Prior to reading and thoroughly dissecting the memoir *Educated* by Tara Westover, my understanding of the meaning of being educated was simply that it was to obtain new information. However, my initial impression changed as I flipped through each and every page of the ingeniously drafted memoir. Westover takes the significantly overlooked topic of education to allow the audience to be exposed to a whole new perspective on it.

**Education is growth.** As I started reading the book, I automatically noticed a major difference between the author’s childhood and mine: isolation. Growing up in a close-knit community like mine, I found it hard to believe that there are people who live in isolation and don’t have the same opportunities, such as education. Tara’s family reminded me about the Fugate family – or the “blue people” – and how they grew up in the isolated hills of Kentucky that I learned about in my biology class.

Tara’s childhood consisted of many hardships, which included a violent brother who abused her physically and emotionally. In the line, “I’m only crying from the pain … From the pain in my wrist. Not from anything else” (pg. 111), Tara describes herself as “unbreakable” and that she misinterpreted the truth that it wasn’t affecting her as that was “its effect” (pg. 111). Instead of staying home in Southern Idaho, Tara decided to leave and make a life for herself through education, which allowed her to grow and build her character.

**Education is an experience.** Tara grew up without a birth certificate, a doctor, and an education because of her family’s radical Mormon views. She strived to get an education so she studied hard to get a decent score on the ACT and was then accepted into BYU. It is there that she first learned about the pivotal points in history, such as the wars, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Holocaust. Learning in a classroom setting among peers and being exposed to the “real world” allowed Tara to experience new things that she was limited to in the past. Education also teaches you how to ask for help, such as when Tara asked for an algebra tutor in college. Her new-found knowledge and opportunities allowed her to travel across the world to places including Harvard and Cambridge University, which further enhanced her education. This reminded me of my experience being an EMT. As an EMT, I am required to earn in a classroom
and outside in the field. The classroom experience is the base to build off of and apply in the real world. Similarly, Tara used her college experience and brought it into the real world by writing this book to show a glimpse of her atypical life and that anything is possible.

**Education is power.** As the story progresses, it is evident that the knowledge Tara has gained throughout the years allowed her to share her shortcomings with the communities around her; she has begun to educate others. She started off without any exposure to a traditional education environment, but she worked her way up and now published this New York Times Bestseller. This reminds me of when I participated in crew (rowing boats) in high school. Since we were the first incoming freshman class, we had no preexisting clubs and sports, so a group of four people, including me, decided to start a crew club without any previous knowledge about racing boats. But, after years of extensive research, we ended up as a large, state-qualifying team. This exemplifies that education will help you power through even in the toughest of times.

After completing this book, I realized that being educated is more than just obtaining new information. Instead, it is the combination of growth, experience and power that knowledge entails. Now, this is what I call an education.

I wish I had read this book before I went to the UK during the summer. I would have visited all of the places Tara mentioned at Trinity College, such as the Great Gate and the library. In addition, I know the line, “the past was a ghost, insubstantial, unaffecting. Only the future has weight” (pg. 273) encapsulates my next four years at SBU.

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