

Do You Know Who's Bending Your Mind?

A great deal about how you live your life is determined by big corporations and organized crime. This article explains how this happens and advises what we can do about it.

By the age of six the average child will have completed the basic American education. ... From television, the child will have learned how to pick a lock, commit a fairly elaborate bank holdup, prevent wetness all day long, get the laundry twice as white, and kill people with a variety of sophisticated armaments.

- Russell Baker, columnist and author (b.1925)

Could Baker possibly be right? Is it that easy? Surely making contact with people who could facilitate any of the illegal situations he mentioned would prevent most people from even considering the acts as possibilities.

Children six years old can find people who will sell them marijuana and other drugs, right outside of their schools in some cases.

Anyone who knows how to use the internet can contact someone who will provide them with anything. Of course you, who are reading this, would not likely search for a web site that offers plans to make a dirty bomb, or access to fissionable materials, or war weapons of any description. You don't want those things, so you assume that no one else does either, other than very bad people.

You may even assume that web sites that offer free education within a warm brotherly group of people who will support the joiner every step of the way (perhaps until the person ignites the explosives strapped to his or her chest) are monitored by government agencies somewhere. And they are. Some. But new ones come into existence every day.

No law enforcement agency can act to indict until they gather enough evidence to prosecute the perpetrators and put them behind bars. How often do you hear of that happening? Rarely, if ever? Yet there are dozens of sites waiting to "help" people out there. (A majority of suicide bombers are rural young people who go to the city and find themselves lonely, without jobs or friends.)

Russell Baker was only partly right about television being the primary source for "basic American education." What the television also purveys is propaganda (called advertising) designed to help people fall into a dependent lifestyle where they believe they need various kinds of products to make them beautiful or young, or at least to smell good all day long.

Television has nothing on the internet as a source for information and even products that most of us would call totally anti-social.

In general, what we call terrorists gather together into cults based on contacts they make over the internet. Criminals source whatever materials they need without having to see the supplier using the internet. Charitable organizations find people willing to contribute to worthy causes on the internet, though the organizations themselves may be bankers for terrorist organizations.

Organized crime gangs are the source for most of the spam we receive in our email inboxes. Yes, that same spam that takes so much of your time to delete. Yes, including the young girls who are bored and want to talk to lonely men by email: "Here's my email address!" Write so I can learn that yours is a valid address. Yes, the same outfits that send heart wrenching messages with cutesy graphics that ask you to forward it to everyone you know (and, by the way, never remove the email addresses that came with them because those emails call home to the gangs with all those addresses).

Does that mean we should close down the internet entirely and return to a simpler time? It couldn't happen. For one thing, the very organized crime gangs that send the spam and gather personal information have enough money to bribe enough politicians and bureaucrats to prevent the internet from being closed down.

Should we have a new version of the internet that is monitored by authorities to ensure that nothing bad is available to people? A new form of internet is coming, but it won't have those safeguards. The bad guys will cry "invasion of privacy" and "loss of our constitutional freedoms" in the media and in advertising so no future internet will ever be safe. They will get good people they can dupe to do the crying job for them.

I get very little spam on my computer. I could count on my fingers the number of times it gets hit with viruses, spyware or malware. Why? Because I know what to expect from the internet and I avoid the kinds of activities that will cause me grief.

Can everyone's computer be as free of viruses, malware, spam, trojans and disk-destroying codes as mine? Yes. That would require everyone to learn what I know and what others who operate their computers safely on the internet know.

Having everyone know that much requires our education systems to teach this information. It requires parents to encourage school boards to put it in their curriculum. Parents will never know enough and will never be able to keep up with advancements in technology (including rogue computer code) so it would have to be taught in classrooms.

That's not likely to happen either. Our culture teaches us not to take responsibility for anyone but ourselves. And maybe our children, which some do obsessively, making the kids permanently paranoid. Look at the number of people who daily harm their own health with tobacco, drugs, alcohol, lack of exercise and self-adopted stress to see that many people don't even look after their own best interests.

Don't expect those people to help you change school curriculum. Or to change anything.

When was the last time someone consulted you about what should be placed on the curriculum of the schools in your area? Likely never. A few people make decisions like those with very little input from outside, even from politicians.

Find out who makes the major decisions within your local school system, your department or ministry of education. Propose these ideas at political meetings where politicians meet the people, such as before elections. Speak to the leaders of Home and School associations in your area. These people can all work behind the scenes to make changes happen.

Don't go to the head of the local elected school board or the director of the local school system. These people effectively have no influence over curriculum decisions. They will listen to you, then ignore your requests.

Curriculum change is a political issue, not an education issue. If you want change, you must act in a political way. Acting in a reasonable way with well reasoned arguments with the wrong people (those who don't matter) will gain you nothing but frustration.

It doesn't require a revolution to change school curriculum. It requires people to talk about the subject they want changed, and talk and talk until enough people know about the need for change that the decision makers in the back rooms decide it's a good idea.

Change is hard, which is why school curriculum changes very little over long periods of time (though its methods of presentation change). Talking is easy.

So talk. Tell others you talk to to spread the word around as well.

Bill Allin

Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems, a guidebook for parents and teachers who want to grow children who won't be naive victims of bad guys who sound really good on the television or over the internet.

Learn more at <http://billallin.com>

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