

I was homeschooled in Texas from kindergarten to 12th grade. My parents homeschooled me due to their religious convictions, mainly to "keep me pure" from the outside world. They subscribed to an isolationist interpretation of evangelical Christianity, which had origins in the "Hebrew roots" movement. This movement valued separatism and purity above all. Purity, according to their religious worldview, meant shielding me from certain core subjects. As a result, my education was extremely inadequate. While this is partially due to inconsistency, their willful neglect of important topics is the main contributor to my poor education.

Very few curricula satisfied my parents' extensive list of objections. Throughout primary school, I was made to use outdated materials (such as Rod and Staff's Mennonite curriculum for mathematics, or exclusively works written in the mid-19th century for language arts.)

Most pointedly, however, I was refused any education in science. This is because my parents believed that all science, regardless of discipline, either "contained evolution" or "was inappropriate". In high school, I was additionally barred from learning about psychology, sociology, or world religions. According to my parents, these necessary topics for maturing into adulthood would "lead me away from religion".

I am now in college. While I've managed to succeed due to hard work and willpower, I have poor scores in basic subjects due to inadequate education. A biology teacher of mine had to provide supplemental instruction and materials for me because she frequently referenced topics "we learned in highschool". Struggling to understand basic subjects such as the weather, politics, and higher-level math affects my job prospects and my self-esteem.

Besides the obvious psychological distress that an isolationist causes, I have hard evidence that this "education" was inadequate. I was given professionally administered cognitive assessments at age 7 (while I was under my parents' care) and age 21 (after I had moved out). These tests show over 20 points of loss in IQ within less than 15 years.

Allowing parents to educationally neglect their children in the name of religion dulls some of the brightest minds of our generation. Being educationally neglected in this manner felt like Munchausen's by proxy - in the same way that children in these cases deteriorate medically due to their parents' control of their health, I deteriorated mentally due to my parents' incessant need to control my thoughts. Children need to see viewpoints other than their own to succeed.

Signed,
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