

# Teaching, Learning, Healing

I draw a parallel between education and health.

*“When you’re thinking about something that you don’t understand, you have a terrible, uncomfortable feeling called confusion. It’s a very difficult and unhappy business... I get this feeling all the time that I’m an ape trying to put two sticks together, so I always feel stupid. Once in a while, though, the sticks go together on me and I reach the banana.”*

— Richard Feynman

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## Health and Education

I draw a parallel between education and health. I believe teaching oneself and healing oneself are skills that enable one another. Working against acquiring these skills are similar authoritarian themes in education and medicine, both of which are delivered by agents whose authority is unquestioned but should be.

There is a vast gulf between teachers and doctors in many respects: salaries, job security, social status, gender (30 years ago 60% of doctors were male, but the ratio has now equalized. Public school teachers remain predominantly female), public versus private sector. There are also many similarities. Both are deeply entrenched economic structures whose standards monopolize the markets and define the laws of compulsory education and health care. Their professional unions, the NEA and the AMA, are some of the strongest political organizations in US politics.

As an independent-minded person to the point of being anarchic, I see education and health care trends moved by the same social currents. Their deep economic roots can be traced to the ways they've shaped society over the last hundred years.

As an independent thinker, I marvel at resistance to change. This resistance to novelty starts at the simple level of habit and extends to the consequential levels of thought and politics. Is it that I am less fearful, or more creative? More important has been my father's money which has allowed me to fail repeatedly. This has been my privilege, and I have taken full opportunity of it.

*"As I get older, I realize being wrong isn't a bad thing like they teach you in school. It is an opportunity to learn something."*

— R.P Feynman

I have failed in more ways than most people can afford but, like melting crushed stone, I have extracted gold. As a result, I see things others miss. The key to extracting success from failure is knowing where to find value, and how to use it. I have become an unreserved advocate of passing through boundaries; boundaries often disrespected as failure.

## College Bound

I am intrigued to watch my alma mater, **Hampshire College's downward spiral toward dissolution**. The school was a brainchild of 1960s liberalism, built on the attractive (to me) idea that learning facts is insufficient. Like many initiatives of the 1960s, there was a move to discard obstacles in order to foster change. But also, like many initiatives, there was a lack of new vision with which to replace it.

Hampshire College aimed to enhance creativity by allowing students to assemble new ideas to see and solve emerging problems. Unfortunately, while they saw established programs as outdated, their new programs were to be judged in the same manner and by the same teachers as before. The result was that students, who were never taught to think for themselves in high school, found themselves expected to sail to new lands with neither boats, sea, or the skills of sailing, on the basis of advice from those who had never done it. I was not one of those students as I was full of inspiration, but most of my college-mates were, and many of them failed to benefit from the program.

As **Maggie Lettvin** says, in my interview in my book *The Learning Project*:

*"Schools almost teach you not to explore. The minute you have another way to solve a problem they say, 'No, no, you have to do it this way.' And that shouldn't happen. Kids should be allowed to explore all different ways of solving problems."*

Maggie was the wife of Jerry Lettvin, a mentor of mine and a celebrated neurophysiologist.

Richard Feynman said:

*"The theoretical broadening which comes from having many humanities subjects on the campus is offset by the general dopiness of the people who study these things."*

Richard Feynman was a brilliant physicist. Speaking of Feynman, my mentor Eugene Wigner said, "He is a second Dirac, only this time human." He should know; Dirac was his brother-in-law. I spoke to Feynman once in the early-1980s about a new idea I had; he was skeptical.



P.A.M. Dirac and R.P. Feynman

Hampshire college encouraged students to approach new problems with little guidance, and then judged them on existing standards. As a result, within five years after it started, the school began moving toward a traditional format, which continued over time.

Rather than teaching students to find new ways forward, the school more encouraged those who needed guidance to find it through the traditional course of graded, mind-narrowing prerequisites, such as were available at any of the conservative, neighboring four colleges. I liked this support of variety, but it was a bleeding-out of the original vision.

Hampshire College now teeters on the brink of disappearing. At this juncture—a crisis that could be viewed as an opportunity—the authorities have stepped in. The authorities are executives who, not surprisingly, have run the show all along. Like the establishment from which it comes, their executive solution to the pain of radical education is to remove it. This is being done in secret, with a certain amount of dissembling, reminiscent of a hostile, corporate take-over. We all have had the experience of a failure in our collaboration with authority. Almost invariably, we get fired.

Naturally, there has been an uproar but what is telling, I feel, is that no faction has taken the dialog outside

the realm of money. All voices vote for a return to the status quo. As far as I can tell, there is not now, as there was not before, any recognition that the college's fundamentally authoritarian structure is at fault. The failure is not financial, but ideological. Like a patient with a chronic illness, they are appealing to the authorities for a cure. But if that structure was deposed, one might ask, would it still be a college? Probably not, and that would be a good thing.



Occupying Hampshire College, the President's office.

*"It isn't that, knowing the answers myself, I perplex other people. The truth is that I infect them with the perplexity I feel myself."*  
— Socrates (Meno 363, 80c.)

For 50 years Hampshire College has run on fumes, advertising innovation along with the implicit promise of privilege and patronage, but these have not come to pass. The "new program" did not have new skills to teach. There was no "beef" in a hamburger that now costs \$63,000 per year. Speaking for myself, having attended the school in the 1970s, there wasn't much beef then, either.

## **Selling Medicine**

My work is built around parallels and metaphor; macrocosms that mirror microcosms. The crisis at Hampshire College mirrors the crisis in modern medicine, except that modern medicine continues to find future technologies to distract its creditors from its failures. Higher education has not been able to do the same.

This isn't fair. Many promised medical technologies are not available while the present failures are still being sold. In a similar vein, consider the centralized control of electrical power. As the dangers and limitations of coal- and oil-generated power grew, the promise of fission- and fusion-generated power extended the industry. These flawed or nonexistent technologies supported people's faith in the power industry, and still today no one questions the centralized control of power.

The medical-industrial complex convinces consumers to support the hegemony of allopathic medicine based on promises of science and technology. Holistic approaches and greater access to information are chiseling away at the edges, but consumers continue to make greater investments in Western health care, as evidence

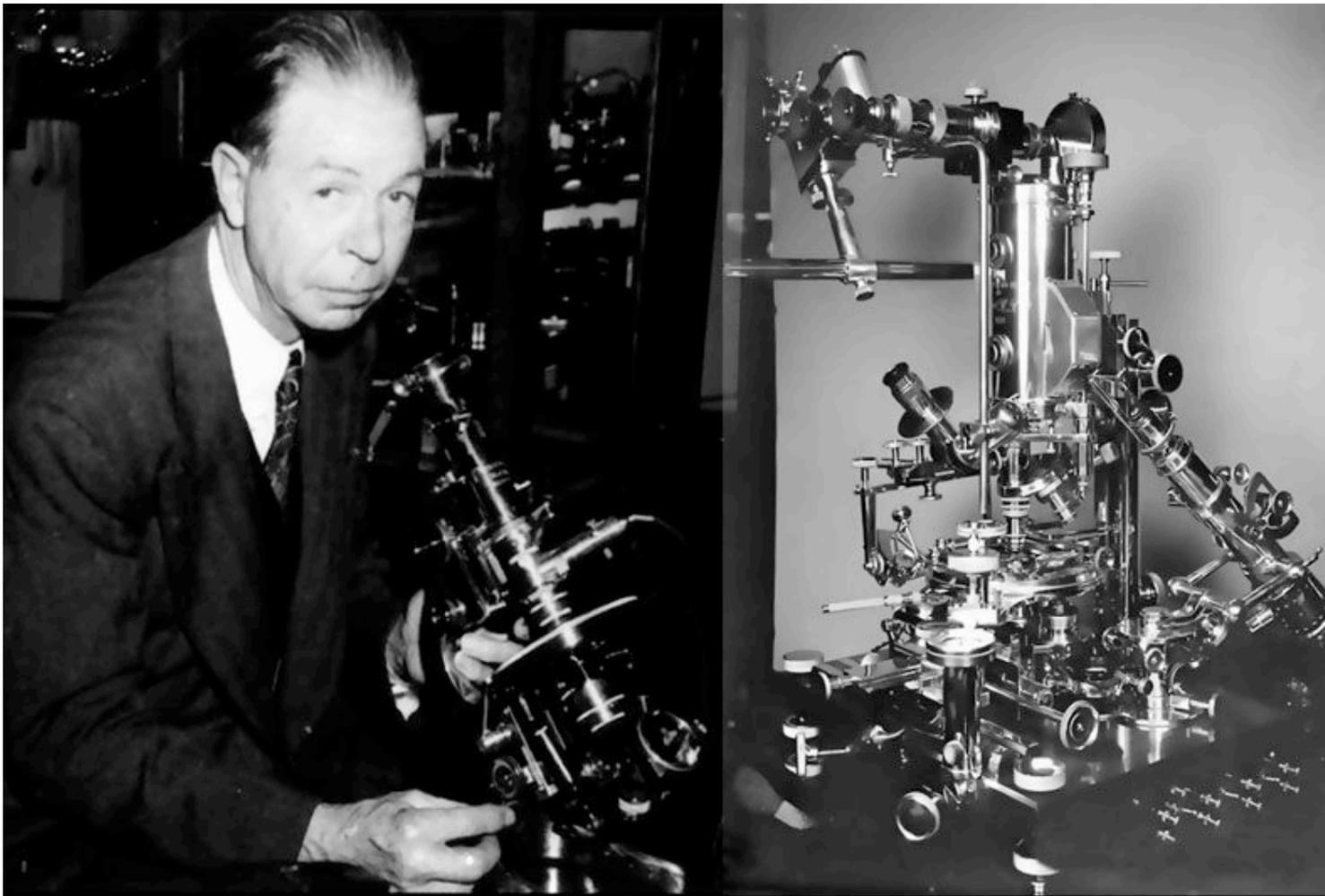
by the services of nationalized health care. Medical prescriptions continue to be accepted for a myriad of social problems ranging from substance abuse to behavioral imbalance, none of which are amenable to a medical solution.

It's hard to argue that more rapid change would be better. Systemic factors govern the rates at which existing systems can incorporate novelty, and the deleterious effects of chaos. Hampshire College cannot easily replace their Harold Johnson library with an internet cafe, or their expensive, on-site curriculum with equally effective (or ineffective) web-based classes. However, the truth regarding education is that the changes needed are ones of quality, not quantity.

In somatic medicine—with its claim of scientific basis—authority is centralized, industrialized, and politicized. In psychological medicine—famously lacking scientific basis—decentralization has resulted in a plethora of barely regulated cottage industries selling everything from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, a supposedly “evidence based” therapy, to the Havening Technique for remediating PTSD, which I judge to be snake oil.

### **Injury by Omission**

Somatic medicine is less scientific than it purports to be. Many examples of the errors of medicine should be recognized for the injuries they have caused. One horrendous failure was the widely prescribed drug thalidomide which caused 10,000 gross birth defects before it was stopped in 1961.



Royal Rife and his amazing microscope.

A potentially larger mistake was the 1920s destruction of Royal Rife, an engineer who claimed that electrical frequencies had vast, curative effects in areas as widespread as pathogenic, autoimmune, and metabolic disorders. Systematic attacks discredited his work, sacked his laboratory, destroyed his results, his reputation, and his life.

Yet last week I read new treatments for liver cancer using electrical frequencies, work that first appeared in the literature around 2007. This does not appear to be based on technology newer than was available to Rife 100 years ago, but on a new willingness to look at it. See:

**“Electric Fields Have Potential As A Cancer Treatment,”** ScienceDaily, 2007.

**“Radio Frequency Ablation Vaporizes Inoperable Kidney And Liver Tumors,”** in ScienceDaily, 2007.

**“Mechanisms and therapeutic effectiveness of pulsed electromagnetic field therapy in oncology,”** in Cancer Medicine, 2016.

**“Targeted treatment of cancer with radiofrequency electromagnetic fields amplitude-modulated at tumor-specific frequencies,”** in The Chinese Journal of Cancer, 2013.

And a large compilation of past research at:

### **Energetic and Vibration Medicine for Cancer**

Eight million people die annually from cancer (as of 2012). If Rife’s technology could have saved 1%, then in 100 years it would have saved 8,000,000 lives. It is still not seriously investigated.

### **Courage and Compliance**

If you have read this far, I commend you. Most people who are not at risk don’t care, and most people who are at risk fear the prospect of taking things into their own hands. It’s somewhat ironic that the highly effective psychosomatic approach to improved health and performance, which I pursue, is only embraced by people who see beyond what’s advertised.

I believe the reason for this centers around courage and compliance. The courage to break ranks when one’s future depends on it it is not something that can be developed overnight. Compliance requires a willingness to take authority and responsibility for yourself. Given a choice, this is frightening to most. These are the skills you need in order to succeed with me, with anyone, or at anything. Wouldn’t it be great if there was a college that taught this?



*“Study hard what interests you the most in the most undisciplined, irreverent and original manner possible.”*

— Richard Feynman