**EDUCATION ——-THE MEANS TO AN END**

**WHAT HAPPENED TO EDUCATION SINCE I GRADUATED IN 1969**

We lost President **Kennedy**, the war in **Vietnam** had escalated, **Malcom X** hadbeengunned down, **Martin** had been taken away , **Bobby Kennedy** assassinated, **civil rights** **laws** are passed but without a proper dialogue, shift to the right remains firm, citizenship education had been removed from the curriculum.

**What happened** to our commitment to education ....our **democracy’s** **back bone?**

Has it become so diluted that it has sunk to the lowest common denominator.

It was the late **60’s early 70’s** and you could feel the undercurrent of unanswerable questions, factions of thought, and change in behavior. Music, dress, conformity, hair style, and mores were all in a state of flux.

My class of 32 intellectually chosen 6th graders received all A’s in the syllabus pertaining to the mantra that **“we are more alike than different”**. Indeed everyone **became socially aware** with the proper posters adorning the walls. The chapter could now be closed; secure that this next generation will help **cure** **the illness of prejudice** **and social injustice** **and bear fruit and flourish.**

I **however**, was not satisfied. I wanted to “push the envelope” and **INSTIGATE** a radically extreme concept. One that would be in **direct contrast to their conditioned** textbook **response**. I chose to **create an atmosphere of prejudicial** **anxiety** that culminated in **REBELLION and then enlightenment** .

**I DECLARED MYSELF THE TRUE REPRESENTATIVE OF SUPERIORITY**

**defining a new virtue and purity of mankind.**

Through question and interaction I created the **NEW ORDER,** remaining firm to my committed beliefs in the new **“truths”** that were to become the MANTRA OF THE STAUS QUO.

**The subtleties of classification** made clear the noticeable differences amongst us and urged the necessity to **SEGREGATE** those to a lesser station in life.

As a trusted and respected teacherI morphed into a **DICTATOR** who became the embodiment of the superior **DARK HAIRED ELITE.** I then divided the children into **SHADES** and those of TRUE BLACK HAIR. One could be black skinned and still be categorized as a shade if there should be any visible tinge (ie.reddish or brown mixed in).

For **ONE** week the punishments grew and each day the segregation process included more restrictions. All questions were answered using “HISTORICAL FACTS and QUOTED PRECEDENT”. I became more **AUTHORITARIAN** provoking them to the point of calling the shades inferior. **YES!** It was now said out loud.... The tension dramatically increased.

After just four days the **SHADES** secretly organized a well planned **REBELLION** that completely overwhelmed both me and the black haired community. All “mindful” thought ceased, pure emotion took over and frustration turned into an organized **revolt**.

I took to the middle of the room. **I pounded on the desk** and SHOUTED ABOVE THE **CAOS**  that they are doing the right thing but they must sit and discuss. You can hear me scream for order above their tirade pleading that their intellect must be forth coming to hold their emotions as we must talk. I used threats of expulsion and then passed around the microphone giving each one the time to vent their feelings.

WHAT TOOK LESS THAN A WEEK TO PROVOKE TOOK OVER TWO WEEKS TO

**RESOLVE AND INTERNALIZE.**

The period of reconciliation as told by the children is filled with emotions that took days to temper and come to grips with the **reality of how delicate** their **minds are** and how important intellect is to maintain responsible thought.

Their dialogues are honest, **unabashed**, beautifully said with a **6th graders purity** of explanation. It was a social studies chapter that has always been swept under the carpet but needs to be discussed openly and internalized.

***As their emotions become liberated and they openly express their anxiety you become aware of how profoundly eloquent they are in sharing their deepest feelings. You bare witness to the upheaval of friendships from across the HAIR BARRIER. As a spectator you take note of the nuances and subtleties that fester and take hold in a prejudicial environment. Their personal tales of frustration that segregation provokes makes you acutely aware why unification is such a slow process. Seeing through their lens is testimony of just how reflective they are of our own reactions. You begin to understand how fickle we are and how important it is to take part in this exercise.***

That was over **45** years ago. I thought by this time a lesson like this would be passé. We were the boomers in charge of educating this new generation. We were the ones that marched for peace, spoke of civil rights, our songs were loud and clear to be heard on every mountain top.

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**I beg the question again!! WHERE ARE WE NOW IN THE EDUCATION OF**

**AMERICAN SOCIAL SCIENCES?**

If this be the age of communication then let us seek ways to raise the standard of interaction with our children as **their insights become the new values.**

It is 2019and the **tension of volatility has heightened.**

The lesson took place in 1972 on Clark Air Base during the height of the Vietnam War

**I invite you to read the transcript as recorded straight from the mouths of the children or listen to the AUDIO TAPES THAT REMAIN UNCENSORED.**