



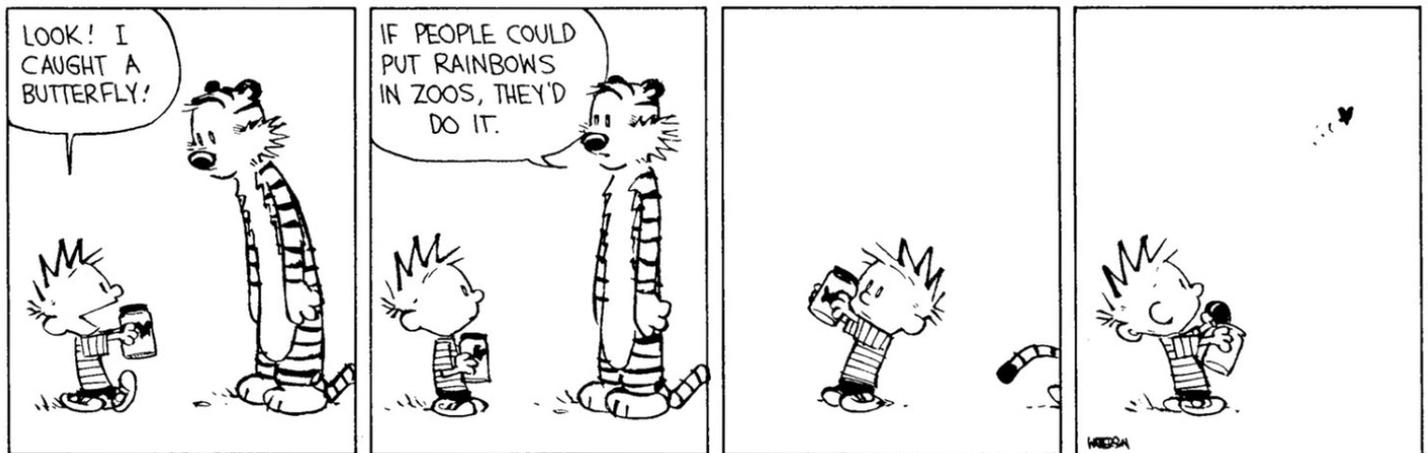
Dear self-taught people...

Where do we look for education that ignites the soul?



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If you're reading this, chances are you know a self-taught person, or perhaps you are one.

The way self-taught people go about learning and teaching themselves is a helpful way to think about the problems with education as we're used to thinking about it. This is because people who are truly self-taught are almost by definition unable to get what they want from the existing array of educational options available to them.

That observation probably applies to many of us even if we aren't self-taught. But instead of simply accepting what's on offer, making the best of it and moving on, self-taught people go a step further and take matters into their own hands. To be self-taught, you need to be curious, discerning, resourceful and highly creative about how to apply that curiosity, discernment and resourcefulness.

It turns out self-taught people are the ideal folks to talk to about education that *sets the*

soul on fire. Because they are already *burning* with interest and enthusiasm, any conversation begins in the right linguistic territory!

But self-taught people also face a number of challenges. Here are some I can think of. Perhaps they will resonate with you, and maybe you can think of others...

- There isn't a place to go to learn and develop that feels like it's designed for you. Other people have that famous school they can aspire to go to, that academy where they want to train, that well-signposted career path to move along, or that well-known community they can go to hang out, meet people and pick things up. Instead, you have to pick and scrabble your way around, panning for gold and washing for occasional nuggets of insight and people of interest.
- Because your hard-won knowledge is, by necessity, cobbled together from all the useful bits and pieces you've found over the years, you probably feel like you're missing some of that knowledge that the formally-trained people all seem to have. And in fact you *are* missing some stuff, which probably slows you down sometimes when interacting with others, especially when you lack important insider language, terms and concepts that would make their world more readable to you.
- Because there's no map, instruction manual or indeed anyone to ask, there's often no obvious path to getting better or unlocking the next level of learning. This means you're sometimes in for long stretches of feeling stuck, losing interest and flirting with giving up, until you find that unexpected insight or throwaway comment someone makes that suddenly lights the way forward.
- Though there's no shortage of people who are knowledgeable about and interested in your thing, you probably find it hard for some reason to find the *right* kinds of people to vibe with. The people you do find are... ok. But possibly you feel like they're slow or missing something important and so after a period of initial excitement, you often quietly disengage and move on.
- It's hard to know how good you really are at your thing. Sometimes you feel like you're the only one who gets it; other times you feel way out of your depth,

intimidated, or just unsure. Because there's no independent or authoritative way to benchmark how you're doing, you never really know where you stand. Even if you're fortunate enough to be a naturally confident person, this is likely to leave you with crippling doubt at times.

Finally, if you've been plugging away for long enough, over time you will have amassed a formidably impressive amount of knowledge, insight and understanding about your thing that couldn't have been earned any other way than through your many false starts, tangents, dead ends, random experiences, unexpected treasures, touchstones, and the connections you've made between all of these.

No doubt you enjoy being sought out for wisdom and advice about your thing, though it probably doesn't happen as often as you'd like. But when the occasion does arise, you're liable to turn a simple question or request into a torrent of insights, recommendations, shortcuts and suggestions that might leave the person who asked feeling inspired, humbled, amused, overwhelmed or all of these at once.

Maybe you've wondered at times about the possibility of finding a way to impart your hard-won wisdom for a living – after all, when you look around, there really doesn't seem to be anyone who knows your thing as deeply or quite in the way that you do. But although it's easier than ever before to publish content and find an audience and maybe you've experimented with this at times, the prospect of starting a business and marketing your way to sustainable revenue is nonetheless daunting. And given you're resourceful, creative, discerning and a fast learner, it's almost certainly going to be easier for you to earn a crust more easily and reliably some other way, even if ultimately it isn't as satisfying as what could have been.

How many truly powerful people end up taking that bargain, and how many soul-fires are extinguished or never lit because of it? Too many, I reckon.

What if there were something we could do about all this? What if more self-taught learners had access to the ideal learning platform for their needs? And what if more self-taught experts had the opportunity to make a living by sharing their expertise with their ideal learners? Maybe then there could be more soul-igniting educational

experiences for learners and old hands alike.

Just a thought. Let's keep talking about it.

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