

I was taken out of kindergarten at the age of 5 when my parents joined a homeschooling cult. While my family did indeed order math textbooks covering algebra, I had difficulty understanding the material and was never given access to a tutor or any kind of academic intervention or even checking for learning disabilities. Instead, I was screamed at, slapped, and shamed for not understanding.

Eventually, it was assumed that I was just going to be married anyway, so I'd never need to know math. The religion my parents fell into clearly thought of women as 2nd-class citizens and did not prioritize their education or mental or emotional health because of doctrine and indoctrination. The homeschooling cults my parents joined claimed to "oversee" my education but never looked hard enough to make sure that there was no abuse and neglect going on in my home. My parents were paying them "tuition" while they were given bad advice that told them what they were doing was okay. I had no adult to go to in my life for help because I was told that people outside our family and religion were not to be trusted, and I was enmeshed and afraid of people in general.

As an adult, this lack of a solid mathematical education has impacted me by limiting my options for what I could study in college, and jobs I could take, among other problems. I have a high IQ but have had to spend thousands of dollars on therapy and remedial math classes just to be able to study courses that I otherwise have a high aptitude for. All this happened because, as a female, my need for quality education was not valued or prioritized, and as a child with limited knowledge of how society works and my rights, even into my late teens, I did not know how to self-advocate. The results of this kind of homeschooling are profoundly damaging and long-lasting. I am in my late 40s now, and having a sense of self-agency is something I've only truly begun to feel in the last 10 years or so.

If parents are allowed to neglect their kids' education on the basis of their religion, then America will become no better than countries run by religious dictatorships. Children are people, and even though they don't have many years behind their names yet, they deserve the right to learn about life on earth and master all the subjects that they need to know to become successful adults.

Signed,
PL