

## Education isn't everything !

### ***Ouch! Controversial? - but it has to be said....***

Do you know what really got Adam and Eve into trouble in the Garden of Eden? Contrary to popular belief it wasn't sex (that really *was* ok!) nor was it eating an apple! It was the fact that they wanted to **be** God – they wanted to have the power that comes with knowledge.

Our Society seems to worship knowledge as if it were the be all and end all. Knowledge is power, certainly, but is it **wisdom** and is it **fulfilment**?

I was talking to a Postgrad from Oxford University the other day, who said that the most intelligent and academically successful people she'd met were the most organisationally chaotic and socially inept people she knew!

Where do we get this idea that if you have a degree (or better a 'masters' or a PHD) that you are become a more socially adept, relationally capable, fulfilled or wise person?!

Schooling and education was originally something that the church gave to poor people (in particular) so that they could read and write and therefore have a better chance at getting the kind of work they wanted or a better life in general. What has happened? Now **it's all about the education itself!** Living in Oxford for 15 years (the pinnacle of the academic world, and the benchmark against which our country's education is measured) I found that the general subject of conversation was around what people are studying and where they're training and what they're going on to study when they've finished that ... and so on....

Do you know what I **don't** hear? I don't hear very much at all about **purpose and vision**. When I ask people – as I frequently do "what do you want to do with your studies?" 90% of them have little or no idea, and seem not to be worried – as if somehow the fact that they've got a degree or more is enough for a full life!

It's long been understood by psychologists and educational experts that the best form of learning is the full sensory 'experiential' learning and yet we keep banging on about college and university as if it somehow equips people for this. I'm sorry to say that it doesn't!

I'm not against university – I attended one myself and came out very fluent in German (with 3 Diplomas!) However, let me tell you about Margaret and Joy (not their real names of course) who did 3 full years and got a degree in drama at a very prestigious university which I will not name. They came to me for training in theatre arts because after three years they were able to do absolutely nothing! They had no skills, no knowledge of how to put on a production, how to play a character, how to do physical theatre. It was hard for them to actually say what they really did learn at college – the bitterness and anger at wasted time and money was not lost on me.

This is not an isolated incident – this is something I come up against all the time!

I've met two university counsellors recently who both said the cases of mental health problems are rising amongst students – they are very worried. Students are feeling under pressure to **achieve** and the issues of **vision, calling and passion for something** are completely ignored. One asked me the other day – how can we take the pressure off teenage kids to feel the need to 'achieve' and to feel the pressure to be 'good enough' to

get to college? I said the only thing I could see would be to teach teachers to identify ***potential and passion*** rather than ability!

Ability is great – but if you are left cold, your motivation runs out and you show symptoms – boredom, frustration, depression, anxiety – I've met and had to handle them all! Studies show that these amongst other things are often the result of people being in unsatisfied work situations. I don't mean working conditions, pay and pensions, but 'unsatisfied' meaning they do what they are good at but are not passionate or energised about – there is no sense of purpose/meaning to work! Today this represented 37% of our working population!

***Let's not put 'education' on the pedestal to equate with a full and satisfied life!*** Let's see what ***motivates*** and ***energises*** people - what gives them purpose and meaning in their work, and encourage them to do that and – let us take the pressure off our kids by letting them know that a college education does not equate to a wisdom and purpose fulfilled life!

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