

I was homeschooled all the way up until I was 18. I eventually got my GED in my early 20s but there was no particular plan for that as best I could tell. Our schooling was extremely intermittent and poorly handled. Most of what I remember at this point in my life was crying at the kitchen table while my mom screamed at me because algebra didn't make sense, and that all of our "science" involved essentially a handful of facts about why evolution was a lie.

When I was young I wanted to be a paleontologist. I loved dinosaurs (still do) and was very excited about the idea of digging up dinosaur bones. But by the time I was in middle school, even I realized that my education was not up to that task. I never wrote a paper, I never did much of anything but read (things that later turned out to be mostly lies). I had no safe adults in my life, only my abusive parents and other people who supported them at our church. Being homeschooled ensured my parents could keep any unwanted eyes off of us, specifically mandated reporters of any kind.

I am now in my 40s and I have done well. I did eventually go back to school, I now have my master's in social work and I hope to eventually get a PhD. But I cannot overstate how much of that was because I was lucky. I was lucky that I didn't have any kind of learning disabilities, I was lucky that I connected to people in undergrad and grad school who were excited to support and mentor me and help me figure out all of the things that I needed to. I still have panic attacks about math, I still have probably less than a 3rd grade education about natural science topics.

I have made a life and career and I love my life and career but also I was so very lucky to get to this point. And if my parents had had my way, I never would have. The assumption was always that I wouldn't go to college, that I would get married to someone and have children and stay in the life they wanted for me. They tried to assure that by trapping me in that life, by closing off my options. And education was a central piece of that attempt. They failed, but they should never have been allowed to try, to keep their children at home and teach (or not teach) whatever they wanted with absolutely no meaningful oversight or intervention. I deserved better, and so does every child after me.

Sincerely,  
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