



ILLUSTRATION: ALIZA RAHMAN

Things We Should've Learned at School

BUSHRA ZAMAN

You're not alone if you've looked at someone doing something and wondered, "Why was this not taught at school?" It's time for a reality check -- you're asking the wrong question. You should be asking, what else have I NOT been taught at school but should know?

Education, in my belief, should not solely serve the purpose of helping us find jobs. Here are a few things I wish I were taught in school.

HOW TO HANDLE FINANCES

There is no point in buying 10,000 watermelons like they do in math problems if we don't know how to handle the bills for the 10,000 watermelons. To avoid being cooped up in jail one day on account of being in debt, it would be nice if we were taught how to fix a budget ahead of the month, or year, in order to spend and save accordingly. Even the people in math problems buying thousands of tomatoes or potatoes would not have been able to do so if they were broke before the end of the month due to miscalculation of finances.

EATING ETIQUETTE

Salad forks and dessert forks are apparently two different forks? And then there's the "spork". Holding them properly is hard enough, now I have to know which food is for which fork?

HOW TO PAY TAXES

This is similar to a very boring math class, but one you keep failing on account of having no clue how it is done. Remember kids, not filing your taxes correctly when you're an adult is illegal and could land you in jail.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE STOCK MARKET

So that we can understand any stock market drama without having to Google in order to understand what is going on. It is also necessary since it might inspire others to incorporate this knowledge in their careers, but more so because googling the context can take the fun out of memes.

HOW TO MAKE IMPORTANT DECISIONS EFFICIENTLY AND PROMPTLY

This might even help solve the age old dilemma of, "What shall I eat today?" and may potentially help sustain friendships and relationships since you won't be constantly switching your order with somebody else's.

HOW TO CONDUCT YOURSELF DURING AN INTERVIEW

Vital, because referring to "How interviews are conducted in movies" are never a good idea. They're scripted!

HOW TO HANDLE REJECTION

If we were taught this, perhaps we would have understood that cutting or dying your hair or making drastic changes to your physical look is not a solution to your problems and would have saved ourselves from plenty of pictures we now have to hide. We would also know how to respond to romantic or other rejections in healthy and non-problematic ways.

BONUS: UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING ABLE TO SPEAK IN A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE AND BEING INTELLIGENT

It is absurd enough that I am having to explain this, but while multilingual skills are definitely a plus point, it does not mean you're better than others at doing things. If you're bad at something, you'll remain bad at it, just additionally in another language.

What do you wish was taught in school?

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What is this morbid curiosity?

FARNAZ FAWAD HASAN

Whenever a fight breaks out in the neighbourhood or each time we pass a serious accident on the road, we all feel a certain urge to sneak a glance. It makes sense because we are eager to know what will happen next.

The curiosity to delve into the situation and the anticipation of the unknown stimulates interest. This is why morbidity, gore, and violence have become such a staple in pop culture. The abundance of grim plotlines and ghastly scenes in TV shows and movies capture a lot of audience attention because of this morbid curiosity. But why?

Morbid curiosity generally refers to interest in all things grisly and grotesque which includes being fascinated with gore, violence, horror, and death. This fascination with the bleak doesn't necessarily mean getting enjoyment from such things because that would be truly problematic. Rather, this feeling mostly stems from the desire to experience fear and suffering without actively participating in dangerous situations. It's true that we are absurdly attracted to highly disturbing things. Our intrigue towards the macabre reflects realism. We imagine us being in the same situation and think to ourselves what we would do if the person suffering was us. This activates the fight or flight response of the brain, releasing certain hormones like cortisol and adrenaline, which creates a surge of energy in the body, triggering a well-coveted feeling called empathy.

True crime shows and our seemingly increasing interest in serial killers and criminals imply that we crave to learn from negativity. Heinous offenses like these make us want to know what goes through the minds of these people and help us empathize with the victims. It makes us feel alive and somewhat connected with each other. Dr. Dolf Zillmann's excitation-transfer theory claims that overcoming a negative experience reinforces positive emotions. We live vicariously through these characters because they quench our thirst for knowing what happens when we die.

Morbid curiosity not only makes us go through these sombre feelings, but also gives us a sense of reassurance that we are alive and living. Sometimes watching aggression and violence makes our own anger wear off as if a need inside us has been met. Finishing a horror movie or a disgusting video makes us feel stronger. We get drowned in a feeling of accomplishment that we overcame our fears and did not surrender to our circumstances. All these set off our brain's reward centre, making us feel good.

Overt violence sells. But overexposure to the graphic and gory conditions lead us to think that this is what the normal looks like. Fascination shouldn't reach such heights that it turns into obsession and at a point we become insensitive. While some filmmakers use violence and gore for the sole purpose of sparking cathartic responses, others highlight the tragic reality of violence for people to learn from, rather than gain pleasure from it.

Knowing the unknown isn't bad. But it's up to us where we draw the line.

The F in Farnaz stands for "Farnaz can't write a blurb". Leave her some suggestions at farnazfawadhasan@gmail.com



Graphic content

This photo contains sensitive content which some people may find graphic or violent.

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