

Education



WITHOUT THE STATE

TOM WOODS

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Introduction

Public schooling is as close to the official religion of the United States as any institution is ever likely to be. And if you are reading this eBook, you are likely a heretic.

Education Without the State brings together some of the conversations I've had about education on the Tom Woods Show, my weekday podcast. Five days a week I cover some aspect of libertarianism. That gives me a treasure trove of material on which I can draw to assemble eBooks like this one.

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Tom Woods
Harmony, Fla.
October 2016

Chapter 1 Separating School and State

with Sheldon Richman

Sheldon Richman is the author of numerous books, including Separating School and State: How to Liberate America's Families. Visit him at SheldonRichman.com. This was episode 62 of the Tom Woods Show.

WOODS: This is a tricky issue for libertarians. I think a lot of libertarians want to turn and run when it comes to an issue like this. They don't want to tell their friends they're against all tax-funded education.

So I wanted to bring you on, and, as devil's advocate, I'll throw some common arguments at you and see how you, the author of a book on this, would parry them. Ready?

RICHMAN: Sure.

WOODS: I think the most obvious one would be that the poor won't get educated. So let's save that for a little bit later.

Just about everyone agrees that there are problems with the government-run schools, and the kids aren't learning what they should be learning, but then come the excuses: this is because the schools have been deprived of funds, and we don't have the right priorities, and we favor basketball players over scholars. If only we could change this, we could get our act together. Why would you think the solution would instead involve getting rid of the whole system, root and branch?

RICHMAN: Well, the idea that they haven't spent enough money is laughable. They've been spending amazing amounts of money year after year for twenty or so years, in increasing amounts. They haven't shown any results. There's no improvement.

The other thing is that the worst districts in the country have the highest per-capita spending. In Detroit, or Chicago, inner-city schools, Washington, D.C., they are spending \$10,000 or more per student, and they have worse results even than other public school districts, government school districts, that spend less per capita. There is no correlation between the amount of money spent and the performance of the children. So that is not the problem.

WOODS: Well, what would, in your libertarian paradise—I'm trying to be like the average guy who's objecting here.

RICHMAN: Sure.

WOODS: In your utopia, where there wouldn't be any taxes collected, public services would be suffering everywhere. The worst suffering would be in the educational sector, because how can you expect some working mom to be able to afford school tuition? Say what you will about government and its inefficiencies, but it gets those kids in the classroom, and it gets them learning how to read and how to get out there in the economy and prosper. And you want to take that away.

RICHMAN: Well, a couple of things about that. A lot of those poor parents are themselves products of government schools, and I think that's one reason why they're poor.

Government produces many obstacles to individual self-advancement economically. And one of the biggest obstacles is its schools. If you look at the inner-city schools, they are just sabotaging generation after generation. If you set out to ruin generations of kids, you could not design a better system than the one we have. So that's one reason alone that parents don't seem to have enough money to educate their kids.

But there are lots of other ways to look at this. In fact, in the '80s, Marva Collins was a former public school teacher in Chicago who got sick of the schools and set up her own school using a spare room in a church. She had some kids from some of the worst schools, and who could hardly read. She had them reading Shakespeare within a very short time. This was publicized on *60 Minutes*, and she wrote a book, which was quite celebrated for a while. She was not spending very much per capita, so, therefore, neither were the parents.

Then we have the work of James Tooley to draw on, which is very, very important. James Tooley has spent, oh, I don't know how many years—the last ten years or more—traveling the world, going to some of the poorest places, like in Asia and Africa, and he finds in the cities of these countries for-profit private schools for poor people. You normally don't go into one of these towns and say, “Does anybody know of a private school for poor people?” People laugh and say, “There are not going to be any private schools for poor people. They wouldn't be able to afford it.”

In every case, he finds at least one school, usually more than one, where the teacher is usually from that community, who cares very much about the kids, who works very closely with the parents, and they have sliding-scale tuition, and sometimes are even just trading produce, stuff that they're growing. And these kids are getting a decent education. They outperform the kids in the public schools.

So, this is a bogus problem that people are somehow not going to be able to afford education. They are only judging that by the inflated prices, the inflated costs, that the government school system has. But we shouldn't be surprised that the government system has inflated costs.

WOODS: I would also say to the person who makes this complaint: try to imagine yourself in a situation in which there is no government funding of elementary and secondary-level education. Don't you think you personally would be more likely to make a donation or contribute to the endowment of your own elementary school, your own junior high, your own high school, where you feel like you have a special connection from your own experience? Wouldn't you kick in?

The reason you don't kick in now is because you don't have to. But, don't you believe there are enough nice people in the country, given that there are enough of you who are complaining about what life would be like under libertarianism? Don't you think you guys together could probably make a difference in people's lives?

I mean, they don't ever stop and think, "Maybe I could be part of the solution, instead of sitting around trying to figure out who else could do it?"

RICHMAN: Tom, that's a really good point. A bigger way to look at that is the fact that, going back well into the nineteenth century, there have been private foundations that gave money to help kids get an education. People care about education, and lots of people, when they amass a fortune, like to endow schools or endow foundations and give scholarships. It's happening today as well.

But you're right, it would be much more widespread if people had more of their own money, if they were able to keep their money, and if they couldn't fall back on the old excuse that, "well, the government is taking care of this, so there's nothing for me to do."

WOODS: But consider this objection. Someone might say, "What if I concede to you that, yes, the market may well be able to provide education, even for people who aren't that well-off financially. But you libertarians are also against compulsory attendance laws. So even if we establish schools that these kids' parents could afford, you won't force the parents to send the kids to these schools. Once again, it shows how anti-social and head-in-the-clouds you libertarians are."

RICHMAN: Well, I don't know what to say about someone who thinks it takes force to get parents to send their kids to school. Parents love their kids, for the most part. Poor parents are no different from other parents. One proof of that is when a government sets up a voucher program, often like a pilot program – this is not meant to be an endorsement of vouchers; I oppose vouchers for reasons you might want to get into. But just to take it as a case, in a pilot program the government authority may say, "We have three hundred slots,

we have three hundred vouchers to offer to parents.” And three thousand people line up to get them.

So what does that tell you? It tells you that parents care about their kids. Parents know that their kids are getting a rotten education in government schools, particularly in the inner cities. And when they get a chance to do something about it, they grab it in great, great numbers. So the idea that we need compulsory attendance betrays a lack of confidence in people.

The other problem with compulsory attendance is the government is going to have to define the terms. In other words, if you have to send your kid to school, it gets to define what a school is. That way, they can crush private initiative by defining something as not being a school.

What’s missing from the government system, and there’s no way a government bureaucracy could ever put it into the system, is entrepreneurship, something I know you know a great deal about. We need entrepreneurship in education, and in order to have that, we need to have complete freedom on both the demand side and the supply side so that people can offer new ideas, and they can try things, and they can engage in trial and error, which is always a path to success, without a bureaucracy having the right to say yes or no, or the power to say yes or no, to any idea. That’s what we are lacking, and government will never be held to bring that to its system.

WOODS: Let’s go back to the subject of vouchers that you mentioned. I guess we should address this, because you often hear in policy-wonk circles that the correct approach is so-called school choice. Parents get some amount that may be somewhere in the ballpark of per-capita government spending on education, and they get to spend it at government-designated schools. This in turn elicits the best from these schools, because now they have to compete with each other.

What’s wrong with that model? Sounds like a free market in education. What’s wrong with it?

RICHMAN: I think that most of the people that push it and the people that helped devise it – Milton Friedman may be the major person – had the best of motives, and I think they meant extremely well by that. But I think they simply underrated how much power that still gives the government.

If the government is going to be directing the money, via the parents’ wishes, to a particular school, it’s inevitably going to want to attach strings to that – because the money, first of all, will always be perceived as taxpayer money. Even though you could say, “No, it’s actually the parents’ money, because the parent is going to get taxed,” that’s not how it’s going to appear to the general public. It’s certainly not going to appear that way to

the special interests like the teachers or the administrators.

So they are going to demand – and you hear this every time – “We can’t have tax money, public money, going to unaccountable institutions.” Well, the moment that prevails, and it always does prevail, that means then the government authority gets to set rules for so-called private schools. Even today private schools are under regulation. They have the power to regulate. The Supreme Court says they can do that.

The voucher would present even more regulation. For example, in Wisconsin, when they started to let money go to religious schools, the Supreme Court said well, you can go to a religious school, as long as the religion is not integral to the curriculum, and the parents can opt their kids out of the religion classes. But there were some religious schools where religion is integrated through the whole curriculum. It’s not a discrete class you can just opt out of.

In a voucher system, that school would not be permitted to accept vouchers, which puts them at a competitive disadvantage. Some parents will say, “I won’t go to that school, because they can’t take the voucher.” So there are going to be rules that will stifle educational innovation under a voucher system. It doesn’t really create a competitive market. It creates sort of an artificial market.

WOODS: I can understand why somebody might nevertheless say, “Since the Sheldon Richman solution is unlikely to occur, this is a second-best option.”

Would you be willing to accept vouchers as a second-best option, or would you say, “It’s just going so far in the wrong direction that I just want to think about the problem differently?”

RICHMAN: I don’t agree that it’s a step in the right direction. I mean, someone will say to me, “Well, don’t you approve of transition steps in the right direction?” And, if I thought it was in the right direction, I might say, “Yes.” The fact is, I don’t think it’s in the right direction.

My old friend, the late Marshall Fritz, was a great champion of separating school and state. He liked to put it this way: “The voucher is like attempting to bridge a ten-foot chasm with two five-foot planks. It just won’t work.” Right now we have 88 or 90 percent of students on the government dole. They are in public schools, with about 10 percent not on the government dole. What the voucher plan presumes to do is put 100 percent on the government dole as a way of getting to zero, and he wondered how the heck does that work.

The other problem is the voucher movement is a rather disparate group of people, that half of them think the voucher will strengthen the public schools, and even Friedman

argued this because of the competition. They don't want to lose children to private schools, so they'll get better. And the other half of the movement think it will end up destroying the public schools and actually think that's a good thing. In other words, the competition will be so great that nobody will be interested in the public schools. Well both can't be true. You can't both strengthen and destroy the public schools. There's something wrong.

WOODS: In your book you also criticize the kind of schooling that traditionally goes on in a K-12 environment. Can you elaborate on that? What's wrong with the actual approach that's being taken in the classroom, from your point of view?

RICHMAN: Well, it was an approach that was devised initially in Germany in the nineteenth century. American social scientists and educators spent time in Bismarck's Germany in the later nineteenth century, and decided to bring that model here, although to some extent the model was already being pursued in the earliest days of public schools, which begins roughly around 1840 and spreads through the states.

It was a very regimented, authoritarian environment, if you think about it for a second. Kids, who are full of energy and want to move around, want to talk, are ordered to sit still and be quiet for some period of time. Then when the bell rings, they're supposed to stop thinking about what they were thinking – math, let's say – and immediately turn to something else – geography – even though they might still be full of enthusiasm for math and want to keep talking about it, keep studying it, keep doing problems. But no, that's not the way it goes. The bell rings – it's almost Pavlovian – the bell rings, and then you switch. You turn your mind off one subject and turn it onto another.

It's a highly authoritarian system. Schools look like prisons. It's amazing when I drive around and see schools. They look like prisons to me. And it's an old-fashioned model that was mainly based on the idea that schools were needed to train factory workers, civil servants, and soldiers. In other words, they were serving the state, and also the state's allies in the world of big business. They wanted to make sure there was a nice flow of quiet workers and civil servants to work in the bureaucracies, and soldiers.

That's not what we need. Education should be about producing independent, thoughtful, innovating self-starters. And that's not what the schools are aimed at doing. People have recognized this for a long, long time. John Stuart Mill understood it. H. L. Mencken understood it. If you go through the world of liberalism – I mean that in the sense of libertarianism – you see this constant criticism of the government system, that it's designed to produce conformity and things that we shouldn't be admiring.

WOODS: You have a chapter called "Why There Are Public Schools," and I just want to read this brief passage: "Despite their differences, the thinkers discussed in this chapter shared at least one principle: They believed that the school should be the mechanism through which the state, run by the intellectual elite, would shape the youth of the nation. In a

word, the schools' business would be indoctrination.”

This is not the usual version of things. The usual version is, “Education is a public good, and what’s government for if not to provide public goods?” But you and I and others take a more cynical view of what the state is up to here. When the state is giving us something for free, we want to look that gift horse in the mouth and say, “What exactly is going on?”

I’m going to ask you to put your prognosticator hat on. We can’t anticipate what some entrepreneur is going to come up with, but obviously we are living at a time when tremendous change is possible in education because of the technology that’s available. It could be possible now for more and more kids not to have to quit doing math because the bell rang and go on to the next regimented part of their day—and by the way, it would warm my heart if there were a lot of kids who felt so strongly about math that they wanted to keep doing problems. I almost was a math major, and that’s really great even to think about that. But, it seems to me that both the technology and the falling prices – you can very cheaply educate somebody now with Internet-based courses and the like. Where do you think we’re headed?

RICHMAN: Well, I hope it’s going in that direction. There has been some slow and steady increase in home schooling, and a lot of that, I believe, is in discovering the World Wide Web, because there are curricula and different approaches that you can now follow through the Internet. So I hope it’s going that way.

All I can say is we need to spread the word, and talk about it, and let people know. Most people don’t spend time thinking philosophically about these things, and they do things the way they learned them. I mean, most people went to public schools, and they think, “Hey, I turned out okay, so it’s okay for my kids.”

The inner-city parents are wiser than other parents, I think, because they see it, and they are fully aware of the lousy situation their children are in. It’s not only teachers who may not care very much – which is not to say there are no teachers that care. There are many. But there are some who leave something to be desired. Plus these schools are dangerous, and there are cops everywhere. It’s just a stifling atmosphere, and I think people are looking for a better way, and they just seem to see that it can be done outside of the traditional framework.

We need to promote people like John Taylor Gatto. You can find his videos on YouTube talking about this. When Gatto and people like that talk, it’s just so exciting what the possibilities are. And we don’t need to put up with these dinosaur institutions any longer.

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Chapter 2 Low-Cost Private Schools in the Developing World

with Pauline Dixon

Pauline Dixon is a Professor of International Development and Education at Newcastle University and has extensive experience working in Asia and Africa. She is Director of Research at the University's [E.G. West Centre](#), and the author of International Aid and Private Schools for the Poor. This was episode 71 of the Tom Woods Show.

WOODS: ...You're saying something that runs deeply counter to what pretty much everyone believes.

DIXON: I guess you're right, Tom. I suppose this started about 13 years ago, when we started looking into how children were being educated in slum areas around the world. It really started because of a John Templeton Foundation grant we got in about 2001. We were awarded \$1 million to go into slum areas in Africa, India, and China and see what was happening, how and where children went to school and to see if low-cost private schools existed or not. If they did exist, what did they actually look like, and how did they compare to the government schools that operated within the same area?

We carried out research in countries that were on lists of UNESCO or the World Bank as being very poor. In Africa we went to Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya. We also went to India and China, and we went into slum areas, and we did a survey and a census of schools within those slum areas. We walked around all of the alleyways and around every street corner, and we plotted these schools on a map. Once we found a school we went into the school and did various things within those schools. That was pretty much the start of it.

WOODS: I think what surprised me the most about your talk was the very existence of the low-cost private schools that you were finding in these various places. That runs contrary to the expectations of many people. It runs contrary to the expectations of certain economic models that hold education to be a public good, which will therefore be underfunded on the market. So what's going on here? Tell us something about the types of schools that you encountered and how it's possible that they were, from the West's point of view, anyway, more or less under the radar all this time.

DIXON: Exactly right. The main reason parents are voting with their feet away from the state sector is that the state sector is failing them. These parents don't read World Bank

reports. They don't wait around for governments to actually do something for them, because their governments aren't going to do something for them. So these parents have to do something for themselves. And what happened in India, for example, was that entrepreneurs within certain areas were finding that government schools were teaching only in Hindi or the local language, and that's not what parents wanted. Parents wanted schools that were what's called English Medium. That means that their children were going to read and write in English. So local entrepreneurs, because these schools grow organically within the communities themselves, started off what we call low-cost private schools in order to satisfy parental demand.

What happened, for example in India, is that parents started moving away from the government schools. What you tend to think is that a government school would be provided free, but there are always these hidden costs. Parents still have to buy a uniform. They have to buy books. There's transport to schools and so on. And the local private schools weren't actually that much more costly for the parent than sending your child to a government school. A low-cost private school costs maybe \$4, \$5, \$6 per month per child, which is about six percent of a worker's daily wage. So in India, for example, what we found was that these low-cost private schools have sprung up because parents wanted English Medium. That's the main thing. But also because the government schools were failing. Teachers weren't turning up. Teachers aren't from the communities themselves, and parents noticed that teachers weren't teaching in governments schools when they're supposed to be.

In the African countries, too, it's become endemic that government school teachers often don't turn up, or they don't teach. They're not from within the communities themselves, so they don't really understand the children. Parents recognize the fact that this is the one and only chance that their children are going to be educated. If they don't grab this chance now for their kids, they won't be educated. Do you want me to give you some of the figures, Tom, of the amount of schools that we found? Maybe some of your listeners will be astounded as to how many schools there are.

WOODS: Absolutely.

DIXON: There are two types of private schools in most countries, and that's recognized and unrecognized, or recognized and unregistered. The two types of schools usually exist. The recognized ones purportedly abide by the on-paper laws and rules. So that's the laws and rules that are on paper: there's a bit of a Hernando de Soto model going on here. But in reality, many of the schools just pay a bribe in order to gain that recognition. And I'm not saying that's a bad thing. It's actually a good thing, because most of these laws and rules are unattainable. A 40-square-meter playground in a slum area, for instance, just isn't going to happen. Or the teachers are going to have to have a trained teacher's certificate – that's not going to happen, either.

So there are these recognized schools that have supposedly ticked the boxes, and on the other side there are unrecognized schools that either haven't got recognition, because they haven't got to that required quality, or they haven't paid the bribe, or they've just started. So there are two types of private schools, but these private schools do not get any funding from the government. They are run totally by parents paying those monthly, termly, or daily fees.

WOODS: To me what's so amazing about this is that education is one of the principal objections against libertarianism. You must be crazy: *especially* in the developing countries, there's no way education can take place without massive government involvement. And then you turn around and show that in fact it exists. So the best argument against "it can't possibly exist" is: here it is.

DIXON: Exactly. I think James Buchanan said education actually isn't a public good. It's a private good. It is excludable, and it is rivalrous. There are economic arguments there as well. But it's not what parents want. If a supposedly free government system is failing them, as I say, these parents aren't going to stand for that, because this is the only chance their kids are going to get educated. For example, the numbers are and were quite astounding when we wandered these slum areas. There we are with our muddy boots on, walking around the slums of Hyderabad, for example, which is a city in Andhra Pradesh, in southern India. And in three zones, which were Charminar, Bandlaguda, and Bahadurpura, of 19 square miles.

So we walked every alleyway, every street corner. We actually drew maps of this slum area, of this low-income area, so that we knew that we'd visited as many of the the alleyways, etc., that we could. We actually found 918 schools, and that's just in 19 square miles. This is in the poorest zones of this one city. We found 918 schools. Five hundred forty-nine of them were private. That's 60 percent of the schools in the low-income areas of Hyderabad that were private. Some of your listeners might be thinking, oh, well, these schools must be quite small. The government schools must be much bigger. But that wasn't the case. Some of these schools have 1000 children in them, the private schools. And of the quarter of a million children attending those 918 schools, 65 percent of them are going to these low-cost private schools. So that was in Hyderabad. That was in southern India.

A third of those schools were unrecognized schools. This was actually a good news story, because the government didn't know that the children in these unrecognized schools were actually attending school. This is a good news story, because education for all is going to be much easier to achieve, because there are these children going to these unrecognized schools that until our research, had actually been under the radar, and people didn't know they were going.

When we went to Africa we found similar numbers. So, for example, in Ghana, in the Peri Urban area of Accra where there's about half a million inhabitants, 70 percent of them are

living on less than \$1.25 a day. We found 779 schools. Seventy-five percent of them were private. And again, something like 65 percent of the people in that region were going to these low-cost private schools. Similar findings in Nigeria in Lagos state, and we also did research in Kibera, which is the biggest slum in east Africa, about the size of Central Park. The reason we did the research there was that in 2003 free primary education had just been introduced. We wanted to find out the effects that introducing free primary education would have on the private sector. Because what we'd seen, for example, in E.G. West's work on looking at what happened to the private sector in 1870 in the British context was there was a crowding out of private schools, which destroyed the private sector altogether.

But actually, for Kibera, in 2003 we found 76 private schools. (When we say we found 76 private schools we're not saying we found all of them, because obviously some of them could have escaped our attention.) When we went back in 2008, we thought gosh, maybe the low-cost private schools now aren't going to exist, because free primary education has been introduced. But we actually found 116 private schools. So there was a massive increase in private schools, and there were many more children attending low-cost private schools than before free primary education was introduced.

Why? In Africa, parents feel these low-cost private schools are accountable to them. Because they pay a fee, they feel they can go into the school, they can complain to the school owner, who can actually then complain to the teacher if they're not doing their job properly. There's no teacher unions in these low-cost private schools. Teachers typically get about a quarter of the wages of the government school teachers.

Also, these schools are within the communities. They're not run by people outside. They're run by people, entrepreneurs that know people within the community, so they really understand their children. So parents believe that these entrepreneurs, these schools, will do better for them. Because they're paying a fee, and they can go and complain. In Kenya, when children went to the supposedly free government schools – although they actually turned out to be almost as expensive as the low-cost private schools – when they so-called “ran away,” as the school entrepreneurs put it, to the free government schools, parents felt that they couldn't go and complain to the headmistress in the government school. Partly because she was of a different socioeconomic background than they were; she didn't really understand their problems. So when they went half a mile or a mile up to the government school they just weren't listened to. So initially, they sent their children to these free supposedly government schools, but then many of them came back to their low-cost private schools in Kibera, where they felt much more comfortable and much more able to complain or actually liaise with the teachers and these school entrepreneurs.

WOODS: Pauline, I think I can anticipate an objection that a critic or a skeptic may have. How can we qualitatively compare the schools you've discovered to the government schools? Maybe the government schools are wonderful institutions that expose the

children to many different sorts of perspectives and have a lot of resources and are able to do all kinds of things. Maybe what you're calling schools are just five parents in a room somewhere. How do you demonstrate that these are qualitatively comparable institutions? And also, if I'm not burdening you too much with one question, can you compare the results? Do you have any data on output, on how well the students wind up doing in one system as opposed to the other?

DIXON: That's a really good question, Tom. First of all we did the survey and the censuses. Then we wanted to look at the quality. So we actually used three approaches with the John Templeton Foundation research. The first one was talking to parents to see what they believed the quality was in the government and the private schools. Then we did a survey of inputs in every school we went to. We and the researchers would go into classrooms and find out whether there was drinking water, if there was a playground, a library, desks, chairs, and so on – what the facilities were actually like. And then finally we did a survey of achievement with the people. We've actually now tested 32,000 children around the world in math, English, and other languages or another subject, and we've compared those with government schoolchildren's results as well.

In our John Templeton research we tested around 24,000 children in the African context and the Indian context. What we found was that in nearly every single place with a survey of inputs, private schools scored statistically significantly better than the government schools, the facilities – bar one, which was actually the playground; government schools typically had a better playground. But private schools were much more likely to have drinking water, they were much more likely to have desks, chairs, and also the teacher was much more likely to be present and likely to be active when he or she was supposed to be. The survey of achievement – as I say, we've now tested 32,000 children around the world, and we have papers in, for example, the school effectiveness journal and I'm sure we could put links for your listeners to actually find the papers. We have them in journals, and we've written books and articles about it.

What we did was, as I say, we tested the children. We also gathered data on family background and innate ability so we could control for those things, and also school choice. One way we analyzed the data was by doing what was called the Heckman-Lee procedure, which is where you control for school choice – because obviously, some people are going to say, well, the children in private schools are obviously going to be better than the ones in government schools, because they've chosen to be there. So they're actually controlled for that. Then we controlled for the child's IQ level, and we controlled for their family background. Still, in every case we found there was a statistically significant difference between the children in the private schools and the government schools on their test scores.

We also did multilevel modeling analysis, just to do it a different way to make sure that what we were saying was actually what the data said. And we also gave our data set to

various other organizations such as the National Foundation for Education Research in England, and they also analyzed the data and found the same thing: that if you're a child in a private school, you're much more likely to achieve higher than a child in a government school.

We're not the only ones that have done this research now. Geeta Kingdon from the Institute of Education has done research looking at achievement levels, and she's found the same things. Sometimes children in private schools are one to two years ahead of those in government schools. In Pakistan, the LEAPS Project has also looked at children's achievement, finding that children in private schools are much farther ahead than children in government schools. This is mainly because teachers in private schools are teaching when they're supposed to be. They teach from 9:00 to 4:00, whereas often in the government schools the government schoolteachers aren't teaching, or they're just not present. So those in government schools really do get left far behind.

WOODS: Pauline, how does this story tie in to the more general story of foreign aid? Wasn't education one of the areas that Western development aid was supposed to go to? The results that you see in the government schools: is this a subset of the more general story of the relative failure of foreign aid, or am I reading too much into this?

DIXON: No, I agree with you, Tom. I think it is. But what you have to remember is that a lot of the bilateral aid and multilateral aid that went into education goes to government schools, and so ironically, it's not the private schools that have been getting the aid. We've seen marked success without international aid. And that's one of the reasons that I wrote my book *International Aid and Private Schools for the Poor*, because I feel very concerned that international aid might actually disrupt the market that is actually operating so well without, as George Ayittey would say, this begging bowl that leaks. So yes, I think it's about \$11 billion worth of bilateral aid in 2011 that went into education. But throwing money at government schools where there's no teacher or where the teacher doesn't actually turn up is actually just trying to get bums on seats, and bums on seats doesn't actually mean improving education. Education for all is a bit of a difficult one.

It's a funny millennium development goal. Just because the child is attending school doesn't actually mean that they're learning anything. But yes, you're absolutely right, Tom....

WOODS: Before I let you run, can you say something about E.G. West? You work for the E.G. West Centre, and I'd like those of my listeners who are unfamiliar with him to know something about him and his work.

DIXON: Eddie West was a great guy. He was an economist, and he actually also was a lecturer and professor at Newcastle University, which is where the E.G. West Centre is situated. Eddie West went to the Mont Pelerin Society in the 1950s, and he was very much

influenced by Hayek's idea that the socialists were distorting historical facts. So Eddie West looked back into the archives, and he wanted to find out what was happening in England. And also in New York, before the state actually got involved in schooling. His findings were that the state jumped onto a horse that was already galloping. He found that children were already being educated in England in 1833. He went through documents and censuses to find out that children were already being educated privately. Minors could read. People were reading, because they wanted to read the Bible, and it wasn't because they needed government schools to do that.

There were lots of different ways of being educated, so the mechanics institutes, the dame schools, parents were prepared to pay for their children to go to school just as much as they are in India and Africa. The same was happening in India in 1833 as well. There was this indigenous Indian private school system before the British imposed their government system on India. In 1931 I think Gandhi actually did a talk at Chatham House, and he said that the British had uprooted the beautiful tree of the village education or the British schooling system in India, because they wanted to replicate something that they were doing in England, which was a bureaucratic, costly government system of schooling. There was an indigenous schooling system both in England and in India before the state imposed the system.

Eddie West was one of the first people to highlight the fact that children were being schooled before 1833, which is when the government started giving some sort of handouts to people for schools to operate, and before the Foster Education Act of 1870. He wrote a book called *Education and the State*, which was published by the Institute of Economic Affairs. I think at the time it was called slanderous, and where had Eddie got the information from? But he won the court case, and I think it's in its second or third or fourth edition, so it's very much worth a read. He's a complete hero.

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Chapter 3 How Private Schools Educate the World's Poor

with James Tooley

*James Tooley is the director of the [E.G. West Centre](#) and the author of *The Beautiful Tree: A Personal Journey into How the World's Poorest People Are Educating Themselves*. This was episode 238 of the *Tom Woods Show*.*

WOODS: After I had Pauline Dixon, also of the E.G. West Centre, as a guest earlier this year, I got a bunch of emails urging me to invite you on to continue the conversation. What she told us in that appearance was quite surprising, about the completely unknown phenomenon of low-cost private schools in the developing world.

TOOLEY: It's still extraordinary to me. I have been talking about this for nearly 14 years now. Fourteen years ago I first came across this phenomenon. I've been talking about it almost since the day I found it, and I still get people who are surprised by it, even in their own country. So I'm in India recently, I tell people – still there they don't know about it. I've been recently in Liberia, south Sudan, and Sierra Leone, and the same phenomenon exists. You talk to people in government or NGOs, non-government organizations, or middle-class people, and even they don't know about it. So it is extraordinary. The poor are doing something for themselves all over the world, and yet somehow people refuse to accept that they are doing it.

WOODS: In the book *The Beautiful Tree*, you give us an overview of what's going on in a number of countries. And that's interesting, too: we're not dealing with an odd cultural attribute of one particular people in one part of the world. This phenomenon seems to replicate itself among cultures that have not interacted with each other. It seems to be going on all over the place.

TOOLEY: Yes, that is an extraordinary finding, isn't it? You've put it very, very well. I first came across this phenomenon in Hyderabad in India, and that's exactly what happened. People took words out of your mouth and said, oh, it's just a cultural phenomenon happening amongst the Muslims in the old city of Hyderabad – yeah, we know about it, but it's not happening anywhere else. And then I got research money from the John Templeton Foundation. They trusted I was talking about something sensible. We went to Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe, several parts of India, and even rural China. The same thing was happening in each of these places, and the same response to inadequate government

schooling or no government schooling. Poor people were setting up their own schools, charging roughly the same amount in each of these places relative to the income of the country. And the schools were performing better than the alternative.

The similarities were even to the extent of the proportion of children in private schools in each of these places. In urban areas, think of the great majority – 65 to 75% of children in these low-cost private schools in urban areas and perhaps a quarter to a third in rural areas. The same picture – you can drop in any country, and you’ll find the same thing going on. It’s quite remarkable.

WOODS: One of the reasons it must be hard for some people to imagine is that we know that the daily income of these people is so low that the amount of money they might have that we could conceivably think of as disposable income would be vanishingly small. How can a private school sustain itself under those conditions?

TOOLEY: Poverty is terrible, of course, but never overdo it, because remember the cost of living in these countries is incredibly low as well. And so the amount of money people have is enough, it turns out. It’s not an *a priori* argument. It’s not sort of sitting here saying, what can people afford? It turns out that even those on the poverty line, and we’ve done a lot of work in our recent studies in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and South Sudan, and Nigeria looking at the poverty line – that internationally respected poverty line of \$1.25 per day, that poverty line – even on that, families can afford private school for their children.

Critics say that means the teachers are paid very little, and therefore you’re exploiting the potential teachers. Well, it’s true: the teachers are paid considerably less than teachers in the government schools – maybe a third, some places even a smaller fraction than that. But typically there’s no shortage of teachers wanting that work for that price. So that suggests that these schools are not exploiting their staff. They’re actually providing employment for local teachers in those communities and doing a valuable job there.

So, yes, they are very low cost, and typically we’re talking in African cases maybe five to ten U.S. dollars per month equivalent. That’s the figure we’re looking at. Maybe three to seven, eight dollars per month equivalent in India. But it can be provided. It’s a fact it’s there, and when you look through the accounts of these schools, you can say, oh, yes, I see how you do it. I see how it’s affordable. We see what you’re doing.

WOODS: Americans, and I suppose British people as well, have certain expectations when they hear the word “school.” They can picture the schoolhouse. They know it goes from about 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There are certain subjects that are taught. Is what what we’re dealing with in many of these cases something different? What kind of subject matter is discussed? How long are they in the schools?

TOOLEY: Yeah, but again, I would challenge you on what you just said. These are

recognizably schools. They're recognizably a school building, which starts whether it's 8:30, 8:00 to 9:00, whatever it is, and carries on until 3:00 to 4:00 in the afternoon. It has timetabled lessons. The subjects are very familiar to a British or an American audience: mathematics, English, science, social science, and of course, local languages. And the building: they vary in quality, of course, immensely as you would expect. But nonetheless, there is a recognizable building on a recognizable plot of land doing a recognizable curriculum. So this is not something that American listeners will think, oh, I won't even be able to spot this. No, you will spot it. You will see it. You will recognize it very much as a school as you know it.

WOODS: I wanted to give you a chance to answer that question because I could imagine that one criticism would be, maybe you're defining schools so liberally that a small co-op of parents qualifies as a school. I wanted to make clear that this actually would be a school environment that would not be altogether remote from the experience of many people listening to this program.

TOOLEY: Yes, it's very important to stress that. Whenever we publish research in academic journals, we specify that we are not describing what other people might call non-formal, after-school, alternative education. No, no, we are describing regular schools, and they are everywhere. Maybe 300,000 of these local, private schools in India alone. Maybe 100,000 in Anglophone west Africa. An amazing phenomenon, but very much schools as you know them.

WOODS: What's going on in this regard in China? It's surprising that there would be a chapter on China. I could understand some countries aren't engaged in formal education simply because maybe they lack the infrastructure to do it, and the parents have to fend for themselves, but I would think with a regime like China, education serves a very important ideological service. So what's going on there? How can they allow any sort of competition to that?

TOOLEY: Very interesting, and China, as you say, is a chapter in *The Beautiful Tree*, and I have done work since then in China. There are two sorts of low-cost private schools in China, and they are both very much, as you say, under the radar. A bit like the independent churches you might get there. They are a similar sort of phenomenon tolerated by the government. Perhaps one day there might be some more pressure on them, as there is in a lot of countries. But the two types: one is the one I described in *The Beautiful Tree*. These are in the remote mountains or the foothills of the Himalayas. We were in Gansu Province, one of the poorest provinces in northwest China, but there there is a public school provided. It's not terrible. In India or in the African countries, the public schools are terrible, but this school is not terrible.

The teachers are just about turning up there. It's okay, but it's too far away. The children might live two, three, four hours walk away in further mountains. They are not going to be

able to go to that school every day. They can't afford to board, or the parents need them at home. So therefore, these entrepreneurs set up private schools in their own villages. So government schools are there. Public schools are there, but they are too far away.

The second type, and this is very interesting, is in the city, and so big cities like Shanghai, Beijing, and so on, and that's where the migrant workers – the floating population, as the Chinese culturally call them – from the rural areas come to the cities. Now in China, they're not really legal citizens of the cities. They're not really supposed to be there, so they come in, and they can't really access public schools, or if they do, are discriminated against, and in any case, they may have more than one child. So some of the children won't even be, as it were, legal children. But, again, entrepreneurs have low-cost private schools in the poorer parts of the major cities catering to the migrant population. So it's very interesting. Again, very much the government is controlling schools still with the curriculum and so on, so they still will transfer the sort of ideological message required. But nonetheless, there are entrepreneurs working there. Very fascinating.

WOODS: One of the questions I asked Pauline Dixon involved the quality of the education, and it turns out that there has actually been work done whereby you have a benchmark of comparison. You can compare these schools in some cases to government-run schools where the students are of the same demographic. You've got as close to a controlled experiment as you could ask for, and these low-cost private schools seem to come out quite well.

TOOLEY: Yes, we've done quite a lot of studies ourselves. I think in *The Beautiful Tree* I report on the studies from Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, and a few parts of India and China. We have now done studies from Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Sudan as well, and there are many other people, as it were, coming in on this, giving evidence. A recent review from the British government – Department of International Development, DEPID – came and said this was one of the most robust findings. Private schools, especially as low-cost private schools, outperform government schools. It's a robust finding across many countries and many studies and in the vast majority of the subjects there. As you say, we've tested many, many children. You're able to control for the background variables. So they are not just looking at the raw test scores where the kids in the private schools are doing better. No, this is controlling for family background, mother's education, income in the family, proxies for wealth, and so on. And these private schools are doing better.

When you go to government schools in these places, it really is not much of a surprise. A few government schools might be okay, but in most of them the teachers are not turning up on time, they're not teaching when they should be, they're getting the kids to do stuff for them or leaving them to play. So it's not really such a surprise in schools where the teachers are on task, the kids will be doing better, or they are doing better. And it's wonderful. One can celebrate this private entrepreneurship at the grassroots doing something for themselves and doing it better than the government alternative, which has

got, amongst other things, billions of dollars of aid thrown at it in order to improve. It's not working.

WOODS: I wonder if you've ever had any critics who have said: this is a nice story you're telling, but I think James Tooley has an ideological agenda here. His main subject matter really is not the developing world, it's the Western world. He probably wants to cut education funding in the Western world, and he's using this as one of his arguments to do it.

TOOLEY: Yeah. Let's be honest. One has a lot of critics, and a lot of critics will throw whatever they can at you, including these sort of *ad hominem* attacks and ideological attacks and so on. But I think it comes across in *The Beautiful Tree*: I didn't go out there to find this. I grew up as a young man who was very much against this sort of thing. My doctoral thesis was supposed to be against the privatization of education. It was really reading, studying philosophical arguments, and then seeing this evidence that has led me to the position where I am now. So I didn't come ideologically predisposed to find this. But the evidence when you see it is pretty overwhelming.

As for coming back to America, coming back to the UK: as it happened, I spent most of my time over the last 10 years or so overseas, away from the developed West. I am interested in America. I am interested in Britain. I have papers coming out in the *Social Philosophy and Policy* journal there, where I actually say could this be relevant to America too, and it's based on the realization – of course, you've got charter schools, you've got various initiatives which are giving choice and alternatives to poor parents, but these charter schools have huge waiting lists, and I remember reading about these waiting lists and thinking, okay, those parents, now they're being frustrated. Maybe they would like some low-cost alternative. Could you create a low-cost private school alternative in America that could attract those parents? I'm interested in that. It's certainly not the basis of my work. But it could be an interesting result of what I'm talking about.

WOODS: Given the nature of my audience, I can't help asking about some other work you've done where you've evaluated some of the common claims about the need for government provision of education, and you've responded to them. So would you mind walking us through some of them? I have an audience that is very hardcore libertarian, and I think this is one of the issues about which they run into the greatest objections when talking to their friends. They run into the most brick walls. Their friends say, look, I understand we don't want price controls on milk. We get that. But we do need government provision of schools, because otherwise everyone would be illiterate and worshiping Thor.

TOOLEY: The answer to that is it's not true. I can't talk about the American evidence from memory. I can tell you the evidence from Britain from memory, and the evidence from America is somewhat similar, but before the state got involved in England and Wales in 1870, there was almost universal provision from the private sector. That includes the

churches, it includes the philanthropists, and it included these much-maligned what we called dame schools, but they were, in effect, low-cost private schools. So this movement was there in England and Wales before the government got involved. Similar evidence is from the American states as well, and the government got involved and eventually crowded out the system. So the first argument is, no, it's not true that without the state you can't have any educational opportunities. In fact, educating your children is as natural to parents, including poor parents, as feeding and clothing them. As soon as they got any chance of social mobility, they want their children educated. The vast majority do. Only a small minority, a tiny minority, maybe five percent in England and Wales in the nineteenth century, were not getting their children educated.

The second argument is, okay, people then talk about equality, or equity, or social justice. Taboo words, perhaps, for your audience, but nonetheless, this is the argument they'll get thrown their way. What about social justice? What about the poor? That is why my work is so valuable for this argument, because first of all you say, well, social justice is not served by public education anywhere in the country we are working in, and I bet a lot of people feel the same way about poor parts of America, too.

Social justice is not being served by the public sector. The middle classes, the richer, the elite, they can always get the better public schools. They can have school choice through house prices – that's the case in England – and obviously, they can afford something else. But what this work is saying is the poor can afford private schools which cater to their needs.

And the social justice argument about the poorest of the poor, well, you can have targeted assistance for those families, for those students, maybe through some sort of targeted vouchers, scholarships. But also, allowing entrepreneurship to flourish because entrepreneurship in a competitive market can bring down prices. And this is what we're seeing in some of our work in west Africa in particular, where we're working with entrepreneurs and seeing how actually you can bring down the price even more to make them even more affordable to the poor.

So I think there's a couple of arguments. Historically, it certainly wasn't true that the state was needed to provide educational opportunities, even in Britain and America, and certainly social justice is not met by public education, but it can be met through private schools, which are responsive to the needs of the poor, plus some targeted philanthropy.

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Chapter 4 School vs. Education

with Brett Veinotte

Brett Veinotte hosts the [School Sucks Podcast](#). This was episode 303 of the Tom Woods Show.

WOODS: Your podcast – what category is it in iTunes? Do they have an education category?

VEINOTTE: Oh, yeah. There's actually quite a bit of competition in the education category, because anything that's like foreign-language instruction or how-to, gets thrown into the education category. I will say, though, that we are the only show that is consistently hitting on schooling versus education and looking at school issues, and not so much delving into all the problems of school like zero tolerance. We did that in the early days of the show and it got pretty tiring. Now we're spending most of our time talking about what real education is, but also frequently reminding people that schooling, government schooling, is not that.

WOODS: Well, I guess that's our starting point. Before we can know that government schooling is not that: in your view, what is education really all about?

VEINOTTE: I think education should really be self-directed, intrinsically motivated. It's lifelong. I think people develop negative attitudes about what they call education because it's always associated with force and pain and boredom. A lot of adults are left unmotivated to learn more about a broad range of topics because the learning experience of school was so miserable for so many of us. So most importantly, education is lifelong. It's intrinsically motivated, it's self-directed, and it's not something that somebody else gives you. It's something you have to go out and seek for yourself.

WOODS: That's important. Education is more than just the time that you devote to formal study; it is indeed a lifelong process. A lot of people say to me: it's such a shame that when I was in school I learned politically correct history, I didn't learn the things I should have learned, and oh, well, what can I do now? Well, you have your whole life is what you can do now! There are so many things you can do now I hardly know where to begin. But we've become conditioned to think of education as something you do sitting in an uncomfortable chair with a built-in desktop and a chalkboard in front of you. Listening to this podcast is a form of education. Reading any worthwhile book is a form of education.

VEINOTTE: Yes, absolutely.

WOODS: This self-directed issue – the response that you’re liable to get, perhaps even from me, is this whole thing that education needs to be child-centered and self-directed, and we need the child to be motivated, and the way you motivate children is to let them pursue what interests them, all seems to make sense. But there’s that nagging feeling that a child just isn’t going to be interested in the multiplication tables, and some things you just have to sit down and do even though they’re painful.

VEINOTTE: I think that’s a very good point. There is real instruction to be done. I think that when you do have those things that need to be taught, you have to let them ride on top of the motivation and enthusiasm of the learner. I’ll give you an example. A few years ago I was working with this homeschooled boy. I was just a facilitator and a guide. He was eight. He was absolutely fascinated by the pseudo-History Channel’s program *Ancient Aliens*. Are you familiar with the show?

WOODS: I am not.

VEINOTTE: Okay, have you heard of the ancient astronaut theory that thousands of years ago, predating the great civilizations of Egypt or Mesopotamia, aliens came, and they seeded life on this planet, or somehow genetically modified human beings into what we are today? There are people who take this very seriously, and they go back into the archaeological or anthropological records, and they cherry-pick information that fits that argument. So there is a lot of confirmation bias, there are a lot of logical fallacies.

But if you're eight years old, and you're really enthusiastic about the idea of aliens, you’re not really ready to defend yourself against that. And that was the situation for this boy. So he definitely had this high level of motivation to pursue this study of ancient aliens. And the whole time as the facilitator or the guide I was saying, oh, I don’t know, this isn’t good; where is this going to go?

But because he was enthusiastic, I was able to check off things that I thought he really needed to learn. Like, how do you evaluate the evidence that other people present? And there were all kinds of scientific lessons about astronomy and archaeology and anthropology that we were able to check off along the way. So starting with something completely silly – the ancient aliens theory – and even if that is a plausible theory, the way they go about presenting it on this show is completely laden with fallacies and confirmation bias and begging the question. But through that silly exploration, we were able to have a meaningful educational experience. So I think the learner’s being motivated is very important, and once you have a curious and motivated learner, the stage is set for instruction to be possible.

WOODS: So are you an advocate of unschooling? Is your view that if that's what works for people, that's fine, and if a more traditional, structured curriculum works for somebody else, that's fine, too?

VEINOTTE: I think it's different for everybody. I think anyone who wants to do home education – I've tried in the last couple of years to get away from the word unschooling because it has "school" in it, homeschooling especially. Only school can do school. We're trying to do education. That means something totally different. I think unschooling definitely has its challenges. I can see why people would balk at that, especially if they're concerned they're not going to be able to check off what they consider to be essential skills. And there's no debate about that: some things are essential skills. But I think having that free environment where learners can follow their own curiosity is very important. Remember, too, that even if parents don't want to control their child or control their curriculum, they have control over that environment. So they can put things into that environment.

This boy I was telling you about: his parents had built this amazing classroom for him, filled with resources and easy access to the Internet and YouTube. So you can create opportunities within a relatively unstructured environment for the learning that you as the parent, or the educator, want to take place.

WOODS: Brett, tell us about the podcast itself. How many episodes do you have so far? You've been doing it for a while, right?

VEINOTTE: Yeah, I think we recorded 322 last time. I would say 350 different pieces of audio available on the website.

WOODS: Wow! Tell me how you're able to talk about this stuff week in and week out and have fresh things to say. What kind of array of topics are you hitting on these days?

VEINOTTE: That's a good question, because back when I started in 2009 so much of this had built up. I had worked in and around the school system for over a decade, and in the three years prior to doing the podcast, I had been tutoring in the Boston area and in the New Hampshire area in some very competitive public schools. I was doing a lot of SAT tutoring. I was doing a lot of academic tutoring. And I found myself in a lot of meetings in the school with teachers and parents and guidance counselors, really biting my tongue and not saying the things that I wanted to say, not identifying the problems that I felt needed identifying about the school system generally.

So when I started the podcast in 2009, I blurted out I feel like the first 20 episodes: what my problems were with school, what I believed to be the hidden lessons of school – obedience, conformity, and as a result of that, a kind of political or philosophical or intellectual apathy. I wound up doing a big series right out of the gate about understanding politics,

because I wanted people to understand that I wasn't pursuing political solutions. I didn't believe in the idea that the public schools could be reformed. We did a series on how kids are made to feel defective if they can't conform to that environment of school, and some of the consequences of nonconformity, and how students could protect themselves from that.

But after I did about 100 episodes, I said, okay, enough, people get it. School is bad. It's right in the title of our show. Let's start talking about what education actually is. So we move from there into more in-depth theories about history. We have had an ongoing series about solutions and alternatives. We did a big series last year about productivity and better organization. We've done a series about logic and looking at top media examples of people abusing logic or ignoring it completely. We did a show about Bill Maher, for example, who has this very popular HBO show, and we went through episodes of his program, which stands up to the rest of television as a pretty intelligent debate show, and we looked at the fallacies that they use to make that program possible. We did a series on the trivium method of critical thinking: grammar, logic, and rhetoric. And we even did a series that I was really proud of this past year on the six pillars of self-esteem, which is based on a book by Nathaniel Branden.

And along the way, wherever we can, we're always discussing homeschooling, home education, unschooling, and providing suggestions for that as well, talking with people who've done that. I'd like to be doing more of that, but I do try to check in periodically and say, hey, remember to consider these things as well.

So the show is very broad. I think it's a soft sell – this idea that school sucks, especially since we're trying to do reach high school and college students. They come to us already on our side. I don't think there are a lot of people between the ages of 16 and 20 who feel very differently about school, and I hope the show has provided a kind of window or doorway into the philosophy of liberty. I came to the philosophy of liberty by understanding the problems with the school system and wanting to investigate that more. So I am hoping more people will do the same and have this valuable introduction to this philosophy – the work of people like you, Bob Murphy, Jeffrey Tucker. They've all been on the show at one point or another. But we always bring it back to schooling versus education, and that's the niche we've carved out.

So there's plenty of work that we can do. I've gotten to a point now after 300 episodes where as long as something is educational, I would be willing to do a show about it. I do stay away from current events. I try to make the shows kind of timeless. But if I think it has educational value for my audience, I will definitely prepare a show and put it out.

WOODS: What are some mistakes you find home educators making?

VEINOTTE: I think unschooling can become a kind of unparenting where some people are just completely hands off with their children. I'm not a parent myself, and I say that over

and over again on the show – and people who are critical of some of the things I say remind me of that frequently. So it's difficult to look at what other people are doing and have specific criticisms. But just because you're giving this hands-off approach as far as education is concerned, I hope that doesn't turn into a hands-off approach as far as parenting is concerned. That's one caution that I have. Or even addressing the concern that you brought up earlier: not understanding that there are some essential skills that might require, even if it's more subtle, some form of instruction from an educator. Those are the two that come to mind.

WOODS: Those are very good. I know very successful examples of homeschooling. But there is also, I think, an unreported underbelly of really unsuccessful examples. Now, that's not to say that it would be better to send them to the government indoctrination factory. But I know of a lot of cases where “homeschooling” really means nothing happens. And it's not even that they have a philosophy of unschooling. It's that the mother has a lot of children, she's totally overwhelmed, and the father feels like it's his job to go and provide materially for the family, so it's up to the wife to do the homeschooling. She can't possibly keep up with it. She's expected to do the house and a million other things. So the result is: nothing happens.

This goes on far more than people realize, because we all keep hearing that the spelling bee champion is a homeschooler, and the statistics for college admission are very good for homeschoolers. But there really is this problem out there of completely overwhelmed parents.

VEINOTTE: Yeah, that's a really good point. I'm surprised that anyone in the second decade of the 21st century would still be trying to do this with the family as an island. There are so many great resources for networking with people in your area. One of the things we've talked about frequently is setting up some kind of cooperative where people can share the duties of teaching or monitoring or setting up activities. I can imagine that being terribly overwhelming for one mother or one father with multiple children, trying to have some kind of home education environment without any help from anybody else. There's so many resources out there for home education in many states. It's different from state to state. New Hampshire is obviously pretty friendly for home education, but there are definitely ways to get connected with people in your area to share ideas. Even if you can't come face to face with people there are resources online. I can see how there could be a high level of burnout for a parent, and kids just wind up in front of a video game system – not that that's entirely uneducational; depending on what they're doing, I think there's a lot of value in that, or there could be a lot of value in that or in front of YouTube or, God forbid, in front of the television. I could see how that could happen.

I'm hoping on my show to reach people who are planning on becoming parents. My target demographic is really about 16 to 24. I want high school and college students, and I want people thinking about these things long before they become parents. People have certainly

written to me and said: it was because of your show that I took my children out of public school. I feel like that's an accomplishment. But quite honestly I also feel a little worried sometimes: that's quite an impact to have, and I hope those people I don't know, and whom I never talk to beyond a couple of email exchanges, really thought this out, and really had a plan of action before they did this.

That was one of the reasons I wanted to even get away from talking so much about the horror show that government school is, because I didn't want to force anyone's hand, so to speak. I wanted to talk about what real education is, the value that it has, different approaches to doing it, provide some curricula for self-study, for home education. But I absolutely agree with the concern that, yes, there probably are a lot of people out there who are not providing an education or not setting up an environment where their children are seeking education for themselves.

WOODS: There are two reasons I would want to ask you about New Hampshire in particular. One is that you have personal experience there. But secondly, New Hampshire is not a state that's just chosen at random on this show. New Hampshire is the heart of the Free State Project, and there are people no doubt out there who are on the fence about whether or not they should commit to moving to New Hampshire. So I would like you to give us a sense of what specific sorts of resources have developed around, for example, the Free State people who are living in New Hampshire—no doubt many of whom are interested in this kind of education. What are they doing among themselves that would be interesting to our audience here?

VEINOTTE: Well, I can speak from personal experience. We were able to set up just a small cooperative. It didn't last very long because people went in different directions, but when I was working near the state capitol a couple of years ago, we were able to set up some continuous art groups. There was a school, actually, that was set up called the Scholars Academy that had a real Free State presence and actually got a lot of financial support from Free Staters that went on for a few years, and I think eventually it dissolved because the directors of the school wanted to convert it into a charter school and get state funds instead of having it privately funded, and a lot of interest waned pretty quickly.

But there are people just working together in small groups – play dates where people bring their children together. I'm not super-connected to that, but I would like to see a lot more of it happening. I've seen, as I said, some examples of this in the past, but I think the good thing about this is your neighbors could be very like-minded. So even if it's a problem, people are getting more and more worried about things like Child Protective Services. I think that's just as important as people getting together and having an art group, that there are like-minded people nearby in case you have a problem as a result of what you're doing.

WOODS: Would you say that the biggest stumbling blocks right now to more and more

people embracing a home-based education, or just something other than the typical government school form of education, are *external* restrictions by government, or cultural frowning upon this form of education, or would you say they are more internal, coming from a lack of self-confidence – e.g., I’m not sure we could pull it off, I don’t think we have the resources, we’re not wealthy enough? Where do you think the real obstacles are right now?

VEINOTTE: Well, I think a lot of those internals that you mentioned are determined by externals – people saying: I can’t do this. I am not qualified. We both need to work. I think that kind of thinking results from external pressures. Most people don’t leave the school system thinking they are capable of teaching anybody. And they are happy to depend on this system. I would even think they’d want to tell themselves a story about the goodness of the system because they need to put their kids someplace 35 hours a week while they go to work to earn the money they need. So I’m completely sympathetic to all of the hesitations people might have about pursuing home education for their own families. I really think it’s both. I think there is a lot of economic pressure on people, and most home education environments involve at least one parent staying home multiple days out of the week. That’s very difficult to do today. And of course, yeah, I think people feel like they’re not qualified to do this. This is something that has to be done by experts.

So really, it’s both. I hope through the show that people hear stories about others who’ve done this and others who want to do this, or even young people who have gone through the system, who’ve been home educated, and they get some success stories, and that builds confidence or it shows them at least that, yes, this is something that is possible, and there are ways to do this even with all the external pressures of the world today.

It’s very hard for me to speak on external pressures that are related to the government because it’s really so different from state to state. New Hampshire is pretty homeschooling friendly. I mentioned that I worked with this boy. I had to check in with his school district periodically. They were extremely flexible with me. They were happy that we had created this environment and that learning was going on. They did not give me a very specific checklist. There was no periodic testing. The person I dealt with directly from the school was really happy that we had come up with a milieu that was helpful for this boy.

I know in some states it’s very difficult. We hear these horror stories of parents being arrested, and their children are – they’re saying the children are truants because they haven’t gone through all the hoops that that state has set up to make homeschooling difficult. So the pressures are more extreme in different places around the country, I think.

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Chapter 5
The Libertarian Homeschooler
with Ana Martin

Ana Martin runs the popular Facebook page [The Libertarian Homeschooler](https://www.facebook.com/TheLibertarianHomeschooler): [facebook.com/TheLibertarianHomeschooler](https://www.facebook.com/TheLibertarianHomeschooler). This was episode 131 of the Tom Woods Show.

WOODS: Let's start with some background about you. How long have you been homeschooling and how many children have you homeschooled?

MARTIN: Well, I have my two sons, and if you count my oldest, who's 13, you could say that we've technically been homeschooling since he was born. Because there wasn't any time where we said, now we're going to start homeschooling. So we've been homeschooling more or less for 13 years.

WOODS: So you're not a case where there was some horror show with the local school and you said that's it, I'm pulling these kids out?

MARTIN: No, no. I knew well in advance of having children that we were going to be homeschooling. In fact, it was one of the first things I said to my future husband when we went on our first date. I said, I'm going to be homeschooling any children I have, and if that's a problem we should go Dutch. I knew well in advance that we would be homeschooling.

WOODS: So why? What's the main reason, or main couple of reasons?

MARTIN: Well, the first reason: when I was younger I really wanted to build a better beast. I was looking to make someone who would be stronger, faster, and would get to the same place but younger and better. But as I was homeschooling our older son, and particularly as our second son began to get older and more aware, it became clear that we were going to have to do something different. Because what we were doing with our older son, which was really pretty rigorous academically, wasn't going to work for our younger son. So we had to figure out something different for him. And at the same time we realized, okay, this academic model for our oldest son, he's doing it because he loves us, but what he started doing is memorizing, regurgitating, and forgetting, and that really wasn't what we wanted him to do.

So we had to scrap everything we were doing and begin again. We started to follow his

interests more. And what we found was that he was still getting what he “needed” but just in a different way. So that’s really what we did. That’s still how we homeschool. Does that answer the question you asked?

WOODS: I think it does. What do you say to people who hesitate because they feel like they’re not smart enough? That if they sent their kids to school there would be experts there who would teach them what they need to know, but my kids are going to need some advanced material somewhere down the line and I am not qualified to impart it to them.

MARTIN: Two things. The first thing is that the big secret about homeschooling is it changes the culture of the family. And it changes it in a really good and powerful way. What happens is, as you are teaching your children and trying to figure out, what do they need now? What is appropriate for this age? What are they going to need when they get out into the real world? You reintroduce yourself to these concepts that maybe you felt really rusty about, and you become much more interested because you’re coming at this as an adult. But you’re also teaching it, so you really have to own it now, and the culture of the family changes. You become much more fierce and also intellectually fearless.

Maybe that’s not the culture of your family right now, but once you start homeschooling something changes and you become a different person intellectually and academically. So who you are now and who your children are right now, particularly if they’re in school, that is not who’s going to be there even a year from now. So yeah, you may feel like you are not qualified, but it’s coming.

WOODS: I was expecting you to say, well, there are a lot of options you have out there to bring in tutors, the Internet has a lot of resources on it, that kind of thing. I was not expecting that answer.

MARTIN: It happens and that’s why it’s a big secret. Nobody expects this to happen. People are scared. They say, “Gosh, I didn’t even graduate from high school.” But what happens is you’ve got skin in the game now. You don’t want to cheat your children. You want what’s best for them. You do whatever is necessary to educate your children, and the person who has the will to do that is the person who is qualified.

WOODS: Let me just raise the objection that’s on everybody’s minds. They’ll say, I don’t know calculus and I’m never going to know calculus, and no matter how much I love my kids I’m never going to figure out calculus.

MARTIN: Sure, and you don’t have to. If calculus is not something you want to do – for me it’s German. My son is a musician; he wants to learn German. I really don’t want to learn German. I’m going to find someone to teach him German. I can find someone on the Internet. I can find someone in my town. I can find another musician to teach him German. There are lots and lots of different options. So many options now that weren’t even

available five or ten years ago. Now you can do calculus on the Internet. You can find a calculus teacher sitting in Hawaii waiting for you. You can do calculus at your community college. You can do calculus with a soup-to-nuts curriculum. You've got so many options.

WOODS: When somebody is ready to take the plunge into homeschooling, but doesn't know what step one is, what is step one?

MARTIN: It depends on the person, but usually what I suggest is getting to understand the child. Pedagogically I'm a Montessorian, and I think that the work of Maria Montessori, the work that she has done on the child, is really sound. I can always rely on the work of Montessori to give me a really good idea of where the child is in terms of needs, capacities, development. That is so helpful.

But the other thing she does that might be even more important is she tells us how to observe our children, how to deal with them and how to really look at them and see what it is they're doing. It's almost like observing a creature in the wild. You're looking at them and thinking, "Oh, they must be doing this because...." And you have this preconceived idea of why they might be doing whatever behavior. But really it's something different, and if you observe over and over again, you get a better idea of what the truth is. And that's one of the most basic things about Montessori: she teaches you how to observe, and that is so critical in homeschooling. How to observe your child.

So that's where I would start, with Montessori. I would begin with maybe *The Secret of Childhood*, or *The Absorbent Mind*. *The Absorbent Mind* is a little bit chewy, but there are also some really good websites out there for the beginner.

WOODS: Do you favor the so-called unschooling approach, and how does that differ from a Montessori approach, if at all?

MARTIN: It really doesn't differ significantly from the Montessori approach. In fact, something that made me feel really good was, I was at a conference with Montessori last summer and somebody I really respected in the Montessori community said, "So, what are you doing with your boys?" And I said, well, we're really sort of following them at home, following the child at home, and she said, "Oh, you're unschooling." And I thought yeah, but I don't really want to say that because that brings a lot of baggage with it. The word unschooling unfortunately has a lot of stuff attached to it. So yeah, we unschool in the sense that we follow our children, but I think people get the idea that if you're unschooling you're basically leaving them to their own devices, and really nothing could be further from the truth.

WOODS: Well, I'm not so sure; I think there are some things that could be further from the truth than that. How do the kids learn multiplication tables if they're being unschooled?

MARTIN: Not too long ago I said to my nine-year-old son, I just want to see where you are with math, so can I give you some addition to do just to see where you are? And he said, “I already know addition. Can you check me in multiplication instead?” And I said sure. So I drew him a multiplication chart with one through ten at the top, one through ten on the left-hand side, and he filled it in. I have not taught the child multiplication, but he knew how to do it. So now remember, I went to college. I have little letters behind my name. This to me is scandalous. I did not expect this. I really thought the child wanted to sit down with me and learn his multiplication tables. So this to me had come as a really big surprise. I don’t know exactly how this happens, but he is showing me that he does things on his own without telling me what he’s doing, and then I just come back and I check. It sounds like voodoo or magic. That is exactly what it looks like when I drew this chart on the whiteboard and he filled it in, and I thought, who taught you this? How do you know this? I don’t know how that happens.

But he’s around us doing math all the time. He’s around us when we’re reading all the time. He’s around us – because we’re really, really geeky – while we’re diagramming sentences, and thinking about music. And he learns a lot of music. Maybe that has something to do with it. But he’s around us learning all the time and just seems to absorb a whole lot.

WOODS: Back up for a minute. When you say you’re sitting around diagramming sentences, that does sound like you were imparting instruction. I assume your family doesn’t diagram sentences just for fun. That does sound like a structured educational—

MARTIN: That’s so sad that you should say that, because in fact we do diagram sentences just for fun. There’s a really fantastic app called SenGram that you can put on your tablet. And yeah, we actually do sit around and diagram sentences for fun. Some people don’t do that, but there are all sorts of great educational apps. I’m taking us off on a tangent maybe you want to go through later.

WOODS: No, let’s do it now.

MARTIN: There are great apps you can use. There’s a wonderful app called Dragon Box. Everyone who’s seen my page knows how much I love Dragon Box. It’s algebra but it’s algebra in a very theoretical way and it’s a lot of fun. Even my nine-year-old is sitting there doing algebra on the tablet. He doesn’t know it’s algebra but our thirteen-year-old is doing the same thing. When I work with him I print out the PDF form that shows all the things you’re learning. And there’s a whole list of things that Dragon Box covers. It’s a game. And then what I’ll do is take out a page from an algebra workbook or something, and I’ll put out some problems and say, what would you do if you were faced with this in Dragon Box? And they’ll solve the algebra problem without having cracked the book. These things happen. And there’s so much of this out there that it’s amazing. Children are learning essentially the things they want to, which really surprises me.

WOODS: So is this the kind of discovery, when you discover apps like these, that you share with people over at the Libertarian Homeschooler?

MARTIN: Yes, exactly.

WOODS: I am not an unschooler. I understand it. I'm fine with people who do it. It seems to have good results in some cases. But I wonder: can this really be for everyone? I can't imagine that all kids could actually follow something like this, and at the end of it you find them doing algebra. Or could it just be that your experience happens to be with gifted children?

MARTIN: I thought you'd say that. Yes, my children are gifted. I think John Taylor Gatto said that genius is as common as dirt. We have to really be able to observe our children. To look at them and to think, what are your sweet spots? Where are you really, really great? And we spend about 80 percent of our time in that sweet spot, and the place where they're really fantastic. My oldest son, who's an organist, a pianist, he sings with the boy choir – a lot of the things he does have to do with music. He spends two hours a day on the organ, two hours on the piano, at least two hours doing choir-related things. But also music history is very interesting to him. Composition is very interesting to him. Right now he's reading a book which you and I would probably think, there is not a chance I am reading that. It's about the glorious pipe organ and its American masters. Who picks up this book? What 13-year-old child is reading it? If you can allow your children to do what it is they really love for an extended period of time I think you'll find that this happens.

Now some children really love a good workbook. That child should not be discounted. And some children really, really love a curriculum, and that child should not be discounted, either. It really depends on the child. Some of them really want that structure: every day I sit down at 9:00 and do this thing. Some of them want something completely different: every day I go into the kitchen and bake for three hours. Maybe that person is going to be a fantastic baker. You don't know. So really following the child, I think, is important. And as I said, some of them are going to do so well with a curriculum, with things very structured. It really depends on the child.

WOODS: What about this? Suppose you have a student who does seem to be suited to a standard, structured curriculum. Here's the question I was driving at that I didn't fully get to. Where I think we may have disagreement would be: would you favor a curriculum that is expressly libertarian, or would you feel like that's imposing ideas on the kids instead of letting the kids discover them for themselves?

MARTIN: I would definitely favor a strictly libertarian curriculum. This is perhaps a little bit too stern, but some of the things that are not negotiable in our home are [Austrian economics](#), political theory – right now my 13-year-old is reading Hans-Hermann Hoppe's *A Theory of Socialism and Capitalism*.

WOODS: That's a hard book for 13-year-old, but he will get something out of it.

MARTIN: We're reading it together, and so we read and then we read again, and make sure that we've extracted the meaning out of the sentence and then we move on. And when he was one year younger we read Rothbard, and also at the same time we're reading Menger. I don't think that you can deny a child what is true. I don't think you can deny a child the knowledge that the moon goes around the earth and the earth goes around the sun. In the very same way I don't think you can deny a child the understanding of human action. You can't deny them the understanding of scarcity. You can't deny them the understanding of property rights. I think these things are absolutely non-negotiable. They have to know these things.

WOODS: I'm particularly sensitive to this because in a minor way I'm in the public eye because I'm an author, and I do a lot of public speaking, and a lot of people assume my kids are going to be carbon copies of me. And if that should happen, if it turns out that they agree that their dad is right about things, I'm not going to be sad about it. That would be great. But I always take care to explain to them that they are entitled to think things through on their own and they don't have to reach the same answer that I've reached to be accepted by me, and to be part of the household and be loved and secure. I always make that clear to them.

Now when they ask me what I believe about a particular issue, I give them my answer and I justify it. Typically they do find that it makes some sense. But they also understand that they are free to be individuals, and I always want them to understand that.

When I was a professor I always told students, do not write in your paper what you think I want you to say. I will give you an 'A' if you take Daniel Webster's over Abel Upshur's view of the Constitution, even though I like Upshur, as long as you make a coherent argument and have a command of the material. So I have always been sensitive about this.

I don't want to be perceived as forcing something on them. I think of it in terms of: I have this wonderful edifice of knowledge here that took me a lifetime to acquire, and I would so like to give them a leg up, to give them a chance to read books that I didn't even know about until I was 20 years older than they are now, and to have their eyes open so early on. But on the other hand, if they want the other side of the story all they have to do is pick up the *New York Times*. They are surrounded by the other side of the story. There's no way I can keep it from them.

MARTIN: Yes, we listen to NPR just to that same purpose. I understand exactly what you're saying. Now there is the fear of indoctrinating your children. I think that for me the principles of [Austrian economics](#) are just so basic that it would be like indoctrinating somebody about gravity.

WOODS: Or what a noun is or something.

MARTIN: Correct. There are first principles. I think you really need to have those in order to understand the world. I don't think you can really understand history until you've got a really good understanding of human action, property rights, economics. So I want to give those to our children before we start talking about history. Because if you can't look at history through the eyes of economics – I think that is really the lens that is most useful, I suppose, if I had to choose one – how do you know if you're looking at just a court historian's indoctrination books? You don't. So I think we really have to give that to our children first.

WOODS: Let me ask you to address the socialization objection, one of the most common objections to homeschooling. The kids aren't going to know how to interact with other people because they are cooped up all day with one or two other kids. They're all by themselves all the time and they're going to be socially inept.

MARTIN: Let me give you a little back story on that, because that's such a completely crazy thought. Way back when, when homeschooling began, people took the children out of school. The choice essentially was to sit at the kitchen table and do school at home. And I've been told this by people who knew homeschoolers way back when. We're the first generation in our house. And yes, sometimes people work, that's what they were doing, and so that piece of mythology has a little tiny bit of truth to it.

Now these people who started homeschooling – I can do what I am doing because they did the legwork. They did all that difficult work before I could do this. So we are really thankful to them. Also because of the work they did we have tremendous opportunities all the time. We have homeschool co-ops. We've got homeschool sports. We have academic classes we take together. My youngest son just performed in *The Wizard of Oz*. There is so much out there. If you wanted to you could fill up entire days, weeks, months, years with homeschool activities, and you would never actually have to be in your house. You can be out of your house all day long, every day. So in terms of socialization there are so many possibilities. Sometimes we have trouble figuring out exactly when we are going to come home and do what we really think we need to do.

The other thing that's really exciting is that your children can be with toddlers, with babies; my 13-year-old son hangs out with children who are younger than he is, and children who are older than he is. And we make it a point to surround him with adults who are interested in the same fields he is. Just last week, we were at Mark Thornton's lecture in downtown Atlanta, and my son was there with all of his friends with whom he can talk about economics or policy questions. Not only that – when he's, say, at church on Wednesday nights singing in the adult choir, there are people there who are in their 60s and 70s.

So there is this whole wide array of people of different ages, different demographics, different income levels, religions, creeds, colors. Everybody is available to him. It's not just

sitting in a room with people your own age from your zip code. How unnatural is that, to be sitting in a room all day long with kids your age who make the same money that your parents do and they're essentially having all the same experiences you're having?

WOODS: One last thing, and this is a practical objection. Don't you need to have at least one parent at home, and isn't that difficult for a lot of families to manage these days?

MARTIN: Some people flip their day. After work everybody comes home. Children come home from their childcare, parents come from their work, and they'll devote an hour or two to the basic lesson for the day. You know, whatever you were doing: English, math, history, or science. And then the next day they go back to their childcare situation and they do their homework. And then they do it again the next day. Sometimes homeschooling can be done on the weekend. It can be done at night. And it's getting done so much faster. I think about 2 1/2 hours is the maximum that is needed for the most basic of homeschooling curriculum.

WOODS: Before I let you go, give us an overview of what the Libertarian Homeschooler is all about. You've got a huge number of likes on Facebook.

MARTIN: The Libertarian Homeschooler page happened at the same time as, I'm sure you're familiar with this, the Keynes and Hayek rap video. Do you remember that?

WOODS: I sure do.

MARTIN: Well, at that point I had started listening to Milton Friedman on YouTube. He was my gateway drug. I came to Austria by way of Chicago. I was watching the Keynes and Hayek rap and I just thought, why don't I know any of this? And I went to Mises.org and started reading widely, and really it was you and Bob Murphy. The reason we chose the two of you was because our boys really like to hear you all talking.

So we really started digging into the Austrian School, into economics, and into philosophy, and all that, and I thought: other people really need to know this. So I started the Libertarian Homeschooler. And people are really curious about homeschooling. They've heard about this mythical beast, the homeschooler, and they want to see what it looks like. And that's what we do on the page. You get a little glimpse into our day-to-day life, and we just look like normal people. I think gives a lot of people a lot of hope, it encourages them, and it makes them think, "Hey, I can probably do this." And if I make mistakes we talk about that. We say, you know what? I did it again. I still haven't learned this lesson. A lot of it is just practical relationship stuff, but I also like to put up notes and links to great stuff like [Liberty Classroom](#), which we also love.

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Chapter 6
The End of School: Reclaiming Education from the Classroom

with Zachary Slayback

Zachary Slayback is the Business Development Director for [Praxis](#), a business apprenticeship program for young people, and the author of *The End of School: Reclaiming Education from the Classroom*. This was episode 623 of the *Tom Woods Show*.

WOODS: Let's start off with your personal story. You were admitted to the University of Pennsylvania, which is an Ivy League school. I don't know how long you went there, but I do know that you did not complete your four years. Have you ever had any reason to regret that?

SLAYBACK: No, not so far. It's funny, I actually ran into the representative for the University of Pennsylvania in my region the other day, just in a cafe nearby. And he asked, "When did you graduate?" And I explained to him that I didn't graduate. We talked about what I eventually went to go do instead, and he said, "You know what? Good for you."

Too many people focus on just getting that degree. I have no regrets. In fact, I would say thus far in my life it's one of the best decisions I've made.

WOODS: You realize you're violating one of the tenets of the American religion when you say that.

SLAYBACK: (laughing) Absolutely.

WOODS: College is part of American life. You send your kid to college. And I know this isn't your primary point, but when I think back when I used to teach, and frankly — well, I wouldn't say in my own undergraduate experience, but in the experience of a lot of people, when I look around at some of the people who are in college, I don't think to myself, "We need more such people diverted into college for four years; we need more subsidies for this."

I think, to the contrary: these people are there because their parents are forcing them, or out of sheer inertia. They're not there because they're deeply fascinated by the various subject matter. I would say it is a very, very small sliver of people who have any interest at all in any of the college work they're doing. They want the certification, and they want to get out.

SLAYBACK: Oh, yeah.

WOODS: But let me ask you the toughest question of all right at the beginning, so the rest of it will just be coasting for you.

SLAYBACK: (laughing)

WOODS: Whether you like it or not, the college degree does seem to be important to a lot of employers for certification purposes. How can you say to people, well, you don't really need it?

SLAYBACK: You need to build a better signal. That's what you need to do. And what we are living in right now is a really exciting time if you're a young person in the United States. We're living during a revolution. Work, education, and entrepreneurship all at once. Because of the Internet, because of all these other technologies around us, and because of how affordable and accessible they are, you can build a better signal, a better credential than just the college degree if you're an 18-year-old in the U.S. today.

So people often ask me, where do you think disruption to higher education is going to come from, and they get caught up in Coursera and Yale Open Courses and things like that. Those are all good, and I'm glad those are out there, because that decentralizes and centralizes education at the same time. That makes it more accessible for plenty of people to actually learn things.

But the market for higher education isn't a market for education. It's a market for the credential. So companies like Google, companies like WordPress and LinkedIn have done more to disrupt higher education than any of these other open courses — MOOCs, things like that — have. Where we are is that an 18-year-old can build a website, essentially build a business from the ground up, for maybe \$100, and that will signal more than somebody just giving me a bachelor's degree. And the employers I talk to every day are more and more in agreement with me.

WOODS: I think also the passive aspect of just sitting in a classroom, having information fed to you, and the presumption that you'll then go out on the job market and again sit there passively waiting to get a telephone call from somebody encourages, well, passivity.

SLAYBACK: Yep.

WOODS: And by the way, I was as guilty of this as anyone. I went to college, I went to grad school, and then I sat there waiting for some employer to decide that I was worthy of hiring, instead of thinking: what if I do something? What if I grab or find or create opportunities and pursue them? And it's been a total change in my mentality, because nothing I do now is automatic. There's no employer telling me to do them. I come up with ideas, and I implement them. And some work, and some don't. But I love doing it, and I would be horrified to be living my life any other way now.

SLAYBACK: Right, and I think it's because of the rate at which we're seeing more and more young people in the U.S. being schooled in more and more ways. I meet families who throw

their kids into school at like three years old. That's horrifying to me. And then they don't get out of school until they're maybe 25, 26 years old. Is it any surprise, then, that we're actually seeing a huge decline in entrepreneurship among young people? Of course not, because what you just described, that kind of activity, actually being active and not being passive in the sense of being in a classroom, is something that's necessary if you want to be an entrepreneur in any sense of the word. If you want to be an intellectual entrepreneur, if you want to be a tech entrepreneur, if you want to be an author, anything like that, that's something that can't be picked up in the classroom. Spending too much time in the classroom actually discourages the kind of activity, the kind of habits, the kind of skills you need in order to succeed.

WOODS: One of the great email marketers is a guy named Ben Settle. I had him on my show, and he was great. And at the end he said, "Making money online is about as hard as falling off a log."

SLAYBACK: (laughing)

WOODS: There are so many ways to do it. You do have to come up with something that people want. That's true of anything you're going to do in the economy. But you set up with a simple opt-in page and relentless email follow-up, and you're going to be successful. It's not brain surgery. And yet with entrepreneurial opportunities everywhere — you can learn from the \$100K Factory program and have your own store by tomorrow. You don't even need to borrow any money from anybody. There are so many things you can do. So in other words, at the time when opportunities are the greatest they've ever been, nobody's trained even to be alert to them.

SLAYBACK: Yeah. If you want to start a tech company today, all you really need is to go get a website on Namecheap, you need a computer that you can code with, and you need Code Academy. You'll need some experience to get better at those things over time, but you don't need to go sit and get a master's degree in computer science or machine learning just to build a basic kind of company like that. And the push to keep putting more and more young people in school longer and longer not only discourages stuff like entrepreneurship and value creation, but it also ends up making these young people incapable of actually figuring out what they love and what they enjoy in their lives. Millennials today are some of the most depressed and anxious people who have ever walked the Earth, and it's because they have no cognitive tools, no philosophical tools, no physical tools to actually build meaning for themselves in the world.

WOODS: You've written this book the way I would want to write a book if I were writing one right now. You've got a whole bunch of sub-headings within each chapter, and each one, as somebody scans that table of contents, is crying out to be read. So can I just throw a few at you, and you come back at us with what you're thinking in there?

SLAYBACK: Sure, absolutely.

WOODS: You have "School Is Keeping You Down," and right under that, "Why Haven't You Dropped Out of School?" Your argument there basically boils down to the claim that schooling is not education.

SLAYBACK: Right.

WOODS: What's the difference? I think people think they're the same.

SLAYBACK: Schooling is a process. Schooling is something that's set up. Not all schooling is necessarily bad. But schooling that is forced on people is usually bad, and it is a process that people go through.

Education is substance. Education is something you have to engage in in order to learn things, in order to adapt, in order to change. It's something that doesn't have a beginning or an end. One of my favorite authors is Peter Thiel, the PayPal co-founder, and he says one of the biggest issues with society today is that we confuse process with substance.

You see someone who has a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, a PhD, an LLM and all these other things, and you just assume they're going to be one of the smartest people you meet. But that's not necessarily true. If you put them into an environment, even in a law firm in that case, they're not necessarily going to be the most skilled person there. Education is something that is highly individually driven. It has certain ends. I think that the end in the purpose of education is to equip people to identify what meaning is in their life and to try to achieve that meaning from their lives. School, on the other hand, is usually meant to just impress bureaucrats, at least in the United States today.

WOODS: There is still an understandable view that people have that an educated person needs to know certain things. They need to have a basic knowledge of certain subject matter that they're not likely to learn on their own.

SLAYBACK: Right.

WOODS: My thinking on that has changed over the years. I used to think that, too. We've got to herd them into a classroom, because how else are they ever going to read Homer or how else are they going to do these other things? But I'm inclined to think now I don't want to force people to do things they're going to be miserable about. They're just going to read the Cliffs Notes anyway, and they're not going to get anything out of it. Instead I'd like to give people enough of a taste of the knowledge they could have so that in their own leisure time as adults they can devote the rest of their lives to becoming educated. Whereas today there's this sense that you've got four years to become educated, and then after that you go out and have your fun. I would rather promote the idea that you have your whole life to learn, to the contrary.

SLAYBACK: Right, and you have these young people, they get out of college at 22, 23 years old, and they haven't experienced any of that. They haven't experienced anything that people would generally view as leisure, which means that many of them are incredibly

anxious people. And many of them have never experienced the classics, as you said. Many of them have never read Homer. Many of them don't know anything in the basic annals of Western civilization.

So I'm in complete agreement. I think what you need to encourage in young people is the love of learning. I think school often squashes the love of learning, because it makes us view learning as work. And when we're young, the primary thing we want to do, what we're hardwired to do, is to play. And work and play, if we view them on separate ends of the spectrum, we don't want productive things, things that are beneficial to us, to fall into the category of work. We want things that are beneficial to us to fall under the category of play. As you probably know, you're most productive when you're having fun with something you're doing.

WOODS: Now, is this what you're driving at? Because you have a section called "You Graduated. Now Deschool Yourself."

SLAYBACK: I'm a big proponent of this idea of deschooling. While in school, people pick up these really big habits, these really bad skills, these really bad cultures that make it really difficult for them to succeed in the world. So my argument isn't merely that school is a bad place to learn, but my argument is that school often hurts people. At the very, very core, as you just said, is that idea of viewing work and learning as two separate things, or viewing learning as work. I like work in the sense of productive labor. I don't like work in the sense of drudgery. So on a very, very basic level, people who have deschooled themselves have been able to separate drudgery and productive labor. Now that's a really long and difficult process, and if you've gone through, say, 20 years of schooling, most people don't achieve that in their entire lifetimes. That's why you see people when they retire who don't do anything with their lives.

WOODS: I want to shift gears a bit, because I know there's a complaint we hear mostly from conservatives, that college has become this terrible place with political correctness and crazy people and all that, and if only we could just get back to the way college used to be. And you have a section called "There Never Was a Golden Age of Higher Ed."

SLAYBACK: What I'm looking at there is the idea of a golden age of higher education when people went and became learned, and the main reason they went was to pursue education. And that's true for some people.

But what I do in that section is look back at the history and the evolution of higher education. If we really look back at higher education before the 1900s, it was essentially a training ground for the aristocracy, a training ground for the religious class, and a training ground for academics. Those were the three things. If you wanted to be an academic, you went into higher education. If you wanted to be a priest, you would go into higher education. A lot of colleges started as religious colleges for that purpose. And if you were very, very wealthy and you wanted to be trained on the mannerisms of being a very wealthy person and your family was very wealthy, you went, and it was essentially a four-

year summer camp.

After World War II, we started to see the growth of the middle class in the United States. And that middle class looked at successful people, wealthy people, and they thought to themselves: this person is wealthy, successful, and has a good job. Oh, he has a college degree. That must be why! So it's the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy. People conflated the degree and the cause of the success.

And then something like the GI Bill comes along, which funnels more and more people into college who normally wouldn't be able to afford it.

And it's just something following a process of memetics, René Girard's idea that we mimic the desires of other people around us.

I don't think higher education has ever been something that people pursue primarily to become learned. The main reason they've gone is because they want to be successful in terms of money or a job.

WOODS: I want to tell you a little story from one of my listeners, one of the people in my [Supporting Listeners](#) program. I told his whole story in my email newsletter.

In the private Facebook group I have for my supporting listeners, this guy said he'd just sold over 4,000 copies of his eBook, called *Music Theory in One Lesson*. For somebody with no name recognition to sell 4,000 copies of an eBook in a matter of months is a real achievement. So I asked him how he did it, and his answer was extremely entrepreneurial.

Well, he said, I started answering people's questions on Facebook about music theory, or I would be on forums answering questions, and in my signature line I would always include a link to my book. And of course it's a very catchy title. Just by doing that, by forming relationships, by building up a network of people who were interested in my answers, I built up people who wanted to find out what I was up to.

And he's got a whole website now that he uses to sell music lessons and other products. He started from nothing and simply asked himself: given that the Internet gives me free resources to promote myself to the whole world, and I don't have a big budget to spend anyway, how would I do this? And he's been fantastically successful. I love stuff like that. And you know what? Nobody taught him how to do that.

SLAYBACK: I met a young man the other day who dropped out of Ohio State and decided to travel for a couple months through Latin America. He's now launching a Kickstarter campaign for the book that he wrote based on what he was doing there. And again, just doing something very similar to what you were talking about, going through forums, going through Quora, going through all these other platforms and talking to people who say they want to travel but they're not rich. Well, I'm not rich, either, he says. You can travel on a budget; here's how I did it; here's what I learned. And he's building followers based on this.

He's probably 20 years old, and he's able to signal more to me from running a Kickstarter campaign, even if it's failed, than somebody would be able to signal me by handing me a marketing business degree from even a good university. It's amazing the resources that are available to people today. Your iPhone has the equivalent of about a million dollars worth of resources from 1980 on it, and people just use it to play Snapchat.

WOODS: When in my own business endeavors I come up against a snag, the answer is almost always one Google search away. Or I join a coaching program for a couple of months to save myself three years of agony. I'm the sort, I'd rather spend money than time, because right now I don't have a lot of time. I have more money than time. I'd like people to train me. There's a teacher for everything from, as we said, music instruction and language instruction all the way up to how to segment your email list. You've just got to look for them. I sound like I'm complaining this whole episode. I'm just exasperated.

SLAYBACK: (laughing)

WOODS: I'm exasperated by people who look around and say, boy, this sure is a tough economy.

SLAYBACK: Right.

WOODS: Yeah, it is a tough economy if you're thinking in the old 1980 model of how to live your life.

SLAYBACK: Yeah. I've been going around to different colleges and high schools in my region recently —

WOODS: Whoa, you have? They let you in?

SLAYBACK: (laughing) I know. I'm always shocked. I've been really pleasantly surprised by the response, especially from guidance counselors and professors around here. But I was speaking to some students recently, some high school students, and I was telling them about these revolutions we're seeing in work, education, and entrepreneurship, and how entrepreneurship's easier, it's less risky, it's cheaper than ever before; how, because of Google, because of LinkedIn, because of WordPress, all these other platforms, the value of the college degree is decreasing, not to mention the fact that you're going to be graduating with \$37,000 in debt if you graduate in 2016; and the fact that there are going to be computers that are going to be doing a lot of people's jobs in the next couple of years.

And I keep giving versions of this talk, and I catch myself midway through, and I tell them, okay, it sounds like I'm trying to scare you guys. It sounds like I'm being cranky, like Old Man Slayback's up here shaking his cane. But this is actually a really, really exciting time to be alive. You have to shake yourself out of the mindset that people 30 years your senior have inculcated in you. One of the greatest injustices done to young people is that people who haven't been on the job market in 10, 15, 20 years are the ones giving them career advice. I think that's totally absurd. The job market is totally different today than it was 10

years ago. It's going to be totally different five years from now. And we have people who haven't been on the job market in 15, 20 years and who make it their jobs to advise people about the job market today. That's bonkers, and it's an injustice to young people.

WOODS: By the way, I'm not sure I agree with it, but I love the heading, "Your High School Friendships Died Out? Rejoice!"

SLAYBACK: (laughing) I wrote that one day when I was wasting time on Facebook, and I just realized how many people on Facebook I was friends with whom I would not describe as my friends today. It's good to build friends. I'm not saying don't have friends. But the fact that we put so much weight into this and then we're so distressed over it when we graduate from college, or when we're 30 years old and we go back to the high school reunion or something — I'm a big advocate for homeschooling, but I was not homeschooled myself. I did go to a public high school, so I had friends from that. But schools are such an artificial place, where the only things you have in common with the people who are your friends in school are often just the fact that you live in the same zip code and that you were born in the same arbitrary age range. That's a stupid way to determine who you should spend most of your time with. You don't have the time freedom when you're a young person to go find friends who share similar values to you. They might have different interests, but I think it's important that people and their friends share similar values.

Most of my friends from high school were people that were either my age, one year younger, or one year older. I couldn't even be friends with someone who was four, five, six, seven years older than I was, which is one of the reasons I find it so crazy when people wonder how homeschooled kids would become socialized. You look at kids from high school: the only people they're trained to be socialized with are their very same age. Eight times out of 10, these are not valuable friendships for most people. They're friendships out of necessity.

If you're a young person in school right now, be more discerning about whom you become friends with. You have more control over it than you think. You will probably become friends with the people who are in your immediate groups, again, out of necessity, out of ease. But it doesn't have to be that way. I was one of these nerds who would spend some time on Internet forums, and I made friends with people all around the country. If I hadn't done that, then most of my friends would be sitting in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, right now.

WOODS: Also, there are other opportunities to make friends. If you're not in high school, it's not like there are no other people in the world. And I think a lot of people haven't walked down the corridors of a typical high school in quite some time. If you do, you don't really say to yourself, boy, how impoverished I would be if I couldn't hang around with the people walking down this hallway. You don't say that.

SLAYBACK: (laughing) Exactly. And the really unfortunate thing is these civic organizations, these youth organizations, the few things that do allow you, if you're a

young person, to build friends and networks and culture outside of the school, are dying for some reason. The Boy Scouts are having a harder and harder time recruiting. Youth groups, things like that. And those are really important for young people to be able to branch out outside of where they are.

I also think it's important, if you're a young person, to make friends who are much older than you — not just a year older than you, two years older than you. You need to have what I call a vertically diverse network. If we do view networking as professionally valuable, then someone who's your age is probably not going to be able to do much for you professionally. It's going to be someone who's 10, 15, 20 years older than you who's going to be valuable to you.

So these arguments you hear for college, where they push young people into college — well, you need to go and build a network; it's a great way of building a network. Those people could be helpful for you. But chances are, if you actually went and worked for a company, worked near a president, a CEO of the company, a founder, and met some of the venture capitalists involved, you're going to get much more valuable connections that way than spending four years with someone who's your age.

WOODS: Tell us about Praxis.

SLAYBACK: The way I like to describe Praxis is: it's an entrepreneurship apprenticeship. We're reinventing the apprenticeship for the 21st century.

With Praxis what we do is we take young people, 18 to 25 or so, and we place them with entrepreneurs at growing businesses, startups, companies like that, where they get to work for 10 months with them, and see what it's like. I'm based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I had a meeting this morning down on the rivers in Pittsburgh with the president and the founder of one of the fastest growing ad companies in the country, and I was describing Praxis to him. He was telling me, yes, I would love to have someone apprentice for me, and if we had had this when I was 18 years old, I probably wouldn't have gone to college, because this is exactly the kind of thing I was looking for.

And it's hearing that that I know that we're really on to something. We want young people to be able to take control of their education and take control of their careers. As you said, a lot of people are just in college out of sheer inertia. A lot of smart people, too, a lot of good, hardworking people. And I don't necessarily mean smart in the sense of grades. Sometimes it correlates to grades, sometimes it doesn't. But you do hear people tell you in the U.S. that too many young people go to college. I hear professors tell me this occasionally. But usually what they mean by that — and they're not wrong — is too many kids who are dumb are going to college. Too many kids they don't want to be teaching to are going to college. But you also see too many smart, ambitious, hardworking, great work ethic, young people going to college as well, and while they're in there they're blowing a ton of money, they're blowing four years that they could be doing something else with. And in my mind, a lot of times they're picking up really bad habits.

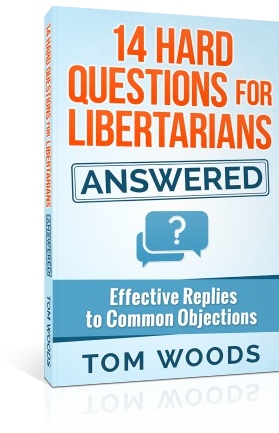
So with Praxis we want to provide another opportunity to someone who's 17, 18 years old, or even 20 years old and currently in college and thinking: I'm hungry to get out into the real world and build something. Because that's how I was. That's why I needed to pursue something like this. And that they can come do this and work with someone who wants to be working with them.

Get content like this every weekday for free by subscribing to the Tom Woods Show on [iTunes](#) or [Stitcher](#)!

APPENDIX A

Enjoyed This Free eBook? Here Are Two More!

That's right: I have two more books for you. Here's the first one:

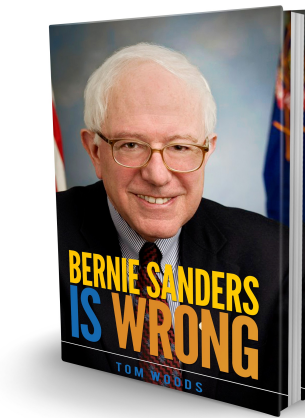


Want help answering some of the really hard questions? Then you'll love this book. Topics include:

- How can you favor legalizing drugs?
- Wouldn't banks be unstable in a free market?
- Why don't you want to ban sweatshops?
- Shouldn't we restrict gun ownership to keep people safe?
- Don't you care about the environment?
- Why don't you support "net neutrality"?
- Can we have law and defense without the state?

[Click here](#) for the book.

The second free eBook:



Bernie's campaign may be long over, but his ideas are probably with us for a long time to come. This book covers everything from health care and the minimum wage to trade and inequality. [Click here](#) to grab it.

APPENDIX B

If You're a Homeschooling Parent, You're Probably Working Too Hard

Chances are, you're exhausted.

You're trying to do it all, and you're overwhelmed. You always feel you're falling behind. You may even have come close to throwing in the towel and sending your children to the government's schools.

There is a better way – one that passes on your worldview, helps students learn how to learn, and gives you back your free time, and your mental health.

It's the [Ron Paul Curriculum](#) – the story of liberty, K-12.

The Struggles of the Homeschool Parent

Do you recognize yourself in any of these?

- Fighting the sense of being unprepared
- Picking exactly the right materials
- Preparing daily lesson plans – for years
- Keeping every student motivated every day
- Staying ahead of your children in all courses: algebra, calculus, chemistry, physics
- Hearing this: “Do you even understand this?”
- Lack of time to plan educational outings
- Wearing too many hats every day
- Moving from parent to teacher and back
- Being resented as a homeschool nag
- Not paying enough attention to your preschoolers
- Emotional burnout

With the Ron Paul Curriculum, you can say goodbye to all that – to running yourself ragged, never feeling caught up, and finding your house a mess and yourself an emotional wreck.

What's more, your students will learn more than ever, from instructors you can trust, in a

curriculum endorsed by Ron Paul himself.

Who Am I?

I'm Tom Woods, the *New York Times* bestselling author of 12 books, including *The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History* and *Meltdown*, a book on the 2008 financial crisis, featuring a foreword by Ron Paul. I hold a bachelor's degree in history from Harvard, and my M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. from Columbia University. I'll be teaching government and Western civilization to your high school students.

I've worked closely with Ron Paul over the years. I've been his opening speaker at countless events (including his great Rally for the Republic in 2008), at Dr. Paul's invitation I testified before Congress on auditing the Fed, and Dr. Paul asked me to write the Mission Statement and Statement of Principles for Campaign for Liberty, the organization he created after his 2008 campaign.

I set up a special page of my own – RonPaulHomeschool.com – because I have some gifts to give you if you decide to join us – but only if you join through one of the links below. More on those later.

A Great Education – and No More Struggles

The Ron Paul Curriculum is self-taught. Even before the junior high grades, parents don't have to teach. Students learn from daily videos, and from the Q&A forums in which students ask – and answer – questions.

What this means:

- * Students learn at their own pace
- * Students learn how to learn
- * Students will be better prepared for college

This is Ron Paul's most important achievement, and it's what he dreamed of doing even during his congressional career. Now, it's here.

How We're Different – More Examples

1. No textbooks. Textbooks are a terrible way to learn. They're written by committees, they're bland, they reflect the conventional wisdom – which is often dead wrong – and they're expensive. Save money and give your students a better education by ditching them forever.

(In a couple courses we use a textbook just to fill in some gaps if the students need that, but the book is available online for free.)

2. We use a lot of primary sources. That means students will read some of the great thinkers and historical figures for themselves, without a textbook telling them what to think.

3. Video-based curriculum. Each full-year course consists of 180 videos – five videos per week for 36 weeks. Every single lesson will have a reading assignment and a video. Students learn much better with video instruction than with a bunch of readings alone.

4. Writing. Every course in the humanities and social sciences has a writing assignment every week. This will train your students to become good writers – a rare skill.

5. Review! Mountains of information won't do any good if your students don't remember it. Review is central to how we learn. So we begin every lesson with a brief review of the previous lesson, and every fifth lesson is a full review of what's been taught during that week.

Why is a self-taught, video-based curriculum better?

- Most people need verbal guidance to learn.
- Students can replay a video until they understand.
- A video boils down fundamental information.
- It reinforces reading assignments.
- It explains reading assignments.
- A good lecture livens up learning.
- It is more personal than reading.
- A good lecture is highly motivational.
- Images and outlines help us to remember.
- It is available at any time.
- Headphones reduce sibling distractions.
- A screen image helps students focus.
- Students learn how to take notes – a skill crucial for college.

In addition to the traditional subjects, our curriculum has courses your students won't be able to find anywhere else. For instance, imagine having your children take courses on:

- ✓ How to start a home business
- ✓ How to write advertising copy – a skill that practically guarantees them a job
- ✓ How to become a skilled public speaker
- ✓ Personal finance for teens (why is no one else teaching this?)

Even our traditional subjects are taught in an extraordinary way:

- ✓ Two full years of Western civilization, instead of the usual one year
- ✓ Two full years of Western literature, designed to run parallel to the Western civilization courses – there is nothing like this, anywhere
- ✓ Junior high science: building radios, robots, and more
- ✓ Economics: learn true economics, better and more reliable than what’s taught in college

What Parents Are Saying

As a single parent with limited resources, I cannot adequately express how valuable RPC is to our lives. The increase in the standard and quality of our living is immeasurable.

Now that RPC has given me some confidence and freedom for homeschooling my kids, I am able to begin building and establishing a home-based business. – Justin Rash

My daughter loves this program. She thought the public schools were great, but once she started the Ron Paul Curriculum she never wanted to go back. – Robert Paul Spencer

This year, my 3rd, 4th, 6th, 8th graders began RPC.

It. Is. Incomparable. To anything else out there.

My little ones are immersed in quality, classic literature, and have loved the books they are blessed to be able to read each day. The elementary education is rock solid. I am learning just as much as the kids are!

My older children are even more spoiled. First, I love the self-learning concept. It’s how they should be learning, and it best prepares them for college.

My 11-year-old loves the format. He feels in control of his own learning. Finally! He is excelling as I had only dreamed he would.

My home is more peaceful and structured. My kids are learning so much that I have no doubt they’re surpassing all grade level expectations, and I am thrilled with the content and approach of RPC.

Make the switch now. It will change your life. – Alicia Thorson

The [Ron Paul Curriculum](#) has a 95 percent renewal rate – unheard of in this field. The parent testimonials you just read help explain why.

And here’s the rest of the story: how a self-taught, video-based curriculum will make your life easier:

1. Homeschooling is not a good environment for live lectures.
2. Live lectures take enormous amounts of time to prepare.
3. Live lectures must be given in every course, every year.
4. Teachers soon abandon live lecturing...or never try.
5. A video can be reviewed for content by parents.
6. Advanced courses are taught by experts in the field.
7. No parent can match experts in every field.
8. Discipline problems disappear fast.
9. Student boredom disappears.
10. You do not have to nag as much.
11. You can see what each student is doing.
12. Making daily lesson plans ends forever.

How Much Does It Cost?

Whether you have one child or fifteen, an annual subscription to the [Ron Paul Curriculum](#) site is only \$250 (if you choose renewable billing; it's \$350 otherwise). Then it's just \$50 per 180-video course – an incredible value.

Your \$160 in Free Bonuses – Available Directly From Me Only!

If you join the curriculum via [RonPaulHomeschool.com](#), you'll get these great bonuses!

FREE Bonus #1: A signed, personalized copy of my book *The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History* (retail price \$19.95), featuring an endorsement by Ron Paul. This book spent 12 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list – to the consternation of the *Times* itself!

FREE Bonus #2: A ten-lesson bonus course, valued at \$19.95, on the foundations of liberty. This course is suitable for students in the junior high grades and up, and it will prepare them for this liberty-based curriculum.

FREE Bonus #3: A one-year subscription to Liberty Classroom, my adult enrichment site that 's also been used by many homeschoolers. As of this printing we have 17 courses on history, economics, philosophy, and more, plus discussion forums, live events, recommended readings, and a great community of liberty learners. That's a \$119 value – free!

These bonuses are available only when you join the Ron Paul Curriculum through my special site, RonPaulHomeschool.com.

“A student who goes through this curriculum, kindergarten through high school, will have a mastery of the foundations of liberty,” says Ron Paul. “There is no other curriculum on the Web to match it.”

Our Guarantee

We're so absolutely sure that the [Ron Paul Curriculum](#) is your best homeschooling option that we're offering an unconditional, no-questions-asked 60-day money back guarantee.

If for whatever reason the Ron Paul Curriculum does not satisfy you in any way, simply send us an email within 60 days from your purchase and we'll refund you right away!

So, if for any reason you're not happy, you can get your money back within 60 days. Simply contact us. No monkey business.

Pass on your worldview, and give your students the extraordinary advantages of the Ron Paul Curriculum by [joining today](#) – risk free!

P.S. Want to see a sample course outline? Here's my half-year, 90-lesson course on government, suitable for high school students.

Lesson 1: Introduction

Lesson 2: Natural Rights Theories I (High Middle Ages to Late Scholastics)

Lesson 3: Natural Rights Theories II (Locke)

Lesson 4: Natural Rights Theories III (more recent theories)

Lesson 5: Week 1 Review

Lesson 6: Locke and Spooner on Consent

Lesson 7: The Tale of the Slave

Lesson 8: Human Rights and Property Rights

Lesson 9: Negative Rights and Positive Rights

Lesson 10: Week 2 Review

Lesson 11: Critics of Liberalism: Rousseau and the General Will

Lesson 12: Critics of Liberalism: John Rawls and Egalitarianism

Lesson 13: Critics of Liberalism: Thomas Nagel and Ronald Dworkin
Lesson 14: Critics of Liberalism: G.A. Cohen
Lesson 15: Week 3 Review
Lesson 16: Public Goods
Lesson 17: The Standard of Living
Lesson 18: Poverty
Lesson 19: Monopoly
Lesson 20: Week 4 Review
Lesson 21: Science
Lesson 22: Inequality
Lesson 23: Development Aid
Lesson 24: Discrimination
Lesson 25: Week 5 Review
Lesson 26: The Socialist Calculation Problem
Lesson 27: Working Conditions
Lesson 28: Child Labor
Lesson 29: Labor and Unions
Lesson 30: Week 6 Review
Lesson 31: Health Care
Lesson 32: Antitrust
Lesson 33: Farm Programs
Lesson 34: War and the Economy
Lesson 35: Week 7 Review
Lesson 36: Business Cycles
Lesson 37: Industrial Policy
Lesson 38: Government, the Market, and the Environment
Lesson 39: Prohibition
Lesson 40: Week 8 Review
Lesson 41: Taxation
Lesson 42: Government Spending
Lesson 43: The Welfare State: Theoretical Issues
Lesson 44: The Welfare State: Practical Issues
Lesson 45: Week 9 Review
Lesson 46: Price Controls
Lesson 47: Government and Money, Part I
Lesson 48: Government and Money, Part II
Lesson 49: Midterm Review
Lesson 50: Week 10 Review
Lesson 51: The Theory of the Modern State
Lesson 52: American Federalism and the Compact Theory
Lesson 53: Can Political Bodies Be Too Large?
Lesson 54: Decentralization
Lesson 55: Week 11 Review

Lesson 56: Constitutionalism: Purpose
Lesson 57: The American Case: Self-Government and the Tenth Amendment
Lesson 58: The American Case: Progressives and the “Living, Breathing Document”
Lesson 59: The American States and the Federal Government
Lesson 60: Week 12 Review
Lesson 61: Monarchy
Lesson 62: Social Democracy
Lesson 63: Fascism I
Lesson 64: Fascism II
Lesson 65: Week 13 Review
Lesson 66: Marx I
Lesson 67: Marx II
Lesson 68: Communism I
Lesson 69: Communism II
Lesson 70: Week 14 Review
Lesson 71: Miscellaneous Interventionism: Postwar African Nationalism
Lesson 72: Public Choice I
Lesson 73: Public Choice II
Lesson 74: Miscellaneous Examples of Government Activity and Incentives
Lesson 75: Week 15 Review
Lesson 76: Industrial Revolution
Lesson 77: New Deal I
Lesson 78: New Deal II
Lesson 79: The Housing Bust of 2008
Lesson 80: Week 16 Review
Lesson 81: Are Voters Informed?
Lesson 82: Is Political Representation Meaningful?
Lesson 83: The Myth of the Rule of Law
Lesson 84: The Incentives of Democracy
Lesson 85: Week 17 Review
Lesson 86: The Sweeping Critique: LeFevre
Lesson 87: The Sweeping Critique: Rothbard
Lesson 88: Case Study: The Old West
Lesson 89: Economic Freedom of the World
Lesson 90: What Have We Learned?

Grab this course a la carte:

<http://www.TomWoodsHomeschool.com/government-1b>

Get the whole Ron Paul Curriculum, including my \$160 in free bonuses:

<http://www.RonPaulHomeschool.com>

APPENDIX C

Losing Debates With Leftist Friends? That's Because Leftists Wrote Your Textbooks

That's another problem with traditional schooling: the left-wing bias pervades everything.

Whether it's omissions, distorted history, or tendentious interpretations, your teachers and textbooks aren't exactly subtle when it comes to the opinions they expect you to hold.

Meanwhile, family, neighbors, and co-workers bombard you with left-wing platitudes they can express in a single sentence but that take paragraphs to refute.

And you fear your kids are having the same experience you did.

Well, you guessed it. I created the solution.

In 2012 I launched LibertyClassroom.com, a project separate from the [Ron Paul Curriculum](http://RonPaulCurriculum.com), out of frustration at the kind of history and economics people were generally learning in high school and college.

I wanted an adult enrichment site for people who'd like to learn the real thing, but don't really have time and lack reliable sources.

Liberty Classroom is for you if:

- you've ever found yourself in an argument with friends or family, knew you were right, but just didn't have the command of history or economics to win;
- you want your college student to have a lifeline to reliable professors;
- you wish you'd gotten a more reliable education;
- you're tired of haphazardly trying to fill in the gaps in your knowledge;
- you're overwhelmed by many books you might read, and don't know where to start;
- you want the self-confidence that comes from real mastery;
- **you're sick of losing debates you know you should be winning.**

At LibertyClassroom.com, people can download courses that can be watched or listened to (we have both video and audio files for every lecture) on a computer or on mobile devices. We have Q&A forums in which you can ask faculty your questions. We also offer

recommended readings, and host a monthly live video session with faculty. Every year we add several more courses to our offerings. Access to *everything we have* – 17 courses and counting as of this printing – costs less than a single credit hour at a community college.

The world's only hope:

<http://www.LibertyClassroom.com>