

Civil disobedience is not our problem.  
Our problem is civil obedience.

**Howard Zinn**

If standing up for humanity is against the rules,  
then the rules must be broken.

**Greta Thunberg**

It would be nice if disruption wasn't necessary.  
It would be nice if we lived in a functional democracy  
where the fears and dreams of young people were not  
routinely ignored. But that is not the world we were  
born into, and we will no longer be ignored.

**Anonymous**

Don't ask what will happen. Be what happens.

**Rebecca Solnit**



You're in luck class. Today you are going  
to learn about the glorious features of our  
political system - freedom and democracy -  
without the hassle of experiencing either.



# A DISORIENTATION GUIDE

James Baldwin  
**A TRUE EDUCATION**

The purpose of education... is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself, to make his own decisions, to say to himself this is black or this is white, to decide for himself whether there is a God in heaven or not. To ask questions of the universe, and then learn to live with those questions, is the way he achieves his own identity.

But no society is really anxious to have that kind of person around. What societies really, ideally, want is a citizenry which will simply obey the rules of society. If a society succeeds in this, that society is about to perish. The obligation of anyone who thinks of himself as responsible is to examine society and try to change it and to fight it – at no matter what risk. This is the only hope society has. This is the only way societies change.

**“Whatever an education is, it must empower you to lead your own life. It must minimize your chances of being manipulated, of being made a pawn, of being an actor in someone else’s play.”**

**Blake Boles**

Grace Llewellyn

**THE INSUFFERABLE TEDIUM OF SCHOOL**

If you ever read any anthropology, one of the first things you notice is that primal cultures simmer up all their mystery and magic and ask their teenagers to drink deeply.

A sixteen-year-old Dakota boy fasts until an empowering vision overtakes him. A newly-menstruating Apache girl becomes the goddess White Painted Woman in an intense, joyful ceremony which lasts four days. All over the planet, traditional cultures provide ritual experiences to adolescents, bringing them into contact with the deepest parts of themselves and their heritage.

What do you get instead of vision? You get school – and all the blind passivity and grey monotone it trains into you.

For an institution to ask you, during some of your most magical years, to sit still and be good and read quietly for six or more hours each day is barely even thinkable, let alone tolerable. How do you feel when the sun comes out in March and makes the most golden Saturday imaginable, but you have to stay in and clean your room?

In case you’ve lost touch with your burgeoning beauty, let me remind you that that’s exactly what’s going on. Adolescence is a time of dreaming, adventure, risk, sweet wildness, and intensity. It’s time for you to find yourself, or at least go looking. The sun is rising on your life. Your body is breaking out of its cocoon and ready to try wings. But you have to stay in – for such a long time – and keep your pencils sharpened.

It’s no accident, I’m sure. The way our society is set up now, something’s got to prevent visionary experience. People who are fully and permanently awakened to the wildness and beauty in and around them make lousy wage-slaves. People who are not distracted by a wellspring of yearnings can briskly assemble automobiles or focus their intellects on monthly sales charts.

John Holt

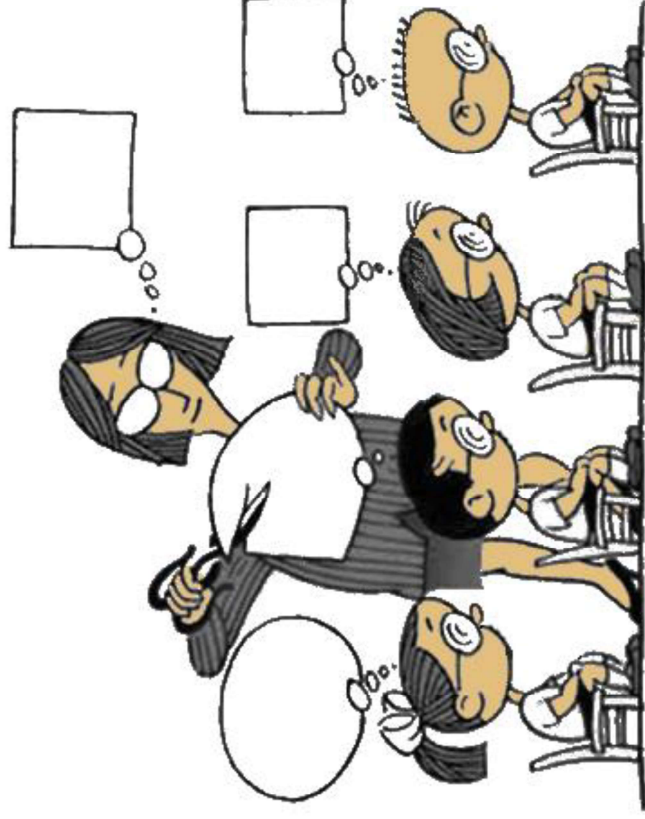
## FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT

Next to the right to life itself, the most fundamental of all human rights is the right to control our own minds and thoughts. That means, the right to decide for ourselves how we will explore the world around us, think about our own and other person's experiences, and find and make meaning of our own lives.

Whoever takes that right away from us, as educators do, attacks the very center of our being and does us a most profound and lasting injury. They tell us, in effect, that we cannot be trusted even to think, that for all our lives we must depend on others to tell us the meaning of our world and our lives, and that any meaning we may make for ourselves, out of our own experience, has no value.

"Our [educational system] is inherently oppressive. It's anti-black. It's anti-poor. It's anti-woman. It is not meant to empower. It is not meant to liberate. It pathologizes and confines. It's a pyramid scheme that guards against widespread access to resources, knowledge, power, and wealth."

**Anthony Galloway**



You are all amazing. Since being born, each one of you has been learning at an incredible pace, and you did it all without a teacher. But you just started school, so **THAT SHIT ENDS NOW!**



Noam Chomsky  
**OBEYING ORDERS**

Most of the people who make it through the education system and get into the elite universities are able to do it because they've been willing to obey a lot of stupid orders for years and years – that's the way I did it, for example.

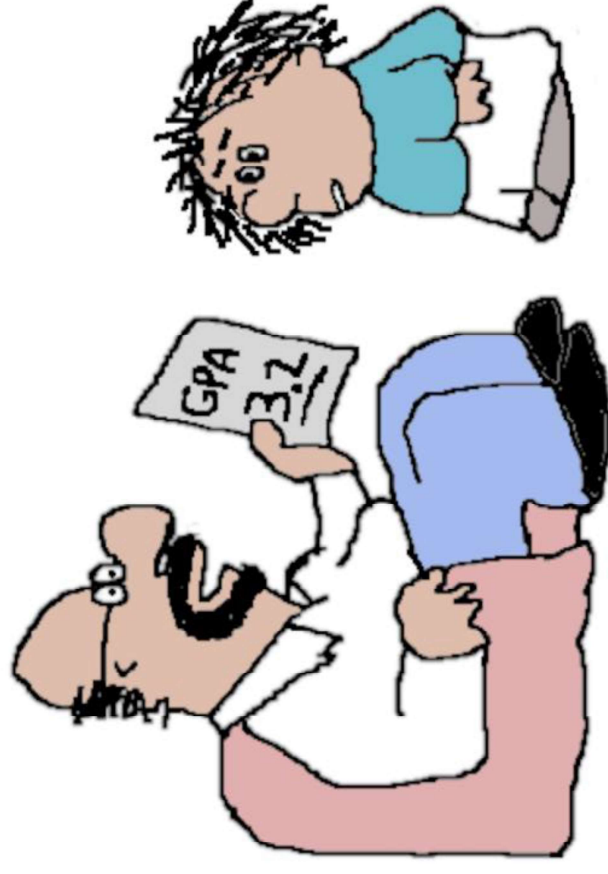
Like, you're told by some stupid teacher, "Do this," which you know makes no sense whatsoever, but you do it, and if you do it you get to the next rung, and then you obey the next order, and finally you work your way through and they give you your letters: an awful lot of education is like that, from the very beginning.

Some people go along with it because they figure, "Okay, I'll do any stupid thing that asshole says because I want to get ahead"; others do it because they've just internalized the values. But you do it, or else you're out: you ask too many questions and you're going to get in trouble.

Alfie Kohn  
**CONDITIONAL LOVE**

The best predictor of whether children will be able to accept themselves as fundamentally valuable and capable is the extent to which they have been accepted unconditionally by others.. Those on the receiving end of conditional love – that is, affection based not on who they are but on what they do – come to disown the parts of themselves that aren't valued. Eventually they regard themselves as worthy only when they act in specific ways. [...]

This desperate strategy to gain acceptance is often associated with depression, a sense of hopelessness, and a tendency to lose touch with one's true self. At some point, such teenagers may not even know who they really are because they've had to work so hard to become something they're not.



Way to go, son. Just a few points higher and you'll be worthy of love.

Do you ever argue with authority figures?  
Do you ever refuse to comply with illegitimate rules?  
If you answered yes to either, you may have something called **OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER**.



**LUCKY FOR YOU**, the world needs you now more than ever. So go out there, and do what you do best.