

为什么学校扼杀了创造力

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早上好，你们好吗？这次会议很不错，不是吗？我被这次会议煽动起来了，实际上--我想走下讲台。今天会议的三个主题都与我要谈论的事物有关。

一是所有演讲者和在座的诸位都有创造力，只是展露的形式和范围有所不同而已。

二是创造力让我们无法预知未来、更不知道如何发挥创造力。

我对教育感兴趣，实际上，我发现每一个人都对教育感兴趣。不是吗？我觉得这很有趣。如果你参加一个晚宴，你说你从事教育工作--坦率地说，如果你从事教育工作，实际上你很少会参加宴会。你将不会被邀请参加晚宴或再次被邀请，好奇吧。我对此感到很奇怪。如果你参加晚宴，并与某人交谈。他们会问：“在哪里高就？”你说从事教育，你将看到他们脸色突变，就像是说：“哦，我的天呀！为什么整个星期唯一的一个晚上被毁了的人是我？”如果你询问他们的教育情况，将会被晾在一边。因为，它是人们内心深处的东西，就像宗教信仰、经济收入和其它隐私一样。我想，我与大家一样都对教育有着强烈的兴趣。因为，我们的自身利益与教育有关，教育让我们无法把控未来。你想想，今天上学的孩子，将于2065年退休。在过去的四天里，我运用现有知识反复思考，却发现我们对五年后的世界将是什么样子，仍然毫无头绪。尽管，我们想通过教育来预知未来。神奇的是，未来就是不可预知的。我们对此感到恐慌。

三是我们都同意，真正杰出的孩子，都拥有非凡的创新能力。

昨晚的赛丽娜就是一个奇迹，不是吗？看看她能做的和她的特长。但是，如果从儿童群体上看，我不认为这是奇迹。作为有奉献精神的你，来这里的目的是见证天才。我的观点是，所有的孩子都有巨大的天赋，却被我们无情的挥霍掉了。因此，我想谈谈教育、谈谈创造力。我的论点是，创造力与教育中的识字一样重要。谢谢！顺便说一句，非常感谢！好，剩下15分钟。好，我出生了.....不。

我最近听到一个很有趣的故事，我很喜欢它。一位六岁的小女孩在上绘图课，她很入迷的在作画。老师走到她身后，也没能引起她的注意。老师感到很奇怪，就问她：“你在画什么？”女孩说：“我在画上帝。”老师说：“但是，没有人知道上帝的样子。”女孩说：“他们马上就会知道了。”

在英国我儿子四岁时，说实话，他在哪里都是四岁。严格来讲，那一年，他那儿都是四岁。他参加了耶稣诞生剧演出。你还记得这个故事吗？这是一个好故事，梅尔吉布森还写了续集。你可能想起来了：“耶稣重生”。詹姆斯参演了一段耶稣，我们对此很高兴，我们认为这是优选的一段。我们还在 T 恤上写上：“詹姆斯·罗宾逊扮演第一段耶稣！”他没有台词，坐等三位国王前来拜见。拜见者带着礼物、黄金、乳香（frankincense）和没药(myrrh，一种芳香族树胶树脂)来拜见耶稣。这是真的。我们坐在那里，我想他们把出场顺序搞乱了。后来，我们跟最后出场的小男孩说：“你认为是这样出场的吗？”他说：“是啊，为什么不是？哪里出错了吗？”他们只是调换了一下出场顺序而已。三个头上戴着茶巾的四岁男孩出场了，他们把这些盒子放下，第一个男孩说：“我带来了黄金。”第二个男孩说：“我带来没药” 第三个男孩说：“弗兰克送了这个。”（将乳香 frankincense，误读成 Frank sent this）。

孩子们的共同点是会利用机会，尽管他们没有认识到，但却会做到。我说的对吗？他们不怕犯错误。我不是说犯错就是创造。众所周知，怕犯错就无法有原创。成人后，大多数孩子的创造力丧失了。他们变得害怕犯错。顺便说一下，我们公司的运营也如此。我们误解了犯错，我们国家教育系统的错误远远超出了你的想象。其结果是，被教育者的创造力被扼杀了。毕加索曾说过：所有的孩子天生就是艺术家。问题是，如何在长大后成为一名艺术家。我热切的坚信，不是我们成就了创造力，而是创造力成就了我們。然而，我们的教育却扼杀了创造力。为什么会这样？

我在埃文河畔的斯特拉特福生活了五年。事实上，我们已经从斯特拉特福搬到了洛杉矶。所以，你可以想象这就是个无缝的过渡。实际上，我们居住在斯特拉特福旁边的斯尼特费德，那里是莎士比亚父亲的出生地。你是否被一个新的想法所打动？我曾是。你不会认为莎士比亚有父亲，对吧？你不会认为莎士比亚曾经是一个孩子，对吧？莎士比亚曾经是一个 7 岁的孩子？我从来没有想过。我的意思是，他在某个时候是七岁。他在某人的英语课上听讲，不是吗？多烦人？“必须更努力。”父亲送莎士比亚上床：“现在就去睡觉”，“把铅笔放下来，停止说话，不要烦人。”

我们从斯特拉特福德搬到洛杉矶，我只想说一句过渡话。实际上，我的儿子不想走。我有两个孩子，儿子 21 岁了，女儿 16 岁。儿子喜欢洛杉矶，却不想来。因

为他在英国有一个女朋友--莎拉是他生命中的爱，他们相识了一个月。提醒一下，他们有了自己的第四个周年纪念日；当你 16 岁时分开，这是很长的时间了。他曾在飞机上很失望的说：“我永远也找到像莎拉那样女孩子了。”我们对此很高兴，坦率地说，她就是我们要离开这个国家的主要原因。

当你移民美国或周游世界时，有些事情总是会打扰你，比如：地球上的教育系统都有相似的等级体系。无论到那里，基本上都一样。你认为会有另外，实际上却没有。教育系统的顶端是数学和语言，中间是人文学科，底层是艺术。在每个系统中，艺术自身还有一个层次。艺术和音乐通常比戏剧和舞蹈的地位更高。地球上没有像数学教育那样进行舞蹈教育的教育体系。为什么？为什么不？我认为这是相当重要的。我认为数学非常重要的，但舞蹈也非常重要。如果孩子只想跳舞，我们就该支持。我们都有身体，不是吗？我错过了一次会议吗？事实上，是在孩子们长大后我们才开始教他们扭腰。我们过于专注孩子的智力，却忽略了他们的身体。

如果，你作为一个外星人去参观教育，你会说：“它是什么，公共教育？”我想你会得出结论的。如果，你看到了结果--谁真正成功了、谁做了一切、谁得到了所有的布朗尼点、谁是赢家。你的结论必然是：全世界公共教育的目的就是培养大学教授。不是吗？他们是教育系统顶端出来的人。我曾经是他们中的一员。我喜欢大学教授，但你知道，我们不应该把它们当成是所有人类成就的高水准标志。他们只是一种生活形式，另一种形式的生活而已。他们对此很好奇，我说这是对他们的爱。在我的经历中有一些奇怪的教授，他们是为头脑而活着的人。他们生活在头脑里，以一种文字的、无形的方式偏向头脑。他们把身体看作是头脑的运输工具，不是吗？身体是头脑参会的载体。顺便说一句，如果你想要真实的体验和证据，就请注册参加一个高级学术会议，并参加会议结束后的迪斯科舞会。你会看到，男人和女人都不可控地、毫无节奏感地扭动着身体，等待舞会的结束，然后回家撰写一篇与会议有关的文章。

现在的教育是建立在学术能力理念上的。因为，整个教育体系是建立在工业化的需求之上的，在 19 世纪以前并没有公共教育制度。**教育的等级制是基于两个思想：**

一是实用性的学科，应置于教育的顶端。

当你还是一个孩子的时候，出于“善意”，你可能无法在学校学到你喜爱的功课，

仅仅是因为无法找到对应的工作。这是对的吗？不要学音乐，你不会成为音乐家；不学艺术，你不会成为艺术家。过去善意的建议，现在看来--是的严重错误，整个世界被卷入了一场革命。

二是学术能力是智力的唯一标杆。

因为，大学都想通过提升自己的学术能力，来重塑自己的形象。你想想，如果世界各地的公共教育系统是阻碍学生进入大学学习的病根的话。结局将是，许多有天赋、聪明、有创造力的人会认为他们一无是处。因为，他们擅长的东西在学校不被重视或被玷污。我认为这是很不应该的。

根据国际教科文组织的报告，未来 30 年内，全球通过教育毕业的人数将超过人类历史开始时的人口总和。技术及其转化对工作效率、人口增长的推动将引起群体数量的大爆炸。**文凭突然之间变得不值钱了。**真的吗？当我是一个学生的时候，有文凭就会有工作。如果没工作，那是因为你不要。说实话，我就不想要工作。然而，现在的孩子有文凭却在家里玩视频游戏。因为，**原来本科文凭的工作却需要硕士文凭，甚至需要博士文凭。这就是学术通货膨胀。**它表明整个教育结构已经在我们的脚下发生了偏移，**我们需要从根本上重新思考智慧观。**

对于智慧，我们有三种认识：

一是它的多样性。

我们运用自身的经历来认识世界。我们运用视觉、听觉、肌肉运动觉来认知，我们使用抽象术语、物体运动来认知。

二是它的动态性。

如果，观察人类大脑的相互作用，正如昨天我们从一些演讲中听到的那样，智慧是奇妙的互动，大脑没有被分离成不同的隔室。事实上，创造力被我定义为是有价值的、原创的思维过程，也是观察事物不同学科方式之间互动的过程。此外，大脑是有意识的。大脑左右半球是通过胼胝[pián zhī]体而连接起来的，女性的胼胝体比较厚。昨天，跟在海伦后面，我想这可能是女人能够更好的完成多项任务的原因吧。因为你能，不是吗？许多研究成果和我个人的经历都支持这一点。如果，是我的妻子在家做饭；谢天谢地！这种情况并不多见。你知道，她在做饭，还善于同时做其它事情，比如：打电话、与孩子交谈、粉刷天花板、做开胸心脏手术。如果，是我在家做饭；厨房门必须关上、孩子们必须出去、电话必须挂上。如果老婆进来，我会很烦。并说：“特里，请让我独处一会儿，我正在炒鸡蛋。”

其实，这有一个哲学典故：如果一棵树在森林里倒了，但是没有人听到，是否发生了？还记得这个老掉牙的说法吗？我最近看到一件很有趣的 T 恤，上面写着：“如果一个男人说他的心遗失在森林里，但是没有女人听到，还是他的错吗？”
关于智慧的第三点，就是它的独特性。

我正在撰写一本名叫“顿悟”的新书，这是一本人们如何发现他们的天赋的系列采访书籍。我对人们如何发现自己的天赋很感兴趣，就像与一位多数人都不认识的美丽女人进行交谈那样：她叫吉莉安·林恩，你听说过她吗？有些人知道。她是一个编舞家，每个人都知道她的作品。“猫”和“歌剧的幽灵”就是她的作品，她太棒了。正如你所知，我曾是英国皇家芭蕾舞团的董事。有一天，吉莉安和我一起午餐，我问她：“吉莉安，你是如何成为舞蹈家的？”她说这很有趣。她上学时，没能看到任何希望。那是在 20 世纪 30 年代，学校写信给她的父母说：“我们认为吉莉安有学习障碍问题，无法专注、而且坐立不安。现在，我知道他们说她患有 ADHD（儿童多动症）。不是吗？但 20 世纪 30 年代，ADHD 还没有被发明出来，无法被使用。人们不知道他们可以患上 ADHD。

为此，家里人带她去一位专家那里诊治。在一个橡木镶板的房间里，她母亲陪着她看病，医生让她坐在椅子上；在医生与她母亲谈论吉莉安在学校所有问题的 20 分钟时间里，吉莉安一直把手放在自己的屁股下面。最后的结论是坐立不安、家庭作业总是迟交、行为举止不像 8 岁的孩子等。听完家长的叙述后，医生坐回到吉莉安旁边，对她说：“吉莉安，我知道了所有的事情，我需要私下与你妈妈说说话”，“你等一下，我们不需要很长的时间。”说完，医生打开了他桌上的收音机，并与她母亲一起走出了房间；在房外，医生对她母亲说：“站在这里看她。”在他们离开房间的那一刻，她说：“**她从椅子上跳下来，并随着音乐而舞动**”。几分钟后，医生对她母亲说：“**林恩夫人，吉莉安没有病；她是个舞者，让她上舞蹈学校。**”

我问：“后来呢？”她回答：“她上舞蹈学校了。那种美妙无法描述。我们进入的那个房间充满了像我一样的人，他们闲不下来，他们通过运动来思考。”他们必须通过运动来思考，他们跳芭蕾舞、踢踏舞、爵士舞、摩登舞、当代舞。她最终被皇家芭蕾舞学校录取，成为独舞者。在皇家芭蕾她获得了美好的事业发展，从皇家芭蕾舞学校毕业后，她成立了自己的--吉莉安·林恩舞蹈公司，遇见了音乐家安德鲁·劳埃德·韦伯。她负责制作了一些历史上最成功的音乐剧，并给数以

百万计的观众带来了快乐，她成为了百万富翁。如果，换一个医生的话，可能会让她吃药，并要求她安静下来。

现在，我想....我的想法是：上个晚上，艾尔·戈尔谈到的由雷切尔·卡森倡导的生态学革命。并相信我们唯一的希望是采用人类生态学的新理念，重构人类能力多样性的概念。我们的教育系统正以剥夺地球的方式、为某一特定的商品来开发了我们的智力，而且不能给我们的将来提供任何保障。为此，是时候重新思考教育我们孩子的基本原则了。乔纳斯·索尔克有句名言：“如果所有的昆虫都从地球消失了，在 50 年内，地球上的一切生命都将结束。如果所有的人类都从地球上消失了，在 50 年内，所有形式的生命都将繁荣。”他是对的。

TED(Technology, Entertainment and Design; 技术，娱乐、设计)颂扬人类想象力的天赋。我们必须小心使用这个天赋，并避免发生已经谈到的一些情况。唯一可行方法就是要认识到我们的创造力，并为丰富和开启孩子们的天赋创造条件。我们的任务是教育全体孩子，使他们有能力面对未来。顺便提一下，我们看不到未来，但孩子们会，我们必须为他们做点什么。非常感谢！

Why Schools Kill Creativity

Sir Ken Robinson

RED TAPE
#3

OUR
FUTURE:
EDUCA-
TION &
CREA-
TIVITY

2

Good morning. How are you? It's been great, hasn't it? I've been blown away by the whole thing. In fact, I'm leaving. (Laughter) There have been three themes, haven't there, running through the conference, which are relevant to what I want to talk about. One is the extraordinary evidence of human creativity in all of the presentations that we've had and in all of the people here. Just the variety of it and the range of it. The second is that it's put us in a place where we have no idea what's going to happen, in terms of the future. No idea how this may play out.

I have an interest in education – actually, what I find is everybody has an interest in education. Don't you? I find this very interesting. If you're at a dinner party, and you say you work in education – actually, you're not often at dinner parties, frankly, if you work in education. (Laughter) You're not asked. And you're never asked back, curiously. That's strange to me. But if you are, and you say to somebody, you know, they say, "What do you do?" and you say you work in education, you can see the blood run from their face. They're like, "Oh my God," you know, "Why me? My one night out all week." (Laughter) But if you ask about their education, they pin you to the wall. Because it's one of those things that goes deep with people, am I right? Like religion, and money and other things. I have a big interest in education, and I think we all do. We have a huge vested interest in it, partly because it's education that's meant to take us into this future that we can't grasp. If you think of it, children starting school this year will be retiring in 2065. Nobody has a clue – despite all the expertise that's been on parade for the past four days – what the world will look like in five years' time. And yet we're meant to be educating them for it. So the unpredictability, I think, is extraordinary.

And the third part of this is that we've all agreed, nonetheless, on the really extraordinary capacities that children have – their capacities for innovation. I mean, Sirena last night was a marvel, wasn't she? Just seeing what she could do. And she's exceptional, but I think she's not, so to speak, exceptional in the

whole of childhood. What you have there is a person of extraordinary dedication who found a talent. And my contention is, all kids have tremendous talents. And we squander them, pretty ruthlessly. So I want to talk about education and I want to talk about creativity. My contention is that creativity now is as important in education as literacy, and we should treat it with the same status. (Applause) Thank you. That was it, by the way. Thank you very much. (Laughter) So, 15 minutes left. Well, I was born ... no. (Laughter)

I heard a great story recently – I love telling it – of a little girl who was in a drawing lesson. She was six and she was at the back, drawing, and the teacher said this little girl hardly ever paid attention, and in this drawing lesson she did. The teacher was fascinated and she went over to her and she said, "What are you drawing?" And the girl said, "I'm drawing a picture of God." And the teacher said, "But nobody knows what God looks like." And the girl said, "They will in a minute." (Laughter)

When my son was four in England – actually he was four everywhere, to be honest. (Laughter) If we're being strict about it, wherever he went, he was four that year. He was in the Nativity play. Do you remember the story? No, it was big. It was a big story. Mel Gibson did the sequel. You may have seen it: "Nativity II." But James got the part of Joseph, which we were thrilled about. We considered this to be one of the lead parts. We had the place crammed full of agents in T-shirts: "James Robinson IS Joseph!" (Laughter) He didn't have to speak, but you know the bit where the three kings come in. They come in bearing gifts, and they bring gold, frankincense and myrrh. This really happened. We were sitting there and I think they just went out of sequence, because we talked to the little boy afterward and we said, "You OK with that?" And he said, "Yeah, why? Was that wrong?" They just switched, that was it. Anyway, the three boys came in – four-year-olds with tea towels on their heads – and they put these boxes down, and the first boy said, "I bring you gold." And the second boy said, "I bring you myrrh." And the third boy said, "Frank sent this." (Laughter)

What these things have in common is that kids will take a chance. If they don't know, they'll have a go. Am I right? They're not frightened of being wrong. Now, I don't mean to say that being wrong is the same thing as being creative. What we do know is, if you're not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with anything original – if you're not prepared to be wrong. And by the time they get

to be adults, most kids have lost that capacity. They have become frightened of being wrong. And we run our companies like this, by the way. We stigmatize mistakes. And we're now running national education systems where mistakes are the worst thing you can make. And the result is that we are educating people out of their creative capacities. Picasso once said this – he said that all children are born artists. The problem is to remain an artist as we grow up. I believe this passionately, that we don't grow into creativity, we grow out of it. Or rather, we get educated out of it. So why is this?

I lived in Stratford-on-Avon until about five years ago. In fact, we moved from Stratford to Los Angeles. So you can imagine what a seamless transition that was. (Laughter) Actually, we lived in a place called Snitterfield, just outside Stratford, which is where Shakespeare's father was born. Are you struck by a new thought? I was. You don't think of Shakespeare having a father, do you? Do you? Because you don't think of Shakespeare being a child, do you? Shakespeare being seven? I never thought of it. I mean, he was seven at some point. He was in somebody's English class, wasn't he? How annoying would that be? (Laughter) "Must try harder." Being sent to bed by his dad, you know, to Shakespeare, "Go to bed, now," to William Shakespeare, "and put the pencil down. And stop speaking like that. It's confusing everybody." (Laughter)

Anyway, we moved from Stratford to Los Angeles, and I just want to say a word about the transition, actually. My son didn't want to come. I've got two kids. He's 21 now; my daughter's 16. He didn't want to come to Los Angeles. He loved it, but he had a girlfriend in England. This was the love of his life, Sarah. He'd known her for a month. Mind you, they'd had their fourth anniversary, because it's a long time when you're 16. Anyway, he was really upset on the plane, and he said, "I'll never find another girl like Sarah." And we were rather pleased about that, frankly, because she was the main reason we were leaving the country. (Laughter)

But something strikes you when you move to America and when you travel around the world: Every education system on earth has the same hierarchy of subjects. Every one. Doesn't matter where you go. You'd think it would be otherwise, but it isn't. At the top are mathematics and languages, then the humanities, and the bottom are the arts. Everywhere on Earth. And in pretty much every system too, there's a hierarchy within the arts. Art and music are normally given a higher status in

schools than drama and dance. There isn't an education system on the planet that teaches dance everyday to children the way we teach them mathematics. Why? Why not? I think this is rather important. I think math is very important, but so is dance. Children dance all the time if they're allowed to, we all do. We all have bodies, don't we? Did I miss a meeting? (Laughter) Truthfully, what happens is, as children grow up, we start to educate them progressively from the waist up. And then we focus on their heads. And slightly to one side.

If you were to visit education, as an alien, and say "What's it for, public education?" I think you'd have to conclude – if you look at the output, who really succeeds by this, who does everything that they should, who gets all the brownie points, who are the winners – I think you'd have to conclude the whole purpose of public education throughout the world is to produce university professors. Isn't it? They're the people who come out the top. And I used to be one, so there. (Laughter) And I like university professors, but you know, we shouldn't hold them up as the high-water mark of all human achievement. They're just a form of life, another form of life. But they're rather curious, and I say this out of affection for them. There's something curious about professors in my experience – not all of them, but typically – they live in their heads. They live up there, and slightly to one side. They're disembodied, you know, in a kind of literal way. They look upon their body as a form of transport for their heads, don't they? (Laughter) It's a way of getting their head to meetings. If you want real evidence of out-of-body experiences, by the way, get yourself along to a residential conference of senior academics, and pop into the discotheque on the final night. (Laughter) And there you will see it – grown men and women writhing uncontrollably, off the beat, waiting until it ends so they can go home and write a paper about it.

Now our education system is predicated on the idea of academic ability. And there's a reason. The whole system was invented – around the world, there were no public systems of education, really, before the 19th century. They all came into being to meet the needs of industrialism. So the hierarchy is rooted on two ideas. Number one, that the most useful subjects for work are at the top. So you were probably steered benignly away from things at school when you were a kid, things you liked, on the grounds that you would never get a job doing that. Is that right? Don't do music, you're not going to be a musician; don't do art, you

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won't be an artist. Benign advice – now, profoundly mistaken. The whole world is engulfed in a revolution. And the second is academic ability, which has really come to dominate our view of intelligence, because the universities designed the system in their image. If you think of it, the whole system of public education around the world is a protracted process of university entrance. And the consequence is that many highly talented, brilliant, creative people think they're not, because the thing they were good at at school wasn't valued, or was actually stigmatized. And I think we can't afford to go on that way.

In the next 30 years, according to UNESCO, more people worldwide will be graduating through education than since the beginning of history. More people, and it's the combination of all the things we've talked about – technology and its transformation effect on work, and demography and the huge explosion in population. Suddenly, degrees aren't worth anything. Isn't that true? When I was a student, if you had a degree, you had a job. If you didn't have a job it's because you didn't want one. And I didn't want one, frankly. (Laughter) But now kids with degrees are often heading home to carry on playing video games, because you need an MA where the previous job required a BA, and now you need a PhD for the other. It's a process of academic inflation. And it indicates the whole structure of education is shifting beneath our feet. We need to radically rethink our view of intelligence.

We know three things about intelligence. One, it's diverse. We think about the world in all the ways that we experience it. We think visually, we think in sound, we think kinesthetically. We think in abstract terms, we think in movement. Secondly, intelligence is dynamic. If you look at the interactions of a human brain, as we heard yesterday from a number of presentations, intelligence is wonderfully interactive. The brain isn't divided into compartments. In fact, creativity – which I define as the process of having original ideas that have value – more often than not comes about through the interaction of different disciplinary ways of seeing things.

The brain is intentionally – by the way, there's a shaft of nerves that joins the two halves of the brain called the corpus callosum. It's thicker in women. Following off from Helen yesterday, I think this is probably why women are better at multi-tasking. Because you are, aren't you? There's a raft of research, but I know it from my personal life. If my wife is cooking a meal at home – which is not

often, thankfully. (Laughter) But you know, she's doing – no, she's good at some things – but if she's cooking, you know, she's dealing with people on the phone, she's talking to the kids, she's painting the ceiling, she's doing open-heart surgery over here. If I'm cooking, the door is shut, the kids are out, the phone's on the hook, if she comes in I get annoyed. I say, "Terry, please, I'm trying to fry an egg in here. Give me a break." (Laughter) Actually, you know that old philosophical thing, if a tree falls in a forest and nobody hears it, did it happen? Remember that old chestnut? I saw a great t-shirt really recently which said, "If a man speaks his mind in a forest, and no woman hears him, is he still wrong?" (Laughter)

And the third thing about intelligence is, it's distinct. I'm doing a new book at the moment called "Epiphany," which is based on a series of interviews with people about how they discovered their talent. I'm fascinated by how people got to be there. It's really prompted by a conversation I had with a wonderful woman who maybe most people have never heard of; she's called Gillian Lynne – have you heard of her? Some have. She's a choreographer and everybody knows her work. She did "Cats" and "Phantom of the Opera." She's wonderful. I used to be on the board of the Royal Ballet in England, as you can see. Anyway, Gillian and I had lunch one day and I said, "Gillian, how'd you get to be a dancer?" And she said it was interesting; when she was at school, she was really hopeless. And the school, in the '30s, wrote to her parents and said, "We think Gillian has a learning disorder." She couldn't concentrate; she was fidgeting. I think now they'd say she had ADHD. Wouldn't you? But this was the 1930s, and ADHD hadn't been invented at this point. It wasn't an available condition. (Laughter) People weren't aware they could have that.

Anyway, she went to see this specialist. So, this oak-paneled room, and she was there with her mother, and she was led and sat on this chair at the end, and she sat on her hands for 20 minutes while this man talked to her mother about all the problems Gillian was having at school. And at the end of it – because she was disturbing people; her homework was always late; and so on, little kid of eight – in the end, the doctor went and sat next to Gillian and said, "Gillian, I've listened to all these things that your mother's told me, and I need to speak to her privately." He said, "Wait here. We'll be back; we won't be very long," and they went and left her. But as they went out the room, he turned on the radio that was sitting

on his desk. And when they got out the room, he said to her mother, “Just stand and watch her.” And the minute they left the room, she said, she was on her feet, moving to the music. And they watched for a few minutes and he turned to her mother and said, “Mrs. Lynne, Gillian isn’t sick; she’s a dancer. Take her to a dance school.”

I said, “What happened?” She said, “She did. I can’t tell you how wonderful it was. We walked in this room and it was full of people like me. People who couldn’t sit still. People who had to move to think.” Who had to move to think. They did ballet; they did tap; they did jazz; they did modern; they did contemporary. She was eventually auditioned for the Royal Ballet School; she became a soloist; she had a wonderful career at the Royal Ballet. She eventually graduated from the Royal Ballet School and founded her own company – the Gillian Lynne Dance Company – met Andrew Lloyd Weber. She’s been responsible for some of the most successful musical theater productions in history; she’s given pleasure to millions; and she’s a multi-millionaire. Somebody else might have put her on medication and told her to calm down.

Now, I think ... (Applause) What I think it comes to is this: Al Gore spoke the other night about ecology and the revolution that was triggered by Rachel Carson. I believe our only hope for the future is to adopt a new conception of human ecology, one in which we start to reconstitute our conception of the richness of human capacity. Our education system has mined our minds in the way that we strip-mine

the earth: for a particular commodity. And for the future, it won’t serve us. We have to rethink the fundamental principles on which we’re educating our children. There was a wonderful quote by Jonas Salk, who said, “If all the insects were to disappear from the earth, within 50 years all life on Earth would end. If all human beings disappeared from the earth, within 50 years all forms of life would flourish.” And he’s right.

What TED celebrates is the gift of the human imagination. We have to be careful now that we use this gift wisely and that we avert some of the scenarios that we’ve talked about. And the only way we’ll do it is by seeing our creative capacities for the richness they are and seeing our children for the hope that they are. And our task is to educate their whole being, so they can face this future. By the way – we may not see this future, but they will. And our job is to help them make something of it. Thank you very much.

This is a transcript from Sir Ken Robinson’s talk at TED in 2006.

http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html

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5



Sir Ken Robinson speaking on ‘Why Schools Kill Creativity’ at TED in 2006