitate discernment and trustworthy, open channels of communication. Consider for a moment that a win/lose system based on punishment and sacrifice may actually be a race to the
bottom. What type of society would inculcate a state of fear among individuals that others in that society might hurt them; is this not the state of "terrorism"? How might coercive educational institutions maintain themselves without providing external motivations for the people in them to do a variety of things that they don't want to do? Punishment is entirely consistent with coercive educational philosophies. Extrinsic motivation is all about punishment and external reward.

“School is the advertising agency which makes you believe that you need society as it is.”
- Ivan Illich

### SOCIAL RELATIONS

Where do we see forced social relations? We see them in prison, in school, in many positions of employment, and in the military. Now, show me a place where forced associations exist where people are experiencing harmonious social interactions. Environments of forced association lend themselves quite well, and we all know this, to unpleasant types of behavior. How many issues and conflicts are consequences of young people being forced together? There are reasons why people bully others or behave in a socially corrosive manner.

School not only forces association, it also forces segregation. Does age segregation (i.e., division by age) take place anywhere naturally? Is anything more socially damaging than forced association and forced segregation in school by age and sex? Are not the “arts” of association and cooperation as valuable or more valuable than anything else you learn when you are young?

**IMPORTANT:** When you force people into a relationship you lose a huge amount of quality. Consider the systematic institutions of force in your life and then consider the reduced baseline of quality to which you have likely become accustomed and are accepting.

Schools not only make it difficult for those of different ages to relate to one another, they even make it difficult for individuals of the same age to do so through the enforcement of competition (the scarcity of education).

**INSIGHT:** School is the pollution of social harmony.

The primary, almost exclusive mode of relationship fostered by schools among children in the same class is competition. The pecking order and who is better than who, who is faster, smarter, taller, more attractive, who has the best this or that. Who is worse, stupider, slower, shorter and least attractive? If ever a system was designed to effectively produce competitive, obnoxious, paranoid, selfish and insecure social misfits, the schools have managed it. Yet, in the real world the most important social attribute for a stable and healthy society is cooperation.

Schooling often appears more akin to “education at the expense of others”, because “you” want to become better than others and outcompete them in school [for grades or praise] and eventually in the market [for a job and for limited wealth]. University programs often market themselves as the optimal path to becoming the best at a particular knowledge, skill, and subject area so that “you” can out compete others in the labor market. Similarly, some secondary schools market themselves as the best school to attend to get into the college of “your dreams”. Aren't most aspects of modern life a competitive game where we try to earn rewards and points in school so we can go out and compete for a job, compete for wealth, save to ensure that when we are past our prime we can still have a reasonable quality-of-life.

**NOTE:** School is a self-reinforcing competitive ethos. A portion of the children conditioned to appreciate a state of competitive training (i.e., go through the process of schooling) go on to become teachers. The most aspirational teachers become senior management and further reinforce the competitive sentiment.

The structural origins of the present schooling-education system are predicated upon competition as an outgrowth of the underlying socio-economic system. The root sources of problem in the market-state “education system” cannot be understood without also understanding the socio-economic system in which it is embedded. One of the immutable components of the modern monetary economic system is competition, which is drilled into us from birth: from companies having to compete with one another for market share, to people having to compete with one another for labor, to students having to compete with one another for grades, politicians for office, and nations for resources. It is a value oriented substructure in modern society. It is so deeply conditioned into us that many of us think that it is part of an inevitable human nature; rather than the narrow pursuit of one's own detached self-interest, which is useful and protective under conditions of scarcity. Fortunately, the reality of the situation is that everything on this planet depends upon everything else. The notion of a "trophic cascade" is just one example of this reality. If the earth is one single interconnected system and the well-being of human beings is dependent on maintaining the integrity of their habitat, then the supposed divisions that separate all of humanity are illusory. Thus, a cooperative systems approach that "manages" our earthly resources in the most optimized fashion; though, more accurately, it allows for a synergy of our understood experience into the arrival at a common decision. Conversely, school teaches that competition is the basis of the world.

In part, competitiveness outside of schooling stems from insecurity and insufficiency: the fact that for so many years the "student" needed to be validated and accepted into a social world that wouldn't see or accept him/her without bearing the proper approvals, authorizations, and insignias, some of which were limited in number.

In school, competition can be as subtle as playing the
games: the row that is quietest can go to lunch faster; and, who is going to get the prize for the best essay. All forms of grading and authoritative judging and evaluating foster a competitive spirit which transcends the schooling environment and roots its way into our social lives. If there are award assemblies where there is a trophy, a prize, a medal, a plaque, a certificate, or some form of recognition and we have decided in advance that not everyone can get it, then the message is clear, everybody else around you is there to be beaten.

Yet, the global school system claims that if it doesn't establish competitive environments it will be sacrificing the long-term "legitimate" objectives for children. One might wonder what these "legitimate" objectives actually are.

**IT IS HARD TO CONCEIVE THAT YOU ARE IN A PRISON WHEN YOU ARE EFFECTIVELY BORN INTO ONE.**

**/ FREEDOM/**

School is not the freedom of the expression of ideas, it is more akin to the forced or coerced acceptance of ideas. And, even if they can't control what you think, they can at least force you to pretend that you agree with them. And, if they can't force you to pretend to agree with them they will force you to stay in a "special safe place" for so many days out of the year and "out of your family's hair".

Generally, this thing called 'school' tells students when they can speak and when they can use the bathroom in addition to all of its other programming outside of the curriculum, just the milieu itself. What would not appear to be freedom after that? In part, this is why government uses schooling: it uses it to enculturate the young into a society of violence and aggression such that they are incapable of perceiving the violence and aggression inherent in the [modern] society around them when they get out. It actually sets a baseline for violence, coercion and aggression.

**QUESTION:** Do you have to ask permission to use the restroom? Asking someone you barely know if you can urinate . . . don't you find that a little bit weird and repugnant? School is often a dehumanizing experience. Granted though, there is a spectrum, and some schools are significantly less dehumanizing than others: the Sudbury valley school, Waldorf schooling, as well as Montessori education.

Schooling quarantines the learning process -- the knowledge areas are separated from each other, as if cross-contamination were a form of pollution, where history can't touch mathematics and chemistry can't be connected to physics or anatomy. The subjects are generally trapped and monitored, forced with conformity and consequence. Many of the young in this system are tormented by commercialized children who will outcast another for not wearing the latest fashion or being aware of the latest manufactured trend; it is the start of consumer pressure and "market forces" in those who will eventually become good consumers and good owners, and keep the money cycle going (keep capitalism running). Why are so many humans so mean in school, so aggressive and reactionary? Why do they appear as if they are in fight or flight mode, in their survival mind, in a prison that is shaping their perception of reality, in a physical and mental cage preparing them for the rest of their lives in the matrix, in an environment of insulting boredom? School acclimates children to boredom so that in the future they can work long hours at jobs they will more than likely describe as "uneventful, mind-numbing, and soul-destroying", in other words, as boredom. School inculcates children into boredom as an attitude, a habit, and a way of being in the world. Boredom is more than a consequence of curriculum and of teaching, it is actually an ethos; and one that lingers on into adult life. Education is to be done dutifully or avoided entirely, but never savoured or enjoyed. And, it seems odd then that those who are facilitated to be autodidacts, self-learners, those who are more likely to be home and family educated, to be "unschooled", are often asked, "weren't you bored at home as a home schooler?" These people are out of their minds; and the learners (or "unschooled" cordially ask back, "Don't you remember being in school?"

Schools are factories of envy, restlessness, monotony, tedium, and force. Just think back to the hours staring at pencils and pens, the mindless doodling, the staring off into space, the desperate passing of notes, the lines, the trying to look busy when you are about to start dozing, the wishing, the dreaming, the rules and orders, the scheduling and lockers, think back to what school was really like, and not some idealized fantasy or a few selected highlights from 13 or more years, and chances are you will recall being bored out of your mind.

"When you are free, then when you are bored, you are boring." This phrase reveals what might be the essence of self-education, and may be taken as reverse psychology, if you will. When you are free you don't have to learn because you will get into trouble, or you will fail a test, or because there is someone who is threatening and

"Schools have not necessarily much to do with education . . . they are mainly institutions of control where certain basic habits must be inculcated in the young. Education is quite different and has little place in school."

- Winston Churchill
cajoling you; you learn because you want to learn. In truth, there is something in you that wants to reach out and touch the world and wants to communicate with it and share experience; it wants to integrate and to facilitate.

Think about all those hours forced into boredom at school. Think of the absence of autonomy, of self-direction, and of the freedom to explore, trapped in a ghetto of peers. Do you even know who you are or what you have interest in anymore after approximately 15,000 hours of processing through such an institution?

Self-learning is a lifelong commitment; it is something which is natural and can be nourished, but it is also something that can be diminished. It is not something you do until you are 18, or you graduate a level, it is not a stepping stone to university or to a career, it is an ethos, like boredom, but possibly it’s opposite. Self-learning involves getting in touch with one’s inquisitive nature, to set one’s own standards for engagement and mastery.

“Whatever does not spring from a man’s free choice, or is only the result of instruction and guidance, does not enter into his very nature; he does not perform it with truly human energies, but merely with mechanical exactness”— and so when the laborer works under external control, “we may admire what he does, but we despise what he is.”
- Wilhelm von Humboldt

John Taylor Gatto wrote in an article published in 2004 that it is not the potential of self-education that has yet to be demonstrated, but that its success has to be suppressed in the service of compulsory education’s true purpose: the cultivation of thoughtless acquiescence and conspicuous consumption which defines our true culture and fuels the economy. Thus, the “education” system’s ultimate goal isn’t to impart knowledge, or to inspire the love thereof, but to train people not to think at a sufficient level because that is what makes them good employees and good consumers and good citizens. School is [in part] a mechanism for those in authority to maintain control of a potentially unruly citizenry.

When learning becomes compulsory, it becomes indoctrination. Effectively, schooling works against life and for turning us into machines.

Summarily speaking, school represents an artificial scarcity of choice. Of course, one of the most important things missing from schooling is the freedom of choice (i.e., the freedom to choose). School removes volition.

Volition is essentially your [free] will. And, the question everyone must ask themselves is, “Am I choosing this for myself? Am I making informed decisions, and am I acting in a constructive manner on my behalf regularly? Am I improving my circumstances? Do my actions generate or otherwise create more opportunities for myself and others? How are my actions affecting others? Are my actions lessening our opportunities?” To a great degree these are the variables that measure how much “I” have learned. When volition is removed education is no longer about learning and instead becomes about conditioning or modeling in another’s desired image.

When learning among community (i.e., “unschooling”) is equated with “alternative school”, then it can blind people to the possibilities of full on [radical] learning. No matter how extremely great or different a school is from a traditional school or the default standard, it is still a school. Learning as a whole way of life, particularly among a community of learners, can discover learning that no school can find.

INSIGHT: If school is this thing called a “social responsibility”, then force is a social value.

Adults can learn what they want to; that same freedom and respect and dignity ought to be extended to the youth of society. Schools treat children like children (and many parents do the same). In other words, there is not a lot of respect going on for young humans in modern society. In modern society the youth are beyond second class citizens; they are beyond prisoners in some cases.

INSIGHT: Personal goals are not equivalent to the scheduled goals set for you in school. The goal (i.e., “your” goal) in school is good marks on a routine basis.

/ PRISON AND PLAY

INSIGHT: Through schooling knowledge can become associated with pain. First, we learn to incorrectly associate school with learning. And then, we learn to correctly associate school with pain. And unfortunately, next comes the association between

SCHOOL DRAINS PASSION
PASSION DRIVES LEARNING
The things that one chooses to do voluntarily give one a sense of fulfillment, of completeness, and flow in their life; conversely, the things one is forced to do are an imposition and makes us emotionally distraught, upset, and distant. The experience of schooling is the experience of having something done to you by an outside force; school is [by degree] a prison for children (both in its internal and external meaning – it is a mental and physical prison principally for the regurgitation of belief). School is force; it is jail for the first part of your life. It is the inculcation of dependence and a lack of self-sufficiency; and some people make it through better than others. Only when one is imprisoned can an outside authority force another individual to “learn” something. In other words, school is an actual prison that children are forced to go to. School is not voluntary, otherwise it would be called ‘play’, which is what we naturally do when we are young.

Play is the ability to make mistakes without fear, which generates rapid cycle-time learning (i.e., rapid iterative learning). As such, play is activity that is directed by the player(s) oneself (or themselves). Play is an activity that you can freely join and freely leave [without fear of punishment]. In other words, you can quit whenever you want; there are no consequences from authority for losing interest or walking away. If you are not having fun, you quit, you walk away.

The presently emergent scientific hypothesis is: The

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**LEARNED HELPLESSNESS**

Learned helplessness is a mental state in which an organism forced to endure aversive stimuli, or stimuli that are painful or otherwise unpleasant, becomes unable or unwilling to avoid subsequent encounters with those stimuli, even if they are escapable, presumably because it has learned that it cannot control the situation. In other words, learned helplessness develops when an organism learns that its efforts are wasted and it’s easier to just conform, when it believes its problem is permanent. It is characterized by decreased motivation, failure to learn, and negative thoughts and emotions.

The learned helpless [behavioral] response pattern was discovered accidentally during the mid-1960s while studying the relationship between fear and learning in animals: psychologist Martin Seligman observed that after exposure to inescapable electric shock some dogs passively accepted the shock even when they could take action to turn it off. Seligman and colleagues discovered that the conditioning of dogs led to outcomes that opposed the predictions of B. F. Skinner’s behaviorism, then a leading psychological theory. In the attributional reformulation of the theory it was found that humans with a pessimistic explanatory style who perceive “negative events” as permanent, personal, and pervasive, are most likely to suffer from learned helplessness and depression. Certainly, learned-helpless individuals see failure as permanent (ability not effort), pervasive, and very personal. Learned helplessness has a high chance of occurring when someone feels a lack of control of one’s time and space and activities.

*Insight: Among the many things that schooling creates is learned helplessness in the face of authority. As a result of being harnessed for a period of time, even when that harness is removed, that animal may act as though it is still harnessed.*

Learned helplessness is formally defined as a disruption in motivation, affect, and learning following exposure to noncontingent (uncontrollable) outcomes. There are three essential elements to its definition: contingency, cognition, and behavior. It also produces three basic deficits in someone - cognitive, emotion, and motivational - which inhibit the desire to learn. For all practical purposes, learned helplessness involves a “giving up” that is incompatible with new learning. Contingency is the idea that there is an identifiable relation between one’s actions and the environmental response. In learned helplessness research, contingency is more often operationalized as its converse—uncontrollability—so that when an agent acts, there is no identifiable relation with a specific response. Cognition refers to the way one understands and explains contingency or lack thereof. And, behavior refers to the observable effects of being exposed to uncontrollable outcomes; including, relative passivity versus activity in coping with situations that are potentially controllable. The motivational deficit of learned helplessness aborts the initiation of a productive response. Teachers and parents often state that a struggling student isn’t trying, but research shows that such individuals have likely learned to be helpless to learn. The learned helpless individual believes s/he has no control over the learning process, and, after many failures, the gives up trying because it hurts too much to try. It is a cognitive deficit in that it is a learned conditioned response; it is learned rather than rational. Someone who has adopted a mental state of learned helplessness will experience some degree of cognitive debilitation, including a reduction in awareness, logic, and thinking. The emotional deficit is the experience of substituting energy-depleting emotions for energy-mobilizing emotions. The emotional deficit may lead to anxiety, depression and lowered self-esteem, which may result in anger, aggression, and avoidance.

Also, Education.com provides a reasonable article on the topic of learned helplessness.
cost of a decline in our freedom to play equates to an
increase in our mental disorders. It is the opinion of
Peter Gray that it is a cause effect relationship. Hence,
one of the effects of play deprivation is to make us
unhappy. In play we judge our own activity and are not
judged and evaluated and ranked and compared with
others by others, particularly authorities. Play is a context
of emergent organization. In the book “Free to Learn”
Peter Gray argues that children, if free to pursue their
own interests through play will not only learn all that
they need to know, but will do so with energy and
passion. Therein, Gray provides evidence and articulates
how all people are born to be self-directed learners. He
has conducted several research studies on individuals
who were never coerced to learn.

The scientific finding is that depriving rats of play has
an effect on their psychology, their personality and
their behavior. When these deprived rats become young
adults and they are assessed for their emotion stability
and positive interconnectability, they are found to be
emotionally crippled in comparison to control rates
whom are allowed to play as they are growing up. Note
here that there are ways of raising rats so that aren’t
deprived of other social experiences, but are deprived
of play. Those that have been deprived of play, if you
put them in a somewhat novel environment, they often
freeze in the corner, they don’t explore the environment
as a normal rat would; they don’t habituate to their
environment. And, if you place them with an unfamiliar
other rat they alternate between freezing in fear and
lashing out with inappropriate and ineffective aggression.
This is analogous to the kinds of behaviors we see in
children today in modern society. In rats, this is extreme,
they have been totally deprived of play; children in
modern society are not totally deprived of play, but they
are partially deprived of play. School shackles our instinct
to learn and to play.

One of the things that children learn while they play
is how to deal with strong emotions. In play we are
learning how to process strong emotions and come to an
emergent understanding of our capabilities. For example,
we may be learning how to be in a fearful situation
and how to overcome it. I can feel this fear and I can
overcome it, I can handle this situation effectively and I
can process these emotions.

In social play we learn how to not be self-centered and
how to pay attention to the needs of others. We come
into the world with the desire to play with others, which
leads us to learn how to attune to the needs of others.
When children are playing with other kids and there
are no adults there to solve their problems for them,
then they have to pay attention and learn to adapt, to
compromise, to negotiate, otherwise the other kids
will quit and just leave them. And quitting is a powerful
lesson; it is a learning opportunity. It represents the
potential that the next time we play together again we
will be more attuned to each other’s needs so that we
maintain play and no one quits. The process effectively
facilitates our attunement to others’ subtle expressions
of whether they are having fun, or not. So, in play we
learn to meet our own needs while also helping others
meet their needs. We are social animals and we need to
get along and interact with others in such a way that they
find us a pleasure to be with as opposed to a pain to be
with.

Play is a creative activity. The essence of play is that it
is fun; and hence, when you play you find your interests.
People find what they enjoy doing and they develop real
skills while doing it. The secret to living the good life is ...
play.

“Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories,
schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble
prisons?”
- Michel Foucault

THE NARROWING OF OUR ‘SENSORY
FEELING GATE’ THROUGH SCHOOLING
AND TEACHING

Our senses are designed to communicate meaning
to us of the place/space we are in, and we then
craft responses within that context. But, in modern
society we have now consumed poisoned meanings
and feelings and material by the ton, and our
senses can no longer taste toxin from nutrition.
Most young humans walk into school and say, “This
feels horrible”. And then, the parent or teacher
says, “Sorry, you have to stay here for 14 years or
about 15,000 hours . . . at least.” What sort of a
‘double bind’ might that create in someone?
Someone placed in such a position is likely to
deaden their feelings (or “feeling sense”) so that
s/he can continue to remain in a place that by its
very nature is not supportive of life and well-being.
When confined to a place that feels “bad”, after
a while, our “feeling sense” has to dull [for us to
survive]. We shut down our feeling(s) because we
have to endure it and get through it, and survive.
Those who attempt to delve too deeply into the
meaning [behind schooling and teaching] often get
punished or ostracised. Therein, young humans lose
their sense of childhood wonder about the nature
of the universe. They shut down because most of
that which is coming into them (i.e., is being felt) is
something that feels so bad that they don’t want to
feel it. Effectively, over time school shut down our
intrinsic drive and curiosity; it teaches us to ignore
[our sensitivities to life and to our fulfillment].
We become inculcated through the school system
into an experience that is commercial, reduced,
competitive, and that constantly requires deference
to an authority.

Once something has been gated (i.e., "shut out" or
"closed out"), then that which can be perceived of
the world around becomes artificially limited, until
an event occurs that re-opens the gated channels.
You (as a “student”) think school is a prison and hate it, and all the adults tell you that you just don’t understand. This carries with it the probability of you believing that you are “defective” when you are not such a thing – school maims intuition (and it cuts the legs off of will). It makes independent thinking extremely difficult.

You aren’t defective for feeling that school sucks, that school is like a prison or that you are being psychologically conditioned and tortured. Adults that are telling you something else are kidding themselves.

NOTE: You can’t call something a “service for kids” if they are forced to be there and they hate it. That is a weird word to use, “service”. Compulsory is not “service”.

NOTE: In modern society, many of the people who embody the problems associated with self-development — politicians, administrators, and teachers — are also the ones charged with solving it.

WHAT DOES SCHOOL TEACH?

“School prepares for the alienating institutionalization of modern life by teaching the need to be taught.”
- Ivan Illich

School is what it teaches -- school is not its teachers. Schools teach conclusions [to the young] who might otherwise be having their intellectual abilities encouraged and curiosities fostered [in a fulfillment-oriented community environment]. Anything less is not “fair” to the young. Unfortunately, for many people, the encouraging of their child’s rationality and curiosities may lead their child to conclusions that are uncomfortable for them; and a lot of people [would rather] choose to avoid that.

In school, many students learn that they should look to the older, more experienced people in their lives to tell them what to do and who they are. Therein, they intuitively learn to expect to be taken care of in this way. Another thing students learn in school, particularly public school, is that they learn their place in life . . . which is important. They learn to settle for their lot in life, while at the same time envying those who [seem to] have more in their lives. In other words, school teaches people their place in life.

School teaches that education is to be carried out as a chore.

What else does school teach?

1. It teaches that truth comes from authority. Mostly, the authority figure stands up in front of you, telling you when you have to be there, when you can leave, and what you do while you are there. The school authorities are preparing you to be an adult whereupon you will acquire a greater authority (e.g., a boss or leader) who gives similar commands.

2. It teaches the confusion of intelligence with memory and recall. In reality, intelligence is not the ability to repeat or remember what someone else has told you; and, it is what you do with your intelligence that matters.

3. It teaches that accurate memory and repetition are rewarded by society. You remember what the teachers have told you, and you repeat it where the teachers tell you to (on the exam or in talking to me), and the authority will say you passed, and others will find you intelligent because you “got good marks and evaluations”; whereupon, your prospects for a good university and good career will improve.

4. It teaches that non-compliance is punished. Challenge the authority figure at the front of the classroom, or in the circle, don’t agree with them, refuse to do what they say because you don’t agree with them, and then, there is punishment and disciplinary action.

5. It teaches us to conform intellectually and socially, or face not being accepted. Because, that is the easiest way to get by without hassle and upset. It is a way of preparing young people to become adult[ed] slaves for the rest of their lives.

In school, students are told, ordered, and assigned [content]. In other words, students are told what their assignments are through orders from authority. Hence, there are [at least] four lessons of school:

1. Obedience. Everything is already known and has been decided by your authorities.

2. Conformity. You will join us and participate in this polite society.

3. Punishment. If you don’t participate politely then you are going to stand out and there will be [at the very least] social consequences.

4. Apathy. We don’t want your self-direction interfering with our lesson plan.

John Taylor Gatto is one of the more prominent critics of the idea of a public school system. His observations and criticisms of the public school system were distilled into 7 lesson that the schools teach, which he wrote into his work “Dumbing Us Down: The hidden curriculum of compulsory schooling”. These 7 lessons are quoted below:

1. Confusion: The first lesson I teach is confusion. Everything I teach is out of context. I teach the un-
relating of everything. I teach disconnections.

2. **Class position:** The second lesson I teach is class position. I teach that students must stay in the class where they belong. I don't know who decides my kids belong there but that's not my business. Stay in the class where you belong.

3. **Indifference:** The third lesson I teach kids is indifference. I teach children not to care about anything too much, even though they want to make it appear that they do. Turn on and off like a light switch.

4. **Emotional dependency:** The fourth lesson I teach is emotional dependency. By stars and red checks, smiles and frowns, prizes, honors and disgraces I teach kids to surrender their will to the predefined chain of command. Rights may be granted or withheld by any authority without appeal, because rights do not exist inside a school.

5. **Intellectual dependency:** The fifth lesson I teach is intellectual dependency. Good people wait for a teacher to tell them what to do. It is the most important lesson, that we must wait for other people, better trained than ourselves, to make the meanings of/in our lives. The expert makes all the important choices; only I, the teacher, can determine what you must study; or rather, only the people who pay me can make those decisions, which I then enforce.

6. **Provisional self-esteem:** The sixth lesson I teach is provisional self-esteem. If you've ever tried to wrestle a kid into line whose parents have convinced him to believe they'll love him in spite of anything, you know how impossible it is to make self-confident spirits conform. Our world wouldn't survive a flood of confident people very long, so I teach that your self-respect should depend on expert opinion. My kids are constantly evaluated and judged. People need to be told what they are worth.

7. **One can’t hide:** The seventh lesson I teach is that one can’t hide. I teach children they are always watched, that each is under constant surveillance by myself and my colleagues. There are no private spaces for children, there is no private time. Class change lasts three hundred seconds to keep promiscuous fraternization at low levels. Students are encouraged to tattle on each other or even to tattle on their own parents. Of course, I encourage parents to file their own child's waywardness too. A family trained to snitch on itself isn’t likely to conceal any dangerous secrets.

These lesson structures are highly likely to re-generate faith in authority as well as self-sacrifice to authority. In a very real sense, learning is dangerous to authority. Here, a community may recognize that it need not regenerate faith in anything; we can verify existence for ourselves through our experience(s), and coordinate therein.

**INSIGHT:** School is a social conformity structure designed to construct individuals who may be more easily controlled [by the authority of the day] through their faith and their sacrifices. In school we are trained in the limitation of our imagination; we are told and instructed about what is and isn't possible. Our imaginative possibilities are artificially limited and socially constructed by others.

What is it that the process of schooling will teach anyone, regardless of what is being taught? It is to “behave”, it is to “defer to authority”, it is to “memorize facts by rote”. Often, though not always, school is one class after another of apparently unrelated “subjects” in which you just “memorize” what is being thrown at you, and if you don't, there is punishment. What kind of a view of oneself and the world does that create? What kind of a person does that create? What kind of an understanding of values does that create? And, to put it slightly differently, are you creating people who might endanger your own future as you age in that society? Are you creating fulminated individuals who have everybody's interests at heart, who can think in terms of a fulfilling context and adapt and change their thinking as new information becomes available? No, schooling does not and structurally speaking, cannot do this. The system is what it produces; and, it produces a standardized and marketable product primarily for the State and for the [cultural] market.

**QUESTION:** How might the structures to which we expose our young possibly be creating broken adults?

In school, students are taught that they get rewards for obeying and conforming. In other words, they are rewarded (or not punished) for sitting still, shutting up [when told], speaking [when expected], and answering questions according to the plan.

In most schools, people learn that graduation comes through “credits”. This idea of a “credit” is visible and plays a role in the monetary economic system also (it goes by the same name). In other words, students learn that at the end of “learning” there is something called “graduation”, and “graduation” comes from having accumulated enough points, credits, or “positive” subjective evaluations. Similarly, to be accepted into the monetary market, you too must have credit in the form of currency (i.e., purchasing power) or capital ownership.

Questions are a threat to authority. Ask questions and notice the “authorities” around you. Beware; you may be punished for doing this.

Fundamentally, school teaches you to trudge through life according to the scripts of others. Trudging through to get a piece of paper (diploma) to trudge through some more to get more paper (money). Hence, in part, the schooling system exists to sort people for the market. The market needs some people to work in factories, some to work in offices, some need to be managers, and some need to be policy and decision makers. The market needs employers, laborers, and consumers; it needs money circulation. The current educational system exists to sort people out and to prepare them for citizenry in a market system overseen by a State. Is that truly
education? One might then ask, “How will the economy work if everyone has a high level of education and a self-directed nature?” You may wonder . . .

**INSIGHT:** In school, they tell you what to believe, and then, you have more schooling or you become a “professional” practicing in what you have been schooled.

**/FORCE/**

Most of schooling is the process of having opinions formed for you without engaging critical thought and discernment. Most of the school experience is about you showing up and being evaluated for what was prepared by someone else.

School teaches that the school schedule is something that must be followed . . . or else. School teaches individuals to attend, to memorize, and to perform on command, or else. In other words, school is force for “your” own good. It uses compartmentalization and chaos to reinforce the need for authoritarian order; while removing individuals’ natural ability to organize, plan, and integrate for their betterment. If you, as an adult, don’t feel like you have a tremendous amount of self-efficacy, then it is important to realize that a psychological sense of disempowerment has likely been built into you through those 12 or more years of experience in schooling, which at least affects your thinking, and ultimately, your efficaciousness. Oddly enough, some people can get pretty far in life never experiencing or even understanding intrinsic motivation. Some people live their whole lives never entering into the state of flow.

Force feeding individuals information that has no apparent relevancy or relationship to their lives and then assessing their regurgitation establishes a less than ideal environment for fostering positive, serving emotions in learners.

An education system based upon force creates anxiety, stress, and frustration within all individuals under its control. Such a system serves only to control others, and not to support others in their self-directed freedom and intellectual liberation. Observationally speaking, the force-feeding process permanently sours individuals on learning and the mechanisms are well described in Alfie Kohn’s work entitled, “Punished by Rewards”.

Forcing students under threat of punishment and coercion to take exams is highly likely to lock the true capabilities of individuals. Forcing students to complete work and judging their finished products can create serious stress responses. Such an environment will modify behaviors, decisions, and cognitive processing. The stress individuals experience due to threat and judgment is likely to cause them to act and think in ways that are less than optimal for their well-being and the well-being of the social environment.

**INSIGHT:** Many schools are actually funded by the threat of force (i.e., they are funded through taxation).

**/STRESS/**

It is a natural and healthy response to fight back against oppression (i.e., the forced un-fulfillment of needs), to escape, or to seek help. In a system based upon authority we either conform or rebel, both of which lead to self-destructive behavioral patterns. Or, we escape the trap entirely and build a new system that makes the old one obsolete. But, what if you are in a position where you realize that fighting back is futile because the opposing party has “authority” and/or a monopoly on violence (to escalate it infinitely beyond your capability). Such a structure has the potential of maiming self-empowerment (i.e., generating self-helplessness) and wasting cooperation. How might someone’s brain deal with the overwhelming stress being imposed on them under such aberrant conditions? One way is to “tune out” or to enter a dissociative state as a natural defensive state of the brain [in part] for blocking conscious awareness of emotional pain. Effectively, some people disassociate as a way of dealing with their environment, and this disassociation persists.

The actual effect of school is to put some people into dissociative states and states of psychosis. The belief in “authority” is actually a state of psychosis involving a “loss of contact with reality”. As is detailed in the Social and Decisioning Systems, there is no such thing as “authority”. Effectively, the process of schooling creates psychotic symptoms in people by conditioning them to

“Modern schools & universities push students into habits of depersonalized learning, alienation from nature and sexuality, obedience to hierarchy, fear of authority, self-objectification, and chilling competitiveness. These character traits are the essence of the twisted personality-type of modern industrialism. They are precisely the character traits needed to maintain a social system that is utterly out of touch with nature, sexuality, & real human needs.”

- Arthur Evans
believe in and respond to those who themselves believe they are authorities. In modern society, these psychotic symptoms might appear normal to most of the population because most people have gone through the process of schooling or a similar indoctrination process (i.e., they have had the belief inculcated into them). However, in a cooperative and fulfillment-oriented community based upon the natural environment, the so-called “normal” behaviors expressed by people in modern society would be seen for what they really are: characteristic symptoms that indicate a level of severe malfunction where the person is unable to differentiate real from not real.

**INSIGHT:** *When we fracture our empowered selves we might slowly begin to self-destruct. A social structure can facilitate in our fracturing, just as a different structure might facilitate in our integration and fulfillment. Figuratively and literally speaking, when a horse is “broken” it no longer even tries to rebel.*

It is common knowledge that unwanted stress negatively affects learning and memory. The man who gave the world the “conditioned response” was also one of the first researchers to recognize the profoundly negative influence that stress has on the learning process. In 1924, during a major Leningrad flood, water surged high into Ivan Pavlov’s laboratory. The terrified dogs that Pavlov had spent weeks and months conditioning were trapped in their cages and had to paddle for their lives with their noses just barely above the high-water mark. After these animals were rescued, Pavlov was shocked to find that the stress of the flood had produced such profound changes in these animals’ brains that they had unlearned the conditioned responses he had worked so hard to implant. Recent research confirms Pavlov’s findings. Over 125 studies of more than 36,000 individuals have shown conclusively that the more stress you are under, the lower your memory performance, no matter how it is measured – by grade point average, IQ, or any other form of achievement test.

There are [at least] nine primary reasons why excessive and unwanted stress significantly decreases learning and skews decisioning:

1. Stress can atrophy and wither neural connections.
2. Stress can wipe out memory by literally killing neurons.
3. Excessive amounts of stress inhibit the creation of new brain cells.
4. Stress negatively affects specialized neurons called glial cells, inhibiting them from transporting nutrients, cleaning up neuron waste, and generating the insulation that surrounds neural wiring.
5. Stress compromises learning by promoting the negative expression of specific genes, resulting in the creation of neural tangles, the obstruction of working memory function, and a propensity to engage in reckless behaviors.
6. Stress can cause neurochemical reactions in the brain, producing "neural static", which garbles the brain's ability to effectively prioritize information for inclusion into working memory.
7. Stress can weaken the body’s immune system with the consequence that it reduces someone's desire and energy to learn.
8. Stress destroys the brain's ability to effectively drop into the incubation states (see [The Incubation Stage of Learning] and [Sleep – the Most Powerful Incubation Phase of Learning]).
9. Stress causes a shift in neural energy (and blood flow) away from our most flexible and evolved neural structures to our most fixed and least-evolved structures. This neurological “downshift” has the potential to “blank out” our learning and creative abilities, while also negatively affecting our capacities for big-picture thinking and planning for the future, as well as reducing deep empathy and compassion for others. It also increases impulsiveness, which leads to the high number of behavioral problems seen in stress inducing institutions.

If learners begin to feel aggred upon, threatened, subjugated, or alienated, they are more likely to stop learning, start arguing, cease participating, or perhaps drop out [mentally and/or physically]. This is simply the fight or flight reflex taking effect, which leads to [a state of] disassociation [with one's environment].

**STATE INDOCTRINATION**

*The aim of public education is not to spread enlightenment at all; it is simply to reduce as many individuals as possible to the same safe level, to breed a standard citizenry, to put down dissent and originality.*

- H. L. Mencken

The process of schooling removes [by contextual degree] the self-reliance and self-esteem of individuals [while instilling them with fear] to make them more malleable and susceptible to authority; it effectively trains deference [to authority]. In other words, schooling trains people to defer to “authorities” (sometimes also known as “experts”, “teachers”, and other “professionals”, “leaders”, or “owners”). Bluntly speaking, school emphasizes regimentation and conformity while it leads
people around and dominates them by directing and scheduling their development. Once we have established that conditioning is indeed a major tactic of public school, we have to ask what the students are being conditioned for. Again, candidly speaking, school is a place where human beings are trapped and their minds are opened as a dumping ground to whomever controls the curriculum. And, over the years, a variety of different interest groups have tried to shape the curriculum.

A honest State teacher: “In school, we don’t teach you discernment and how to optimize your thinking; instead, we teach you attitudes and behaviors, which leads to a more purposeless attitude and mentality in you. The schools are the principle vehicle through which we make great citizens, workers, and soldiers, where most have jobs and everyone’s rights are protected, through our teaching. Effectively, school is an opportunity to make useful objects of labor and sacrifice, to the nation.”

School often overlooks the negative factors of a given society, exaggerating the positive, and providing a superficial understanding of its meaningful operation [and structural purpose]. As such, school becomes an efficient structure for inculcating beliefs and other patterns into people, principally, the belief in authority. In modern society, the greatest authority for some is the State [or nation] and for others it is the market [or business, ownership]. In other words, the State is a god in modern society for some as the Market is for others. One ought to ask themselves how that might have happened – could it possibly have something to do with the nature of schooling? The state appears to make a lot of sense after 15,000 hours of schooling (or approximately 12 years). Allegiance to the state is implicit in much of schooling, and it is still noticeable in many alternative schools.

NOTE: Approximately 100 years ago the schools started putting the State in all of us through compulsory "public education".

Schools are autocratic institutions designed [in part] to indoctrinate students into an autocratic socio-economic system. Practically speaking, school instructs individuals in their identity as the citizen of a nation-state and a future laborer/owner in the market. Through schooling our resistance to authority is bred out of most of us. In practice, schooling is a behavior system that trains people like people domesticaly train animals. School exists [in part] to create a uniformed pattern of response to authority – that is the outcome and was [quite possibly] the intended result. Yet, it is also true that the claim that school is solely about control is an overly simplistic narrative.

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLING PRIMARY: Good citizenship is good attendance and good grades. The regimentation of education maintains the useful regimentation of society.

If education is enforced in any manner, then surely it is not about personal development . . . it is about conformity. It might be interesting to note that in Germany in 1936 a law was passed that made it mandatory for all German youths to be educated in National Socialism through the Hitler Youth Program (except for Jews). The Nazi’s even punished parents with jail time when they would not allow their children to join the organization. Over time, the youth of the country began to regard Hitler as a god-like figure/leader. The National Socialists became willing to die for his cause. In modern society also, schools are reproducing similar, though significantly less caustic, authority-oriented belief structures. It was not until very recently that the act of homeschooling was not a seriously punished offense, in Germany.

Learning is not about entering an institution that is organized by policy and managed by a collection of bureaucrats and security officials that are there to make sure the policies are followed. Like the State and industry, school treats “students” as mere units moving along an assembly line governed by a manager and policy / procedural documentation.

NOTE: In the bureaucracy of school, kids are just a

AN INDIGENOUS UPBRINGING FOCUSES A LOT AROUND ALLOWING THE YOUNG TO EXPERIENCE THINGS WITHOUT A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON MAKING SURE THAT THE YOUNG DON’T HARM THEMSELVES (WITHIN REASON AND ENVIRONMENTAL ALLOWANCE). THEY GOT CUT AND LEARNED ABOUT KNIVES. THEY BURNED THEMSELVES AND LEARNED ABOUT FIRE. IN OUR SOCIETY, ESPECIALLY WITH CHILDREN (AND THE STATE SEES ITS CITIZENS AS CHILDREN), MOST PEOPLE TRY TO INSULATE THE YOUNG FROM THE WORLD USING FORCE AND CONTROL, “STAY AWAY FROM THAT FIRE OR ELSE . . .” SO, WHAT THEY LEARN IS NOT THE DANGER OF FIRE, WHAT THEY LEARN IS THE DANGER OF NOT LISTENING TO THEIR PARENTS OR AN AUTHORITY FIGURE, AND GETTING PUNISHED.
Despite their “democratic” claims, the few owners with the greatest wealth in modern society have long seen compulsory schooling as a mechanism for maintaining control of a potentially unruly citizenry. In 1909, Woodrow Wilson, then president of Princeton University, put it this way in a speech to the New York School Teachers Association, “We want one class of persons to have a liberal education, and we want another class of persons, a very much larger class of necessity in every society, to forgo the privilege of a liberal education and fit themselves to perform specific difficult manual tasks.” A scarcity-oriented economy doesn’t have a need for creative and cooperative systems thinkers.

INSIGHT: School is a bonding experience. The question is, to what or to whom is one being bonded? When we learn superficially, then we only recognize reality superficially. Schooling creates [in part] a superficial learning environment, the result of which are superficial individuals. Just like the industrial diet has created physiological dis-ease conditions, the industrial education has created psychological dis-ease conditions.

In school, children are taught to be servants [to an authority]. School is not about building self-reliant, confident and cooperative individuals, but about building a servile class of people; a class of people subservient to the greatest owners; a class of people who are unlikely to freely cooperate and express their creativity and imagination when they encounter a problem (i.e., they do not “cross the chasm” of self-integration). Instead, they become thinking servants who do little more than stimulus-response. Instead of crossing the chasm on their own they have to wait for an authority, teacher, expert, leader, or manager to tell them what to do next or to give them the resources through some requisite exchange. Some people become so disconnected from reality that they can’t even fulfill their own needs. It is the creation of a naive class of people, the extension of adolescence, the generation of a mass of people who become absorbed into the collective chaos of modern society.

What if school included the notion of an education as the idea that it is possible to self-direct and to self-integrate? Then, it is likely that the population would begin cooperatively coordinating its efforts at scale, and individuals would stop turning their ability to navigate over to an authority, which would essentially mean the end of schooling, as well as the end of many other socio-economic institutions reliant on the reinforced regeneration of the value of competition in modern society.

QUESTION: How might school and consumerism have programmed you to function? Through schooling the question “why” becomes, “Why aren't you listening to me?” There is a saying, “Strings attached often turn out to be chains”. Are these strings going to make our independent thinking difficult. There is a schooling primary and it says, “Want them to learn more, teach them more.”

INSIGHT: The relationship between “State” and “citizen” is often related to the relationship between parent and child. A child who is disobedient to their parents may be punished. A citizen who is disobedient to the dictates of the State may be punished.

In a sense, the State and other forms of authority are giving “students” assignments (as work dictates) at a very early age. They say, your school work is your duty as a student, as a “citizen”, as someone who has yet to begin living their own life.

QUESTIONS: Where are social hierarchies being reinforced by schooling?

/ GRADES

NOTE: Inappropriately, guilt and shame are used as means to motivate you to action, and this happens in all cases where authority exists.

When students are given grades in school, three things tend to happen, and this is the scientifically studied result:

1. Students become less excited about and interested in learning. The results of every study on the effects of grading and learning have found a negative effect.
2. When kids are given grades they tend to pick the easiest possible task when given a choice. This is not because they are lazy, but because they are rational. Of course, “I” would pick the shortest book [to read] because the point is to get a grade or point, so the easier thing “I” am doing the better the chance “I” have of reaching your goal (i.e., the authority’s goal). Effectively, the goal is not intellectual risk taking, it is the opposite, it is risk avoidance. But then, you blame “me” for not being motivated or having enough grit (or something) to select the more complex task. To you, it is all about “me”, as opposed to looking at the structure and the way it predictably elicits artificially limited behaviors. Fundamentally, the goal is not to learn, learning pulls in the opposite direction of the grade.
3. Kids that are trying to work for a high grade in school tend to forget more quickly that which they were taught. They also tend to think in a more superficial fashion and with less depth, than students given the identical task in a grade-free environment.

INSIGHT: Pushing grades into the kids and parents faces making them even more salient and destructive.

Educational reform often involves the question of how
to assess and grade: should we grade for effort or not, should we include zeros or not, as opposed to taking a step back and asking, why are we talking about how to grade when all the research, all the real life experience argues strenuously for the non-encoding of grades, and for more authentic forms of reporting that are not reduced to letters and numbers.

“Governments want efficient technicians, not human beings, because human beings become dangerous to governments – and to organized religions as well. That is why governments and religious organizations seek to control education.”
- Jiddu Krishnamurti, Education and the Significance of Life

Radical questions must be asked of ourselves and others -- “radical” comes from the Latin meaning “root”). Practically speaking, grades are only an assessment of how well a student has learned to play the school game. Generally speaking, the better someone's grades the more that someone has bought the lie, hook and sinker; the more s/he has conformed and obeyed. John Taylor Gatto address this in his discussion of college admission and diplomas.

NOTE: In corporate business there is a saying, “A students work for B students in companies owned by the C students.”

In reality, grades are a problem. On the most general level, they’re an explicit acknowledgment that what you’re doing is insufficiently interesting or rewarding for you to do it on your own. In school, what does the grade, letter or number tell you? It tells you what the teacher or the institutional system happens to believe about your ability to follow orders and memorize. From the institution’s perspective grades are useful for comparing students, and from the student's perspective grades represent a form of competition.

Grading and subjective evaluations by authority figures in one form or another are inherent to school. Yet practically speaking, grades are unhelpful [to self-development] at best and damaging to the individual at worst.

Punishment with a failing grade is still punishment. What sort of tools does a teacher have when a child is simply not interested in what the teacher has to teach them or where the teacher wants to keep them? It comes down to coercion, one way or the other. Effectively, failure means being forced to repeat the lesson this year or next. In higher education it often means paying a second time for a repeat of the course, or losing a scholarship. And, if “you” are grading them for class participation, then that is the definition of a lack of safety. The kids are now contributing to impress you and get a grade (or evaluation), which is the opposite of doing it for authentic and intrinsic reasons.

“I don’t believe in the curriculum, I don’t believe in grades, I don’t believe in teacher-
households, where students might otherwise use free time to learn something unauthorized from a father or mother, by exploration, or by apprenticing to some wise person in the neighbourhood. Disloyalty to the idea of schooling is a Devil always ready to find work for idle hands."

– John Taylor Gatto

In fact, homework is more akin to robbery: it robs the “student” and their families of meaningful time; it robs individuals of self-paced experimentation and reflection time; it robs passion; and it robs individuals of the “right” and respect to decide what to do with his/her time away from school. What gives the institution of schooling and its associated authorities the right to dictate what a person does when s/he is away from their control?

In terms of standardized test results, there is a distinction between high-school and before high-school for homework. At the high-school level, there is evidence of a modest correlation between standardized test scores and how much homework kids do; if, someone happens to think that test scores are a meaningful marker of intellectual proficiency, which they are not. But even then, that correlation tends to vanish with multiple controls. Below high-school the research clearly shows that there is no case to be made for homework of any kind.

Homework associated book references:

• The Homework Myth: Why our kids get too much of a bad thing by Alfie Kohn
• The End of Homework: How Homework Disrupts Families, Overburdens Children, and Limits Learning by Etta Kralovec and John Buell

Homework associated article references by Alfie Kohn:

• “Changing the Homework Default,” Independent School, Winter 2007
• “Rethinking Homework,” Principal, January-February 2007
• “Rethinking Homework,” Principal, January-February 2007
• “The Tougher Standards Fad Hits Home,” Rethinking Schools, Fall 2006
• “The Truth About Homework,” Education Week, September 6, 2006
• “Down with Homework,” Instructor, September 2006
• “Kids May Be Right After All: Homework Stinks,” USA Today, September 14, 2006
• “Interview with Alfie Kohn”, Maclean’s, September 15, 2006

IT’S AMAZING. No tests + no homework + no grades = no cheating. No reason to cheat.

/ CHEATING

School is a system of distrust, deception, trickery, fraud, and the swindling away of the natural desire to learn and the innate ability to integrate. Only a system of distrust would encode the idea of “cheating” into its structural fabric and then punish its structurally incentivized behavior. Remember, the system is what it produces. In truth, there is no problem with “cheating”; the problem is with the system of schooling itself.

INSIGHT: Schooling cheats every “student”.

What is often called “cheating” in school is actually discussing, comparing, questioning, sharing, asking, and looking up the best answer possible [often to avoid punishment or maintain a reward]. It is ironic and sad that students that get caught are punished for the very skills they will need to do well in life. Therein, a lack of compliance with is not immoral. What is immoral is the coercive demand to do otherwise. One could go so far as to say that to follow the rules of a tyrannical system [of individual and social limitation] is immoral.

Insight: Most of the work that happens in school is useless drivel - it is intended to be measured and judged, not to be enjoyed, integrated, responded to, and nurtured to improve.

Consider this: in many ways, the behavior “cheating” in schools is exactly the behavior we desire in the real and participatory world. Think about it. What behaviors are called “cheating” in the school system? Generally, they involve asking others for help and copying answers. In the real world these activities are called inquiring, helping, networking, working cooperatively, and sharing. In business, managers don't ask their employees to continuously reinvent the metaphorical “wheel” when they are working.

NOTE: One of the worst lies the school system will tell you is that “cheating is unfair to you.” The truth is that the school system itself is unfair to you. In the real world, if you don't do the work of inquiry and integration yourself you are going to hear whatever you want to hear and be lead to believe what others with agendas, who understand your psychology, want you to believe and to consume.

In modern society, the taking of someone else's work and passing it off as one's own to an authority figure or to an entity in the market is generally known as “plagiarism”, which is considered a form of “cheating”. So, several questions arise. In order to more greatly
understand the concept of ‘plagiarism’ we might ask some questions in the context of what we know of learning:

1. What sort of system would require an authority to approve work you have done for your own supposed benefit?
2. What sort of social system would incentivize people to pass off another's work as their own? And, what sort of economic system would punish someone for passing off another's work as their own?
3. Why would a learner require the permission, approval, or judgment of an authority figure to continue their learning process?
4. Why would someone “cheat” if one were not in competition with others for reward or award or praise or grades or employment or resources?
5. Why would someone “cheat” [on an assessment that qualifies one to operate a technology that could put others’ lives at risk] if one's survival and basic needs were covered and one had the freedom to pursue a subject or skill to mastery in a fulfillment-oriented value environment?
6. What sort of system predicates your survival on the work you do for others?
7. What exactly is the meaning of the concept of “cheating” in a society based on cooperation, sharing, transparency of operation, and the generation of abundance?

In the real world, “cheating” is a term without meaning. Once we begin to recognize the damage that school has done to us, then we can begin correcting our direction toward one of greater fulfillment for ourselves and for all others.

Often, the most successful “students” become robot-like, learning how to memorize and spit out information, but not to deeply analyze it and integrate it without contradiction. They fully accept and adopt the meaning of concepts with little to no relationship to the true nature of the reality around them (i.e., they become well indoctrinated).

Often, students with a strong loyalty to authority (i.e., a strong authoritarian “honor code”) will turn other students in for cheating. These “honorable” people establish a culture of denunciation and “snitching”. Denunciation is the act of accusing someone of wrongdoing and its inculcation into the minds of young people extends far beyond their school experience. In a political context, it means reporting a person to the State for investigation and possible punishment.

We are intelligent beings and can initiate and quantify our own “progress” (i.e., we have intelligence and can seek feedback; we can self-assess, which requires self-empowerment). And, if assessment can’t be authentic, then the variable it is assessing likely shouldn't be assessed. When we have passion and care for the things we do then we are more likely to self-assess accurately. If the work is real, there will be a real audience. The real audience will be assessing the work by giving feedback in the form of viewing the work, sharing their appreciation for the work, and critiquing or otherwise commenting on it. If there is no real audience interested in doing that, then you’re wasting your time. As a point of clarification, it is okay if the person doing the work is the only interested audience member. It is not okay if the only interested audience member is the teacher or some other authority figure.

“People don’t mind being in prison as long as no one else is free. But stage a jailbreak, and everybody else freaks out.”
- William Deresiewicz

/ COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY

‘Worthiness’ is a useless concept unless every single human in this world is worthy.

In modern society, the ultimate goal and measure of an education is a college degree. There are two reasons why college used to mean a lot more than it does now [and secondary school was someone's ticket to getting there]. The first reason was that college kept certain sets of knowledge more protected from the ordinary masses. And, the other reason is/ was that everybody is told to go to college for college is their ticket to “success”. A degree is more easy to obtain now than it has ever been in the past. Hence, it is becoming a commodity that is no longer able to sell itself on the basis of rarity. In the market economy the notion that "my degree is valuable because not a lot of people have it, or because it says something really special . . . about me" is beginning to be seen as vacuous. More and more people are realizing that their ability to survive and thrive is actually based on our capacities to solve problems, not to acquire pieces of paper. In the past, the degree was the primary market signal for a person's capacity to solve problems and to create "perceived value" for others, but now, the signaling power of that degree is weakening amongst the numerous ways we can freely and transparently demonstrate our intellect and abilities. Today, people have an abundant number of ways of educating themselves and demonstrating their abilities. There are many alternative ways for people to signal their abilities and share knowledge when global communications mediums and creative avenues are essentially free and open to everyone. One might well wonder how this abundance of access to knowledge and the ability to help others affect the [labor] market? We no longer need personal intermediaries like school and agents and representatives, and when logically extended, money itself (which was at one time a requisite for education and labor). We don't need institutions to signal our abilities or to provide for our fulfillment; we can signal ourselves and create for our own fulfillment.

Primary and secondary school were once considered preparation for this thing called “college”, which was preparation for this thing called “employment”. Herein,
it is important to remember that “employment” is a legal term, and not a term that describes work within the Community. Fundamentally, no one needs college to develop passions, or to step forward in their own development and facilitate the development of others.

**INSIGHT:** A degree is supposed to represent competency. In the real world, competency represents itself. It is important to recognize that universities do not add value to us (or to community); they are a product of a specific (and one might say, unfortunate) socio-economic environment.

In modern society, college is the finishing school for citizenry. In other words, schooling is partially a tool of the State and university is its finishing school. It is the metaphorical nail in the coffin to social conformity around the encoded concept of “authority”. It represents a duty to contribute to the perpetuation of the society in which one was enculturated and given the gift of an “education”. Therein, the institution of college/university is designed primarily to provide graduates with employable skills and/or managerial skills. In fairness, these institutions also conduct research as well as providing a space for socializing and recreating, but these are secondary to the organizations primary purpose which is well described in “Don’t Worry About College: A Letter To My Granddaughter” by John Taylor Gatto.

**QUESTIONS:** What type of a society would charge people for learning? What type of society would create a [college] admissions boundary to bettering themselves and developing the skills necessary to survive in their world? What type of a society would “in-debt” future generations for education in the present?

What do capital industrialists and other social controllers (i.e., human resource managers) want? They want a population with skills useful for specialized commerce as well as a predictable and ordered subordination among the common population. Effectively speaking, college is a commercial product that standardizes and turns out other commercial products. Yet, statistics of working college graduates show that many (if not most) of them don't end up working in a field related to their college education.

Here, we are called to notice the general difference in perspective toward life taught at "prestigious universities" versus the perspective conveyed by most other schools. At the Ivy League schools they teach their students from the perspective of, “how to make a living for yourself”, and at all the other schools, especially public schools, they teach students from the perspective of “how to get a good job.”

**METAPHOR:** Universities are like sausage machines standardizing peoples' thinking - standardizing entrepreneurs and managers, or standardizing employees.

In the market, educational establishments are in competition with one another. Hence, they naturally attempt to hoard knowledge, creating artificial scarcity to give "market value" to the information they systematically sell as a product/service. Today, however, some universities have such a great reputation, as well as such advanced and expensive technological research facilitates that they are capable of giving away a small portion of their instructional-oriented knowledge for free. MIT OpenCourseWare is one such example. The selection is limited, however.

College is an institution that came to be when most people had no [easy] access to information. Through the internet, anyone can replicate everything that college (as an institution of knowledge storage and sharing) does, for the equivalent of marginal cost; with the exception of the achievement of the piece of paper (i.e., the "diploma") at the other end. Teachers and professors and authorities are no longer gatekeepers. In the age of ridiculously abundant information and multiple avenues for acquiring knowledge, these anachronistic institutions are slowly being seen for what they are: principally, scarcity promoting structures for rolling out a new generation of employees for State industrial capitalism.

There is more educational freedom in college. Yet, college is different than other schools in ways that seem important but are insidiously not. College is still schooling; it is just a different version of schooling. To put it less eloquently, it is true that everything “stupid” about primary and secondary school is less “stupid” about college, and even less “stupid” about graduate school; but, school is still school is still school (i.e., schooling as a process has a set of characteristic variables which exist along a spectrum and produce equivalent behaviors along the spectrum). People are attracted to these places for entertainment, socializing, and personal interests, all worthwhile. But, a common goal is to come out a winner and enter your next role in the life of a machined society.

**CLARIFICATION:** What the words college and university stand for varies significantly by country. In general, a college is an institution of higher “education” that may stand alone or make up one part of a university. There may be several colleges that cater to a variety of specialized professions in law, medicine, the liberal arts, etc. on a single university’s campus. In some countries, “facult” or “school” replace college’s usual meaning (e.g., faculty of law or school of medicine, instead of “college of”). Sometimes “college” and “university” are used interchangeably.

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SELF-DIRECTION

People who grow up going to school end up believing that learning is something that has to be forced; and, therefore, that learning is not fun. Children who are never forced to learn or to do schoolish things have no reason to believe this. Before children, and more importantly, their parents who have gone to school and do believe this, can find the joy in natural learning, they first have to unlearn this idea that they have acquired from the forced learning (school) model. This healing and unwinding process is usually referred to as “deschooling” or “the deschooling period”.

“Deschooling” is going through a period of time when you are decompressing from all of the extrinsic motivators that have stripped away your intrinsic motivation, your own sense of identity of what you want to do and your sense of purpose. Many people in modern society seek spiritual guidance from others for identification of their “life’s purpose”. Yet, if they were to just strip away all the conditioning and trauma they might see the purpose in life for themselves.

DE-SCHOOLING INSIGHT: Indoctrination + Regurgitation + Graduation = An Education

“Deschooling” is effectively a period of detoxification [from the toxic accumulation of by-products which someone has accepted, by varying degree, while in the process of schooling]. People who begin deschooling might do nothing for a period of time because they need to rest and recover, to decompress and to re-set. “Deschooling”, if not interfered with, eventually leads to a higher degree of completeness and confidence; but, it can take time to re-integrate one's sense of self-esteem and self-direction. From a parent's perspective, deschooling is a time of relaxation and healing away from the system of conditioning. It is important for a parent to note, however, that often the entire process of deschooling starts over again for the deschooler each time a presumed authority figure appears to instruct the deschooler. In other words, the deschooling process starts over again each time someone from an apparent position of authority tells the deschooler what s/he should be doing with his/her time.

BE CAREFUL what you say to the young in your society for they may agree with you. Before calling them “clumsy” or “bad” or a “disappointment” or a “child” consider the question, “Is this how I want this young person to experience himself/herself?” Which, eventually speaks to the type of relationships they will be able to form as an adult: their friendships; their romantic partners; and ultimately, how they view themselves.

Deschooling can be slow because it is not just about understanding, it is also about learning to trust your intellect, which takes time, and often, an environment of support. Read a little, try a little, wait a little, watch [and repeat]. This is a useful mantra while you are in the throes of deprogramming yourself and relaxing into the natural flow of learning, of inquiry. It can be painful at times to look at the broken trust and suffering that one experienced around the whole schooling process.

Many people don't want to face the truth that many of the ways in which they were treated, when they were younger, were morally wrong, and that many of the conditions they suffered were unjust, which can be difficult to come to terms with (i.e., to accept, process,

LEARNING STYLES AND MEMORY

The ability to learn involves the capability of remembering, logically speaking. Skilled practitioners of memory show us, they demonstrate, that memory is visual, regardless of what people may believe about "learning styles". We can improve our ability to learn by looking at those who have deeply studied and practiced the skill of remembering. Therein, we may refine our approach and our visualization skills.

There is a significant lack of evidence that there are different kinds of "learners". A scientific assessment of the "evidence" for learning styles published in Psychological Science in the Public Interest (2009) conclude that the learning-styles hypothesis has little, if any, empirical grounding. Further, the very idea of a "learning style" becomes significantly irrelevant when the teacher-student paradigm is dismissed, and hence, "teaching styles" also become irrelevant. Individuals do not "learn better" when the instruction they receive is tailored to their preferred way of learning. Instead, individuals learn better when the learning is self-directed. In part, the idea of a "learning style" has persisted because in a school-type setting: Parents like to think that their children are receiving a tailored education, and teachers like to think that they are sensitive to each child's needs and motivated to find out more about how to fulfill this ideal.

Finally, in concern to learning, neuroscience tells us that memory consolidation occurs primarily during sleep and down time (a restoration phase).
and move forward). Life goes on. The realization that one has been duped is an opportunity for learning.

Because schooling is a model that becomes deeply conditioned into peoples' psyches, it can be difficult to de-condition from that model and integrate a new and more accurately “emergent” one.

People who grow up around school have a degree of fear and panic around the non-existence of school. Partially, this is because they were told that school is crucial to life and that if they didn't finish school they wouldn't have the ability to provide a life for themselves. Likely, they were also told that if it wasn't for school no one would know how to read and write, and that there would be this thing called “chaos”. They may have also been told that if it weren't for school then laziness would dominate.

What is laziness? Is “laziness” just a reaction against the constraints placed on someone by an overly controlling [schooling] environment? Is "laziness" possibly just a reaction against that process, against being programmed? Is "laziness" a fear response to failure? Is "laziness" a lack of energy, or an unwillingness to apply effort, as a result of abuse in life? How do you feel when your day/week is completely busy and being programmed for you by others? Disengagement sometimes looks like "laziness" to people on the outside. Yet, downtime and recovery is often where our most creative ideas come from -- from stillness often comes a build-up of energy and power. What is laziness as a measure of someone else's behavior (i.e., how exactly is one individual judging another individuals behaviors, or lack thereof, to be lazy)? In community, laziness is a personal projection onto another. If you call someone you love “lazy”, then you ought to understand that they may come to believe your label.

**NOTE:** There is such a thing as ‘avoidance behavior’ due to frustration and poor self-image and low self-efficacy, which outside others may misinterpret as "laziness".

Maybe someone is doing something internally and does not look productive form the outside, but inside there is processing going on, there is a part of the naturally cycled process of learning. Or, maybe there is something actually wrong. Downtime is useful; it is a time for processing, restoring, thinking, doing something different, and de-conditioning/ decompressing. Therein, it allows us the space and freedom to think about what might be going well, and what might be going wrong, in one's life.

Trying to stay busy is a failure to acknowledge that the moment you are in is the only one you can live.

**QUESTION:** In an era where our access to information is changing so quickly and dramatically, is it logical to mandate what young people should learn?

Practically speaking, it can take a long time and a lot of revision and reflection to unscrew the worldview that is plugged into someone's brain through schooling. And, it is sad to see how many people can't unplug from it completely. In order to actually better oneself and others, then you kind of have to realize the hole that you have been thrown into. And if you don't realize it, you might live the rest of your life in that hole. A life of a higher potential is about identifying and stepping out of (or around) holes when you encounter them.

It is important for our health as individuals to look at our past in a meaningful and constructive way [so that we stop feeling defective and we don't let it beat us down into despair].

Generally, parents come from the same school system that they send their kids to. To put the same idea forward from a somewhat linguistically imprecise psychoanalytic generational perspective, “bad” people tend to do “bad” things because “bad” things happened to them. Without interruption, most societies condition and repeat the same pattern of abuse and trauma across generations. We developed ways to protect ourselves from further harm when we didn't get our needs met as children. And, we repeat those same patterns over and over again even when they no longer serve us as adults.

Once a paradigm has become established among a society and the population has given away their power to people who spout the paradigm, then that population essentially becomes stuck in the replication and multiplication of that paradigm. Once a paradigm has been established through belief and repetition (in a parrot-like fashion), then it becomes extraordinarily difficult to shift people away from their limited understanding.

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**DAILY ROUTINES**

We have routines in our daily lives that we follow which maintain our lives on some [oriented] course. These daily routines may over time lead to the development of greater skill, understanding and appreciation, or they may be harmful patterns and can have the opposite effect. Over time, hurtful patterns can wear us down, make us unhappy and less functional. Our daily routines can help fashion and mold us into beautiful and intelligent compassionate beings, or they can break us down and cycle fear, and ultimately, disease. Yet, these routines do not just manifest out of nowhere; they might not only come from with us, but they can be conditioned and influenced from without also.

*Insight:* A slight change in repetitious thought or behavior pattern can bring about major effects.

The brain adaptively rewires itself through our patterns. It has an almost inexhaustible capacity to rewire. It adaptively reroutes control of the way it uses various packets of neurons in order to help us do the activities we regularly participate in.
Ignorance is a necessary ingredient for oppression. If people were honest with themselves and others about what is going on, they likely wouldn’t tolerate it.

People who support or have otherwise become invested in the system will say, “I went through the school system and I turned out fine.” And from their perspective they did; they can pay the rent, they can take care of themselves and their families; and they feel like, “How dare you attack this system, it did good for me.” At a basic level, the system they were processed through has formatted their thinking, conditioned their opinions, and re-orientated their values to find acceptable behaviors and systems that if they more accurately understood themselves and the real world they would find unacceptable. And, its likely (or possible) that they actually found school unacceptable at the time [they were in processing through the condition system of schooling]. In other words, they do not realize that they have come to accept artificial limitations, misunderstandings about themselves and others, and [by degree] the initiation of force, for those are the things they have been conditioned to accept through schooling. Schooling modifies and shapes one’s own perception of themselves and of the surrounding world, while masking the real influence of its social purpose and content. It effectively conceals how it contributes to the reproduction of harm and the limitation of individual potential. In other words, it masks the social and economic roots of under fulfillment. The process of schooling itself is rarely interrogated and critically examined in school [or anywhere else in modern society, for that matter]. The system is designed to repeat its own cycle.

QUESTION: If you are “successful” in modern society, then are you successful because of school or in spite of school?

When you are in high school, people are already asking you what you want to do for the rest of your life. Modern society has a practice of trying to establish who you are (i.e., where you fit in the socio-economic hierarchical system) and make these proclamations before you even have the tools for self-discovery. By the time you want to start figuring out who you are, you are already too busy pretending to be who you said you are going to be.

QUESTION: If you are someone who is “successful”, then how much of that success do you attribute to the process you went through, known as “schooling”?

In academic schooling people spend years developing their opinions, many of which are contrived, about the way in which the world should work. Fundamentally, it is unwise to expect that just because something was apparently good in our own lives that it will be good in the lives of others; particularly if we have been living sheltered lives.

INSIGHT: In structure, academia is the parroting of what another parrot who came before him/her was told to parrot.

Many adults don’t want to look back and admit that they were deceived, that they were lied to, that they were forced and punished for doing things that they didn’t want to do, that they were put through a processing machine. In this sense, there is a rationalization that happens. They have become completely invested in the system, of which they are a product. From a wider perspective, what these people are essentially saying

ONE OF THE GREAT FAILINGS OF A LACK OF CRITICAL THOUGHT IS THE ASSUMPTION OF AUTHORITY AROUND A GIVEN DATA SET.
is, “I have become attached to my given identity (or, the identity I have been given) and I cannot change or accept change, for then I would not know who I am.”

The enemy that the system of schooling and forced education crushes at each and every opportunity, starting at birth and continuing until death, is: creativity. When someone's life is dominated by curiosity, then creative desires become relatively immune to this agenda. When people are creative, they want to make things, not buy things. They want to discover, not follow. They want adventures, not entitlements. They want self-control, not control of others. They want intelligent constructors, not social sacrifices. They want to free others in like kind and not claw over others to see who can acquiesce or acquire first. They set goals and are not set back by agendas. They are creators, not social manipulators. The worst nightmare of social controllers is a population of intelligent, creative, and curious individuals sharing and working together. Such people are potentially subversive to self-serving agendas. So, once employed or in debt, they are buried alive in contracts written up by organizational entities that fear them and wish they did not need them. These contracts hijack their physical and intellectual freedom, and prevent them from working on what they think is important, in favor of what a “boss” orders. This is a system of slavery by any other name – a system of profit and social control over people.

**MAXIM:** The largest proponents of slavery are those who are the most enslaved themselves.

Those who choose to engage with and stay in artificial structures of forced limitation, must remember at all times (i.e., always and all the time), that they are being molded and patterned to fit the narrow and superficial agendas of that particular society. Some control structures are simply more likely than others to refresh a “mask” over reality, and cause a forgetting of the true nature of this existence we all share. It is important to remember that we all naturally entrain to our environments, and that someone can entrain to a corrupted environment (over time) without realizing it -- by being continuously present in (or exposed to) that environment.

For those who have been subjected to "power over" [fulfillment] strategies for most of their childhood, school seems helpful as a natural extension of the parenting process.

**NOTE:** In modern society, compliance is rewarded. In community, self-direction is nurtured.

/ THE SCHOLED NARRATION OF LIFE

The general and impressionable narrative of life given to people by schooling is: You go to kindergarten, and that is a great thing, because when you finish that you will get into first grade. First grade leads to second grade and so on, until you get out of primary grade school, and now you have secondary high-school and life is just revving up. The thing is coming, and then, you go to college and become educated. Some of you will then go on to graduate school. When you are through with school, you...
go out and join the world's workforce (or become part of ownership class) where you have timelines and quotas and tables and deadlines and commands to give [into]. And, all the time that thing is coming, its coming, its coming, that great thing, the success you are working for, that absolute reward. Until one day, if you are fortunate, you wake up somewhere and you say, “My god, I have arrived”. Yet, you don't feel very different from how you've always felt, and there is a slight let down. It is here, in this moment of pause, that the courageous and still inquisitive begin to reflect on this feeling; they begin to search more deeply for answers. And, if they search long enough, they eventually realize it was all a hoax, a dreadful hoax. “They” made you miss everything by expectation. We cheated ourselves the whole way down the line. We thought of life by analogy with a journey, a pilgrimage, which had a serious purpose in the end, and the point was to get to that end, success, or whatever that it is for you, maybe heaven, after you are dead. But, we missed the point the whole way along. It was a musical thing, and we were supposed to sing and share and dance and create while the music was being played. Then, after this realization, you begin to inquire about all the other illusions that were once accepted, tolerated, and dis-integrated as truth. One's whole value system of what's important and what's not, what's good and what's not, what's worth putting effort toward and what's not, must be called into question [not to destroy the whole value system, but in order to see it for what it is, and to redirect where necessary].

**INSIGHT:** Success is a journey, not a destination. You have never “arrived” at anything more than an emergently understood information space.

Among community, why would you follow this narrative; why would you stop being yourself and become a tool for someone else, or for someone else's agenda?

/ CERTIFICATION AND ACCREDITATION

Just because someone has an accreditation (or credentials) does not make them reputable. In fact, it might mean that they are more invested in that which they are accredited, and hence, less open to new information that might contradict or prove their claimed “area of expertise” less valid.

Those who become accredited or credentialled often cannot fathom that the answer to a complex systems problem may not lie in their credentialled field of study. Credentials is likely to generate blind spots in those who achieve them. People who are “professionals” (or, “-ists”) may never realize that their beliefs are creating blockages to a more accurate and comprehensive understanding, for they have unknowingly accepted (and likely attached themselves to) a perceptual limitation in the form of a socio-economic role and an accompanying title, which masks the reality that they are actually [still] just learners in practice. In a sense, credentialing represents the affixing of a paradigm of thought into the mind of an individual who has tied their ego, and possibly their social status and lifestyle, to a particular and temporary role in society. In practice, professionals rarely ever invite those who have a different paradigm of thought to help solve a complex problem. There are great lengths that need to be gone through to undo such dogma, particularly when credentials and accreditations are tied to survival and profit in a competitive market for quality of life.

What do academic and professional credentials signify? They greatly signify that someone is willing to play by the rules and be managed. The difference between true education and credentialing is profound. It is important not to mistake one process for another. HERE, lifelong learning leads to a different conception of what accreditation and certification even means.

The terms “accreditation” and “certification” are sometimes used interchangeably, however, they are not synonymous. And, their application within the community environment is not equivalent to how they are applied around the schooling or professional labor environments. The terms, as they are defined herein are similar, though not exactly alike to how they are applied by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (nist.gov; or its equivalent). Here, **CERTIFICATION** is used for verifying that an individual has adequate skills and knowledge to operate a complex technological object that has the potential of putting other life forms or community resources at risk. However, certification does not convey any form of honorific title, such as PhD, MD, or DR.

**QUESTION:** What does it mean to be acknowledged by the community? What would it be like to live in a coordinated society where there are no authoritative and expropriation-based access control mechanisms in place?

In community, we require authentic/objective assessments to operate certain technologies or perform certain procedures. For example, when operating a potentially dangerous technology (e.g., an automobile) we require each other to have demonstrated in a socially transparent context that we are sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable to operate the technology safely. Simply put, you wouldn't want someone responding to an emergency lifesaving situation who wasn't trained in lifesaving and stabilizing emergency response procedures. You also wouldn't want someone who wasn't objectively assessed to be knowledgeable / skilled in operating emergency response technologies. You would likely also prefer someone who had a deep interest and passion in what they are doing, and weren't doing it because, "That is just the job I fell into".

When you get in a car and drive in traffic, you want some basic social assurance that other drivers on the road are capable of effectively handling their vehicles and understand road signs and signals.

Alternatively, in community, **ACCREDITATION** is used to verify that a geophysical space has been appropriately
assessed via a set of objective criteria to maintain safe operation, and it accompanies a set of 'use conditions' for operating the safe and responsible use of the space. For example, a laboratory might require a fire extinguisher for it to operate safely, which would be a checklist item necessary for the space's accreditation to operate. Therein, if an individual desired to use the technological space, then s/he would socially certify for the correct usage of said fire extinguisher. Similarly, two 'use conditions' of tools in a general tool workshop might be: 1) put everything back where you found it; and 2) do not leave blood (or other particle matter) on the tools.

NOTE: It is important to remember that in all cases a certificate is an extrinsic reward. However, a social environment could maintain a value set that de-emphasizes the certificate itself by decoupling its acquisition and the opportunities it represents from both 'status' and 'standard of living'.

Certification is essentially the process of socially attesting that a specified quality or standard has been met for operating [a technology] or performing [a procedure]. Here, the term 'certification' only applies to humans. In other words, the notion of a 'certification' is not applied to products, goods and services. In community there is no "market" for the production of products amongst competing business entities, and there is no "government" regulating and overseeing the production of products. Instead, decisions regarding designs are arrived at via the process(es) described in the Decision System specification.

The internet age is an age where we have access to information like never before; it is laterally distributing (or "democratizing") information; information is becoming abundant.

ONLINE LINKS

- A description of how memory works, School of Phenomenal Memory, pmemory.com. 'Intelligence' as memory is the number of repetitions it takes to precisely repeat a learned and intended action (or task), which requires recall and structural rewiring.
- "Against School" by John Taylor Gatto on wesjones.com
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LEARNING AS A LIFESTYLE

In community, our interests and desires evolve based upon our experiences and the information we come into contact with. Herein, individuals progress from one experience to the next, dependent upon their evolving interests, curiosities, and goals. Essentially, we come to learn about ourselves and the world through investigation and discovery, wherein an emergent formal/structural learning environment stands in contrast to a planned or programmatic curriculum, as a lifestyle that intrinsically facilitates learning through self-direction as opposed to institutional force. In other words, the community provides the opportunity for structuring our learning so that we have a context of what we have learned in relation to what is possible to learn. However, it does not programmatically force an individual to learn [anything] within that structure. Instead, the structure is present and individuals may use it or not. If we choose to use it then we progress at our own emergent pace, and we may add to the structure freely wherever we desire. Practically speaking, in community we have the freedom to learn in a structured environment (or not) about a subject matter (or set of relationships) from other learners.

LEARNING IS THE INTENTIONAL PROCESSING OF A STRUCTURALLY EMERGENT ACCESS INTEGRATION SPACE. IN OTHER WORDS, LEARNING IS THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATING NEWLY ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION [SPACES]. DISCOVERY IS NEW ACCESS. INTENTION IS 'AGENCY'. SPACE IS STRUCTURED CREATION. See Figure 1-7 on page 66 for a “lifestyle coordinate” representing the formation of a learning system among community.

The biological term 'selection' defines the process of physiological change that takes place within an organism when it selects new information that helps it more effectively adapt to its world. The most important element of a selective system, such as our brain, is that all new information must in some way attach itself to data that has been previously encoded into our neurological structures, either by our genetic program or by our previous encounters with the environment. In selective systems the individual-self has this constructive power, not some outside authority, such as a "teacher". It is the individual who is actually doing the matching (Read: pattern recognition), as his or her brain unconsciously selects new information that resonates with previously acquired knowledge for inclusion into long-term memory.

Former efforts to develop effective learning systems that produce dramatic neurological change – and thus dramatic learning – have been hampered because of a failure to understand that learning takes place though the process of 'self-selection', not the academic professing of "instruction". There are substantial differences between the biological term "selection" and the academic term "instruction." The academic term implies a method in which learning is claimed to take place through directives and orders from a central authority (e.g., a “teacher” or “leader”). Instructive methods view the brain as an empty container to be filled through the authority's direction, using the Newtonian and behaviorist tools of leverage that every learner in modern society is likely familiar with: the reward and punishment of good and bad grades, marks, scores, and evaluations.

A learning community does not force a predefined (or planned) program of study or career of tasks on individuals. Planned programs cannot adequately accommodate the evolving interests of learners and the expansion of our knowledge. Planned programs advance students down a single path toward a pre-chosen [authority directed] goal, often in a single discipline. In community, we realize that learners have interests that span numerous disciplines, and that in truth all disciplines are connected. Here, we begin to see the interconnectedness of the world around us.

Individuals in community don't generally segment their life into academics versus life. Instead, learning enmeshes with life. There is hurtful artificiality in separating learning from living through institutionalization of learning into academics. In community, we look at life more as connections and less as academic subject matters. 'Academia' represents the compartmentalization of life. Effectively, school diverts our attention from a sensitivity to, and the fulfillment of, our life needs. One of the consequences of school is the disconnection of learning from living.

INSIGHT: To cut off a single field, any field, from the rest of cognition, is to drop the vast context which makes that field possible and which anchors it to reality. The ultimate result, as with any failure of integration, is floating abstractions and self-contradictions. Potentially generating a form of compartmentalization with respect to values, desires, and logical self-interest, by the compartments of private and political life. Relating one context of knowledge to another is necessary for integration. Reality must be viewed as a whole in the formation of concepts that indicate aspects of reality.

The truth is that when you dig deep intellectually, everything has an interdisciplinary synergy. We can't talk about nutrition without also talking about biology. We can't talk about biology without also speaking about physics. We can't talk about physics without talking about mathematics, and so forth. There is a synergy in life that we can integrate [over time] and use to organize a more fulfilling lifestyle for all of us.

INSIGHT: When the architecture is done right, then the learning becomes effortless and inevitable. In other words, community represents the deliberate
design of an environment where learning through the state of flow becomes effortless and inevitable.

/ SELF-DIRECTED, LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Self-directed learning (or self-directed study) is the process by which learners initiate, monitor, and reflect on their own learning, and it is potentially the most important element in life-long learning. Our community exists to support individuals in their pursuit of learning throughout their entire lives, and therefore, self-directed learning must be an inherent part of our community. Self-directed learning provides an environment for the natural continuation (or “development”) of self-directed individuals.

The Community offers individuals the freedom to explore their personal interests and to fulfill their continuously evolving aspirations. Here, learners are nurtured into taking the initiative and the responsibility for their own lives, their learning, and their routines.

In the Community, learners are responsible “owners” and “managers” of their own learning process and progress. Here, learners design their own path to their own highest potential. The modular, continuous learning approach [discussed later] ensures that learners have the time to process, integrate, and fully enjoy what they are learning.

Figure 1-7. A lifestyle coordinate for ‘learning’. ‘Discovery’ is new ‘access’ (to information, to feedback, and to experiences). ‘Intention’ is ‘agency’ (as individual, group, and facilitation). ‘Space’ is “creation” or “material structuring” (as usability, contextuality, and technology).
Self-directed learning nurtures the intrinsic motivating factors of autonomy, connection, mastery, and purpose over factors of a more extrinsic nature, such as reward and punishment. Self-directed learning allows for a state of flourishing among individuals, for herein, we are following the interests and curiosities of our own hearts and minds, which have not been shackled and beaten by the self-serving agendas of others. Environments that support learning shift the role of the “instructor” [if one is present] from that of the “bearer of knowledge” to that of a “facilitator of learning”. Hence, in community there are no “instructors” or “teachers”; there are only learners, some of whom may have sufficiently mastered a subject or task to a degree that they have the capacity for adopting the role of “facilitator” or “guide” to other less developed learners.

Only a limited form of self-direction can be achieved in a programmatic or pre-planned environment wherein individuals are told (or “instructed”) on what they must learn and how they must learn it. Alternatively, an emergent curriculum is founded upon the principle of individual self-direction, and it is therefore in line with how learning and change actually occur in our natural, biological systems.

This leads us to acknowledge that optimized learning, the efficient and logical integration of new knowledge, and movement toward a true higher potential, necessitates a self-directed environment. Self-directed environments appear when individuals have the freedom to express their desires, wants, and preferences. Note that self-directed freedom is one of our community's core values, and it is discussed at length in the Social System Specification.

When individuals have a choice as to where they focus their physical, creative, emotive, and intellectual energies, therein exists alignment with our natural world. If we seek a continued movement toward our higher potential, then the decision to learn something must originate from within the individual. In community, individuals have the opportunity to self-select their intention and focus their intention without intrusion by others.

“Every truth has four corners: as a teacher I give you one corner, and it is for you to find the other three.” [In other words, those who have come before us have given us useful information that we may critically examine and potentially use as a point of reference to continue our own discovery into that which exists.]
- Confucius

What is Confucius stating in the above quote? Should a “good teacher” not show you all four corners, laying everything out plainly? Confucius apparently thought otherwise. Nature provides the corner of experience. To truly learn, to remember and understand and integrate, a mind must be in a state of questing, of seeking to find knowledge.

In the Community, most formal learning is delineated into what may be commonly referred to as formal learning experiences (‘learning objects’ or learning modules). A learning object is a collection of activities, events, and content that has been temporarily assembled based upon one or more closely knit learning objectives. ‘Learning objects’ represent smaller, self-contained, re-usable and often assessable units of learning or purposeful experience. By organizing learning into manageable chunks, learners can smoothly transition between experiences and disciplines. Many technical learning objects are even designed to span disciplines.

Metadata about ‘learning objects’ is an important component of the learning system. Metadata provides learners complete transparency within and between learning objects and experiences, allowing for an informed choice about the direction and path of their own learning.

ONLINE LINKS
- This Khan Academy video describes [in part] how we access formally learnable content among community.
MODULAR TASKING

There are no pre-defined, authoritative programs of study in our learning community. Learners progress from module to module (or experience to experience) dependent upon their developing interests, curiosities, and goals. This progression of flow is known as ‘branching’, and therein, the system keeps track of the modules someone has completed (including the interactions the individual participated).

A module is one or more closely bound learning objectives or purposefully definable experiences designed by an earlier learner who may be acting in posterity as a facilitator. Modules may also have a series of learning tasks (or interactions) including but not limited to exercises, events, videos, and other activities relevant to the acquisition, completion, or experience of the learning objective(s).

In a sense, every module could be seen as a “situated problem” representing some form of explicitly formalized inquiry, which involves access to knowledge and the practice of tasks [to acquire a set of knowledge and/or skills for oneself].

Our community recognizes that lengthy, course-based instruction is perhaps not an ideal model for learning. A course [of study or of instruction] is still the “educator’s” pre-existing combination of connections, and so, the “teacher” is highlighting by default, whether intended or not, certain elements of the discipline and deselecting other elements. When a course follows more of an “instructionally open” approach, then individuals have the space to express their own views (allowance for critical thinking and logical integration), and they can explore and involve their own personal learning preferences, while truly integrating their experiences. Our community fundamentally requires an environment where individuals are allowed the space to foster the development of new and potentially novel (i.e., creative) connections. In other words, it is an open approach, and not necessarily an instructional approach.

A second issue with courses is that as our understanding of learning itself continues to evolve, those methods and strategies followed in a course must be continuously updated and adapted, which is a tedious action for a course instructor to pursue, if they even remain aware of the understood advancements in the field of learning sciences. And, if an instructor is aware of changes and has a desire to implement those quasi evidence-based changes, then they require the permission of another layer of authority. Certainly, the change management process for a course of instructional material is less efficient than the change management process of shorter modules and their associated learning objects.

When a module is created, then a defined sequence of learning activities, events, content and materials are associated with (Read: linked to or placed within) the module. And, anyone can facilitate the creation of a module.

When a learner decides to “take” a module, they may either follow a predefined path (i.e., a template), such as the one created during the modules initial establishment, or they may define their own path (i.e., their own sequence of relevant activities and events, personalization). This flexibility allows individuals to pursue their own path of learning and joy, while adding to the learning community’s understanding of the learning process itself. Each new path to an objective or purpose helps to more greatly inform the community’s knowledge base.

See Figure 1-8 on page 69 for an example of module progression. Therein, modules contain different templates, which represent different activity pathways to the same learning objective. Every learner has the choice to select their next learning objective/module.

Within our community learners choose those activities, events, and materials that they wish to utilize during their learning experiences. Learners have three primary options when it comes to personalizing a module. Firstly, they may select a “good practice” design template that other learners have followed as an efficient and enjoyable way to complete the module. Secondly, learners may follow the advice of the community’s recommendation planner, which provides the learner with a selection of templates that meet the learner’s personal preferences and explicit requirements, such as completion date, the amount of deep practice desired, and the desired amount of collaboration. Finally, the learner can define (or develop) their own unique path.

It is relevant to note that learners regularly create new modules with previously unrecognized learning objectives.

NOTE: Learners may both design the mechanics of a [learning] experience as well as go through their designed learning experience, or they may simply replicate the learning experience of another. In other words, they may simply choose to follow a pre-defined relationship of tasks, or they may design their own tasks and experience those.

Learners may “formally” enrol in a module when they have met the module’s prerequisite knowledge or skill requirements. Some modules require no prerequisites and others necessitate the taking of prerequisite modules. Few modules exist in isolation; there is a tree of integrated progression with all knowledge. As the learner advances, s/he moves further and further down (or “along”) the knowledge map. The great majority of modules have content elements (Read: specific knowledge and tasks) that are also part of another module. The restricting of participative access (i.e., enrolment) in a particular module due to a lack of prerequisite knowledge and experience is discussed later, and is a necessary control mechanism built into the functioning of our learning system. Please note that this is not a secreting or confidentiality mechanism. It is a material, safety control mechanism. A quick example of this is someone who has never driven a car before and is
on their first day of a driver’s education course. It would not be safe for them to sit behind the wheel during rush hour highway traffic conditions. Without prior training, there would not be sufficient proficiency of knowledge and skill to operate a vehicle safely in those conditions. This is an example of an evidence-based safety control mechanism.

Learners in our community generally take a single module at a time. Instead of being forced by an outside authority to handle multiple subjects at once [splitting their attention and their will], they may immerse themselves in as little as one, or more if they so choose, full-time modules for any pre-specified period of time (Read: module duration).

The Community’s learning system makes a recommendation to the learner concerning the amount of time the system forecasts it will take the learner to complete the specified module. With this recommendation in mind, which is informed by prior knowledge of a learner’s past experiences, a learner will then set their desired module-completion date and time goal based upon a reasoned expectation of how long they foresee the module taking. Over time, this action becomes second nature and becomes a useful measuring tool for individuals to gauge how rapidly they acquire, understand and integrate new material. It is a feature of the learning system to be capable of logging the amount of time a learner spends on a module. The learner can choose to enable or disable this logging capability. If the learner chooses to enable it, then the learner has the option to share or not to share the information. Time tracking gives the learner useful data for quantifying self-improvement. It also gives the community useful data for flagging modules that may need improvement.

**INSIGHT:** The “quantitative self” metrics that matter are those that measure your progress towards a well-defined goal. If you can’t measure it, then it is likely not understood. Even the five sensations we are familiar with (i.e., touch, taste, and so on) are a form of measurement.

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**Figure 1-8.** Module progression from choice. Here we can see that modules contain templates, which contain activities.
Learners can choose to complete modules individually or work voluntarily in teams (or groups).

For most modules, individuals work toward proficiency/mastery, which is indicated by completing a set of active problem-challenges in a row, unlike a test. This means that proficiency (or "mastery") can be achieved in minutes or hours, but the learner is learning through the entire process. There are no time limits or even estimates for how long it takes someone to obtain proficiency, and there is no final exam in which "you" can "fail". It should, however, be noted that there are some modules that involve the operation of technologies/processes which could be unsafe to the wider community if mishandled or if mistakes are made. At the conclusion of one of these modules, or "module series" (Read: a sequence of modules with an overarching objective) learners take a set 'knowledge and skills assessment' to give reliable information to the community (and to themselves) that they have achieved (or not achieved) the learning objective(s) of the module(s). After passing the assessment learners may safely operate the technology/process, or move on to a more advanced module that involves the technology/process. The assessment of certain learning objectives is part of the safety control mechanism mentioned earlier. These assessments may be retaken as many times as necessary, so the fear of failure or the urge to rush the learning is significantly lessened or non-existent (i.e., removed). Also note that the operation of certain technologies/processes may require periodic re-assessment on a scheduled cycle to ensure that proficiency has been maintained.

Although higher-level modules often have prerequisites, and learners are encouraged to take a broad-range of modules in different disciplines, learners choose modules based upon their own evolving and emerging interests. Therein, the Community's learning system makes recommendations to the learners concerning which module(s) might be a preferred next module (based on a variety of metrics, including observed interests, potential challenge areas, pre-requisites, skill set, and goals), but this system acts solely to support the learner in making an informed choice. This recommendation system could ease learners' regular entry into the flow state by supporting them in determining tasks/activities (and their qualities) that are of an optimal, individualistic challenge to skills ratio for producing flow. Another feature of the learning system is the ability of learners to recommend related materials (i.e., something found on YouTube could be associated with the module as a recommended resource by other learners). Over time, as others review the modules, they can up-vote or down-vote materials, and the module algorithmically updates the presented content.

"There is more to life than increased speed."
- Gandhi

Modules are designed, developed, and updated by an interdisciplinary team, including members of the learning sciences team, multimedia content developers, facilitators, and the learners themselves.

The form of learning described herein is also known as self-regulated learning (SLR). Under SLR conditions the learner has control over his/her own learning. The learner steers and directs their cognitive and motivation processes toward achieving their highest potential at their own desired pace and through [objective] selection via preference.

At the present, we understand the most efficient form of learning as that which is characterized by definable and recognizable experiences. It is in the recognition of having these experiences and the integration of being in them through which our cognitive and physical abilities evolve.
OPEN AND MEANINGFUL LEARNING

Our community defines “open learning” as an approach to learning that gives the learner flexibility and choice over what, when, where, at what pace, and how they learn, and also, that there is no externally ordered or coerced target, outcome, or result that a learner must achieve.

For a moment, imagine the following: A student enters an educational institution and registers for a course. The background of the student is not taken into account. The institution does not know the types of experiences that the student has formerly had, the type of home life they have come from, the beliefs and value system they hold, and the extent of knowledge and understanding they maintain in long-term memory. Simply, educational institutions do not know their students. Said institutions then throw disconnected and often irrelevant materials and experiences at their students, and then, give them a standardized test. This commonly accepted [as normal] and established schooling process is irrelevant to meaningful learning, because meaningful learning is concerned with active participation and reflective engagement on the part of the learner. Most educational institutions are simply not designed to facilitate/produce meaningful learning. To a great degree, they are designed to produce people (Read: workers) who can mimic and duplicate. By making learning experiences open, our learning community establishes a system that supports individuals in pursuing learning experiences that they find relevant and meaningful to their lives, not to the lives of controlling outside forces.

INSIGHT: It is in changing the processes within us that meanings also change.

Open learning exists even within the learning module’s, for learners have the flexibility of selecting those learning activities, tasks and events that they find relevant and meaningful [in the context of a given objective]. There is no outside force applied to them in the selection or creation of a template (i.e., the defined series of learning experiences or activities).

/ ONLINE LINKS

- Tom Wujeck: 3 ways the brain creates meaning, YouTube

Figure 1-9. Khan Academy's dashboard provides a visual representation of a learner progress for an identified area. The basic premise of Khan Academy - as reflected by its user-interface - is the streamlining of time on task, as defined by watching videos and working through problem sets. Notice that the inner circle represents passive demonstrations of the knowledge/skill, and the outer circle represents active engagement with the knowledge/skill. Herein, a person can see how much time they have spent watching videos, working on problem sets, and also, how effective they have been at working through these problem sets.
PROFICIENCY LEARNING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CONTINUOUS EDUCATION

It is commonly recognized that individuals learn at different rates (i.e., different paces). If learners intend to progress toward their own higher potentials, then they must be afforded an environment where conditions allow for individualized progress. The amount of time and effort learners’ need to master a given objective will vary, and a learning system designed to support a community in developing toward its highest potential must account for this. The understanding that learners have different temporal needs when learning a subject matter is a core characteristic in what is commonly known as “proficiency learning”.

“Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence, that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of reality.”
- Henry David Thoreau

Proficiency learning is most adequately defined by its four major associated principles:

• **Principle #1**: Individual learners have sufficient time to acquire proficiency of specific learning objectives. It is a feature of the community to provided learners with a recommended completion date & time using an informed predictive engine. The predictive engine arrives at the recommended completion date based upon several factors of input, including but not necessarily limited to: past performance of the learner, current/predicted knowledge schema, the observed performances of past learners with the module, and other ongoing modules or activities the learner is participating in. Learners then set, if they so choose, a completion date & time goal for themselves, which may have no relationship to the recommendation engine's date & time. The setting of a ‘timeframe’ may be done for each module. If the completion date needs to be changed, extended or shortened, then this is generally always possible (i.e., it may not be possible when a module is scheduled among multiple participants). And, this information can be added to a personal schedule/calender.

  *We work at our own pace on tasks we desire to work on.*

Performance (or repetition) has the effect of deepening the likelihood of retention. Hence, it may be better to become proficient and move on while receiving prompts over time to reassess skills and knowledge, which reinforce the memory/skill. Only after a long period of time of being proficient at a task can one really be said to have achieved mastery.

• **Principle #2**: The subject matter to be learned is broken down into units of learning (i.e., modules, experiences and learning objects) with objectives for each unit. All learnable content is provided in modular branching (Read: tree like) form, which constitutes a systems knowledge map. See **Figure 1-10 on page 73** for an example of a branched knowledge progression map (by the Khan Academy).

  Here, each module (or, content + task) contains one or more learning objectives. Community is essentially a purposeful experience, wherein meaning generates goals, which subsequently direct tasks.

  *We recognize the structured integration of information and the necessity for developing an elaboration of skill.*

• **Principle #3**: Learners demonstrate proficiency at each unit's objective(s) before moving on to other units. Learners may take an authentic/formal "knowledge and skills" assessment or an alternative requirement to certify to the community (where necessary) that they have achieved proficiency of some information or task. Also, the learner may need to re-assess at some periodicity. Again, for our community, this is an inherent safety control mechanism to maintain the safe continuance of our society, and it is not applied to every module. Note, that this principle isn't embedded into the learning system itself. In other words, it isn't designed into the learning system to restrict learners from progressing to other modules if they haven't achieved proficiency at a given module.

  *We recognize the necessity for proficiency of a given task before moving on to a more complex information set. As we move on in our education, we achieve proficiency in different ways, which facilitates mastery over time in a given subject.*

It must be emphasized and noted here that 'mastery' in the context of a "certificate of completion" is a potentially dangerous idea, as it neglects the fact that humans forget. In Khan Academy, for example, it takes a long time to achieve "mastery", and questions are brought back periodically, months later, to see if the learner has retained the skill/understanding. A certificate is static, permanent, and does not update with new information.

• **Principle #4**: Learners' assess their progress and receive feedback and guidance where necessary or available. Many of our community's computerized learning modules provide continuous feedback. End of module (i.e., subsequent or "summative") feedback is sometimes provided. Feedback may be entirely automated or it may come in the form of facilitator or guide, or in form of the individual checking their own work. But primarily, it comes in the form of sensation from a responsive
environment. Human facilitators and subject matter experts are available for feedback and re-mediation when necessary.

We use feedback from an interactive environment to correct our own development and integration processing.

COMMUNITY LEARNING

The individuals in our community learn, play, grow, and work together as all pursue their highest potential through the opportunities provided by the synergy of cooperation. Herein, we recognize that there exists self-benefit through the interplay of action, interaction, and reaction with a community of those who have similar interests, curiosities, and goals. Humans are social beings with a vast potential for learning from one another. This is well described in Lynn McTaggart’s book, “The Bond”. Individuals that recognize this necessity for connection will seek to better the community because in so doing they better themselves.

Community learning is not teaching: it is not the teaching or selling [of anything] to an audience. A community is a space where like-minded people can come together and share with each other things that

Figure 1-10. A structured and branched knowledge progression map (or “developmental relationships map”) screenshot of the Khan Academy (YouTube). In this formal learning environment there are progress quantifications known as metric reports. Individually, we can select which data we would like recorded and tracked for ourselves, and which data we would like available to the wider community. We can select what we choose to share about our formal educational development with others.
matter to them, while they design and engineer things that benefit them. With an “audience” there is a sense of removal, of artificiality, and of persuasion -- there is a disconnect. There are experts and students, not learners. It is a sense of being “talked at”. Whereas with a community, there is a sense that we are “all in this together”. No one is above the other, we are here to help each other, and we care about things together. An audience is passive, a community is active. An audience is entertained or not; whereas, a community is actively involved.

**NOTE:** In life there are going to be some days that are great, and some days that aren’t so great, but the question in all of our minds, as we interact with each other, might preferably be, “How do we work together and how do we increase the ratio of benefit for ourselves and our society?” Here we come to realize that a community is a group of people who timely show up for each other.

Imagine having a relationship with a community that supports you and fulfills you. In community, we are supported to maximize a maintained movement toward our highest potentials. We create a space where ideas can mingle and swap, and evolve to create more fulfilling forms. Here, we are continuously evolving our spaces and information systems to make it easy for people to find one another and share information and creative works and tools and tasks.

We also recognize the value in having the community exist as a center for learning, which is something strongly advocated for by the former teacher and author John Taylor Gatto. In the community our days are mostly taken up with participation in multiple communities of practice.

/ **COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE**

In community we get together and share and practice forming a structure of peer-to-peer education -- we share with our peers and learn from our peers. “Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.” Communities of practice exist both offline and online. Communities of practice are not a new phenomenon: this type of learning practice has existed for as long as people have been learning and sharing their experiences through storytelling. A community of practice is essentially a group of people practicing something in some form of a “gathering”. A group of interest is simply a group of people sharing information of a particular topic of interest.

/ **THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE MODEL**

Learning within an open community has some similarities with the historical schooling model known as the “one-room schoolhouse”. The one-room schoolhouse is the name given to the space in which some cultures have historically (as youths) learned in a formalized manner. The concept is now more commonly known as a “multi-age classroom” or “multi-age learning environment”. It is essentially a space where learners, who are diverse in age and experience, get together and pursue learning activities where they facilitate each other's progress.

In many historic cases of the presence of a one-room schoolhouse, the majority of “teaching” was actually not done by the “teacher” overseeing the space, but was instead done by older students, who were more advanced, helping younger students with their lessons. Younger students also learned by observing the more advanced lessons being given to older students by the “teacher”. Although schooling still occurred here, if someone was slow or had a problem, it was another student that was responsible for helping when the teacher (or “facilitator”) was busy. Sometimes even if the sole teacher wasn’t available, it would be another student who was responsible to provide assistance. Traditionally, the basic structure of a multi-age learning environment is one in which the teacher views the entire class as one learning community, and students stay with the same teacher for more than one year.

In some cultures the one-room schoolhouse served as a center of rural town activities, a place where parents gathered and shared information. Learning has not always been isolated in our history, but was typically considered a part of the community (or “tribe” / “village”). The one-room schoolhouse is described and discussed at length in John Taylor Gatto’s authored work, “The Underground History of American Education”.

/ **TASK-/PROJECT-BASED LEARNING**

In the community, a project-based approach to learning focuses on the exploration of real world problems and challenges, while simultaneously developing interdisciplinary skills through individual practice, or through participation on a systems team. Because project-based learning is filled with active and engaged learning, it inspires individuals to obtain a deeper knowledge of the topic they are pursuing. Project-based learning is essentially a form of task-based learning where tasks are defined, completed, and integrated [through a “project or “mission”].

**NOTE:** Here, the idea of ‘mission-based learning’ is similar to project-based learning with the transposition of the notion of ‘mission objectives’ in place of ‘project objectives’. The terms ‘project’ and ‘mission’ are similar, but may have slightly different meanings depending upon the specific situational context. A ‘mission’ is essentially a declaration of a purpose; however, the term also applies to an assignment (or objective) given to someone (or to a group) by an authority that expects compliance.

At a basic level, most projects involve organizational skills, discovery and analysis skills, and communication skills. Learning within project-based environments is often based on one or more of the following:
• Adding to one's knowledge schema.
• Consideration of future projects and new or rekindled interests.
• Assessment of the success of the project.
• Self-evaluation and reflection.
• Documenting what occurred.
• Producing something.
• Accomplishing the goal of the project

/ ONLINE LINKS

• Steven Johnson: Where good ideas come from, YouTube
• The One-Room Schoolhouse, Vimeo

INFORMAL LEARNING

THE THINKER WORKS AND THE WORKER THINKS.

Informal learning is widely used to describe the many forms of learning that take place independent from an instructor or teacher, through direct and often real-time experience. Informal learning is not formal learning, which involves a pre-design of the learning experience. In essence, informal learning is everything that is not formal learning (Read: that with a predefined curriculum and time frame). The way you learn to speak your native language is a pure example of informal learning. Informal learning occurs all the time. It is the primary means by which most people learn. Even in modern society, which applies a schooling model, more learning occurs in informal learning environments than in formal learning ones. It is commonly understood that approximately 80% of learning about a job is actually accomplished through informal learning while on-the-job. In fact, informal learning is occurring to YOU all the time. To not remain aware of this fact is a dangerous thing.

“Social networks” are vital to informal learning for they allow for the communication of knowledge, understandings and opinion from one individual to another. Hence, the Community’s infrastructure has necessarily been designed to facilitate communication, connection, and sharing. Conversation is incredibly important, and we tend to want to encourage conversation to transfer and reinforce learning.

/ ONLINE LINKS

• Informal Learning: An Interview With Dr Alan Thomas MSc, PhD, FBPsS, YouTube

Figure 1-11. Simple diagram representing the learners’ progression from inquiry to assessment with continuous feedback

Figure 1-12. Simple diagram of the project based learning cycle
INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING

Our community supports individuals in contributing to and benefiting from a wide-variety of disciplines, which we perceive as integrated. Herein, the term ‘interdisciplinary’ implies that methodology and language become efficiently communicated and integrated between disciplines (i.e., from more than one discipline) to examine a central theme, topic, issue, problem, or work. Every complex system can be categorized by those subjects or disciplines which bring the language from which the system is built.

An interdisciplinary approach is a collaborative approach because it necessitates cooperative activity and information flow between disciplines (or knowledge/skill areas).

**STATEMENT:** We connect and seek relationships regardless of discipline. We explore connections regardless of discipline. There exists a systematic network of knowledge which is available at all times for our integration.

/ ONLINE LINKS
- [BRAIN POWER: From Neurons to Networks](https://www.youtube.com), YouTube

EXPERIMENTAL FAILURE

Failure is useful for it represents an opportunity to develop ourselves further. It is our fundamental understanding that through the frequent testing of our limits, and failing, that we experiment and learn. In other words, we understand that we learn through experimenting, through the frequent testing of our limits, and through our failings (or failures). We recognize that spectacular failures lead to spectacular learning. Failing is neither embarrassing, nor discouraging. Also, in virtual learning environments we can fail time and time again without any other human knowing or caring. Learners in our community fully understand the necessity of failure in exploring, experimenting, and ultimately, learning.

There is nothing wrong with failure; it is where we acquire our experience. And of note, there is nothing wrong with criticism. We shouldn't be ashamed if someone (a critic) points out a technical or scientific issue in regards to our understanding (learning) of something? We are all sufficient in our process of learning. We are all learners; it is innate in all of us, and there is still a great deal more to learn.

**INSIGHT:** Being wrong might be right if it keeps you moving. Is there the space for being wrong in your society’s educational system?

THE CONCEPT OF "ENTERTAINMENT"

To entertain a guest means to bring him/her into your house. To entertain a thought means to bring it into your mind. To be entertained means to be brought into something external (e.g., television programming). To be entertained means to be removed from yourself and the world. When television does this successfully we applaud it as entertaining. Craving for entertainment points to the impoverishment of our society. Yet, the dose makes the poison.
POSSIBLE LEARNING METHODS AND STRATEGIES

In the learning community we recognize that there is no single, universally applicable learning method or strategy. In some cases a single strategy is most appropriate and in other cases a blended combination of strategies is ideal. And, in state of play or “flow”, often if there is a strategy, then it is applied seamlessly, almost effortlessly.

In terms of the learning system as a whole, it is impossible to build a single learning solution that fits the needs of all learners. Real complexity is a requirement for a learner-centered, systems-based approach, an essentially personalized approach.

The following learning strategies are only suggested strategies. They are suggested due to what we now scientifically know of how and why we learn (in the context of our value system). These strategies are essentially learning design / selection strategies formed by what we know, and also by our value orientation. They are recommended suggestions in concern to the design of learning modules and their accompanying activities, events, and experiences. These learning strategies, when applied appropriately, are highly likely to facilitate high-quality learning under intrinsically motivating conditions.

You will not find a single method, strategy, or philosophy that serves the needs of so many diverse individuals who have different needs, desires, curiosities, aspirations, and varying strengths. Our learning system is not a “one-size fits all” system. Our learning system is emergent, encompassing, and fundamentally, self-directed. We, as learners, desire to customize our learning experiences while we also learn from the experiences of others.

These are just some of many ways to learn in a more formal manner an objective (“over the course of a curriculum”). These methods and strategies provide a high potential for facilitating the acquisition and integration of knowledge, skills, and behaviors by learners in an effective, efficient, and intrinsically engaging manner.

THE CONSTRUCTIVIST STRATEGY

The constructivist strategy is based on the constructivist learning theory. This theoretical framework holds that learning always builds upon knowledge that a learner already knows; this prior knowledge is called a schema. The theory suggests that because all learning is filtered through pre-existing schemata, learning occurs when a learner is self-directed and actively engaged in the learning process, rather than attempting to receive knowledge passively (i.e., through teaching and/or schooling).

The following constitute the strategy’s four primary principles:

• **Principle 1:** Anchor all learning activities to a larger task or [real and responsive] problem.

  The purpose of the learning activity or lesson must be relevant to the learner in order for the learning task to be successful from the learner’s perspective; its purpose must be clear to the learner and accepted by the learner.

• **Principle 2:** Design or select an authentic task.

  Tasks are authentic in their cognitive demands. Maybe the task has real consequences. Learning should occur in environments and under conditions that present the learner with the same type of cognitive challenges and physical demands as the authentic real-world environment (i.e., authentic in their cognitive and physical demands).

• **Principle 3:** Select a focus of intention (i.e., “objective”).

  Learners set goals and regulate their own learning, through which they live in alignment with a deeper integration.

• **Principle 4:** Design the learning environment to support and challenge the learner’s thinking and response.

  Learning environments are designed to promote immersion and engagement while supporting and challenging a learner’s thinking. Facilitators and others play an important role by encouraging critical thinking and coaching (where desired).

Constructivist methods ensure the replication of real-world, authentic learning environments. It should be self-evident that an appropriate redesign of the expository instructional environment toward a more authentic and problem-based learning environment (including interactive 3D / simulation-based learning) not only supports learner satisfaction, but it ensures a stronger connection between the learning that occurs in the community and the tasks and responsibilities that may be required of learners outside of the community.
Computing technology can facilitate just the right amount of challenge, through algorithmic programming, to keep a learner engaged and learning a subject matter for a [learner's] chosen amount of time.

**APHORISM:** It is wise to recognize that it is from the nature of existence that we learn everything.

When individuals select their own learning activities it is wise to anchor them to a larger task or problem [in their life], which is commonly understood to increase feelings of both relevance and satisfaction in learners [by increasing the meaning and connection the learners experience with that which they do].

Fundamentally, one’s current understanding is constructed from experience based upon prior understanding. It is often stated that wisdom is the product of knowledge + experience.

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**THE TRIVIUM METHOD**

**NOTE:** The Social System design specification describes the Trivium Method in full. It is a component of the approach applied at a social level by the Community as a whole. There is no new content here; this is just an overview.

The Trivium, the first three of the seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, is both a method and a selection of content used to support the mind in learning and thinking systematically without contradiction. It benefits us as individuals and as a community in deriving certainty while arriving at ever greater approximations of truth with any information coming in via the 5 senses. The Trivium, by its very nature, is a systematic method of learning and discernment. The method serves multiple purposes, among which is its ability to verify an intuition or hunch. The Trivium is intrinsically related to the process of critical thinking. It is a simple stepped process and has been given many names over the centuries.

The Trivium (Latin for “three ways”) is the core of what was once known as a “classical curriculum”. It is believed to have been developed by ancient Greek philosophers [though forms of it date back further] and practiced during Greco-Roman times. It is likely that the Vedas had a similar system. The Trivium curriculum was formalized in the medieval period and nearly universally embraced by teachers in the English-speaking world until the early 20th century. Although the Trivium Method is traditionally a teaching method for children, it may be applied to the process of learning at any age level and with any subject matter. Every system, every subject matter, has a grammar, a logic, and a rhetoric.

The Trivium recognizes three developmental stages of comprehensive learning: grammar, logic, and rhetoric (in this order). A Trivium-based learning method organizes learning around the maturing capacity of an individual’s mind (their knowledge, understanding, and cognitive skills) by using methods and materials specific to each progressive, spiralling stage of development. When used in this configuration, one’s thoughts shuttle back and forth, up and down the focus stages of the Trivium in an attempt to discern and communicate ever greater approximations of reality.

The purpose of the Trivium Method is to support an individual in becoming intellectually independent and self-reliant (i.e., “intellectually self-sufficient”). A Trivium-based approach is sometimes discussed in contrast to an outcomes-based education (i.e., outcome-skills based). An outcome-based education (OBE) generally teaches rhetoric level skills without teaching the basic grammar and logic level skills. With standard outcome-based education, externally expected results (i.e., those standards and results that teachers, parents and politicians expect) may be obtained faster, but they are often shallow, short-term, and create collective minds that perceive themselves incorrectly, sometimes with a sense of deficiency.
The three roads of the Trivium offer three insights for learning. First, every discipline has a “grammar”: the organizing factual data (a coherent body of knowledge) on a particular subject, known as “general grammar”. Logic refers to the systematic arrangement and relationship of factual data in a non-contradictory manner. And a rhetoric, which concerns the means by which it is most cogently and appropriately applied and communicated – its stories, discourses, and applications. Second, any topic can be learned (or taught) in a way that includes its grammar (that which exists – factual knowledge), its logic (cause and effect relationships, scope and sequence, and rationale), and its rhetoric (communication and implications). Third, the Trivium affirms the developmental nature of learning – that is, learning progresses in iterations and the learning process is best tailored to each iterative stage.

NOTE: The Trivium Method is roughly equivalent to the social domain as presented in the Decision System specification and is composed [in part] of data, knowledge, and values. The 'grammar' is the 'data'; the 'logic' is the 'knowledge' involving the data and its complete relations set; and the 'value' is the 'rhetoric', which explains why and how we share, communicate, and create together.

Because the Trivium Method necessitates the verification and understanding (i.e., grammar and logic) of information prior to the information's communication (i.e., rhetoric), it is reasonably effective at reducing the dissemination and accepting of falsehoods (i.e., the learners' exposure to information that if properly checked would be shown to be false). Thus, its application generates a more efficient learning process by reducing the noise within the learners' learning space. Further, with this systematic method of discernment learners always know to dig back down into the grammar and logic of a subject when instruction is being provided (i.e., a teacher is teaching) to ensure that what they are being taught is the presently knowable truth, and the most valid and logical conclusion with all the available data.

The Trivium, as a functioning system, always teaches the user to return to an examination of the data when contradiction precludes a logical conclusion. It also tells the learner that they must go back and recheck the whole information system when more data becomes available.

There exists an understanding that humans make errors; those errors in thinking and acting are a natural part of the learning process. Through error correction we can correct our patterns. When the Trivium Method is applied, errors are recognized and instead of stagnation, a continued movement toward truth occurs; setbacks are seen as opportunities for further development and integration. When the Trivium Method is applied appropriately, one's thoughts flow in a coherent manner between the Trivium's stages (or nodes) in search for the truth relative to the known information system. Similarly, the idea of science is to look at the available evidence and then always look for new evidence. If someone is holding on to a single idea, then they are effectively putting logic before grammar, which is neither the scientific method nor the Trivium Method, and will flatline self-development.

NOTE: The aim of education should be to facilitate critical thinkers who are thoughtful about and productive with content.

THE THREE STAGES

Knowledge [or grammar]
Understanding [or logic]
Wisdom [or rhetoric]

THE GRAMMAR STAGE:
During this stage individuals learn the facts (or “general grammar”) of a subject or task. Under the Trivium Method this is traditionally done through memorization and drill. It is important to recognize that memorization and drilling can be made enjoyable and often young children have a natural fondness for such activities - think of those who repetitively use their body in a way that they enjoy such as any sports practice. To “drill” is just to practice. However, the grammar stage can be blended with numerous other learning methods in an effort to create a fun and engaging learning experience.

General grammar answers the questions of who, what, where and when of a subject under study and concerns the discovery and ordering of the objective facts of reality to form a basic, systematic knowledge set.

THE LOGIC STAGE:
An individual's capacity for abstract thought expands rapidly. At this stage the learner becomes attracted to reason and abstraction. The introduction of logic shifts the focus from mere facts to the understanding of relationships (conceptual and mathematical). Individuals learn to reason as they identify critical assumptions, logical fallacies and inconsistencies. Through the logic stage the faculty of reason and the actualization (or integration) of non-contradictory relationships is established, which reveals a fully systematic understanding of the thing being dealt with.

The art of logic is the art of non-contradictory identification. Logic answers the why of a subject. It is important to note that without having a solid grasp of the general grammar of a subject, then how do you know exactly what you are understanding?

Having explicit knowledge of the fallacies enables the identification [via explicit knowledge] of the exact type of falsehood being used against someone, and it provides the ability of expressing (or explaining) the specifics of the uncertainty generated by the use of the fallacy to others (i.e., intellectual self-defense). This is an especially useful faculty for all learners. Sophistry (“sophisticated”) behavior exists. Sophism is the intentional use of fallacies to “win” an argument regardless of grammar or certainty.
THE RHETORIC STAGE:
Grammar and logic are now integrated into communication and problem solving. In experimenting and designing learners develop clarity and beauty of expression in addressing vital and sometimes controversial issues and philosophies.

Rhetoric is the how of a subject. A rhetor will ask, “How is the grammar and understanding of a subject best communicated and applied?” Thus, rhetoric concerns the application of knowledge and understanding expressively, which composes wisdom. Note that inherent in the rhetoric stage is the proper choice of means and methods for cogently expressing the conclusions of the grammar and logic of a subject.

Fundamentally, if something cannot be explained, then it is likely not understood. If something is not understood, then it is likely that the comprehension or breadth of its grammar is not sufficient. Therefore, when something cannot be fully or appropriately explained, under the Trivium Method, it is prudent to return to the grammar stage before preceding forward once again. In other words, if someone doesn't understand a subject (logic), then they likely don't know enough about the subject (grammar), which may necessitate further inquiry and discovery. One might gather more “grammar” through additional study, research and/or discovery, (i.e., all the available data), then one might remove the contradiction for the purpose of integration (logic), and finally, one might seek its cogent re-expression or re-explanation. For true rhetoric, true wisdom, is pure signal and void of noise.

ONLINE LINKS
• The Trivium of Classical Education, A dissertation by Randall D. Hart, July 2004 on greenleaf.edu
• Trivium Education
• The Trivium Binder Project
• The Lost Tools of Learning by Dorothy Sayers

PLAYFUL LEARNING
Play is nature's learning engine. It is therefore terribly unfortunate when play is painted as a negative or placed in contrast to the “work” or “effort” of learning. When we look at the mechanics of play, it is fundamentally the act of deploying the scientific method toward learning in its most natural form through which a state of flowing engagement is formed with the natural world – hypothesizing, testing, retesting, improving, and enjoying. Fundamentally, if you are playing, then you are likely learning. If you are not playing, then you are likely not creating long-lasting and integrated, meaningful learning. We view the abundance of play as true freedom.

NOTE: The term ‘play’ is generally used to refer to children when they are in this state. And, the term ‘flow’ is generally used to refer to adults when they are in this state. Quite possibly the two words might be connected to describe a ‘playfully flowing’ state of experience.

A playful learning design strategy selects for an environment where the learner is energetically explorative and curiously interested in solving a problem or pursuing a purpose. Playful learning is in effect, learning through the act of playful exploration. Playful learning is itself an excellent facilitator of intrinsic motivation. In other words, the space and opportunity to play increases our internal incentive to play. The Rat Park study discussed in the Social System specification relates to this understanding. It is important to recognize, however, that within an environment that accommodates play, it is relevant for learners to develop a sense of metacognitive reflection on their actions and activities. In other words, not all play includes learning, though it is our preference that all learning includes play.

Learning is more than the accumulation of data, especially in a society where the Internet and online reference and troubleshooting guides are at everyone's fingertips. In community there are no artificial barriers (e.g., pay walls) to learning. This perspective has empirical support from the field of neuroscience, which shows that the brain is changed more so through active experimentation, rather than by a teacher-centered pedagogy.1

Playful learning may be differentiated from “edutainment”. Edutainment activities typically blend entertainment and education. At least one complication with edutainment includes the way that creators of edutainment products tend to think about learning and education. Too often, they view education as a bitter medicine that needs the sugar-coating of entertainment to become palatable. Further, edutainment activities are often not complimented with metacognitive reflection. In an edutainment environment, entertainment is often provided as a reward for suffering through “education” (Read: extrinsic motivation).

“It is an invariable principle of all play . . . that whoever plays, plays freely. Whoever must play,
cannot play." [If we are forced to do something, by definition, it ceases to be play.]

When you seek to explore and to answer questions freely, of your own volition, and not because you are obligated to, then we say you are “curious”. But curiosity does not immediately imply you are going to play. Play involves something else — play involves willful action, usually a willful action of touching or changing something — manipulating something, you might say. So, one possible definition of play would be: Play is manipulation that indulges curiosity.

/ ONLINE LINKS
- Aaron Dignan: Why The Future Of Work Is Play, Vimeo

EXPERIMENTAL LEARNING

“I don’t believe people are looking for the meaning of life as much as they are looking for the experience of being alive.”
- Joseph Campbell

Aristotle once said, “For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.” Experiential learning is learning through reflection upon doing, which is often contrasted with rote (or didactic) learning. Experiential learning is related to, but not synonymous with, experiential education, action learning, adventure learning, free choice learning, cooperative learning, and service learning. While there are relationships and connections between all these methods of learning, they all have slightly different meanings.

Experiential learning focuses on the learning process for the individual (unlike experiential education in an institutional setting, which focuses on the transactive process between teacher and learner). An example of experiential learning is going out in nature and learning through observation and interaction with the things in nature, as opposed to reading about animals and plants from a book. Through experience we may experiment and discover knowledge firsthand, instead of hearing or reading about others’ experiences.

Experiential learning requires no teacher and relates solely to the individuals process of direct understanding and integrating an experience. According to David Kolb, an American educational theorist, knowledge is continuously gained through both personal and environmental experiences. He states that in order to gain genuine knowledge from an experience, certain abilities are required:

- The learner must be willing to be actively involved in the experience;
- The learner must be able to reflect on the experience;
- The learner must possess and use analytical skills to conceptualize the experience; and
- The learner must possess decision making and problem solving skills in order to use the new ideas gained from the experience.

Experiential learning can be a highly effective learning method. It engages the learner at a more personal level by addressing the experiential needs, wants and preferences of the individual under the condition of experience. Experiential learning requires qualities such as self-initiative and self-assessing. For experiential learning to be truly effective, it should employ the whole learning lifecycle, from goal setting, to experimenting and observing, to reviewing, and also, action planning.

As stated by the ancient Chinese philosopher, Confucius, “tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I will understand.”
**PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING**

Problem-based Learning is a method of learning that stresses problem solving activities and the arrival at solutions as a means to develop and apply knowledge. The learner is initially confronted with (or inquires into) an interesting and relevant problem that requires a solution. The problem itself drives the activities and learning tasks. Instead of proceeding from the abstract to the concrete via a more traditional educational strategy, learners experience for themselves the process of arriving at a solution to the problem as they identify requirements and test their engineered solutions. Problem-based learning can be a solitary endeavour, but it is often done within a collaborative [team] environment.

**NOTE:** Learners often select problems that exist within our community as the content to which they apply the method. Thus, they learn while improving the total community around them. Here, learners make meaningful connections between themselves and the community. Learners build upon prior knowledge and skills while they work to solve authentic, relevant issues facing themselves and the society of which they are a part.

The individual (or group) formulates an understanding, an analysis of the problem and key questions which have to be answered in order to “solve” it. They collect data and analyze it for relevancy prior to synthesis and the arrival (or calculation) of a tentative solution [and not an opinion]. They then work to articulate the solution so that it may be tested to see whether it solves the problem. A solution might then be disseminated to the wider community. Depending upon the context of the problem, the learner(s) may apply the solution in real-time and assess/evaluate its results.

The learner is the primary agent of his/her learning in a problem-based environment with possible guidance and support from a facilitator, or even, the community as a whole.

**GAME-BASED LEARNING**

Games involve problem solving and one is hard pressed to come up with a game that does not. Any game with a goal effectively has presented you with a problem to solve.

“A game is a problem-solving activity, approached with a playful attitude.”

Games are also a form of play and have the innate capability of inducing a state of flow in those participating in them where skill and challenge match one another and learners become so focused that they experience a loss of time perception. It is often during this experience of flow that gamers rapidly develop and evolve those skills which they are applying. Although a game is something you “play”. Read Trevor Van Gorp’s well written blog post on designing for emotion and flow.

**CASE-BASED REASONING**

Case-based reasoning (CBR), broadly construed, is the process of solving new problems based on the solutions of similar past problems. An auto mechanic who fixes an engine by recalling another car that exhibited similar symptoms is using case-based reasoning. Under case-based reasoning, an individual works through a significant number of cases in order to learn how to respond effectively to various situations and future cases.
SIMULATION-BASED LEARNING

Simulation-based learning (SBL) is comprised of a computer-based learning environment that simulates in an interactive and dynamic manner both abstract concepts and complex processes. Simulation-based learning has emerged as a model implementation of interactive, real-time, photorealistic visualizations for the presentation of and interaction with information. Simulation itself is a technique for practice and learning that can be applied to many different disciplines. It is a technique to facilitate the experience of elements of the real natural world in an immersive manner that would be impossible, difficult, or dangerous to experience otherwise. Virtual immersion is intended to replicate substantial aspects of the real world in an interactive fashion. With simulation-based learning and immersive hardware, learning experiences become increasingly like real world physical experience.

Simulation-based learning environments are typically highly interactive and permit learners to change input variables, manipulate visual objects and perspectives, and view the results of changes in parameters in real-time. Simulations are generally aimed at establishing an active learner environment.

Today, interactive 3D / dynamic perspective technology provides a highly interactive and spatial environment for simulation-based learning. One example of this is a simulation that illustrates the contraction of the bicep muscle in a manner that permits the learner to both visualize and experiment with influential variables in the process in real-time. A flight simulator is another example.

The following are some characteristics of the applied technology of simulation-based learning.

- Simulated learning environments provide learners with as much reality as necessary and technically possible to give them the “hands-on” experience they need to learn real skills. Simulation-based training techniques, tools, and strategies can be applied in designing structured learning experiences, as well as used as a measurement tool linked to targeted learning objectives.
- Simulated environments are scalable. Because, it is a simulation.
- Simulated environments are flexible. Because, simulated environments are a digital recreation of the material [technology] that they represent, they can be technically re-configured in a large number combinations. In modern society, an instructor might have to literally break something on a machine so the student could diagnose the problem and then fix it. And, to manufacture and configure complex technical machines for many learners for one simple exercise may be inefficient when simulation technology is present.
- Simulated environments are portable. With the advent of the internet the ability to provide hands-on experience at a distance is now possible.
- Simulated environments are a safe option when working with the real thing provides unnecessary risk. Simulation solutions are a safe and responsible way to train. Simulation-based learning helps to mitigate errors and maintain a culture of safety. With a simulator, dangerous and sensitive tasks may be trained for in a safe and flexible manner.
- Simulated environments allow learning and re-learning as often as required to correct mistakes, permitting the learner to perfect steps and fine-tune skills. Human performance is strongly influenced by the ongoing situational context (i.e., the interaction between the task, the environment, and behavior), and simulators virtually facilitate the maintenance of a realistic context.
- Simulated environments are designed for learning. Learning scenarios can be reset and practiced over and over again. Technical processes can be artificially slowed down to demonstrate difficult concepts or time consuming processes can be sped up to not waste time waiting for the process to be completed.
- Simulated environments are updatable. When you consider the cost of technology and the rapid rate of technical obsolescence, it is obvious that digital environments are uniquely more easily updatable, and therefore, sustainable, than their physical counterparts (i.e., material duplicates for a great number of learners).

The features of a simulation that best facilitate learning include, but are not limited to:

- The ability to provide feedback
- Repetitive practice
- Information system integration
- The ability to range (i.e., set, modify, and control) the difficulty level
- Engagement and enjoyment

The benefits of simulation-based learning include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Deliberate practice with feedback
- Exposure to uncommon events
- Reproducibility
- Opportunity for assessment
- The absence of risks
- Parameter modification

Simulation Based Training is ideal when:

- A piece of equipment is hidden or inaccessible to the learner.
- An object is dangerous or difficult to manipulate in reality.
- An object is too small and needs to be shown in great detail.
- A process must be visualized [with spatial information] to be effectively understood.
• When the technology is available, and the learning strategy is conducive.

/ SIMULATION GAMES

Simulation games are a practice associated with both interactive 3D (i3D) and simulation-based learning (SBL). Simulation games used for learning (i.e. “serious simulation games”) engage learners as active participants in an immersive gaming environment. Designers must realize that it is not a necessity for simulations to have explicit goals, and many simulation games are open-ended in that they contain a flexible virtual environment where players define their own goals. It is also important for learning designers to understand that the primary role of a simulation is for it to be a highly realistic representation of some chosen reality; however, this is not the function of games, which out of necessity use restrictions and challenges to create and maintain playability.

GAME DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

It is not sensible to design a game that baits learners into doing things while disregarding their movement toward greater skill acquisition. If badges and rewards aren’t actually built on a basis of real learning, real accomplishment and real skills development, then the rewards will wear off and the badges will wear away. We will be left with a sense of loss for what we could have accomplished together, instead of set in opposition to one another.

Well-designed games often have the following elements in a particular balance for a particular learner or group of learners.

• Objective – the goal.
• Outcomes – what do I win, what if I do it right, what happens.
• The activity itself, what is the activity.
• Player profile – who is this person, what drives them (psychological or personality profile). The things in the middle are the skill cycle, the things that are done repetitively.
• Actions – what can you do.
• Black box – The formulaic arrival at an alignment off/on (by degree) of the “optimal” or “correct” decision/action. In concern to a game, it is the coding.
• Feedback – the thing that gives you points or lets you move ahead or gives you more ingredients, or whatever the case may be.
• Skills, what skills are you learning – spatial reasoning, hand-eye coordination, cognition, memory.
• The resources that you have to apply, the inputs. Limiting resources in this context creates a drive for efficiency.
• Resistance– uncertainty is key to a game experience.

What are some key qualities (or elements) of games? Games are entered willfully; games have goals; games have conflict; games have rules; games can be won and lost; games are interactive; games have challenges; games can create their own internal value; games engage players; games are closed, formal systems.
EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

IN REALITY, BOTH HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER TO INFLUENCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL. LIFE IS AN ADAPTIVE RESPONSE.

Among a community of learners we desire to know more greatly how high-level performance is developed. Research shows that the way individuals practice skills, and the amount of practice they do, largely explains differences between top performers and others (given that there are a wide-variety of other factors that influence how rapidly and precisely a task is capable of being performed at a high level). The concepts of ‘deep practice’ and ‘deliberate practice’ are two similar ways of describing the process of ‘effective practice’ (i.e., practicing effectively so as to develop efficiently toward high-level performance). Generally, all forms of effective practice resemble each other and have just been given different names by different market entities promoting what is basically ‘effective practice’. And, the approach that leads to the application of effective practice principles might be more broadly labelled as a “progress-focused approach” or “error-focused approach”. In other words, in ‘effective practice’ an individual practices, determines errors, and then corrects for those errors as they progress [in improving their performance of a task].

‘Deliberate practice’ refers to effortful activity designed to improve individually targeted performance. It consists of the following four elements: 1) It is designed specifically to improve performance; 2) It is repeated frequently; 3) Feedback on results is continuously available; 4) It is highly demanding mentally, and not necessarily particularly enjoyable because it means you are focusing on improving areas in your performance that are not satisfactory (i.e., it is challenging). Thus, it “stretches” you.

You don’t need “talent”; great performance is available to everyone [through precision of effort qualified by technical mechanics]. “Talents” is, in a sense, overrated. People carry around beliefs and myths about what great performance is. There are plenty who work extremely hard and are not great performers and vice versa. Deliberate practice is a method for developing better performance. Deliberate practice is:

1. Activity designed expressly for you at this moment of development;
2. The activity will change as you get better;
3. The activity pushes you slightly beyond, just beyond, your current abilities. Not too far so you become confused, and not too little so you don’t grow;
4. The activity is repeated at high volume, high repetition;
5. It includes continuous feedback, constant feedback that is telling you how you are doing, so that you can navigate and course correct.

Here, passion provides intense mental focus = getting better faster. Passion drives deliberate practice in time.

QUESTION: How do you know you are passionate about something until experience it (i.e., “try it”), then the passion will develop. Passion is developed.

Daniel Coyle describes a way of effective practice in the book The Talent Code, which he calls ‘deep practice’. Deep practice is a way of attentive practicing which closely resembles deliberate practice. Deep practice has three principle rules; and, the first rule identifies the three steps to the deep practice system:

RULE 1: CHUNK IT UP

- Step 1 – absorb the whole thing. Take the task as a whole – one big chunk – a mega circuit. Listen to it. Imitate it. See the big picture.
- Step 2 – break it up into the smallest possible chunks. Make small fragments. Memorize them. Then, link them together into progressively larger groups.
- Step 3 – play with time: first slowing the action down and then speeding it up. Slowing down helps you to attend more closely to errors, creating a higher degree of precision.

RULE 2: REPEAT IT

Repetition (in the context of a task and a degree of intelligence) is invaluable and irreplaceable, with some caveats. First, stay at the edge of your abilities. Also, 3-5 hours of daily practice is generally the human limit.

RULE 3: LEARN TO FEEL IT

To avoid the mistakes, first you have to grow to feel them immediately. “An out-of tune note should bother you . . . a lot,” states Daniel Coyle. High-level performers often describe their most productive practice with the following descriptive words: attention; connection; build; alert; whole; focus; mistake; repeat; tiring; edge; and awake. The following words were never used as descriptors: effortless; natural; routine; automatic; and, genius.

“GENIUS IS AS COMMON AS DIRT” – GATTO
When we struggle, it feels like a struggle. And through struggle, we develop skill that may be applied toward a greater experience of ‘flow’ in our life.

Embedded into the idea of ‘deep practice’ is the notion of ‘ignition’. The term ‘ignition’ is something of a metaphor for the burst of awakening that leads one to passionately pursue the practice of a task. Here, ignition is seen the process by which individuals start and then maintain the high level of motivation necessary to pursue the deep practice process itself. Forms of ignition include, but are not limited to: primal cues, an event, interest or curiosity, and establishment of a goal. Opportunity and environment also play crucial roles in the ignition process. Coaching is a part of deep practice and it is described in *The Talent Code*.

The authors of *The Talent Code* found that highly experienced facilitation coaches delivered their information to those practicing in a series of short, vivid, high-definition bursts. The directions weren’t dictatorial in tone (usually) but were delivered in a way that sounded clinical and urgent, as if they were being emitted by a particularly compelling GPS unit navigating through a maze of city streets: turn left, turn right, go straight, arrival complete. Also, *The Talent Code* noted that excellent coaches and “teachers” were mostly older in age: all had spent decades, usually several, intensively learning how to coach a particular task (or set of tasks).

Feedback and guidance in the form of facilitative “master” coaching are useful in developing exceptional skill. Think of this as the wise, older sage who can tell the younger learner what he could discover on his own in time, but can’t tell himself in the immediate. Coaching is a bit like neurofeedback: it becomes effective (or, more effective) with a faster signal response time. The development of great skill often requires the assistance of those who have the ability to facilitate skill in others.

The basic observation that the repetition of a task improves performance is not coincidence. The simple fact is that practice is a prerequisite for high-level performance of any type. This is because practice builds the neural superstructure that is the most essential part of a skill. In concern to coaching, if a strong neural superstructure is the first virtue of a great coach, then perceptiveness is the second virtue, which also takes practice to develop.

The neuro-scientific truth about skilled performance and information retention is that learners develop "mastery level" proficiency on only those activities they practice. Fundamentally, to improve ourselves and continue our growth process, knowledge must be applied and skills must be practiced.

**INSIGHT:** What “you” do frequently matters at a fundamentally structural level.

At the level of neuroscience, excellence in thinking, problem solving, and skills are at least partly based on the laying down of a dielectric material known as ‘myelin’ around the axon of a neuron. Myelin is the “white matter” in our brains, the dry mass of which is composed significantly of lipids. Myelin is the insulation that wraps around the nerve fibers in our brains and increases signal strength, speed, and accuracy. Scientists have discovered that there is a direct proportional relationship between “hours of practice” and “volume of white matter”. As humans develop their skills they build thicker

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**Figure 1-13.** Structure of a typical neuron. Image from Wikipedia page on ‘Myelin’.

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and thicker myelin around the nerve fibers that make up the neural pathway under use. In effect, the construction of myelin makes (or allows) the individual to perform a skill with greater accuracy and efficiency, leading to mastery. Building myelin through practice is a temporal variable (i.e., it takes time). One of the quickest and most efficient ways to build myelin is to place ourselves in a position to fail, then fix our mistakes and fail better. See Figure 1-13 on page 86 for a depiction of the myelin sheath (yellow blobs) wrapped around the axon of a neuron.

When we practice anything — be it the flute, our tennis swing, or singing in the shower — we create a circuit of nerves in our brain (i.e., new neural pathways) and the more we practice, the more free-floating myelin wraps itself around that neural circuit. The more a circuit is fired, the more myelin optimizes the circuit. Heavily myelinated nerves are estimated to be 100 times faster than lightly myelinated nerves. The brain functions at a faster than average speed for highly learned tasks. And, highly practiced nerve systems are several thousand times more efficient. It is, however, also important to recognize that the opposite is also true. If we don’t “exercise” a neural pathway in our brains, that pathway’s signal will weaken.

The more myelin the circuit attracts, the stronger and faster its signal strength becomes. It turns out that myelin, not the nerves, is what builds the speed, precision and timing that creates super performers. The difference between a high performer, such as Tiger Woods, and most other people, is that Tiger Woods has the precision and timing that creates super performers.

The right form of practice makes the master. Rote practice is not effective practice. Effective practice is a slow and uncomfortable interaction with something that is just out of your grasp and just beyond your capabilities, and this is what leads best to well-developed myelin. To practice deeply is to live deliberately in a space that is uncomfortable, but with interest and the sense that progress is not only possible, but absolute. Deep practice is built on a paradox: struggling in certain targeted ways – operating at the edges of your ability, where you make mistakes, which make you smarter and furthers your capacity [by restructuring your bodies systems]. Deep practice positions individuals in a place of self-leverage where they can capture failure and turn it into skill. Here, it is important to choose a goal just beyond your present abilities, to target the struggle, which may in fact lead into a state of flow. Thrashing blindly doesn’t help; reaching does.

**GOALS:** Just the act of setting a goal has been shown to increase performance. And, setting “big” goals is important; it is just easier for our cognition to process a complex goal when it is broken down into tasks (or “chunks”).

Every human movement, thought or feeling is a precisely timed electrical signal traveling through a chain of neurons. The more we develop a neural circuit, the less aware we become of using it (often associated with the sensation of flow). In other words, through replication the process becomes "automatic" (i.e. without perceptible transition). When many of these automatic process are happening concurrently, driving awareness into the “now”, then we are in the state of “flow”. The best way to build a good circuit is to fire it, attend to mistakes, then fire it again, over and over – tension is a necessary biological requirement.

**NOTE:** Fundamentally, if you don’t love it, you’ll never work hard enough to be great.

Optimally, individuals would only pursue deep practice in skills they truly enjoy, and certainly under an entirely voluntary and non-aggressive environment. If a person is going to invest the amount of time, passion and concentrated, difficult practice that produces high-level skill, that person will have to be deeply interested and motivated. This is quite simply, the way things factually are.

**JOURNAL REFERENCE**


**BOOK REFERENCES**

- Talent is Overrated: What really separates world-class performers from everybody else by Geoff Colvin
- The Brain that Changes Itself by Norman Doidge
- The Practicing Mind by Thomas M. Stermer
- The Sports Gene: Inside the science of extraordinary athletic performance by David Epstein
- The Talent Code by Daniel Coyle IMPORTANT: must read ‘highest rated’ 1 star reviews of the book on Amazon.
**UNLEARNING**

“If scientific/technical knowledge is doubling every 7 years that means that everything we know today will represent only 25% of future knowledge in just 14 years. Before we can take advantage of this new knowledge, it will require a great many (and very intelligent) people to unlearn what they spent much of their life learning.”

- Jack Uldrich

Unlearning involves the releasing of behavioral patterns and sets of information (i.e., "knowledge") that are no longer serving one's highest fulfillment or the most accurate expression of their own information space in relationship to an existent commonly discoverable existence. Here, we learn how to evolve beyond our established biases and understandings, which may have served well as protection for some time. As we enter a more technologically thought responsive environment it is important for us to effectively and efficiently integrate new information in alignment with our highest fulfillment.

**INSIGHT:** When our thoughts modify more quickly, then we must be more aware of our thoughts, which may have drifted us out of the flow space of a higher potential of fulfillment.

Unlearning is akin to the revision of an error. We can error correct ourselves (i.e., our information space), when we care to. The notion of an unlearning strategy may be applied as a metaphor for both the scientific method and the Trivium Method. In essence, the scientific method is a process for challenging the reality of the connections we form between different entities; thus, we are always working toward a greater comprehension and ability to act in our world.

“To obtain knowledge add things every day; and to obtain wisdom subtract things every day.” [In other words, error correction is "intellectual fulfillment" as knowledge and wisdom]

- Confucius

**ONLINE LINKS**

- Jack Uldrich: The Future Requires Unlearning, YouTube

**IMMERSIVE VIRTUAL TECHNOLOGIES**

Immersive and virtual technologies allow for the creation of flexible, realistic and authentic learning environments. The potential learning uses for immersion and visualization technologies are virtually endless.

The advent of immersive display and virtualization technologies means that highly-realistic and simulated creations of real-world environments are entirely possible, and have been so for several years. Of particular importance are immersive 3D stereo technologies in their ability to convey a spatial experience, a sense of distance, to a user. In virtual worlds and environments, learners personally experience the concrete realities that words and symbols describe. Through the use of intuitive, interactive virtual environments, learners practice skill-based activities for as long and as often as needed in an effort to develop mastery.

Certain applications of these technologies may not produce statistically significant differences in subject matter expertise over non-technology environments. However, due to the ability to alter environmental variables, the technological environment may be more efficient, safer, and also, more effective at capturing the interest and imagination of a learner.

**INTERACTIVE 3D (I3D)**

Interactive three-dimensional content allows for the realistic visualization of objects, processes, and/or complex concepts within a virtualized and immersive environment. The degree of immersion depends on the type of technology used. Stereo 3D technologies are more immersive than 3D content published on a 2D surface (e.g., watching an animated film on a LCD monitor). Interactive 3D technologies are potentially one of the most effective learning and communication tools presently available because of their ability to photo-realistically replicate the physical world. Due to the immersive graphical nature of i3D technologies they have been found to support effective knowledge transfer; regardless of, to a certain extent,
educational and cultural limitations that would have otherwise inhibited the effectiveness of learning. Further, because 3D replicates physical reality, it is a more natural learning medium than other more widely implemented mediums such as textbook reading, lecturing, and PowerPoint presentations.

One of the most powerful aspects of i3D is its ability to blend various media forms including audio, video, graphics, and animation into a single delivery method, which may be analyzed, evaluated, updated, reused, and shared. A second powerful aspect of i3D is its ability to be delivered in a large variety of presentation formats. Although i3D may be displayed on standard PC system with a standard flat screen monitors, it may also be displayed on mobile devices, head mounted displays, through transparent holographic displays, via stereoscopic technology, and in immersion rooms. Integrating i3D with simulation-based learning can establish learning environments which resonate with today’s modern learners.

Some of the benefits of visualization include:

- The safe simulation of real-word activities.
- Visualize all proposed changes to existing structures in 3D prior to development. Create walk-throughs of the intended designs.
- Demonstrate a tool’s functionality, quality, effectiveness, and efficiency prior to manufacturing.
- Model, train, and develop physical-world procedures.
- Content may be published to a wide array of display platforms and the Internet.
- Visualizing data and conducting research within a stereo 3D immersive (virtual reality) environment.
- Virtualize all your design elements simultaneously to accelerate the design process.
- Ability to augment reality.
- Convey spatial information about objects, scenes, and other learning content.
- Add visual depth and digital immersion to your peak state and meditative experiences.

// VIRTUAL REALITY

Virtual reality (VR; and virtual environments) refers to a three-dimensional and interactive computer-simulated environment that creates a sense of physical presence for the user. There are multiple publishing platforms for virtual reality-based solutions. VR provides a less symbolic interaction with the environment. Any description of an experience or action is usually transmitted through symbols, conventions and formalisms, meaning that the traditional learning of a concept requires previous knowledge of symbology. VR also enables first person experiences, which are natural, unreflected and personal, generating direct, subjective and personal knowledge. Physical and perceptual interactions in first person are possible with VR. Because VR can simulate the real world users may learn while placed in the context where they should apply that learning. This enables two types of experiences of knowledge not available in the real world, which have a high potential in education: scale and transduction. Scale is the process of distorting the relative dimensions of objects and the virtual world to give access to new perspectives. Transduction is the conversion of usually imperceptible data into information that is perceptible to human senses.

There are some valid concerns with virtual reality. Virtualization can create an environment that allows learners the opportunity to turn toward the virtual world as a means of escape. However, when individual’s basic needs are met and they are driven in some way toward a purpose, they are happy in their pursuits and will be less likely to turn to VR as a means of escape; for they have nothing to escape from and only a path of growth to move down.

New technologies can lead to a disturbance in an individual’s learning process. VR can turn the interests of the learner toward the medium itself (i.e., the VR technology), and away from the content to be learned. While this is true in particular cases, it may be more true that users of new virtual reality systems experience a bit of a “wow effect” and get caught up in the environment, no longer maintaining an awareness of what they had intended to learn. However, this peak interest and fascination in the technology fades after continued use of it, leading to the experience eventually becoming the tool it was intended to be for the user.

Also, learners acting in a self-directed environment are more likely to maintain interest in the content, regardless of a peaking interest in the technology. Technology can lead to physiological complications when not designed ergonomically or in bio-physiological alignment of its user. Every technology in our community exists in a continuous evaluation cycle for its short and long-term effects on users and the community.

// IMMERSIVE VISUALIZATION AND DISPLAY TECHNOLOGIES

Immersive displays (a.k.a., immersive environments or immersive visualization) physically surround the viewer with a panorama of imagery, typically produced by video projection. These display solutions generally allow a user to walk into the immersive environment, although there are exceptions (e.g., head-mounted displays). In an immersive environment, images are often, though not always, displayed in stereoscopic 3D. Examples of immersive displays include but are not limited to CAVEs and DOMES, head mounted displays (HMDs), panoramic projection screens and holo-immersive displays.

When presented in stereoscopic 3D mode, immersive displays are sometimes referred to as spatially immersive displays (or environments; SIDs). Stereoscopic 3D conveys spatial information to the user, and thus, the environments are known as spatially immersive.
Please note that it is the stereoscopic 3D aspect of the visual display that conveys spatial information and that stereoscopic 3D presented on non-immersive displays (e.g., a desktop monitors) also conveys a degree of spatial information.

Please note that these environments typically use multiple projectors and are highly energy intensive.

/ AUGMENTED REALITY

Augmented reality (AR) is any environment that combines both virtual reality and real-world elements. More precisely, it is a type of virtual reality that augments a direct or indirect view of the physical real-world environment with an overlay of virtual, computer-generated input, such as sound, graphics, or text. Augmented reality differs from pure virtual reality in that while virtual reality often aims to replace a person's perception of the world with an artificial 3D world, augmented reality enhances a person's perception of his or her physical surroundings. AR technology can even be used to annotate physical reality. Augmented reality can be implemented over tablets, smart phones, HMDs, and even pcs with a camera attachment.

Augmented reality head-mounted display (AR HMD) devices present an alternative to CAVEs. Whereas a CAVE can only have one individual using it at any one time, AR HMD allows for multiple people to see 3D objects in midspace at the same time.

AR requires the use of physical markers or real-world shapes that allow the correct positioning of objects and text in 3D space. There are degrees of interactivity built into AR systems. Some AR marker systems allow a user "touch areas" on the marker, thus causing the AR 3D model to animate in some pre-defined manner. Some AR marker systems allow markers to "interact" with one another to change or animate the 3D model. AR systems may also be combined with voice recognition software. For example, a marker may be displaying a 3D model of a wind farm. When the user blows into a microphone the voice recognition software detects the noise and in return animates the movement of the blades on the wind turbine and makes a whirling noise. It is also important to point out that augmented reality is moving toward markerless AR using real-word shapes.
Image 1-1. Life becomes the iteration of construction; at the tip of a fluctuating tetrahedron there is the potential for constructive change.
Understandably, it is difficult for most in the world today to imagine a different type society. To envision what one's own lifestyle might be like among community, it is important to recognize the lifestyled culture of most people in modern society [and the hole(s) into which they are dug]. The following reading should make it abundantly clear that the default lifestyle in modern society has already been designed for those in participation by other interests.

Among community there is the freedom and interest to design one's lifestyle for oneself around a framework that allows for customization, the fulfillment of need, and the self-empowered direction of ones' own life.

**QUESTION:** Would you take more time to enjoy the sensitive and meaningful aspects of life if you had more time that was your own?

One of the most well-known traits of modern society, around which most people's life circles, is the 7-8 hour workday (and working week), and its equivalent, the 6-8 hour school day (and schooling week). The workday is the root component of the lifestyle of most individuals in modern society; it is a fundamental structure around which most people's lives are built. Therein, as one reads this section, it would be useful to consider how the workday itself may be one of the dominant issues/pollutants in modern society.

**THE WORKDAY**

The workday is the number of hours someone has to work for an employer to maintain salaried compensation. The workday "experience" is significantly formed from a combination of culture and values. The average human being in modern society must mould their daily routines to fit this employment schedule. Therein, they internalize the patterns of working life, which constitutes the centerpiece of their day, and often adopt their occupation as their personal identity.

This is what a contributor to the Huffington Post has to say in an article entitled, The Origin of the 8 Hour Work Day and Why We Should Rethink It:

"The typical work [labor] day is around 8 hours. But how did we come up with that? The answer is hidden in the tidings of the Industrial Revolution. In the late 18th century, when companies started to maximize the output of their factories, getting to running them 24/7 was key. Now of course, to make things more efficient, people had to work [labor] more. In fact, 10-16 hour days were the norm." [Comment: possibly, one should rethink how people laboring more in factories that are running for longer hours is a sign of efficiency.]

In any case, these long work days caused labor strife and eventually there was a successful campaign that standardized the number of hours to be worked each day. The reason most people around the world labor 7-8 hours a day isn't scientific or much thought out. It's purely a century old norm for running factories without significant labor strife, and as will be discussed later, potentially for keeping the consumption-production cycle going.

In some cultures the workday is much more relaxed and incorporates everyday life such that there is a greater sense of flow and continuity in the lives of such societies. In other cultures, the workday is considered significantly separate from the rest of the day.

**NOTE:** Some people then go on to say: we ought not labor around an 8 hour a day schedule, but we ought to fit our labor into the ultradian rhythm; the argument for which is just more truncated thinking. Instead, we ought to think about labor itself, about actual economic efficiency (i.e., resource economization), about our real needs, and about what it means to have a fulfilling lifestyle. There is a marked difference between entraining to our natural cycles and entraining to the cycles of production set by owners and by profit. Fundamentally, it is time to ask better questions.

It could be well argued that the 35-40 hour work week [as a "normal" lifestyle] is the ultimate tool for business to sustain a culture of mindless consumption. As technologies and methods have advanced, workers in all industries have become able to produce more "market value" in a shorter amount of time. One might think this would lead to shorter workdays. But, it seems that the 8-hour workday is too profitable for business, not because of the amount of work people get done in 8 hours (the commonly quoted figure is that an average office worker gets less than 3 hours of actual work done
in 8 hours), but because it makes for such a purchase-happy public. Keeping free time scarce means people pay a lot more for convenience, gratification, and any other relief they can buy. For many people, it keeps them unambitious outside of work (and in a continuously tense mindset).

David from Raptitude.com writes of his experience after returning from months of casual traveling,

"I've only been back at work for a few days, but already I'm noticing that the more wholesome activities are quickly dropping out of my life: walking, exercising, reading, meditating, and extra writing." He goes on to say, "The one conspicuous similarity between these activities is that they cost little or no money, but they take time." And, one might add; they take a conducive mindset and environment.

People in modern society have been led into a culture that has been engineered to leave them tired, hungry for indulgence, willing to pay a lot for convenience and entertainment, and most importantly, vaguely dissatisfied with their lives so that they continue wanting things they don't have (i.e., infinite consumerism). They buy so much because it always seems like something is still missing, which it is (as in, true fulfillment). Modern societal economies have been built in a very calculated manner on gratification, addiction, and unnecessary spending. They spend to cheer themselves up, to reward themselves, to celebrate, to fix problems, to elevate their status, and to alleviate boredom. Such is not the sort of lifestyle we desire for ourselves among community.

QUESTION: What might a societal system look like that actively attempts to make people feel dissatisfied with their lives?

THE MANUFACTURING OF DEMAND

Modern society has become a lifestyle of unnecessary spending deliberately cultivated and nurtured in the public by economic establishments (i.e., businesses and States). Companies in all kinds of industries have a huge stake in the public's penchant to be careless [with their thinking, their money, and their resources]. In the documentary, The Corporation, a marketing psychologist discusses one of the methods she used to increase sales for her industry. Her staff carried out a study on what effect the nagging of children had on their parents' likelihood of buying a toy for them. They found out that 20% to 40% of the purchases of their toys would not have occurred if the child didn't nag its parents. Similarly, one in four visits to theme parks would not have taken place. They used these studies to market their products directly to children, encouraging them to nag their parents to buy.

This marketing campaign alone represents many millions of dollars that were spent because of demand that was completely manufactured. In part, advertising exists to implant in "you" new desires that "you" may not have had before. Therein, advertising tells us that happiness is at the end of our next purchase.

"You can manipulate consumers into wanting, and therefore buying, your products. It's a game."
- Lucy Hughes, co-creator of "The Nag Factor"

Industry will take every opportunity to sell more [stuff]. Retail stores are well known to apply scientifically backed strategies to make it more conducive for a [potential] shopper to spend more. Retailers purposefully modify the shopping experience to make it more likely that those inside their store will spend money. The .99 versus 1 dollar is just one example. Therein, proven methods of manipulation are used to drive sales and profit. Just moving products around a store to locations that are easier to access or more visible increases their sale. In other words, whatever the manufacturers put in certain locations correlates to an increase in their sale; and this is why they pay the retailers “sloting feed” to put their products in those prominent places.

These are only several small examples of something that has been going on for a very long time and to which we have become 'normalized'. Enterprise businesses didn't make their vast financial wealth by earnestly promoting the virtues of their products; they primarily made it by creating a culture of billions of people that buy way more than they need and try to chase away dissatisfaction with money.

NOTE: Marketers give names to products that have nothing to do with their function, which creates confusion.

We buy stuff to cheer ourselves up, to "keep up with the Joneses", to fulfill our childhood vision of what our adulthood would be like, to broadcast our status to the world, and for a lot of other psychological reasons that have very little to do with how useful a product really is.

NOTE: One marketing strategy is to discover what people want in a particular product offering, and then market the product based on that information. Hence, the order of events is: 1) The product is developed; 2) Discover interest for the product; 3) Market interest (which is a double entendre). In the market, once the immense accumulation of commodities are produced, they must also be sold. A market entity can't just produce things and not sell them. For commodities to lead to profits for producers, they have to go through the circuit of production, distribution, and consumption. Investment must be converted back into money and profit.

Therein, Advertising creates a culture in which desire and identity are to be fused with commodities. The lifestyle of those in modern society has become choreographed by marketing entities competing for profit.
DEFINITION: ‘Culture’ is the place and space where a society tells stories about itself, where values are articulated and expressed, where notions of good and evil, of morality and value, are defined. In modern society it is the stories of advertising (embedded in all forms of media) that dominate the cultural field.

The right question to ask is not whether this or that ad sells what it is advertising, but what are the consistent stories that advertising tells as a whole about what is important in the world, about how to behave, and about what is good and bad? In fact, we must inquire into values. Which values does advertising stress? And that’s not just one ad, but across the whole range of advertising.

It could, therefore, be said that advertising should be treated as a cultural system; a system that impacts how human beings make sense of the world, how we understand its meanings. So the images, the values, the ideas of advertising are lodged inside us because that’s the way all culture works. To not be influenced by advertising would be to live outside of culture, and no one lives outside of culture. We are all influenced by advertising to some degree.

Every society has to have a story about happiness, of how we can become happy, what we should strive for to be happy. And, the advertising system gives everyone a very specific answer to that question for their society. Advertising tells the receiver that the way to happiness and satisfaction is through the consumption of objects. Commodities will make us happy. In one sense, that’s what every single ad tells us. And, when consumption is so central to the way that the economy functions, that shouldn’t come as a surprise. The immense accumulation of commodities has to be sold, and it is sold through the story of goods bringing happiness.

A culture dominated by commercial messages that tells individuals that the way to happiness is through consuming objects, gives a very particular answer to the question “What is a society?” What is it that binds us together in some kind of common way? In fact, Margaret Thatcher, the former conservative British Prime Minister, gave the most succinct answer to this question from the viewpoint of the market. She said, “There is no such thing as society. There are just individuals and their families.” That is, there is nothing solid that we can call society. There are no group values, no collective interests. Society is just a bunch of individuals acting on their own. And, in fact that is precisely how advertising talks to us. It addresses us, not as members of a society talking about common issues, but as individuals. It talks about our individual needs and desires. It does not talk about those things we have to navigate commonly, things like poverty, health, life-support, and the environment.

INSIGHT: In those societies where the marketplace dominates there will be more stress on what the marketplace can deliver. Therein, advertising is the main voice of the marketplace. In that sense, advertising systematically relegates discussion of key societal issues to the peripheries of the culture - to the margins, and talks in powerful ways of individual fantasy, of individual pleasure, and security and comfort.

Fundamentally, demand can be manufactured, and it is the labor role of market psychologists to scientifically maintain and increase (where possible) sales for the business of industry. One could even say that the monetary-market socio-economic system itself [through the encoding of its value orientation] manufactures the “need” for, and then the demand for, money. Therein, the word “need” is in quotes because money is not what is actually needed. Money is an abstract ‘mediator’ [between competing players].

NOTE: Similarly, the modern socio-economic system manufactures the “need” for schooling, and then the demand for, public education and university.

Instead of creating a dynamic of increased efficiency and effectiveness toward freedom and fulfillment, modern society has internalized the idea of object acquisition and of productivity to such a state that it has caused a neurosis of production and a psychosis of consumption. The consumer vision that is pushed by advertising, and which is conquering the world, is based fundamentally, of course, on a notion of economic growth. More consumption requires more production. So it is pushing industrial production. Now, industrial production has costs. It requires resources, raw materials, and energy, and there is broad consensus among environmental and logistical researchers that the Earth simply cannot sustain present levels of economic expansion.

THE GAME [OF LIFE] IS RIGGED

Specific structures produce specific outcomes. Here is a secret; the game is, by its very (un)nature, rigged – it produces a specific outcome due to its specific structure. The most unfulfilling of structures with the worst of intentions can be hidden in plain sight when buttressed by the emotional appeal of hope and the belief in the possibility of winning amongst a public willing to believe that if they sacrifice and “work hard” (or, “play their hand well” in the game of life-survival) perhaps they might earn enough money to purchase their freedom [from the game].

The following logical discovery was laid out by Daniel
Here, we start with the concept of 'employment' (i.e., job/occupation), which is fundamental to the game [of life] in modern society. To say one has a "job" [in modern culture] is to indicate employment, or that one is "employed". What does this really mean? If we were to simply look the word up we might end up with the following:

**employ | em'ploi|**
verb [with obj.]
1. give work to (someone) and pay them for it

But one can't help noticing that the word is made of two parts, the prefix "em" and the word "ploy". Let's dig a little deeper.

**em- | im| (also en-)**
prefix
1. forming verbs (added to nouns) expressing entry into the specified state or location: embed | engulf.
2. forming verbs (added to nouns and adjectives) expressing conversion into the specified state

So we see that "em" is a combining form, meaning the same as "en": To enter into. So what then is a "ploy"?

**ploy | ploi|**
noun
1. a cunning plan or action designed to turn a situation to one's own advantage

Interesting, no? To ensure that we fully grasp this meaning, let’s define the above term “cunning” as well:

**cunning | 'kәniNG|**
adjective
1 having or showing skill in achieving one's ends by deceit or evasion

"Wait” you’re thinking, “that can't be right!”. Perhaps we might misinterpret this to mean that getting a job is a trick we play on ourselves to gain the advantages provided by money. However, to avoid the folly of this interpretation, we can look to the commonly attached suffixes which lay plain the meaning of the word, as in “employee” and “employer”.

**-ee |i: |**
suffix
forming nouns:
1. denoting the person affected directly or indirectly by the action of the formative verb: employee | lessee.

In other words, the person being employed, the “employee”, is the person who is affected by the ploy.

Which is to say, they are the victim of the ploy, not the perpetrator. The ploy is of course created and administered by the person who offers said “job”.

**-er |әr|**
suffix
1. denoting a person, animal, or thing that performs a specified action or activity: farmer | sprinkler.

This reveals that the ploy is that of the “employer” — the one who creates the ploy. Like a spider whose web, once spun, is a trap lain in anticipation of the misstep of its prey, so too does the employer create the ploy, and then lie in wait for the employee to enter into it.

If we assemble the pieces into their logical order, we can now see then that an employee could be defined as:

**One who enters into a skillfully developed, deceitful plan designed to leverage their paid work for the advantage of the employer.**

Hence, we could define “employer” as:

**One who skillfully and deceitfully creates a plan, ensnares another into it by offering money for labor, and leverages this person’s work to his advantage (i.e., exploitation).**

Perhaps if we are diligent and hardworking, we can hope for a promotion to management. This is where the employer vests an employee with some of the power over others that is held by the employer her/himself. Essentially allowing the employee to act on behalf of the employer within their appointed capacity. The effects of what is deliberately called 'human farming' (i.e., controlling other humans) is exhausting however, and we can see this reflected in the word itself: “manager”, or if you read it again; man – ager.

**manager = man – ager**

And the stress of human [resource] management does age us quickly, though certainly some jobs are more man-aging than others.

Let’s now take a more careful look at the word 'management'. Textbooks on management commonly define management as something equivalent to: "getting work done through others"; which, is a perfectly adequate and reasonable description of 'management' since managers are, after all, paid to organize, to command, and to control the work of others. It seems sensible to suggest, therefore, that management is, indeed, about achieving results through the [controlled] use of other people.

**manage |man-ij|**
verb
1. to handle, especially to control in action

IF YOU HAVE A PLAN IN LIFE AND YOU ARE USING SOMEONE ELSE’S ENERGY TO GET THERE; THIS IS NOT A PLAN, IT IS A PROBLEM.
Holland (1985) defines ‘management’ as an enterprising environment; one that emphasizes manipulating other people in order to attain organizational goals or economic gain (i.e., self-interest goals). In this view, management and business administration are about getting other people to do what you want them to do. Managers seek to control people and resources, and often, they have to compete for success in comparison to others. Thus, management entails the pursuit of power and prestige, ambition and success. These are goals compatible with the self-enhancement value types of power and achievement. They conflict, however, with cooperation and facilitation values that emphasize concern for the fulfillment and well-being of everyone, including oneself.[14][15]

Enterprising

“Enterprising people prefer activities that involve the manipulation of others to attain organizational goals or economic gain, and avoid scientific, intellectual, and abstruse activities. These behavioral tendencies of enterprising people lead, in turn, to an acquisition of leadership, interpersonal, speaking, and persuasive competencies and to a deficit in scientific ability.” [16]

Truthfully speaking, the idea of “great [human] management” is meaningless [in the context of fulfillment]. Just like the idea of a “great teacher”, which was explained earlier, is equivalently meaningless [in the context of self-integration and intrinsic motivation].

While this word-play might feel disheartening, we can rest in the knowledge that if we allow this deceitful plan to be played on us for most of our functional adult life — from the time we reach early adulthood until we succumb under the weight of the enfeebling grindstone of labor — and remain loyal to both the cunning plan and to our employer, we can hope, under certain predetermined circumstances, to be able to “retire”:

**retire** |rɪˈtɜːr|
verb
1. [ no obj. ] leave one's job and cease to work, typically upon reaching the normal age for leaving employment

This again – due to years of conditioning and repetition – sounds normal enough to most of us, until we tease apart this word as well.

**re-** |riː|
prefix
1. once more; afresh; anew; return to a previous state

**tire** |tɜːr|
verb
1. feel or cause to feel in need of rest or sleep:
   • (tire of) lose interest in; become bored with [with

After a lifetime of work, we can, at the end, hope to enjoy being tired, exhausted, and well, bored . . . again. Maybe there really is something to the notion that a ‘wage slave’ is someone who trades time for money and for fulfillment. In common discourse, a “wage slave” is someone who is locked into bringing home a salary to pay off life-required and acquired expenses. In a sense, a job/employment is the lifelong security of servitude. Fundamentally, doing something all day that we are disinterested in, or possibly hate (Read: employment), in order to survive, is a laughable societal model.

**QUESTION: Should we end employment discrimination or should we end employment?**

Herein, it is relevant to note that the acceptance of [wage] slavery requires a myth. If you want people to give up their freedom and their sufficiency willingly, and work for you, then you need some kind of mythology. To the “owners”, “workers” are disposable and replaceable people (with the notation that some may be more difficult to replace than others). Hence, workers need a good story to keep them working as workers [for someone else]. If “your” society is one of labor (i.e., dependence on a “boss” who could cut “you” off), then it might be useful to inquire into what mythology is continuing the perpetuation of the perception of a human as a resource for another class of humans.

**Head Count**

Make no mistake, we are still serfs (servant class), in a system of neo-feudalism that we now call “capitalism” or the “ism” of “the head” (capita from the Latin caput, meaning: head).

It is important to note that by no means is it being suggested here that any other system of human farming is preferential. In recent centuries there have been many other systems of human farming that have vied for dominance including Communism, Fascism, Socialism, and any of the other “isms” which essentially amount to different human farming methods, each steeped in its own philosophies of human livestock management.

**-ism** |ˈɪzəm|
noun
1. a distinctive practice, system, or philosophy, typically a political ideology

The suffix, -ism, represents a [system of] belief about how reality works. In other words, an -ism is a form of organization derived out of a belief system. A belief is faith in the existence of something that may or may not accord with verifiable information. For all practical purposes, beliefs do not maintain the directed notion that more can be learned, which changes how we behave and how we create. Beliefs and other insufficiencies consume energy and limit the self in its own re-direction...
toward an information space of greater accuracy and greater fulfillment.

**NOTE:** Practically speaking, “-isms” are all immature attempts at an “equal-value economic system” as a system that reflects a balance of wealth access among a population and has no arbitrary, constantly shifting values; because, its values are objectively referential to verifiable information and the equal well-being of everyone. The adoption of an “ism” is the adoption of something which is immature. Someone who adopts an “ism” has not yet actualized the experience that reality is just information and that by evolving the quanta of low entropy information one progresses oneself, and when the evolving self is shared among the social, then there is progress for humankind also. In community there is an organization of increasingly accurate quanta of information about the evolving self, as well as the efficient and regenerative organization of the material world applied toward the fulfillment of each individual’s needs.

Capitalism is “headism”, and while one could pontificate eternally about the implied meaning here, it originally referred to the unit by which livestock were counted, (i.e. “I have 400 head of cattle in my herd”). This of course calls back to a time that cattle (chattel) were like a form of money. The more “heads” someone had, the more wealth s/he controlled.

While those who sit atop the pyramid of the Ponzi Scheme of civilization remain obfuscated, it seems clear that large economic establishments in the form of corporations now exploit the earth and the resources that are found here, and we (“natural persons”) are both working for them and then also buying back those products that we make while competing against each other in the process.

Increasingly though, the products are being made by robots (effectively cutting out the employee in the circular equation employer > employee > consumer > employer). For all practical purposes, the labor for income system is on its way out anyway due to technological unemployment (i.e., machine labor replacing human labor). In the market, technological unemployment doesn’t relieve anyone of the burden of having to pay rent or buy groceries or pay taxes.

**INSIGHT:** In the market, your co-workers are your competitors. Therein, wages are prices, they are the prices that you charge for your labor and the competition that you face in the market workforce.

We ought to work to see our common humanity and stop clawing over one another for scraps.

**QUESTIONS:** What is the difference between renting yourself and selling yourself? Is it wise to exchange one’s life for payment?

When fractional reserve banking is accounted for, then life begins to amount to a perpetual chase after artificially generated, fiat receipts of perceived value (currently known as “money” or “notes of debt”) that we covetously trade about as we endlessly compete with one another over perceptually and artificially limited resources with a mounting burden of debt that, because of the usury (“interest”) charges accrued, never really seems to diminish.

All of this, of course, is what those in modern society have been calling freedom.

Ooops!

“Freedom is Slavery” - A slogan of Big Brother in “1984” by George Orwell

In modern society there is a social hierarchy based on where someone is employed and what kind of work s/he does. This is [in part] due to the fact that the type of work, and the particular employer being worked for, corresponds to the amount of pay someone makes. Therein, the amount of pay corresponds to the amount of purchasing power in the market. And, the amount of purchasing power in the market correlates with the potential for social influence and the purchase of [economic] ownership (which maintains one’s position in the hierarchy).

**hierarchy | hī(a),rärkē |**
noun
1. a system or organization in which people or groups are ranked one above the other according to status or authority.
2. (the hierarchy) the upper echelons of a hierarchical system; those in authority.

To best understand the word we have a look at its etymology.

**hierarchy**
noun
1. from medieval Latin hierarcha, from Greek hierarkhes “leader of sacred rites, high priest”. Hierarchy refers to the rule by a high priesthood.
2. a body of persons having authority
3. subordination to the rank above

For all practical purposes a hierarchy is a structural organization of subordination to differing levels (or ranks) of authority. Herein, it is essential to realize that power positioning and violence (from the subtle to the gross) are part of the structure of every social hierarchy. Yet, it is very easy to think that the society that one lives in (or the organization one is participating in) is non-violent when one becomes enculturated or otherwise normalized to the violence (i.e., adapted to current conditions).

Socially hierarchical organizations often see any inquiry into the structure of the organization itself (the structure within which a select individual or group of individuals have social power) as divisive. In other words, to a “leader” in a position of authority [in the hierarchy] valid questions concerning the hierarchical social structure of the system will likely be called “divisive”. In truth,
it is the social hierarchy itself that is divisive toward a cooperatively shared value orientation and toward coordinated fulfillment.

Censorship of inquiry is an indication that someone is participating in a socially hierarchical organization. Such a structure can be initially hard to perceive until someone begins calling into question the structure of the system itself or an individual's position in the system (i.e., in the hierarchy). It is important to remember that questions about organizational structure are often seen as threats to those in positions of power in the structure.

**ADAGE:** The structure manifests the individual.

In community, our lifestyle is not one of renting our lives to others who demand obedience, and neither are we slaves to others who demand our sacrifice. There is no power positioning, nor is there a social power play (i.e., politics). Instead, we focus on creative pursuits rather than climbing the ladder of social power or “making a living”.

**INSIGHT:** In hierarchical human societies, the lifestyle of some is disadvantaged in comparison to others. Hence, opportunities for development toward a higher potential of one's self-expression are fulfilled dissimilarly.

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**/ VOLUNTARY SERVITUDE**

The root cause of voluntary servitude is believing in things that are not true - giving support to structures that dis-engage our common fulfillment. Believing in something which does not exist subverts not only our intellectual capability for survival, but it also turns off our resistance to "unrealities" and forms the foundation of tyranny. It becomes a single source of control until we choose to observe, identify, organize, integrate, and communicate in terms of that which exists. By believing in that which is non-existent our intellectual "immune system" is turned off. The unrealities accumulate over time and it becomes increasingly difficult to define reality based on that which exists. To distinguish the subjective from the objective, the arbitrary from the substantial, the unreality from reality, which we can [f]actually perceive. We communicate with others to meet our needs, but in a state of unreality, communication can become a survival trait inverted in on itself. Most communication in modern society is about unsubstantial, arbitrary, and non-meaningful information, about non-existence. What role does communication serve when it only produces noise on a mass scale; what is it indicative of; despite there being a clear signal available?

**INSIGHT:** Many believe in work (as employment). And some believe in employment so deeply because they know so little else.

Bluntly speaking, most workers are part-time slaves, and some are full-time. Most work experiences involve a boss, a leader, a supervisor, or a manager who says when to show up, when to leave, and what to do in the meantime. S/he dictates how much work to do and how fast to do it. Some managers are direct and others leave clues and set expectations. S/he is in control and holds the power in the relationship. Often, s/he is free to carry his control to humiliating extremes, such as the clothes you wear or how often you go to the bathroom. With few exceptions, s/he can fire you for any reason, or no reason at all. S/he has you spied on by snitches and supervisors and talking back is called “insubordination”. Anyone who says these people are free (or, live in a free society) is being disingenuous.

**QUESTIONS:** If slavery exists when authority has the right to take 100% of your effort, then at what percentage [of extraction] is it not slavery?

The prevalent, universal feeling among bosses and their agents, and also widespread among workers themselves, is that such work is inevitable and necessary. Such a perspective is not only inaccurate, but it is unfortunate and unhelpful in creating a system that fulfills everyone (the bosses and agents and workers alike). In truth, systems that are not of fulfillment [are likely to] only multiply human misery.

**SUBMIT... to employment:** In a competitive society some people must unwillingly, and therefore, apathetically accept employment positions in organizations in order to pay for those things they need, want, and otherwise desire.

**The market “party line”:** “Do your fair share, and if you don't, there will be consequences that you have brought on yourself.”

**The reality:** Find employment to earn capital for your right to exist in a society that re-generates poverty, hunger, conflict, and greed.

It is hard to argue against the obvious fact that modern society is composed significantly of useless work. In actuality, much of it is worse than useless and causes harm, and the vast remainder of it is not approached from a designed direction toward effectively and efficiently fulfilling need. Entire industries consist of nothing but useless paper shuffling. What is an industry itself if not a means for separating, dividing, establishing and forming complexes [that separate out the potential for the formation of community]? It is wise to look more toward the concepts of integration, cooperation and emergence, and decide based upon these recognitions.

Most work isn’t worth trying to save because it serves the unproductive purposes of control. They want your time, enough of it to make you theirs, even if they have no use for most of it. The tiresome debate of freedom versus necessity resolves itself practically once the production of use values is co-extensive to the engagement of playful activities.

**QUESTION:** In your society, do people drink coffee to wake themselves up in the morning to do the most mundane, banal, and repetitive of tasks?
‘Linear income’ keeps you tied to a ‘job’. Linear income is earned when you do something once and get paid for it once. Being tied to a job or to debt limits your freedom; in fact, it could be said to be the opposite of freedom. ‘Residual income’ is earned when you do something once and get paid for it over and over again. For all practical purposes, in the market, residual income is rent extraction and linear income is represented by a salary.

**job |jôb|**
noun
1. a piece of work
2. continuous labor [for compensation; for salary]

In the market, most jobs are the latter; they are continuous labor for a salary. When there is continuous labor, then a whole new set of [continuous labor] jobs crop up to support and advocate for the original set of people who are continuously laboring. Together, a third continuous set of labor jobs ends up forming, that of [political] labor advocacy.

Another common word for the concept of a job and for employment is ‘occupation’.

**occupation**
noun
1. activity that serves as one's regular source of livelihood; employment
2. holding or possessing
3 invasion, conquest, and control

One could read this concept, in the context of the market, as someone involved in an activity on a regular basis to provide an intangible for their continued survival while the whole time being possessed or otherwise controlled by something that has invaded and conquered . . . possibly the mind of the occupied laborer who has less time, resources, and may have become so identified with the system and their occupation that they can neither see nor think about what has happened (and is still happening). Maybe the word occupation not only relates to the occupation of land by a conquering force, but also applies to the occupation of someone’s mind by an outside force (or structure) that is farming their energies [for the purpose of its own continued existence, as well as to maintain the separation of the individual from the true source of their fulfillment].

**NOTE:** Employment is a legal status. It means that you are [in part] paying taxes to the government and contributing to the continuation of the domestic economy (which is in warring competition with other domesticated State economies).

There is no unemployment in community because there is no employment. Or, said another way, community has no market, and so, there is no employment. Further, it could be said that community has no unemployment due to bad planning. Hence, no one is paid to sit idle for the sake of maintaining labor standards or a wage. In community we expend energy and effort efficiently so that we can live a life of fulfillment. We do not work for the sake of work (i.e., the "x work ethic" - work as good in and of itself). Instead, we apply ourselves and our systems intelligently for our fulfillment, and for which we benefit through a fulfilling lifestyle - a lifestyle that generates a higher potential dynamic of flow in our lives. Herein, when we do work we do it as efficiently and effectively as possible, so that it doesn’t have to be repeated until absolutely necessary (i.e., until dictated by the physical environment or a change in our requirements). Anything less than this is inefficient, and potentially, coercion.

Community is efficient, in part, because when individuals "work" for themselves their "workmanship" is of higher quality due to them being more present in the moment.

**QUESTION:** How might the workday, as a fundamental structure that the lives of individuals in modern society revolves around, itself be a significant contributing factor to the mental and physical pollution ubiquitous in modern society? It may be interesting to note here that State likes to claim the role of saviour mandating a set work week over which employees may either not work or must be paid extra for work.

**THE PERPETUAL CREATION OF AN ELITE CLASS OF OWNERS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF AN ELITE OWNER:**

"Have you noticed that when you first start working you find that effort is rewarded. Then, as you climb the ladder of power and social influence you begin to notice that hard work is a bit, well, crazy. Over time you come to feel that you don’t want to work so hard, but you want to maintain the income and the position of power you have achieved. And so, you rig and manipulate the game – you apply efficiency to the maintenance of your position in the hierarchy (i.e., you re-structure the game for your own competitive advantage) . . . then, you make it look like you care about the disadvantages by giving away a portion of your wealth to charity through charitable deeds. We learned of the usefulness of this tactic from the 20th century industrialists. Amongst our own, this behavior is euphemistically called ‘public relations’.

**WE CARE. PLEASE RATE THE QUALITY OF OUR SERVICE?**

Below is someone from the Community responding to a question about what they think of the service quality of the human element of a business:

"Well, I am not so cool on having other human beings serve me, when we could have machines do it and these other human beings could be pursuing their higher potential."
In a market system there exists the issue of individually (or familially) providing for livelihood. If an individual desires to survive and to “make a life/livelihood”, then they have one of several options: 1) they can [attempt to] start a business (become an entrepreneur); 2) they can [attempt to] find a job with a business (become employed); 3) they can partner (as in marriage or be born into a life) with someone who “has money” accumulated, or has a business, or has a job with a business. In the abstraction that is the “market”, players are generally on their own. In the market the point is, “you do it on your own” (a perspective mirrored in schools). Therein, people operate their own lives and fulfillment independent of everyone else.

Most people, however, work for a salary in a defined role, which they must fulfill in order to maintain a “livelihood” and to survive. Therein, “requests” from employers aren’t really requests, regardless of a meaningful rationale for the “request”. They aren’t requests, because (over time) if the employee ignores them or goes against them, then his/her employment would most likely be terminated. Such “requests” might be more accurately referred to as orders (or commands), or coerced requests. If the boss says, do it this way and you do it another way (regardless of the outcome) and the boss fires you and you can’t pay your rent that month or put food on your family’s plate, then clearly there is coercion. It is a less aggressive form of coercion than that perpetrated by the State, but it is still a form of coercion nonetheless.

INSIGHT: In community, the fact that you can’t be fired gives you the power to speak the truth.

Most employers are, for all practical purposes, stating: “If you do not do what I tell you to do, then I am going to withhold biosurvival tickets (i.e., money), or fire you so you no longer can receive biosurvival tickets (i.e., salary) from me”. Therein, if you know that you can easily find another job, then the coercion is less aggressive. But, if you depend upon the job for sustenance, and finding another job is not a simple and quick process (i.e., there is undesired stress involved that could affect one’s personal relationships or accustomed standard-of-living), then it is a more aggressive form of coercion. Though, it should also be noted that some employment conditions make it nearly impossible for [administrative] employers to fire employees. On occasion, employment in government and the tenureship of a professor are examples of this.

NOTE: In order to survive in modern society most people have to submit to the methods of the system. In other words, they have to submit to “work” for income and profit, not work for the betterment of themselves and humanity. In community, we update our system so it fits the new understandings and technologies.

Fundamentally, the market coerces a great majority of people into jobs [in order to provide for their continued lifestyle and survival] that they would otherwise not pursue if they were free to pursue their genuine passions and interests. Hence, for most people, the market represents an obligation to submit to mindless and often pointless labor, or at least, labor that is meaningless to oneself.

QUESTIONS: How does one distinguish participation in the market from mere survival? Is it intelligent to structure a society around the idea that everyone must work in order to earn the right to live?

Oddly enough, the road to high pay is very frequently a toll road where the more money you are earning the more of a toll you pay by working more hours, by doing jobs that you don’t like, or making decisions you don’t like in order to get more money, while selling products that don’t make you feel good and aren’t particularly fulfilling. Conversely, the more fulfilling your work is (in the market), the chances are, the less it pays. And, the reason it pays less is because people want to do it: the more fulfilling work is, the more people want to do it; the more people want to do it, the greater the amount of supply of people; the greater the amount of the supply of labor in a relationship to demand, the more the pay goes down. So, fulfillment (through work in the market) equals low pay as a rule; and, a lack of fulfillment often equals high pay if the job needs to be done (e.g., collecting garbage). It is usually not that fulfilling to most people, but

WHAT HAPPENS TO PEOPLE WHO CAN’T FIND JOBS IN THE MARKET?

The above question is likely to be answered in a unique way depending upon the ideological background of the responder.

> A market philosopher will generally answer by saying: The strong will survive and the weak will perish.

> A religious philosopher will generally respond with: Your question is a good one, and this is why we need more charity in the world.

> A Statist philosopher will generally answer by saying: No problem, they are entitled to State services, and the public will sustain their life.

>> At this point, the questioner might say, “Ah, I see. No thank you. None of those options are good enough for me; none of them go far enough. To the market philosopher my retort is: Why should death be the solution? To the religious philosopher my rebut is: Why should we not integrate and coordinate our efforts? And to the State philosopher, I reply: Why should we facilitate dependency upon others?”
it needs to be done (due to the structure of the system), so garbage collectors generally get paid more than most other equal effort blue collar workers; in order to get that job done).

“We don’t need thinking people when we just want them to repeat the same manual or mental task each workday.”
- Service Economy Manual.

Yet, speaking with even the wealthiest people, one soon finds that they are just as deep in, just as desperately — or sometimes more so — trapped (and stressed) as those who are the poorest, and whether you work for yourself or for another, the house almost always wins. Once you are in, it’s nearly impossible to get out (both physically and mentally).

INSIGHT: If any of us have a job, our job is to be good ancestors. In other words, we ought to leave a better environment as ancestors.

If you have a job (or, when you did have a job), do you attend this job and participate in its mission because you are passionate about being a part of it, or do you feel you must in order to meet the constant stream of financial requirements? Does your work feel like the fulfillment of your “soul”, or is it something more akin to burden of necessity? The real determining question in identifying work-life passion is the following: “If you were given an amount of money that, let’s say, was equivalent to living at an exceptionally high standard of living for the next 50 years, would you go back to your job, or would you choose to do something else with your life?” So, when someone says, “but, I enjoy my job” or “there are people who enjoy their jobs”, then ask the prior question.

QUESTION: If we can meet our needs and wants by individual self-direction, then why would we compensate for effort put into sustaining and evolving the system that ensures our needs and wants are met.

Employment is a means to another end. And therein, you can hear the sucking sound of your energy being drained to fill the pockets of others [higher up] in the socio-economic hierarchy.

NOTICE THE DIFFERENCES:
Need food : need money; need job/employment : need fulfillment; need life-support : need want; need well-being : need industry.

Locked into the cycle of the workday, the well-being of the employee is slowly eroded. Perhaps the biggest factor in this decline is stress that is inflicted on the worker. We’d never be so naive to suggest that life could or should be stress-free, but there is a big difference between stress that arises from the natural order of things versus overt pressures imposed upon us by other human beings. At its worst, malicious managers endlessly harass their staffs in a cynical attempt to extract as much profit and productivity as possible. At its best, the helpless employee is tethered to their labor that is both mundane and meaningless.

NOTE: In the market, “financial independence” means you don’t have to surrender to life through a wage; you can come and go as you wish. Do we not all have the same wish for freedom?

In community, the phrase “earning a living” is no longer (i.e., has disappeared) from our vernacular. We have enough for people to just be, without having to justify their existence through often tedious, meaningless, or degrading work. It must be admitted that many jobs in modern society are irrelevant to human well-being and fulfillment, are redundant, as well as socially, psychologically and environmentally destructive. Herein, there is a realization that we can work to design a more fulfilling life for ourselves and for all others. Anyone who says otherwise is ignoring reality, and possibly in business to consult other businesses on how to make their employees love their jobs [even] more.

Yet, it is important to understand that most people in modern society live the way they have to, not the way they want to. In other words, they don’t have the economic power to live the way they want to. When living in a society requires currency, and hence, purchasing power, then are you living the way you want to, or the way you have to? You see, this is a question of structure: What if you want to live a well and fulfilled life without currency inside of a structure that requires currency in order to live that way? Conversely, among community, power is the ability to control our own life. If we have the ability to control our own life, we have power. We don’t
have power if we are working for somebody else, and if we feel obligated to take a job we don't like because it earns an abstract intangible required for our fulfillment in said structure.

**QUESTIONS:** Should freedom be purchasable? Can freedom be purchased? Should social power be purchasable? Can social power be purchased? What does it mean for our behaviors toward one another when fulfillment is purchasable? Should freedom come at the end of a purchase?

## WORK: THE TWO CONCEPTUAL FORMS

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs: ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

- Howard Thurman

There are at least two separate and dissimilar forms of the concept of ‘work’ (in an economic context): there is "work as labor" and there is "work as fulfillment". In community, work is the expenditure of energy toward fulfilling or achieving something, possibly a goal, in a voluntary manner. Herein, we work on what we love doing (i.e. that which we have passion and an intrinsic drive). In the market, work is something you have to keep coming back to do more of in order to maintain an employment position that recycles and sustains the earning of a salary, which you may give yourself (if you are self-employed) or someone else may give you (if you do not own the business). These two conceptual meanings of ‘work’ are not alike in any meaningful sense.

**KOAN:** When you die you will regret that you haven’t worked more.

Herein, someone might ask themselves the following questions in order to facilitate an initial comprehension of the type of work they are involved in:

Am I working as a laborer for a company in compensation with a wage? Am I living the life I want or the job I have found? What am I working for:

- acquiring coin or creating something that I will use?
- Am I working to sustain my occupied position or am I working through a deep desire to share myself with others? Does my work have even a quanta of intrinsic interest; is it being done out of its sheer joy? Is the work a “job”? If I don’t continue working, will I lose the right to live [with access to that which I need to survive and thrive]? How much of the effort that one exerts on a daily basis is exerted through intrinsic self-direction? Does the work make sense [in terms of one’s own fulfillment], or does it seem fragmented?
- is the work actually solving a personal or social problem? Whose choice is it to do the work or not do the work? In other words, if you don’t do the work will the structure of society you live in dictate that your standard of living and fulfillment decrease?

Someone might further determine the type of ‘work’ they are doing through the following descriptive characteristics that differentiate the two empirical expressions (i.e., the two different forms of work):

- Work is something one does for a chance at other opportunities. *[potentially both forms]*
- Work is the exertion of effort to produce something. *[both forms]*
- Work is something performed as labor in return for compensation. *[the market form]*
- Work is something performed without compensation. *[the voluntary form]*
- Work is something that generates profit for another human(s). *[the market form]*
- Work is the inability to fully choose one’s working conditions. *[the market form]*

Fundamentally, salary dependence serves as a substitute for a means of establishing parameters for voluntary participation and cooperation on an intrinsically motivating project. If somebody is dependent on their employer for a salary, then their work cannot be claimed as voluntary (i.e., such a claim would be disingenuous).

**QUESTION:** Should we be “selling” [the] time [of our lives] in exchange for salaried survival? Is work just a way of keeping people busy, out of the way, and not causing trouble for the powers that be?

There is a warning in what is written here that if a society fails to break its ideological commitments to the

"OF COURSE, OUR FAILURES ARE A CONSEQUENCE OF MANY FACTORS, BUT POSSIBLY ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT IS THE FACT THAT SOCIETY OPERATES ON THE THEORY THAT SPECIALIZATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS, NOT REALIZING THAT SPECIALIZATION PRECLUDES COMPREHENSIVE THINKING. THIS MEANS THAT THE POTENTIALLY INTEGRATABLE TECHNO, ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES ARE NOT COMPREHENDED INTEGRATIVELY AND THEREFORE NOT REALIZED."

- R. Buckminster Fuller, Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth, 1963

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value of work (as ascribed by puritanical and market philosophers), then it will create enormous ecosystems of unnecessary employment that will consume enormous amounts of resources that could and should be put to much better use.

“I can envision a plethora of futures where everyone has a job. One job could be to show up at the office, sit down, look busy, and read emails all day. Another could be to look at robots working, and make sure nothing is wrong. The fact that only one in ten thousand robots fail over the course of a week, and that one supervisor per facility would suffice matters not. We can have hundreds of supervisors. And then supervisors of supervisors. And then managers, and managers of managers, up in the food chain. We can fabricate new diseases, and then create professions to cure those fictitious illnesses. Finally – desires, as economists teach us, are infinite, therefore we can perpetually generate things to fulfil those desires, however frivolous or whimsical they might be. While this may sound laughable to some of you, it may also sound striking similar to what we are already doing today.”

- Federico Pistono

Federico concludes that the idea that everyone must earn a living is a spurious conceit that we must eliminate before we squander our resources trying to give every human a job to do in an environment in which artificial intelligence and robotics are eliminating whole categories of human labor. Not only will the newly created jobs serve invented needs, but they will mostly fail to provide people with any sense of meaning or challenge because the work, by its very nature, is unnecessary, and so if it is done poorly or not done at all, the only consequences will be invented consequences in the way that we invent and impose harsh consequences on people who cultivate illegal plants. Not only will the failure to perform unnecessary work have no meaningful consequences, but the diligent pursuit of the duties of those made-up jobs won’t produce any tangible good. Such work can provide no sense of accomplishment with any sense of meaning or challenge because the work, by its very nature, is unnecessary, and so if it is done poorly or not done at all, the only consequences will be invented consequences in the way that we invent and impose harsh consequences on people who cultivate illegal plants. Not only will the failure to perform unnecessary work have no meaningful consequences, but the diligent pursuit of the duties of those made-up jobs won’t produce any tangible good. Such work can provide no sense of accomplishment unless one takes seriously accolades like employee of the month or top sales achiever for the year. In Federico’s well-informed view the belief that every human must toil and earn a living serves mainly to prevent people from imagining any alternative. It is one piece of a belief system that serves the establishment’s goal of quashing any inkling of an alternative vision.

Your true greatness will come when you focus on creating a life, not a career.

-Vishen Lakhiani

The monotony of a job drains its ludic potential. A job that might engage the energies of some people for a reasonably limited time for the fun of it, is just a burden on those who have to do it for 35 hours a week, with no say in how (and why) it should be done, for the profit of others who contribute little to nothing to the project. The degradation that most workers experience on the job is the sum of assorted indignities called ‘discipline’. ‘Discipline’ is essentially totalitarian control at the workplace, and may be forced through management, surveillance, rote work, imposed work tempos, production quotas, and punching in and out. ‘Discipline’ is [in part] what the factory, and the office and the store share with the prison and the school and the [mental] hospital.

NOTE: Some say that if you don’t contribute to society the way the leaders of the society want you to contribute, then you don’t deserve its support, you don’t deserve a quality-of-life or even living. Is that a healthy mentality?

Remember that play is always voluntary. What otherwise might be play is work (in its pejorative, herein) when it is forced or coerced. This is axiomatic. To play involves flow, as non-attachment to results. The player gets something out of the process of playing. The core reward is the experience of the activity itself.

The alternative to work (as defined in the market) is not idleness. As much as we may treasure the pleasure of passive entertainment, it is never more rewarding than when it punctuates other actively engaging pleasures and pastimes.

Some people confuse work among community with vacation. Voluntary effort expended toward the development and maintenance of the community is not the managed, time discipline, safety-valve commonly called "vacation". Vacation is non-work for the sake of work. Vacation is time spent recovering from work, in the frenzied, but hopeless attempt to forget about work. At work, at least you get paid for your alienation and enervation.

IMPORTANT: In the market, people don’t just work, they have jobs which become their identities. One person does one or more repetitive tasks on an “or else” basis, and they become identified with that.

In community, we don’t “have to” work [at a job] or do anything, but if we do that en masse, then our fulfillment reciprocally suffers. In other words, we seek to maintain the relationship between that which we do and our fulfillment without the interjection of artificial abstractions that disconnect our behaviors from our fulfillment -- we facilitate self-integration and self-direction. Hence, it is important to realize that the notion of ‘work’ takes on an entirely different meaning when
we are working in a connected and coordinated manner for fulfillment. As socially connected individuals among community, our work is meaningful and prioritized. In community, there is concern for priorities and efficiencies.

**NOTE:** In Scandinavian languages there is actually a separate word for job/work happiness. It means something between one's satisfaction/happiness with one's work and also "I'm satisfied with what I'm doing and the environment I'm doing it in". There is not yet the equivalent word in English. In Finnish, the word is "työtyytyväisyys".

Let's be clear that this logical derivation is not a knock against "strong work". Most things worth doing are going to be difficult, and will likely involve some degree of struggle or unpleasantness (see the flow cycle). Certainly we can agree, however, that concerted effort to create something worthwhile is quite different from the arbitrary, narrow-minded, soulless drudgery of contemporary labor. It's called an "occupation" because it's just something to keep you busy.

**SUPERFICIAL TIME EXPANSION THROUGH UNFULFILLING WORK**

**EFFICIENCY PRIMARY:** Do what needs to be done, and then, when you are done, stop. Note, at a "job", there is always more to be done, even if it is just looking busy or doing busy work. In all practicality, business is one grand open-loop.

There is a fairly well-known employee/worker maxim that states, "Work expands to fill the time allotted to it". Herein, we come to realize that knowing long the average person works every day has little to do with how efficient or productive that pattern is [toward fulfillment]. Similarly, you may have heard of Parkinson's Law. It is the adage that "work [as labor for others, or for extrinsic reward] expands so as to fill the time available for its completion". It is often used in reference to time usage: the more time you've been given to do something [by a manager/authority], the more time it will take you to do it. For an intrinsically driven individual, this understanding alone should unravel the whole labor for income paradigm. In part, this is why most individuals who remain intrinsically driven and concurrently believe in the market paradigm become entrepreneurs and business owners. They understand the importance of "working for oneself" and of self-direction in actually accomplishing things in an efficient, and often, effective manner. Therein, there is possibly just one final thought hurdle, one last truncation, for them to arrive at the understanding that the market itself and the set of values surrounding it are artificially inhibiting the effective and efficient common fulfillment of everyone.

**QUESTION:** Is asking one's employer for a little more free time truly creating an environment of more freedom?

**INCENTIVES**

When discussing the organization of a new social system, people often project their current values and concerns into the new model without considering the vast change of context inherent that would likely nullify such concerns immediately. A common straw-man projection in this context would be that in a society where material production were based upon technological application directly, and not an exchange system requiring paid human labor, people would have no incentive to do anything and therefore the model would fail as nothing would get done. This type of argument is without testable validity with respect to the human sciences and is really an intuitive assumption originating from the current cultural climate where the economic system coerces all humans into labor roles for survival (income/profit). This often occurs regardless of one's personal interest or social utility, often generating a psychological distortion with respect to motivation.

It is fallacious reasoning to argue that humans will not do anything unless it is monetarily rewarded. In fact, it is such a common fallacy that it has been given the name "incentive fallacy". The great "secret" of humanity (which is only a secret to those conditioned into a society of disordered incentives) is that people are curious, love learning, growing, and doing things that help others. But, these passions can be suppressed under a significantly adverse system.

In the words of Margaret Mead: "If you look closely you will see that almost anything that really matters to us, anything that embodies our deepest commitment to the way human life should be lived and cared for, depends on some form of volunteerism." It has also been found in studies that repetitive and mundane jobs lend themselves more to traditional rewards, such as money, whereas money is not a significant motivator toward tasks that involve creativity and discovery. And herein, it is important to realize that if we wish to create a community of fulfillment, then we must facilitate the automation of necessary, but mundane and repetitive tasks, and this task itself requires at least: 1) participative synthesis; 2) creativity; and 3) discovery [in order to intelligently direct the application of efficiency toward our common fulfillment].

*Insight: Nature provides the motivation and we provide each other with inspiration.*

In truth, motivation and incentive exist when people have meaningful tasks. Among community there is an abundance of creative, challenging, and constructive endeavours. Motivation and incentive die in monotonous and abusive environments. In the Community, there is access and there is also [the opportunity for] challenge. If we are not challenged in life (i.e., there is no struggle in the cycle of flow), that in itself is a problem.
THE PURPOSE OF A JOB
CONSIDERING AUTOMATION

As far as occupations are concerned, we need to ask ourselves what the point is of a given focus and why is said focus necessary. In other words, we ask, “what is the focal point of our efforts and why has it been chosen?”

The fact is, most jobs today are not directly related to the actual necessities of life (or even toward facilitating material fulfillment). Rather, most are artificial concoctions created in order to keep people employed so they can maintain purchasing power in an environment where our technological capabilities continuously expand, exponentially, slowly displacing humans from the production and distribution force.

In modern societal politics it is common to hear (statements) about the need to “create jobs”. Well, in theory, an occupation could be created where people are paid to sit in a room and test chewing gum all day, every day; but, is that a reasonable and viable use of the human mind? Should we relegate our mental capacity to simply any so-called job due to mere “economic” reasons, regardless of what it actually contributes to personal and/or social sustainability, development, and progress? The re-creation of occupations becomes even more bizarre as a train-of-reason when we realize that advances in science and technology have shown that mechanization not only frees us from labor, but it is actually more efficient and productive due to the exponential advancement of science and technology.

Technology is always creating jobs and destroying jobs, but right now the pace is accelerating faster than ever before in history, and as a consequence modern society is not creating jobs at the same pace that the market system requires to in order to maintain the money cycle.

Karl Marx actually addressed technological unemployment in his book Capital:

“...When machinery seizes on an industry by degrees, it produces chronic misery among the operatives who compete with it” (Capital v. 1).

**QUESTION:** How does a society apply technology: as a labor saving device or as a labor adding device?

Advancements in science and technology have shown that we can significantly automate our services, and those services that pose an automation challenge may not even be necessary (i.e., may be superfluous to the fulfillment of our life-support, technology-support, and facility-support). The more greatly we apply mechanization to labor, the more productive our systems become. The result is less employee involvement in production and a corresponding reduction in purchasing power by non-owning/employable entities in the market.

Further, it is not only negligent for us to waste our lives waiting tables, working at a bus station, fixing cars, or other repetitive, monotonous jobs, it is also entirely irresponsible for us not to apply modern mechanization techniques to every possibly service. Apart from strategic resource planning, the application of mechanization to a service system is a powerful way to sustain distributive justice and abundance for everyone in community, thus reducing crime generating imbalances.

**INSIGHT:** [In part,] you are what you do. If you do boring, monotonous work, chances are you will end up in a boring life [styled] in a pattern of behaviors and thoughts that are monotonous.

We no longer need employment because we can conceptually and technically create for our fulfillment without it. We know how to create an access abundance. We know how to coordinate resources toward mutual fulfillment for an exceptionally high standard of living for all of us.

“...When machinery seizes on an industry by degrees, it produces chronic misery among the operatives who compete with it” (Capital v. 1).

**JOBS ARE FOR MACHINES, AND LIFE IS FOR PEOPLE.**

Jobs are going the way of child labour, slavery, and indentured service, which is hardly encouraging news for the billions who have been schooled, trained, and conditioned their whole lives that a good job and steady paycheck are the dividends of playing by the rules in modern society. Automation is displacing human labor, which also displaces purchasing power, continuing the inevitable loss of “growth” that defines the monetary market system. Corporations will continue to move toward automation because they are competing against one another, and automation is less costly than human labor. Oddly enough, such behavior really is the purpose of technology - the creation of [fulfilling] services, to free humans from banal, repetitive and undesired effort, and to extend our potentials.

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC “CLASS” DISTINCTIONS**

They cause neurosis and conflict. Here are some common class labels that we have thrown away (in community):

- Upper class; lower class; under class; ruling class; criminal class; oligarch class; working class; middle class; peasant class; white collar class; blue collar class; the labor/worker class; administrative class; managerial class; entrepreneurial class; warrior class; military class; police class; merchant class, the outcast class, the slayer class; the servant class; the leadership class.

Community has no socio-economic classes.
POSSIBILITY: If there was no profit or property, no money to be made from enslaving people, then all slavery would end.

We now have access to highly advanced technologies and can easily provide more than enough for all of the Earth's people [at an exceptionally high standard of living]. This is possible through the implementation of an integrated system via the direction, orientation, and approach outlined in the Social System and the transparent, parallel-inquiry, and systems-based decisioning model detailed in the Decision System.

IMPORTANT: Problems create jobs, not solutions: In modern society, we can't fix real problems, because it would destroy more jobs. This insight is just another reason why patchworking the market system will not work in facilitating integral fulfillment.

+ PATCHWORK

THIS IS PATCHWORK: A moral person who was manufacturing something and noticed a defect in an item would shut down the conveyor belt. Patchwork is like seeing a defective item and trying to patch it so that it kind of works (the market), but mostly it is just watched (the State) until it falls off the end of the conveyor belt.

The system of which modern society is composed is not reformable because it does exactly what it is supposed to do for powerful and vested interests. For all practical purposes, the modern monetary system was setup with the interests of a ruling class in mind. Modern society has been designed by the cultural appetites of its designers. It is the result of a structural emergence, as well as people with a plan and access to wealth and power.

MARKET MAXIM: Careers and intolerance for some, poverty and charity for others, isolation for all.

We need to stop putting faith in a failed system. In a sense, patchwork is even an admission that the system is broken. When "you" find yourself in a hole, stop digging. Using the problem to fix the problem is a recipe for unintended consequences, and for, disaster.

It is possible to enable change in a broken system, but in order to build a new system you have to build that new system. It is unwise to confuse the problem(s) [in part, the structured system] with the symptom(s) [in part, the surface behaviors]. Fixing symptoms doesn't fix the problem. Patchwork is re-construction and not re-structuring.

A structurally significant element of a society will embed its objectives in the lifestyle of those within the society. When ‘business’ is a significant element of a society's operation, then the objectives of business will be embedded within the lifestyle of those in said society. And, the two principle objectives of business are: 1) to maximize profit; and 2) to minimize costs. If it is a business [organization], then at the end of the day money controls its existence or non-existence. Patchwork will not re-direct the structural objectives of the system. It might re-orient individuals within the confines of the set structure by a slight degree, but it does not provide a means for re-directing the structure as a whole.

QUESTION: How do you know whether or not you are a potential sale for profit [maximization] in the market?

Trying to patch up the market system is artificial, it's crude, vulgar and will not provide a solution. Herein, it is important to recognize that money alone does not produce incentive to accomplish work. For example, if we lived in a community with all of our needs met, we would have no desire to chase money (sometimes aptly known as an "incentive disorder"). It is only when something is withheld from us, and then, out of necessity will we chase money, or through lots of conditioning (one might suppose). Hence, in a society where money is a requirement to meet needs, then "yes", money does produce incentive. But, it also has the characteristic of producing incentive for corruption and embezzlement, which span the spectrum from subtle to gross. Therein, when people seek advantage by money, then we cannot have a decent world [space]. Because, money is the source through which an individual maintains their survival. Right now, billions of dollars are being made in the war industries. Yes, war is an industry. It is a profit generating action. And in war, there is also the embedded value of competition, which enhances scarcity and conflict. A system that facilitates and incentivizes profit from war cannot be patchworked to become something it is not.

We are literally flying at the speed of light on spaceship earth and we have lost our way. We need to re-orient and re-examine what we have created. A system that has foundational flaws needs to be accurately modeled so that the new design doesn't contain the same flaws. Fundamentally, we need a new design, a new model. Patchwork will never change what a system is.

NOTE: It is unwise to ignore the purpose of industry. Every industry wants to maximize profit (i.e., sell more stuff). Industry has no goal or responsibility to maximize fulfillment. Attempting to evolve an industry is like attempting to give a regular pet feline a bath: what is the expectation that it will evolve into, and further, you will get cut and slashed in the process. Similarly, re-directing an establishment is like re-directing a supertanker -- it takes significant time as well as a functional engine and navigational structure designed to re-direct the system toward a newly built point-of-focus (e.g., the Community).

And yet, modern society is a construction of beliefs and we can change it anytime we choose; not through money in the hands of the few, but through accurate information in the minds of many.
ONLINE LINKS

- Anti-work essays on audioanarcy.org in audiobook format through BitTorrent
- Federico Pistono blog at federicopistono.org
- How technology is destroying jobs by David Rotman on 12 June 2013
- HuffPost Interview - A Future of Unemployment on YouTube
- Jacque Fresco - A story of change by Inspiration Journey on YouTube
- The Operant Condition – Rewild Yourself! – Dispatch 4. by Daniel Vitalis on danielvitalis.creatavist.com
- The Original Affluent Society by Marshall Sahlin
- The Poisonous Workday by Carter Brock on 11 April 2014
- The Tyranny of the clock by George Woodcock published in War Commentary - For Anarchism mid-march 1994 and presented on YouTube
- Your lifestyle has already been designed by David from Raptitude.com <-This article is a great read.
- Why Humans Like Taking the Easy Way Out by Mark from Mark's Daily Apple

BOOK REFERENCES

- Manna by Marshall Brain (free online)
- Robots will steal your job, but that's OK by Federico Pistono
- The Impulse Society by Paul Roberts
- The Zeitgeist Movement Defined by The Zeitgeist Movement

DOCUMENTARY REFERENCES

- Technological Unemployment | 60 minutes on YouTube
- The Corporation, thecorporation.com
APPENDIX 1: ON THE PHENOMENON OF BULLSHIT JOBS

By David Graeber

(Only a portion of the excellent article at strikemag.org is posted here)

Ever had the feeling that your job might be made up? That the world would keep on turning if you weren't doing that thing you do 9-5? In the year 1930, John Maynard Keynes predicted that, by century's end, technology would have advanced sufficiently that countries like Great Britain or the United States would have achieved a 15-hour work week. There's every reason to believe he was right. In technological terms, we are quite capable of this. And yet it didn't happen. Instead, technology has been marshaled, if anything, to figure out ways to make us all work more. In order to achieve this, jobs have had to be created that are, effectively, pointless. Huge swathes of people, in Europe and North America in particular, spend their entire working lives performing tasks they secretly believe do not really need to be performed. The moral and spiritual damage that comes from this situation is profound. It is a scar across our collective soul. Yet virtually no one talks about it.

[...R]ather than allowing a massive reduction of working hours to free the world's population to pursue their own projects, pleasures, visions, and ideas, we have seen the ballooning not even so much of the “service” sector as of the administrative sector, up to and including the creation of whole new industries like financial services or telemarketing, or the unprecedented expansion of sectors like corporate law, academic and health administration, human resources, and public relations. And these numbers do not even reflect on all those people whose job is to provide administrative, technical, or security support for these industries, or for that matter the whole host of ancillary industries (dog-washers, all-night pizza deliverymen) that only exist because everyone else is spending so much of their time working in all the other ones.

These are what I propose to call “bullshit jobs.” It's as if someone were out there making up pointless jobs just for the sake of keeping us all working. And here, precisely, lies the mystery. In capitalism, this is precisely what is not supposed to happen. Sure, in the old inefficient socialist states like the Soviet Union, where employment was considered both a right and a sacred duty, the system made up as many jobs as they had to (this is why in Soviet department stores it took three clerks to sell a piece of meat). But, of course, this is the very sort of problem market competition is supposed to fix. According to economic theory, at least, the last thing a profit-seeking firm is going to do is shell out money to workers they don't really need to employ. Still, somehow, it happens.

[...]The answer clearly isn't economic: it's moral and political. The ruling class has figured out that a happy and productive population with free time on their hands is a mortal danger (think of what started to happen when this even began to be approximated in the ‘60s). And, on the other hand, the feeling that work is a moral value in itself, and that anyone not willing to submit themselves to some kind of intense work discipline for most of their waking hours deserves nothing, is extraordinarily convenient for them.

[...]I came up with one possible vision of hell. Hell is a collection of individuals who are spending the bulk of their time working on a task they don't like and are not especially good at. Say they were hired because they were excellent cabinet-makers, and then discover they are expected to spend a great deal of their time frying fish. Neither does the task really need to be done – at least, there's only a very limited number of fish that need to be fried. Yet somehow, they all become so obsessed with resentment at the thought that some of their co-workers might be spending more time making cabinets, and not doing their fair share of the fish-frying responsibilities, that before long there's endless piles of useless badly cooked fish piling up all over the workshop and it's all that anyone really does. I think this is actually a pretty accurate description of the moral dynamics of our own economy.

This is a profound psychological violence here. How can one even begin to speak of dignity in labour when one secretly feels one’s job should not exist? If someone had designed a work regime perfectly suited to maintaining the power of finance capital, it's hard to see how they could have done a better job. What does it do for your state of mind and health when you dislike your job and general day.

Also, the economist.com posted a blog article in response to Graeber's article entitled, On "bullshit jobs".
No one should ever work. [Please let me explain.]

Work is the source of nearly all the misery in the world. Almost any evil you'd care to name comes from working or from living in a world designed for work. In order to stop suffering, we have to stop working.

That doesn't mean we have to stop doing things. It does mean creating a new way of life based on play; in other words, a ludic conviviality, commensality, and maybe even art. There is more to play than child's play, as worthy as that is. I call for a collective adventure in generalized joy and freely interdependent exuberance. Play isn't passive. Doubtless we all need a lot more time for sheer sloth and slack than we ever enjoy now, regardless of income or occupation, but once recovered from employment-induced exhaustion nearly all of us want to act. Oblomovism and Stakhanovism are two sides of the same debased coin.

The ludic life is totally incompatible with existing reality. So much the worse for "reality," the gravity hole that sucks the vitality from the little life that still distinguishes it from mere survival. Curiously -- or maybe not -- all the old ideologies are conservative because they believe in work. Some of them, like Marxism and most brands of anarchism, believe in work all the more fiercely because they believe in so little else.

Liberals say we should end employment discrimination. I say we should end employment. Conservatives support right-to-work laws. Following Karl Marx's wayward son-in-law Paul Lafargue I support the right to be lazy. Leftists favor full employment. Like the surrealists -- except that I'm not kidding -- I favor full unemployment. Trotskyists agitate for permanent revolution. I advocate for permanent revelry. But if all the ideologues (as they do) advocate work -- and not only because they plan to make other people do theirs -- they are strangely reluctant to say so.

They will carry on endlessly about wages, hours, working conditions, exploitation, productivity, profitability. They'll gladly talk about anything but work itself. These experts who offer to do our thinking for us rarely share their conclusions about work, for all its saliency in the lives of all of us. Among themselves they quibble over the details. Unions and management agree that we ought to sell the time of our lives in exchange for survival, although they haggle over the price. Marxists think we should be bossed by bureaucrats. Libertarians think we should be bossed by businessmen. Feminists don't care which form bossing takes so long as the bosses are women. Clearly these ideology-mongers have serious differences over how to divvy up the spoils of power. Just as clearly, none of them have any objection to power as such and all of them want to keep us working.

You may be wondering if I'm joking or serious. I'm joking and serious. To be ludic is not to be ludicrous. Play doesn't have to be frivolous, although frivolity isn't triviality: very often we ought to take frivolity seriously. I'd like life to be a game -- but a game with high stakes. I want to play for keeps.

The alternative to work isn't just idleness. To be ludic is not to be quaaludic. As much as I treasure the pleasure of torpor, it's never more rewarding than when it punctuates other pleasures and pastimes. Nor am I promoting the managed time-disciplined safety-valve called "leisure"; far from it. Leisure is nonwork for the sake of work. Leisure is the time spent recovering from work and in the frenzied but hopeless attempt to forget about work. Many people return from vacation so beat that they look forward to returning to work so they can rest up. The main difference between work and leisure is that work at least you get paid for your alienation and enervation.

I am not playing definitional games with anybody. When I say I want to abolish work, I mean just what I say, but I want to say what I mean by defining my terms in non-idiosyncratic ways. My minimum definition of work is forced labor, that is, compulsory production. Both elements are essential. Work is production enforced by economic or political means, by the carrot or the stick. (The carrot is just the stick by other means.) But not all creation is work. Work is never done for its own sake, it's done on account of some product or output that the worker (or, more often, somebody else) gets out of it. This is what work necessarily is. To define it is to despise it. But work is usually even worse than its definition decrees. The dynamic of domination intrinsic to work tends over time toward elaboration. In advanced work-riddled societies, including all industrial societies whether capitalist of "Communist," work invariably acquires other attributes which accentuate its obnoxiousness.

Usually -- and this is even more true in "Communist" than capitalist countries, where the state is almost the only employer and everyone is an employee -- work is employment, i. e., wage-labor, which means selling yourself on the installment plan. Thus 95% of Americans who work, work for somebody (or something) else. In the USSR or Cuba or Yugoslavia or any other alternative model which might be adduced, the corresponding figure approaches 100%. Only the embattled Third World peasant bastions -- Mexico, India, Brazil, Turkey -- temporarily shelter significant concentrations of agriculturists who perpetuate the traditional arrangement of most laborers in the last several millennia, the payment of taxes (= ransom) to the state or rent to parasitic landlords in return for being otherwise left alone. Even this raw deal is beginning to look good. All industrial (and office) workers are employees and under the sort of surveillance which ensures servility.

But modern work has worse implications. People don't just work, they have "jobs." One person does one productive task all the time on an or-else basis. Even if the task has a quantum of intrinsic interest (as increasingly many jobs don't) the monotony of its...
obligatory exclusivity drains its ludic potential. A “job” that might engage the energies of some people, for a reasonably limited time, for the fun of it, is just a burden on those who have to do it for forty hours a week with no say in how it should be done, for the profit of owners who contribute nothing to the project, and with no opportunity for sharing tasks or spreading the work among those who actually have to do it. This is the real world of work: a world of bureaucratic blundering, of sexual harassment and discrimination, of bonehead bosses exploiting and scapegoating their subordinates who -- by any rational-technical criteria -- should be calling the shots. But capitalism in the real world subordinates the rational maximization of productivity and profit to the exigencies of organizational control.

The degradation which most workers experience on the job is the sum of assorted indignities which can be denominated as “discipline.” Foucault has complexified this phenomenon but it is simple enough. Discipline consists of the totality of totalitarian controls at the workplace -- surveillance, rote work, imposed work temps, production quotas, punching -in and -out, etc. Discipline is what the factory and the office and the store share with the prison and the school and the mental hospital. It is something historically original and horrible. It was beyond the capacities of such demonic dictators of yore as Nero and Genghis Khan and Ivan the Terrible. For all their bad intentions they just didn't have the machinery to control their subjects as thoroughly as modern despots do. Discipline is the distinctively diabolical modern mode of control, it is an innovative intrusion which must be interdicted at the earliest opportunity.

Such is “work.” Play is just the opposite. Play is always voluntary. What might otherwise be play is work if it's forced. This is axiomatic. Bernie de Koven has defined play as the “suspension of consequences.” This is unacceptable if it implies that play is inconsequential. The point is not that play is without consequences. This is to demean play. The point is that the consequences, if any, are gratuitous. Playing and giving are closely related, they are the behavioral and transactional facets of the same impulse, the play-instinct. They share an aristocratic disdain for results. The player gets something out of playing; that's why he plays. But the core reward is the experience of the activity itself (whatever it is). Some otherwise attentive students of play, like Johan Huizinga (Homo Ludens), define it as game-playing or following rules. I respect Huizinga's erudition but emphatically reject his constraints. There are many good games (chess, baseball, Monopoly, bridge) which are rule-governed but there is much more to play than game-playing. Conversation, sex, dancing, travel -- these practices aren't rule-governed but they are surely play if anything is. And rules can be played with at least as readily as anything else.

Work makes a mockery of freedom. The official line is that we all have rights and live in a democracy. Other unfortunates who aren't free like we are have to live in police states. These victims obey orders or-else, no matter how arbitrary. The authorities keep them under regular surveillance. State bureaucrats control even the smaller details of everyday life. The officials who push them around are answerable only to higher-ups, public or private. Either way, dissent and disobedience are punished. Informers report regularly to the authorities. All this is supposed to be a very bad thing.

And so it is, although it is nothing but a description of the modern workplace. The liberals and conservatives and libertarians who lament totalitarianism are phonies and hypocrites. There is more freedom in any moderately deStalinized dictatorship than there is in the ordinary American workplace. You find the same sort of hierarchy and discipline in an office or factory as you do in a prison or monastery. In fact, as Foucault and others have shown, prisons and factories came in at about the same time, and their operators consciously borrowed from each other's control techniques. A worker is a part time slave. The boss says when to show up, when to leave, and what to do in the meantime. He tells you how much work to do and how fast. He is free to carry his control to humiliating extremes, regulating, if he feels like it, the clothes you wear or how often you go to the bathroom. With a few exceptions he can fire you for any reason, or no reason. He has you spied on by snitches and supervisors, he amasses a dossier on every employee. Talking back is called “insubordination,” just as if a worker is a naughty child, and it not only gets you fired, it disqualifies you for unemployment compensation. Without necessarily endorsing it for them either, it is noteworthy that children at home and in school receive much the same treatment, justified in their case by their supposed immaturity. What does this say about their parents and teachers who work?

The demeaning system of domination I've described rules over half the waking hours of a majority of women and the vast majority of men for decades, for most of their lifespans. For certain purposes it's not too misleading to call our system democracy or capitalism or -- better still -- industrialism, but its real names are factory fascism and office oligarchy. Anybody who says these people are “free” is lying or stupid. You are what you do. If you do boring, stupid monotonous work, chances are you'll end up boring, stupid and monotonous. Work is a much better explanation for the creeping cretinization [i.e., becoming less intelligent] all around us than even such significant moronizing mechanisms as television and education. People who are regimented all their lives, handed off to work from school and bracketed by the family in the beginning and the nursing home at the end, are habituated to hierarchy and psychologically enslaved. Their aptitude for autonomy is so atrophied that their fear of freedom is among their few rationally grounded phobias. Their obedience training at work carries over into the families they start, thus reproducing the system in more ways than one, and into politics, culture and everything else. Once you drain the vitality from people at work, they'll likely submit to
hierarchy and expertise in everything. They're used to it.

We are so close to the world of work that we can't see what it does to us. We have to rely on outside observers from other times or other cultures to appreciate the extremity and the pathology of our present position. There was a time in our own past when the "work ethic" would have been incomprehensible, and perhaps Weber was on to something when he tied its appearance to a religion, Calvinism, which if it emerged today instead of four centuries ago would immediately and appropriately be labelled a cult. Be that as it may, we have only to draw upon the wisdom of antiquity to put work in perspective. The ancients saw work for what it is, and their view prevailed, the Calvinist cranks notwithstanding, until overthrown by industrialism -- but not before receiving the endorsement of its prophets.

Let's pretend for a moment that work doesn't turn people into stultified submissives. Let's pretend, in defiance of any plausible psychology and the ideology of its boosters, that it has no effect on the formation of character. And let's pretend that work isn't as boring and tiring and humiliating as we all know it really is. Even then, work would still make a mockery of all humanistic and democratic aspirations, just because it usurps so much of our time. Socrates said that manual laborers make bad friends and bad citizens because they have no time to fulfill the responsibilities of friendship and citizenship. He was right. Because of work, no matter what we do we keep looking at our watches. The only thing "free" about so-called free time is that it doesn't cost the boss anything. Free time is mostly devoted to getting ready for work, going to work, returning from work, and recovering from work. Free time is a euphemism for the peculiar way labor as a factor of production not only transports itself at its own expense to and from the workplace but assumes primary responsibility for its own maintenance and repair. Coal and steel don't do that. Lathers and typewriters don't do that. But workers do. No wonder Edward G. Robinson in one of his gangster movies exclaimed, "Work is for saps!"

Both Plato and Xenophon attribute to Socrates and obviously share with him an awareness of the destructive effects of work on the worker as a citizen and a human being. Herodotus identified contempt for work as an attribute of the classical Greeks at the zenith of their culture. To take only one Roman example, Cicero said that "whoever gives his labor for money sells himself and puts himself in the rank of slaves." His candor is now rare, but contemporary primitive societies which we are wont to look down upon have provided spokesmen who have enlightened Western anthropologists. The Kapauku of West Irian, according to Posposil, have a conception of balance in life and accordingly work only every other day, the day of rest designed "to regain the lost power and health." Our ancestors, even as late as the eighteenth century when they were far along the path to our present predicament, at least were aware of what we have forgotten, the underside of industrialization. Their religious devotion to "St. Monday" -- thus establishing a de facto five-day week 150-200 years before its legal consecration -- was the despair of the earliest factory owners. They took a long time in submitting to the tyranny of the bell, predecessor of the time clock. In fact it was necessary for a generation or two to replace adult males with women accustomed to obedience and children who could be molded to fit industrial needs. Even the exploited peasants of the ancient regime wrested substantial time back from their landlord's work. According to Lafargue, a fourth of the French peasants' calendar was devoted to Sundays and holidays, and Chayanov's figures from villages in Czarist Russia -- hardly a progressive society -- likewise show a fourth or fifth of peasants' days devoted to repose. Controlling for productivity, we are obviously far behind these backward societies. The exploited muzhiks would wonder why any of us are working at all. So should we.

To grasp the full enormity of our deterioration, however, consider the earliest condition of humanity, without government or property, when we wandered as hunter-gatherers. Hobbes surmised that life was then nasty, brutish and short. Others assume that life was a desperate unremitting struggle for subsistence, a war waged against a harsh Nature with death and disaster awaiting the unlucky or anyone who was unequal to the challenge of the struggle for existence. Actually, that was all a projection of fears for the collapse of government authority over communities unaccustomed to doing without it, like the England of Hobbes during the Civil War. Hobbes' compatriots had already encountered alternative forms of society which illustrated other ways of life -- in North America, particularly -- but already these were too remote from their experience to be understandable. (The lower orders, closer to the condition of the Indians, understood it better and often found it attractive. Throughout the seventeenth century, English settlers defected to Indian tribes or, captured in war, refused to return. But the Indians no more defected to white settlements than Germans climb the Berlin Wall.
from the west.) The “survival of the fittest” version -- the Thomas Huxley version -- of Darwinism was a better account of economic conditions in Victorian England than it was of natural selection, as the anarchist Kropotkin showed in his book Mutual Aid, A Factor of Evolution. (Kropotkin was a scientist -- a geographer -- who'd had ample involuntary opportunity for fieldwork whilst exiled in Siberia: he knew what he was talking about.) Like most social and political theory, the story Hobbes and his successors told was really unacknowledged autobiography.

The anthropologist Marshall Sahlins, surveying the data on contemporary hunter-gatherers, exploded the Hobbesian myth in an article entitled “The Original Affluent Society.” They work a lot less than we do, and their work is hard to distinguish from what we regard as play. Sahlins concluded that “hunters and gatherers work less than we do; and rather than a continuous travail, the food quest is intermittent, leisure abundant, and there is a greater amount of sleep in the daytime per capita per year than in any other condition of society.”

They worked an average of four hours a day, assuming they were “working” at all. Their “labor,” as it appears to us, was skilled labor which exercised their physical and intellectual capacities; unskilled labor on any large scale, as Sahlins says, is impossible except under industrialism. Thus it satisfied Friedrich Schiller's definition of play, the only occasion on which man realizes his complete humanity by giving full “play” to both sides of his twofold nature, thinking and feeling. As he put it: “The animal works when deprivation is the mainspring of its activity, and it plays when the fullness of its strength is this mainspring, when superabundant life is its own stimulus to activity.” (A modern version -- dubiously developmental -- is Abraham Maslow's counterpartion of "deficiency" and "growth" motivation.) Play and freedom are, as regards production, coextensive. Even Marx, who belongs (for all his good intentions) in the productivist pantheon, observed that “the realm of freedom does not commence until the point is passed where labor under the compulsion of necessity and external utility is required.” He never could quite bring himself to identify this happy circumstance as what it is, the abolition of work -- it’s rather anomalous, after all, to be pro-worker and anti-work -- but we can.

The aspiration to go backwards or forwards to a life without work is evident in every serious social or cultural history of pre-industrial Europe, among them M. Dorothy George's England In Transition and Peter Burke's Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe. Also pertinent is Daniel Bell's essay, “Work and its Discontents,” the first text, I believe, to refer to the “revolt against work” in so many words and, had it been understood, an important correction to the complacency ordinarily associated with the volume in which it was collected, The End of Ideology. Neither critics nor celebrants have noticed that Bell's end-of-ideology thesis signaled not the end of social unrest but the beginning of a new, uncharted phase unconstrained and uninformed by ideology. It was Seymour Lipset (in Political Man), not Bell, who announced at the same time that “the fundamental problems of the Industrial Revolution have been solved,” only a few years before the post- or meta-industrial discontents of college students drove Lipset from UC Berkeley to the relative (and temporary) tranquility of Harvard.

As Bell notes, Adam Smith in The Wealth of Nations, for all his enthusiasm for the market and the division of labor, was more alert to (and more honest about) the seamy side of work than Ayn Rand or the Chicago economists or any of Smith's modern epigones. As Smith observed: “The understandings of the greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments. The man whose life is spent in performing a few simple operations... has no occasion to exert his understanding... He generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become.” Here, in a few blunt words, is my critique of work. Bell, writing in 1956, the Golden Age of Eisenhower imbecility and American self-satisfaction, identified the unorganized, unorganizable malaise of the 1970's and since, the one no political tendency is able to harness, the one identified in HEW's report Work in America, the one which cannot be exploited and so is ignored. That problem is the revolt against work. It does not figure in any text by any laissez-faire economist -- Milton Friedman, Murray Rothbard, Richard Posner -- because, in their terms, as they used to say on Star Trek, “it does not compute.”

If these objections, informed by the love of liberty, fail to persuade humanists of a utilitarian or even paternalist turn, there are others which they cannot disregard. Work is hazardous to your health, to borrow a book title. In fact, work is mass murder or genocide. Directly or indirectly, work will kill most of the people who read these words. Between 14,000 and 25,000 workers are killed annually in this country on the job. Over two million are disabled. Twenty to twenty-five million are injured every year. And these figures are based on a very conservative estimation of what constitutes a work-related injury. Thus they don’t count the half million cases of occupational disease every year. I looked at one medical textbook on occupational diseases which was 1,200 pages long. Even this barely scratches the surface. The available statistics count the obvious cases like the 100,000 miners who have black lung disease, of whom 4,000 die every year, a much higher fatality rate than for AIDS, for instance, which gets so much media attention. This reflects the unvoiced assumption that AIDS afflicts perverts who could control their depravity whereas coal-mining is a sacrosanct activity beyond question. What the statistics don't show is that tens of millions of people have their lifespans shortened by work -- which is all that homicide means, after all. Consider the doctors who work themselves to death in their 50's. Consider all the other workaholics.

Even if you aren't killed or crippled while actually working, you very well might be while going to work,
coming from work, looking for work, or trying to forget about work. The vast majority of victims of the automobile are either doing one of these work-obligatory activities or else fall afoul of those who do them. To this augmented body-count must be added the victims of auto-industrial pollution and work-induced alcoholism and drug addiction. Both cancer and heart disease are modern afflictions normally traceable, directly, or indirectly, to work.

Work, then, institutionalizes homicide as a way of life. People think the Cambodians were crazy for exterminating themselves, but are we any different? The Pol Pot regime at least had a vision, however blurred, of an egalitarian society. We kill people in the six-figure range (at least) in order to sell Big Macs and Cadillacs to the survivors. Our forty or fifty thousand annual highway fatalities are victims, not martyrs. They died for nothing -- or rather, they died for work. But work is nothing to die for.

Bad news for liberals: regulatory tinkering is useless in this life-and-death context. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration was designed to police the core part of the problem, workplace safety. Even before Reagan and the Supreme Court stifled it, OSHA was a farce. At previous and (by current standards) generous Carter-era funding levels, a workplace could expect a random visit from an OSHA inspector once every 46 years.

State control of the economy is no solution. Work is, if anything, more dangerous in the state-socialist countries than it is here. Thousands of Russian workers were killed or injured building the Moscow subway. Stories reverberate about covered-up Soviet nuclear disasters which make Times Beach and Three-Mile Island look like elementary-school air-raid drills. On the other hand, deregulation, currently fashionable, won't help and will probably hurt. From a health and safety standpoint, among others, work was at its worst in the days when the economy most closely approximated laissez-faire.

Historians like Eugene Genovese have argued persuasively that -- as antebellum slavery apologists insisted -- factory wage-workers in the Northern American states and in Europe were worse off than Southern plantation slaves. No rearrangement of relations among bureaucrats and businessmen seems to make much difference at the point of production. Serious enforcement of even the rather vague standards enforceable in theory by OSHA would probably bring the economy to a standstill. The enforcers apparently appreciate this, since they don't even try to crack down on most malefactors.

What I've said so far ought not to be controversial. Modern industrial activities or else fall afoul of those who do them. To this augmented body-count must be added the victims of auto-industrial pollution and work-induced alcoholism and drug addiction. Both cancer and heart disease are modern afflictions normally traceable, directly, or indirectly, to work. Many workers are fed up with work. There are high and rising rates of absenteeism, turnover, employee theft and sabotage, wildcat strikes, and overall goldbricking on the job. There may be some movement toward a conscious and not just visceral rejection of work. And yet the prevalent feeling, universal among bosses and their agents and also widespread among workers themselves is that work itself is inevitable and necessary.

I disagree. It is now possible to abolish work and replace it, insofar as it serves useful purposes, with a multitude of new kinds of free activities. To abolish work requires going at it from two directions, quantitative and qualitative. On the one hand, on the quantitative side, we have to cut down massively on the amount of work being done. At present most work is useless or worse and we should simply get rid of it. On the other hand -- and I think this is the crux of the matter and the revolutionary new departure -- we have to take what useful work remains and transform it into a pleasing variety of game-like and craft-like pastimes, indistinguishable from other pleasurable pastimes, except that they happen to yield useful end-products. Surely that shouldn't make them less enticing to do. Then all the artificial barriers of power and property could come down. Creation could become recreation. And we could all stop being afraid of each other.

I don't suggest that most work is salvageable in this way. But then most work isn't worth trying to save. Only a small and diminishing fraction of work serves any useful purpose independent of the defense and reproduction of the work-system and its political and legal appendages. Twenty years ago, Paul and Percival Goodman estimated that just five percent of the work then being done -- presumably the figure, if accurate, is lower now -- would satisfy our minimal needs for food, clothing, and shelter. Theirs was only an educated guess but the main point is quite clear: directly or indirectly, most work serves the unproductive purposes of commerce or social control. Right off the bat we can liberate tens of millions of salesmen, soldiers, managers, cops, stockbrokers, clergymen, bankers, lawyers, teachers, landlords, security guards, ad-men and everyone who works for them. There is a snowball effect since every time you idle some bigshot you liberate his flunkeys and underlings also. Thus the economy implodes.

Forty percent of the workforce are white-collar workers, most of whom have some of the most tedious and idiotic jobs ever concocted. Entire industries, insurance and banking and real estate for instance, consist of nothing but useless paper-shuffling. It is no accident that the “tertiary sector,” the service sector, is growing while the “secondary sector” (industry) stagnates and the “primary sector” (agriculture) nearly disappears. Because work is unnecessary except to those whose power it secures, workers are shifted from relatively useful to relatively useless occupations as a measure to assure public order. Anything is better than nothing. That's why you can't go home just because you finish early. They want your time,
enough of it to make you theirs, even if they have no use for most of it. Otherwise why hasn’t the average work week gone down by more than a few minutes in the past fifty years?

Next we can take a meat-cleaver to production work itself. No more war production, nuclear power, junk food, feminine hygiene deodorant -- and above all, no more auto industry to speak of. An occasional Stanley Steamer or Model-T might be all right, but the auto-eroticism on which such pestholes as Detroit and Los Angeles depend is out of the question. Already, without even trying, we've virtually solved the energy crisis, the environmental crisis and assorted other insoluble social problems.

Finally, we must do away with far and away the largest occupation, the one with the longest hours, the lowest pay and some of the most tedious tasks around. I refer to housewives doing housework and child-rearing. By abolishing wage-labor and achieving full unemployment we undermine the sexual division of labor. The nuclear family as we know it is an inevitable adaptation to the division of labor imposed by modern wage-work. Like it or not, as things have been for the last century or two it is economically rational for the man to bring home the bacon, for the woman to do the shitwork to provide him with a haven in a heartless world, and for the children to be marched off to youth concentration camps called “schools,” primarily to keep them out of Mom's hair but still under control, but incidentally to acquire the habits of obedience and punctuality so necessary for workers. If you would be rid of patriarchy, get rid of the nuclear family whose unpaid “shadow work,” as Ivan Illich says, makes possible the work-system that makes it necessary. Bound up with this no-nukes strategy is the abolition of childhood and the closing of the schools. There are more full-time students than full-time workers in this country. We need children as teachers, not students. They have a lot to contribute to the ludic revolution because they're better at playing than grown-ups are. Adults and children are not identical but they will become equal through interdependence. Only play can bridge the generation gap.

I haven't as yet even mentioned the possibility of cutting way down on the little work that remains by automating and cybernizing it. All the scientists and engineers and technicians freed from bothering with war research and planned obsolescence would have a good time devising means to eliminate fatigue and tedium and danger from activities like mining. Undoubtedly they'll find other projects to amuse themselves with. Perhaps they'll set up world-wide all-inclusive multi-media communications systems or found space colonies. Perhaps. I myself am no gadget freak. I wouldn't care to live in a pushbutton paradise. I don't want robot slaves to do everything; I want to do things myself. There is, I think, a place for labor-saving technology, but a modest place. The historical and pre-historical record is not encouraging. When productive technology went from hunting-gathering to agriculture and on to industry, work increased while skills and self-determination diminished. The further evolution of industrialism has accentuated what Harry Braverman called the degradation of work. Intelligent observers have always been aware of this. John Stuart Mill wrote that all the labor-saving inventions ever devised haven't saved a moment's labor. Karl Marx wrote that "it would be possible to write a history of the inventions, made since 1830, for the sole purpose of supplying capital with weapons against the revolts of the working class." The enthusiastic technophiles -- Saint-Simon, Comte, Lenin, B. F. Skinner -- have always been unabashed authoritarians also; which is to say, technocrats. We should be more than sceptical about the promises of the computer mystics. They work like dogs; chances are, if they have their way, so will the rest of us. But if they have any particularized contributions more readily subordinated to human purposes than the run of high tech, let's give them a hearing.

What I really want to see is work turned into play. A first step is to discard the notions of a “job” and an “occupation.” Even activities that already have some ludic content lose most of it by being reduced to jobs which certain people, and only those people are forced to do to the exclusion of all else. Is it not odd that farm workers toil painfully in the fields while their air-conditioned masters go home every weekend and putter about in their gardens? Under a system of permanent revelry, we will witness the Golden Age of the dilettante which will put the Renaissance to shame. There won't be any more jobs, just things to do and people to do them.

The secret of turning work into play, as Charles Fourier demonstrated, is to arrange useful activities to take advantage of whatever it is that various people at various times in fact enjoy doing. To make it possible for some people to do the things they could enjoy it will be enough just to eradicate the irrationalities and distortions which afflict these activities when they are reduced to work. I, for instance, would enjoy doing some (not too much) teaching, but I don't want coerced students and I don't care to suck up to pathetic pedants for tenure.

Second, there are some things that people like to do from time to time, but not for too long, and certainly not all the time. You might enjoy baby-sitting for a few hours in order to share the company of kids, but not as much as their parents do. The parents meanwhile, profoundly appreciate the time to themselves that you free up for them, although they'd get fretful if parted from their progeny for too long. These differences among individuals are what make a life of free play possible. The same principle applies to many other areas of activity, especially the primal ones. Thus many people enjoy cooking when they can practice it seriously at their leisure, but not when they're just fueling up human bodies for work.

Third -- other things being equal -- some things that are unsatisfying if done by yourself or in unpleasant surroundings or at the orders of an overlord are enjoyable, at least for a while, if these circumstances are changed. This is probably true, to some extent, of all work. People deploy their otherwise wasted ingenuity
to make a game of the least inviting drudge-jobs as best they can. Activities that appeal to some people don't always appeal to all others, but everyone at least potentially has a variety of interests and an interest in variety. As the saying goes, “anything once.” Fourier was the master at speculating how aberrant and perverse penchants could be put to use in post-civilized society, what he called Harmony. He thought the Emperor Nero would have turned out all right if as a child he could have indulged his taste for bloodshed by working in a slaughterhouse. Small children who notoriously relish wallowing in filth could be organized in “Little Hordes” to clean toilets and empty the garbage, with medals awarded to the outstanding. I am not arguing for these precise examples but for the underlying principle, which I think makes perfect sense as one dimension of an overall revolutionary transformation. Bear in mind that we don't have to take today's work just as we find it and match it up with the proper people, some of whom would have to be perverse indeed. If technology has a role in all this it is less to automate work out of existence than to open up new realms for re/creation. To some extent we may want to return to handicrafts, which William Morris considered a probable and desirable upshot of communist revolution. Art would be taken back from the snobs and collectors, abolished as a specialized department catering to an elite audience, and its qualities of beauty and creation restored to integral life from which they were stolen by work. It's a sobering thought that the grecian urns we write odes about and showcase in museums were used in their own time to store olive oil. I doubt our everyday artifacts will fare as well in the future, if there is one. The point is that there's no such thing as progress in the world of work; if anything it's just the opposite. We shouldn't hesitate to pilfer the past for what it has to offer, the ancients lose nothing yet we are enriched.

The reinvention of daily life means marching off the edge of our maps. There is, it is true, more suggestive speculation than most people suspect. Besides Fourier and Morris -- and even a hint, here and there, in Marx -- there are the writings of Kropotkin, the syndicalists Pataud and Pouget, anarcho-communists old (Berkman) and new (Bookchin). The Goodman brothers' Communitas is exemplary for illustrating what forms follow from given functions (purposes), and there is something to be gleaned from the often hazy heralds of alternative/appropriate/intermediate/convivial technology, like Schumacher and especially Illich, once you disconnect their fog machines. The situationists -- as represented by Vaneigem's Revolution of Daily Life and in the Situationist International Anthology -- are so ruthlessly lucid as to be exhilarating, even if they never did quite square the endorsement of the rule of the worker's councils with the abolition of work. Better their incongruity, though than any extant version of leftist, whose devotees look to be the last champions of work, for if there were no work there would be no workers, and without workers, who would the left have to organize?

So the abolitionists would be largely on their own.

No one can say what would result from unleashing the creative power stultified by work. Anything can happen. The tiresome debater's problem of freedom vs. necessity, with its theological overtones, resolves itself practically once the production of use-values is coextensive with the consumption of delightful play-activity.

Life will become a game, or rather many games, but not -- as it is now - -- a zero/sum game. An optimal sexual encounter is the paradigm of productive play, The participants potentiate each other's pleasures, nobody keeps score, and everybody wins. The more you give, the more you get. In the ludic life, the best of sex will diffuse into the better part of daily life. Generalized play leads to the libidinization of life. Sex, in turn, can become less urgent and desperate, more playful. If we play our cards right, we can all get more out of life than we put into it; but only if we play for keeps.

No one should ever work. Workers of the world... relax!
APPENDIX 3: COMMUNITY [AS CITY] BLUEPRINTS

These images are artistic representations of example community-city systems. Can you imagine living in these communities? What functional purposes would you assign to the architectural structures and other building spaces?
Appendix 4: Your lifestyle among community

What might that look like? It is up to you.
Write your own lifestyle in here >

Herein, we have presented a foundation of evidence for a new way of living. Yet, our lifestyle among community is one that allows for flexibility. You can participate in the evolution of our lifestyle by adding your own narrative of that which you would love your lifestyle to be like among community.


punishment  29, 41, 42, 43, 48, 49, 50, 54, 55, 56, 65, 67

R
recovery  14, 24, 42, 59
retire  96

S
school  29, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 63, 64
schooling  26, 29, 30, 35, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 71, 74, 75, 77
segregation  43
selection  65
self-sufficient  32, 78
serotonin  14
simulation-based learning  83
State  29, 40, 49, 51, 52, 53, 56, 57
Steven Kotler  10, 16
stress  42, 50, 51
Sugata Mitra  25, 63

T
tasks  5, 6, 9, 33, 53, 65, 68, 71, 72, 74, 77, 82, 83, 86, 87, 110, 114, 118
teacher  30, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 53, 54, 56, 65, 67, 68, 74, 75, 79, 80, 81
teaching  36, 39
the Community  4
the grammar stage  79. See also trivium
the logic stage  79. See also trivium
the rhetoric stage  80. See also trivium

U
university  43, 53, 56. See also college
unlearning  88
unschooling  45

V
vacation  103, 109
virtual reality  89

W
wage  96, 101, 102, 109, 113, 114
wisdom  25, 29, 30, 39, 78, 79, 80, 88
work  102
workday  38, 92, 99, 101
SEPARATE,

TOGETHER