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Humanities

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We Don't Need No Education

“ I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination.” *-Jimmy Dean*

When I was a little kid, I had freedom. If I didn't want to do something I wouldn't. Nowadays things have changed a little bit. The most notable chore that I didn't want to do was go to school. Day in, day out the same routine over and over again, for years. I hated elementary school more than anything. I was constantly getting in trouble for stupid reasons. For four years , I was accused of “not caring enough about others delicate feeling”, asking why we had so much homework, and even chest bumping another student in a skit got me sent to the Explorer Elementary principal's office! Fifth grade graduation was a relief, I thought it was all finally over. But then came middle school; the staff's focus on babying students fragile feelings died down, but it was the same old thing. I was stuck in a building for seven hours a day, 5 days a week and around 180 days a year, for 12 years not including college.

In my freshman year all I could think about was how much of my life I was wasting sitting in a chair at school. I could be learning so much more useful knowledge outside of school. Traveling all over the world, climbing and surfing. When I was in elementary school it wasn't as bad. I would take Wednesdays off to go snow skiing and other things. But now grades mattered more and this was no longer an option.

I struggled through my freshman year. Academically I was a straight A student, but I was bored. School was no fun and it continued to be that way for a long while. We would do the same old generic projects, and we as students would just go through the motions. We never really got interested or involved. People told me to try to have fun but it was no help; I could see no way to make it any less miserable. By the end of my first semester I was so fed up with school I ended up doing my POL about how much I hated it. My physics teacher surprisingly agreed with most of my points, but gave me some advice on coping with my situation. I do not remember how he phrased it exactly, but it was something along the lines of, "You know you're going to be stuck here anyway, so you might as well make the best of it instead of being frustrated." At first I didn't make much of an effort, I was stuck in my mindset of thinking school sucks and so on.

During the second semester of freshman year we got into a project that was more my style. Toga Night was a great project. I got to work with my hands more than I had ever had before at school, so this made it much more fun. I enjoyed this because it gave me freedom and a chance to prove what I could accomplish. Among all of the things I produced for the project, the one I received the most recognition for was the 3D backdrop for the play. This project put me in a leadership position, at first I didn't think I would like it, being the minimalist who just did the bare minimum to get by, but I grew to like it a lot. In this position I felt like I was being treated as an adult in a professional environment. As a result I began to gain the trust of many adults around me. Here is where school began to change for me, when I could begin to see teachers as peers, co-workers, or even friends rather than masters or dictators. Once I realized

this I didn't completely come out of my cave, but I would eventually. Through the rest of freshman and sophomore year I continued to discover common interests with teachers and students.

At the end of my sophomore and beginning of junior year was when I really started taking my freshman physics teacher's advice. I took advantage of my surroundings. The greatest example was astronomy club, after being very involved and becoming knowledgeable on the subject I eventually became co-president of the club. Junior year my chemistry teacher and I got very interested in rocketry, once again I took advantage of the situation and I got into making rockets. During engineering when we had nothing to do, we would use the machines to make parts for our rockets. I learned that the school was an incredible resource, nowhere else would I have the funding or means of getting the chemicals involved in rocketry, or the expensive equipment for astronomy. I am just now beginning to see the opportunities this environment can provide me, and I wish I would have discovered it sooner. I used to spend my lunch break dreading the next class, but now I find myself spending the majority of them inside working on independent projects. I have gotten so interested in the things I do at school outside of the normal classes that I end up spending far more time in school than I need to.

I always knew I would be stuck at school, but I didn't know how good you could make it. Although I am now taking full advantage of the resources school offers, I wish I would have taken the advice when it was given to me. I now look at my time left in high school differently than I used to. I wish I hadn't spent so much time freshman year moping around and saying how bad school was. If school has taught me one thing, it's that if you want things to get better,

you're going to have to go out there and do it, and if you just complain and wait around for something to happen, it never will.