

*The philosophy of the school room in one generation will be the philosophy of government in the next- Abraham Lincoln*

This quote above by Lincoln is so good. Talk about a man with understanding and vision. Family breeds people. Those people go to school one day. Our teachers and lawmakers are shaping your sons and daughters. Those kids will form the backbone of the nation one day. Recently there has been a rash of things happening in the Canadian landscape. In Alberta the passing grade for math has been reduced to 45%. New parents are refusing to vaccinate their children only to see a spike in diseases. Pipelines for oil are being blocked. Energy prices have risen and jobs were lost. Who taught this current generation the ways of government?

What will these decisions do to the public office in the years to come? How many more half-truths will be embraced by the students of today? I know that's probably the main reason kids are more and more home schooled. Home schooling is good and seemingly safe. Is the goal of home schooling to sanitize our children from the world?

I bet many home-schooled children become amazing citizens. Yet, I am nervous. We train at home to what end? I believe that there are steps and levels to becoming an adult. I worry that keeping kids away from the public realm is exactly what corrupt government wants. It's a damned if you do and damned if you don't decision. Some parents fear the school system corrupting their children. On the flip side, I worry that sanitized exposure to the world leaves some kids ill equipped.

School is the one way that we can introduce kids to people. People that are beyond a safe and secure family. In a way, school is the buffer between morals, character, and life outside the family. It's sending your Kids headlong into different attitudes and perspectives. Our school

system is so much more than just the ABC'S. The social fabric of a nation begins in a school setting. We learn the lines for toleration, comprise, and enduring another human being. You can't get that at home.

That's why I wanted to place this chapter here. You know what work is. We all grew up in a family of some sort. We know what heartbreak and romance looks like. Family is growing up together as a unit. I feel school is the "how did we get here sign." All our family training comes to school. The learning center takes that training and thrashes it about for three years or so. Then we enter the workforce a little bit better equipped than we were at home. Equipped to handle people, disappointment, success, and failure.

In the mid-evil time period, there were apprenticeships. A young boy was paired with a knight or priest. Those boys left home at an early age to train and learn from the master. In the Bible, we have the famous writer named Paul. He came from that system. Today's school mimics that tradition. Our kids are trained, mentored and prepared at school. Let's look at how our educational institutions have molded us for better or worse.

Earlier in this book I mentioned the maturation of a child to adult. There was (for many generations) a process. Recently we have added adolescence. I worry that home schooled kids are missing some of the tools gained in those public high school years. Parents of home-schooled kids would disagree. I get it. Yet, the training to become a well-rounded adult does not end at home. Life outside the home is part of the process. Life is hard. Life is awesome too. I have a friend who lives at home. Their long-time spouse lives in their parents home too. For ten years living apart? Then they had a baby while still living apart. It's like their playing house without the house. Are they playing life without living it? You can't simulate the world at home.

I guess I've made up my mind. School is part of the cog that makes an adult. Can I prove that? No, but I am in that camp. The public vs private debate does not matter to me. It's about exposing your kids to people. All the training in the home goes up in smoke if it's not battle tested. Imagine a parent saying that looking both ways in traffic is a very important lesson in life. Then they never take their child outside their yard. Why do you think they put those horrible lung pictures on cigarette boxes? We hear it but we need to know and see it.

I know that is extreme thinking, but hear me out. Beware of strangers. Don't touch the hot stove. Be open to who your friends are. Relationships can be harmful if we don't know the danger. It's pretty hard to avoid relationships outside the home. It's pretty hard to avoid people in authority. Our endurance, compromise, and toleration level only get tested and molded through our interaction with people. It's the only way to protect our kids. Unfortunately, we need to let our kids interact with people. One of the best and safest ways to do that is in a school.

School is far more than just math and writing. Our interaction with kids will change us. I'm sure that's the point home school parents would make. An actor with Doctor Who made an observation. She said that traveling through time and space will change history. She also believed that everyone changes everyone. It's not so much about for the good or bad. Maybe, encountering the good and bad is part of the making a person. If we think about it. Family begins the process of being changed by people. Then the variety is ramped up in school. Finally, we take that to a whole new level at work. It's character building 101.

Some of my friends have an opinion on school. I thought it was ok. Others just hated it. I was surprised at the anger over that opinion. Was it really that bad? I wonder if school is the beginning of the process. A process of segregating people into categories like go-getters, the

silent, and bus riders. All the types of people at work come from their family and school experiences. Funny enough, I was told I would not amount to much by a teacher. I lived within that view for almost 20 years. In my mind, that teacher changed me.

Let's look at family vs school. People become who they are partly through the family they grew up in. I know parents that play music. So do the kids. Is it really our choice to play music or become a writer? A parent's influence is massive. We are part of a family of people we did not chose. In school it's the same. Yet, a school always has a flavor like being academic or sports minded. Those themes will shape us like our parents did.

The people in a family shape us. The kids in a school will shape us too. I am the sum of several of my friends. Their music became my music. I had one over bearing parent. Maybe that's why I am not fond of management. In school, teachers are still over bearing adults. They are just paid parents in my way of thinking. I was shaped by my time in school interacting with authority. Some are good memories and others not so much.

Imagine being stuck with a family. In school, we are still stuck with our siblings. My brothers went to school with me. Their friends became my friends. I married one of my brothers' friends. It's an interesting debate. School boards make it hard to change schools. We are stuck with the kids we get just like in our family.

I am at Canada Post. It is a big company with many sections. I have moved around a bunch in my 32 years. Some have questioned why since I did it again recently. I wonder if I get board with being stuck with a group of people for too long. It's a time to change it up. Maybe I'm just changing family every now and then just because I can. My family past was not that great. Maybe I want control.

I know my wife and I wanted a different up-bringing. Yet, life gave us the family life we had. We can't change that. Both of us gained family values. Yet, we are somewhat strange because we were not like the family we have had. I am quite different than my parents and brothers. There are many of the traits of my parents in me. Trust me I know. However, I have been shaped by church, God, and friends too. Some of my traits have come from differentiating between all those experiences.

A teacher in grade 8 changed my direction. The friends I met at school changed my style. I have used my family values at school. Some way and some how I made up some new values too. For some reason I took "no" as an invitation to "yes." A teacher said I can't learn. So, I took extra courses. A friend said I can't play goal. I played goal. Clearly, I changed direction in school. Made my own goals and view on life.

That is why I believe we need school outside the home. Different personalities pushed me. A variety of people challenged me. I realized it's not just parents. We are all different. It's not just two brothers. It's 1500 kids. It's not just two parents. It's a school staff of 100. We compromise at home. We have little choice in school. Were reduced from being the focus of a parent to a number of people jammed in a small room. I found out quickly in school that it's not just about me.

Being pushed is a good thing. Like I said, it separates the cream from the milk. If your going to make it in this world, then you need to know who your friends are. Those choices affect more than just you. The world does not really care who you are. I think that made me want to succeed all the more. Parents can tell you that you're not that good. School might suggest that

you're not one of the best. It's becomes about proving them all wrong. Those who don't survive school will not do well in life either. School is a thick skin maker and a thin skin killer.

Adolescence makes for interesting relationships. Who are your friends? In the family unit, one member is always dearest to mom or dad. It's just that way. Suddenly, in school, we can pick our own favorites. Some kids join the wrong group. Others like me, found lifelong friends. We are fairly alike, yet we also accept our differences. Young adults are much more lenient with relationships. I have gained some great friends through school directly because I'm more lenient with them.

In each of my friends is a little rogue. One friend likes travel, money, and rock and roll. Another friend likes science fiction and pop music. I chose a rock group. It got me pushed around by the country element in the school. Eventually I played hockey with those very country kids. Were friends now. My close friends did not play sports. I see a rogue rebel nature in my friends. In school, kids can be cruel, yet they pick friends who are vastly different sometimes. They are friends our parents wouldn't touch with a ten-foot pole. Is that the rogue in us?

I think all those experiences taught me to find my limits. I know what kind of friends I wanted. It was those who challenged the system. Gladly, not the criminal system. Lucky for me I have not dropped many friends. I can't even think of any I have let slide away. Some have dropped me. I think I have watched how my friends have treated their parents, or were treated by them. It's helped me navigate my own parents.

It's like this. I was a rogue in school to some teachers. Could I have behaved better? Yes! Yet, I learned my limits. Some friends and teachers are not that good. They are the ones who suck the life out of people. In my family home life I was influenced to be a rebel by my mom.

That caused me to rebel against my dad. In turn, I rebelled against terrible teachers too. It's not a great thing, Yet, it can be a good thing. Usually you have to push to be pushed back. It's a limit maker.

I have learned limits in school. One teacher that challenged me. It pushed my life perspective. Preached to me to about setting boundaries. A bad teacher in one math class taught me that bad people do exist. Not all teachers are good people. School showed me my limits to bad behavior. There is also a limit to people's bad behavior towards me. In university, I was late on my first assignment in my first week. I learned limits there too. Marks are deducted if my limits are too liberal, even in the first week. I think school works. I believe school has made me more responsible.

In life, I have picked some good friends. I have dropped a few as well after my divorce. Sadly, their mean side showed up when I needed them most. I can take criticism, yet a hug and companionship are needed too. Some of my family and friends decided that it was the perfect time to kick me when I was down. Oh, I learned. My problem is that I want to be friends with everyone. That is just a bad idea. People are people. There needs to be limits in friendships.

I am classified as a sports nerd. Probably a host of other things too. I love sports, science fiction, literature, and comedy. Equally, I love heavy metal, country, and pop music. I wonder if my "loose perimeter" with friends is because I like too much stuff. I need a limit or range. I can't tell you how many times, in my life, someone asked me why I was there. I love everything but always look out of place. In one group I am a nerd. At a party I can hang out with the cool kids. School helped to define my relationships. I think I love to learn who people are and then adjust. School had a lot of people to learn from.

Paul in the Bible is famous for saying he would wear any hat to win a person for Jesus. It's a noble task. Yet, some people will not accept you. They just won't. Trying to be liked by everyone is a tall order. Damn near impossible too. Paul was not trying to fit in. He had a big heart that said he would move mountains to help people know Jesus. In School, I was willing to hang with the metal head bangers and the country folk. Adolescence gets confused when your wearing the wrong hat. I was misunderstood at times in school. I think it's because I like all kinds of people. I would move mountains for anyone.

My relationships now are not as loose as they were in school. I think in my family life I was trained to endure bad parenting. It is what it is. I took that outlook into my school life. I tried to compromise on everything. It meant I chose to ignore crud just to have a friend. That might have been my motto. Were all good people regardless of the crud. I think that tolerating bad people hurt me in school. I was always working on them. Too many friends meant that I had no time for me.

School gave me some great perspective on the types of people. The lazy guys were in the back. The go-getters were near the front. I wonder if the ones who did not want to be noticed were in the middle. The go-getters were always hiding us with their hands up. The people in the back always caused trouble. The middle was happily ignored.

That rogue in me had to fight to be noticed. It was that way at home and in school too. Oddly my work life has been an effort to hide. Yet, I am who I am. The rogue in me stands out at work as well. Maybe that's why I move around so much. Yet, I'm loyal too. I have been in the same company for a long time. Imagine having a friend who is rogue, loyal, antsy, and hard to pin down. It might be why I have so few friends now.



So, how did School change my relationships? I feel that I leaned to accept differences. I could not care less how people acted in school. I went to all the parties. I played many sports. Most of my current high school friends are people I never knew personally in days gone by. We are the ones that are still willing to have high school friends. Also, I have a filter. They do too. We know what good long-lasting relationships look like.

School was good to me. Sure, I got beat up a few times. Sure, a few teachers were terrible. I have had heart ache and failures. Yet, school gave me so much more than that. I think the ones that hated school believe that place was hell. I see it differently. Those tough instances gave me a view of people. It helped me to be a better friend to those who need one. I know that I chose friends who were rejected more than accepted.

I loved the opportunity to try different classes. I had to work with different teachers. I think that school helped me with management and leaders. I found in school, that not all the people in authority are bad. School gave me that. Trying different girls made me know what I liked. I was able to watch mistakes by others. That helped me define my morals and character.

Taking that experience into work helped. I wanted a good job that treated me well. ok, I stayed at Canada Post. The king of treating employees terrible. Yet, not quite as terrible as a slave plantation owner. I learned in school to know who was worth associating with. At work, that becomes useful. Finding good bosses to work for is useful as finding good teachers. I certainly picked classes in university based on the professor. I have moved from boss to boss over 32 years. I believe I'm always searching for good people.

Missing school life is a missed opportunity to work on who we are. I am a Green (family name). I know what that is to me. I am a Central Memorial Student alumnus. I know what that is.

Those two things molded me. It gave me perspective on what work should look like. It also gave me hindrances on tolerance. Things I never figured out until after divorce, and after working in terrible jobs for too long. Yet, I have learned to chose wisely now. Fine, it took me a long time.

I like it that I reversed the work and school chapters. To see family is one thing. To see the outcome of being raised is another. We are the sum of our family and school life. I feel that looking at the work perspective will give us better perspective on school. School refined our family upbringing. School added to our character. It challenged our preconceived notions on life. We need that in the harsh world of work.

Why am I the lover I am? Why am I hard working? There are kinks in my character. I can look at my currant work life and marriage with an open eye. Why? All the different people in school gave me some of that perspective. Looking back on school is an interesting exercise. In many ways that time made me. Made me into a certain husband, dad, and friend. Every event and person I've encountered had changed me just enough.

Have you ever done the "I wish I could go back in time thing?" I have pinned it down to Junior high in grade 8. If I had just listened to my favorite teacher just a little more. I could have worked harder in school. I would have not dated at all. Picked better friends. Worked hard on knowing me. Yet, here I am. A sum of family, school, and work. That experience has given me certain tools for marriage and parenting. Let's take one last look at marriage and parenting before I end this thing.