

The deception of success and education: Looking into the truth of the modern ideology of education

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

“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. The youth of today are absolutely right in recognizing this nonsense of earning a living. We keep inventing jobs because of this false idea that everybody has to be employed at some kind... of drudgery because, according to Malthusian-Darwinian theory, he must justify his right to exist. So we have inspectors of inspectors & people making instruments for inspectors to inspect inspectors. The true business of people should be to go back to school & think about whatever it was they were thinking about before somebody came along & told them they had to earn a living...”

Buckminster Fuller

Everywhere we look we are assailed by ideas of what it means to be “successful”, ideologies of how we can change the “story” of “me” into a “success” rather than a so-called “failure”. But what does this really mean? On one hand we have the of absolute poverty of inner city slums, council estates run by drug gangs, robbers, crime, and on the other hand we have the so-called “polite society” which is preoccupied with the “correct way to behave”, confident that they have the tools to make themselves successful, as they have the education system behind them. Ultimately the education system is part and parcel of a classed society, based on people who are educated and can understand the world, can read and write and be clear about how the money markets run. They are able to take a seat “above” those who are basically “labourers” who won’t “get on” in the world because they are “just” labourers, who were unwilling to conform to the school system because they were too engrossed in the hedonism of sex, drugs and rock-and-roll during their youth rather than “knuckling down”.

So there is a hierarchical relegation, these people are told they are lesser, they are not given so-called opportunities to so-called “better” themselves, they are left to rot in the social sewer. The middle and upper classes who have gained social status, whether through birthright or aggressive intent, will condemn the situation of “lower class” as a “missed opportunity” or a situation which is “sorrowful” or even a “sick” aspect of society needing “care”. This is because for them the ideology of successfulness and capitalized individualism was not sufficiently “educated” for there to be a “way out” of social poverty. But is there really a “way out”? It matters not what so-called social class you’re in because the big equalizer is suffering. Basically you are either suffering the story of inadequate “self” in poor surroundings or luxurious surroundings. In poor surroundings there is also the added belief that you ought to be in luxurious surroundings

but when in luxurious surrounding there is the added burden or realization that it makes no difference to the suffering, so what was all the struggle or the “burden” of inheritance for? It makes no difference. If money equates to opportunities and opportunities equate to success, then no money equates to no-opportunities and failure. This way of thinking simply sees the wood but not the trees.

One might suggest that in this way the poor stay poor and the rich remain rich if all we can do is to accept that it “doesn't matter” either way, but this kind of argument about wealth misses the point entirely. The real question is about the nature of success and why teachers and those in authority would try to instill in us aspirations to achieve it. This is not only utterly ridiculous but also illustrates the total illusion in which they themselves are living. If success is all about attempting to make your “life better”, pushing forward to find a future situation where things are going to be “better” this is always an unending process of seeking a pot of gold that simply doesn't exist “out there”. It's like going on holiday to escape, not realizing that you're taking the trap of “self” with you!

No matter how hard we strive, we only end up in the exact place we started, the only difference being we may have slightly more or a lot less money than when we began. The person however remains exactly the same. People in the media who build companies out of nothing, who are industry-builders and so-called successes are always compared to all those who didn't “make it” to that level, who are deemed to be “failures”. This kind of ideology judges success and failure based on accumulation of wealth, on achieving or influencing something which then promotes and increases their sense of “self”-importance. Society deeply encourages this, it is its main focus. But those who don't like the whole idea of work, who find the whole approach and constraints of it repugnant, who feel something is innately wrong with the way the world is, who would love to find something different, but just don't or can't, these people just fade away and live in poverty and difficulty. Society applies massive, hypnotically aggressive judgment to these people, shaming them for being different from the norm - but are they in fact so different? Is it simply the truth that's behind the office-mask and that these people are more directly true to instinct? Those who are less educated in the rules of society, and therefore one could say less brain-washed, can however often be deeply depressed through shouldering a barrage of blame. In many ways those people who seek out a new life are simply responding to the call of natural instinct and moving away from all that is mechanized, constrained, contained and adjusted.

There is no direction for those who are stuck in patterns that they know are not “good” for the body or mind, but they continue to do what they do because they see no alternative, or perhaps the alternatives seem detached, fake in some way, not really opportunities but merely what they are told are opportunities. The key problem is that when attainment of “success” is sought, based on what the big city dictates is successful, then there is dis-ease on the horizon.

In reality there is no such thing as success or failure, like right or wrong, good and bad, these are all things that go together. None of them actually derive from instinct. As a result when we use one set of these duplicities we are using them all. When we use them

to build society that then forms a dualistic society and this is no one's fault it's just what is occurring. However there can be a realization that all of this is fundamentally judgment and division. When this is recognised the education system is one of the first areas that collapses because it is seen that education no longer provides the answers.

A process of realization then occurs that people have natural abilities and interests which are fundamentally within their nature. When this is recognised there is a realization that all education can ever bestow is a nurturing and encouragement of what there already is. Education is not an addition, its function cannot build "successful" societies because its foundational ideology is dying. When this is realised industry too collapses, unable to continue advertising its base motive of "success" or its last ultimatum of "failure", as there is no longer belief in either.

The natural state of "learning" is not as we perceive it. It requires no belief system. When we look at animals we may say "Look, the bird is learning from its mother how to find worms!" Of course no such thing is happening, the mother and baby birds are One thing, there is no learning process. The idea of learning fosters the situation of a teacher and a student, immediately the process of dualism is created and as a result all that is passed on is dualistic dogma and the ability to apply this to many situations. Learning in real terms is simply being, it does not occur through the influence of a particular teacher whose "authoritative" ideology is going to make sure pupils know how to "live in society". Whoever embraces this process, is perpetuating a lineage of judgmental force.

The essence of this way of learning, playing or simply understanding life is profoundly unconventional. Instead of it relating to gaining or winning something and thereby being regarded as successful, or worse, being taught the importance of not failing there is simply a realization that to learn literally means being accepted and thereby to live in this acceptance and in connection with others. In some ways the educational ethos of Rudolph Steiner comes closer to this by identifying and using the ancient Greek 4-element categorizations of the personality/*nature* of different people and allowing them to follow their natural expression within the schooling context. This at least provides a realization that natural processes underpin society but that if we ignore them and focus only on the highly dis-eased human sense of self-conscious motivation towards unachievable goals, there is intense suffering.

At present society has many outlets for the disparate expressions that people have but very often countless expressions are formulated without any thought being given to whether anyone has the natural expression which gives them an interest in doing the job that is on offer, thereby rendering them just another cog in the chain of industry. Only infrequently does a job match the person's nature and most people, rather than following a natural vocation, become slaves to a "success"-oriented ideology which will always seem unachievable if they are regarded as being "at the bottom of the pile", rather following a natural-vocation.

Natural-vocations require no real learning only a natural ability and way of being which intrinsically fits the environment of the situation. With such a quality the job and its requirements are or will become second nature and it becomes a playful experience. In primitive societies there were by-nature people who would do different jobs within these cultures based on the requirements of daily life, but also fundamentally based on the natural ability of the personality of the people within these tribes. In a modern and innovative expression there are some people who are trying to get in touch with these natural senses again, such as those at www.trackersearch.com. Their training programs are designed in such a way as to reintroduce natural abilities to make and build, and to sense the environment which are no longer success-orientated but are more like a learning to use the natural senses and innate skills or expressions of the body. When the idea of learning changes from learning in order to “get to”, “become” or “achieve” and instead becomes about playfulness about what *is* naturally, then not only do society and industry collapse but also the divide between rich and poor, the haves and the have-nots, is demolished, everyone’s innate quality is seen, acknowledged and is equal in its expression no matter what place it takes. The leader is not above the follower, the leader simply leads, the follower follows, like the back and the front. How can the front be “above” the back, or the back “below” the front?

The ideology that intellect is the only way to success is deeply misconstrued and is part of a logic based in dualism. This is overturned time and again the Tao Te Ching:-

Chapter 3:

Not exalting an “individual’s” way prevents competitiveness/contention

Not exalting items of “value” prevents thieving

The Natural-human draws towards relaxing and letting go of the mental-process, and an interest in the abdomen and body,

Softening forceful wilfulness, so sinking into and strengthening the bones.

If most people are not focused in intellect and desire, Naturally those within intellect and desire have no influence

If there is no pre-intended action, all will be well.

Chapter 19

Let go the idea of the “sage” and the “wise”

And the people will benefit a hundredfold

Let go the practice of “benevolence”, and rules of “rightness”

And the people will return to Natural relationships

Let go of intellectual ingenuity, discard profit

And there will be no more thieves and bandits.

All of these processes of “letting go” are simply the surface, they are not the Truth

People seem to need to attach themselves to something

So express what is Natural, unadorned and naked, feel the Original Nature

Here is little thought of a “self” or “desire”.

People can pretend this isn't true, uttering the words "life just isn't like that", endlessly adhering to their beliefs and thus creating further social and economic disparities. This is neither the first nor the last time these things will be pointed out but the point is that if we focus on goal-oriented ways of educating and instill ideologies of success/failure and judgment in the hearts of people, this can only have a dualistic outcome resulting in the inevitable consequences as we attempt to pick up the pieces while still continuing to smash the world we are one with.

Real education is about releasing the grip on "learning" and "achieving" and letting go. This has to start with an un-learning of the ideology of authority figures and also of the ways of dualism. This isn't an anarchy for the sake of it, it's not an anarchy to just trash what is old and forget the "wisdom", but simply that there is no wisdom in that which is associated with education, the wisdom has been drained out of it. It is mostly based on ideology around the necessity to feed an insatiable industrial machine, following rules and regulations we feel have no significance and living lives full of stress and tension on every level, most of which is directly proportional to our status and level of success within a social network. This shit simply has to go! It is unsustainable on any level. It's not about wisdom, or about profit at any cost, it's not about education, it is a deep dryness of knowledge that cannot quench the thirst. There is no learning to be found in learning, and the old are very often not wise any longer, this is simply what *is*. As these fundamental principles are let go of, even at an intellectual level, this allows the process of change towards something fundamentally based in our instinctual senses, in-tune with the environment and each other as Oneness which cannot be taught or found within any textbook. As we let go of intellectual focus and the headstrong compulsion to drive forwards in the way we once thought would "help", we start to move into a society where there is at last liberation rather than conflict.

(For more clarity on the nature of education and its impact on society please see the brilliant work of Ivan Illich at : <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-illic.htm> and <http://www.davidtinapple.com/illich/>

...also please see the genius is Sir Ken Robinson
http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html)

David Nassim
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