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I have a firm belief that the quality of any life is dependent on the ability to appreciate every moment, every stimulus, no matter how insignificant, and a love of itself no matter how bleak it may seem. I also firmly believe that my life will be greatly improved by controlling all my emotions, reactions and attitudes. Instead of rushing through life, out of control, if I can learn to control my temper, study situations before making decisions and realise the result of my actions I can surely hope to do little I regret. Surely to learn this sort of control would help immeasurably more in life than an 'O' level pass in Disraeli's Foreign Policy. Why on earth then is no attempt whatsoever, in any ordinary school that I have ever heard of, been made to do just this? "Education" as it stands today is a total, complete and criminal waste of time. Eleven years of the most formative years of any person's life are coerced through a mechanism that produces a majority of closed minded, retarded and prejudiced people that far from appreciating life have to battle through, trial and error style. Most have an attitude that says academically cleverer people are superior because they leave school with a collection of useless information, that they are "somebody" because of this and that if they have not fitted the "mould" then they are a failure because of it.

Surely the whole of life is an opportunity to expand and develop your soul or your mind or whatever you call the individual spark that is life. Many, many schools of thought worldwide teach people how to channel their emotions to a constructive fulfillment of themselves and a realization of their own potential in every way, in a sense, mind over matter. Whether they achieve this by meditation or fasting or lying on a bed of nails it leads to a knowledge of yourself that has to be worth more than a set of examination results. I am not suggesting that first lesson Monday morning should be spent on a bed of nails but that some attempt has to be made towards showing that a person's well-being is not dependant on how many cars he or she may have or where they went on holiday. In fact the whole educational system seems to be looking down the wrong end of a telescope, it is very obvious that money does not and cannot create real happiness: the wealthiest people are often the unhappiest and as people glibly say, "you can't take any of it with you". Why then are we taught that the worth in our life depends on our qualifications, leading to a good job, leading to more and more material possessions? But surely the worth in our lives depends on our ability to be happy and interested and lead a truly full life. I am also equally sure that whoever created life did not mean its potential to be only encouraged in the eight subjects we are obliged to take. I am positive that the wonderful machines of our minds have other abilities than reading and writing. If so, why is 99% of the educated world been shunted in such a way? The conclusion could almost be drawn that people are produced this way to provide equally satisfied morons to fill the unfulfilling, supposedly essential jobs in this world.

Another scholastic attitude that leads to much unhappiness is that of productivity, that you can only be happy if you produce something, and what right have you to be happy if you don't? In these times of unemployment this is a crippling attitude to still instil into people.

Why are schools made so unappealing in most cases? From nine until three-thirty we sit on hard chairs staring at dull colours in stifling heat. Neither staff nor pupils like it so why isn't it changed? We are also told to attend school unless we are very ill and yet when we all arrive, bad tempered with colds, no concession at all is made. It is impossible to function normally when we feel depressed, yet the system as it stands allows for no fluctuation of mood. It seems to expect hundreds of highly emotional teenagers and young children to all be of the same frame of mind and placidity, therefore we are made to feel in the wrong for expressing any kind of emotion. Is it any wonder, then, that people grow older with an inability for self-expression?

I feel as I come to the end of my scholastic training that I am getting less and less from school; I am finding the lessons more worthless and tedious than ever before. A drastic change is needed, you can't improve a rotten house by repainting the walls if they are about to fall down. In my opinion, this ancient, out of touch and inept structure should be swept away and started afresh. Not with the same tired old principles, but with what to most restricted view points must seem revolutionary ideas. As far as I am concerned the biggest and oldest crime in the world is committed the day you send your five year old child to school.