



Sandra asked:

I saw mentioned that Tyler Westover has published a review of this book, giving it 5 stars and also excerpts of the letter he writes his parents. Can someone let me know where I can find this?

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Answer this question



Julie Barrett I just googled that. It's a review on Amazon.

"Good message, although some supporting information isn't fully accurate -Tyler W.

ByAmazon Customer on February 26, 2018

Format: Hardcover|Verified Purchase

First, let me identify myself. I am Tyler Westover, brother number three in this book. Reading through other comments, it is clear that the book has become very controversial. A natural tendency when we encounter someone that we disagree strongly with is to attempt to dehumanize those individuals into foul monsters. We see this behavior regularly in politics as well as in arguments over land and other natural resources. My purpose in writing this review is not to try to prove either side wrong; rather, it is to "humanize" the people on both sides, while also providing a partial perspective that people on both sides of the argument may be able to agree with. Several concerns prevent this from being a full perspective.

I will start by quoting an email that I sent to Tara on Feb. 21, 2016. I still mostly feel the same way. Here are excerpts from the note that I sent:

"Overall, I like the book and wish that we could all understand it. It not only contains important messages, but the writing style and descriptions are captivating. ... I could add a number of details on Part 1: Idaho. For your earlier memories, I was old enough to have access to more



Educated

by Tara Westover (Goodreads Author)

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on key messages and points and deliberately leave out seemingly contradictory or excessively complicated information for general audiences. The fact is that practically no-one can understand all of the details in a complicated situation, and focusing on the underlying themes is generally best unless the audience has specific need to try to grasp the details. I think that you did well following the 80/20 rule. If you like I could send clarifying notes that you could include in an appendix or as publication notes. As you mention, we have different memories and different perceptions of the same events, and I recognize that if you try to include my version, it will likely interfere with your clean narrative.”

Some elements in the book have been misinterpreted from the way that Tara likely intended, and I think that some things Tara misunderstood herself. Because education is a primary theme of the book, I will offer a different perspective on that topic here. In writing this alternate perspective, I do not intend to convey that Tara’s interpretation of events is wholly in error. Our parents are extremists, and they and other members of our family have done terrible things that have hurt Tara. There is no doubt there was abuse, neglect, and other awful choices. Those events are described in Tara’s book, and I will not add new comments about those events here. I was removed quite far from the family when most of those events took place, and for the most part they are not entirely clear in my mind. As indicated above, I intend to restrict my narrative here to my personal experiences or actual events for which I have clear accounts that I expect will generate little disagreement from other individuals who were involved.

As Tara describes, our father is very suspicious of the government. At one point, he told us, his children, that he was concerned someone from the government could come to our home and gun shots could be fired. Nothing he ever said, however, led me to believe that this concern was connected with our homeschool. Instead, he referenced Charlton Heston’s sentiment that the only way the government would get his guns would be from his “cold dead hands.” To expand a little further, our father also said that he did not think that the government would send local law enforcement or even federal agents to take guns away from law-abiding U.S. citizens. He considered it more likely that such a task would have to be fulfilled by troops from the United Nations. It should also be noted that the guns in question did not include high capacity, semi-automatic rifles, such as have been used in mass shootings or are designed for intense combat. I have never seen our father with such a weapon, and as far as I know, he has never owned one.

Regarding higher education, many readers of the book have concluded that Tara attended formal higher education against apparently insurmountable odds. Perhaps it is not that surprising after all. Of the seven children in our family, six of them attended formal higher education classes (Luke is the only one who has not, and as described in Tara’s book, classroom education is not really his thing). In addition, both our mother “Faye” and our father “Gene”

education as well as its bias toward liberal thinking.

Observing people around me, it seemed that university degrees actually helped very few people in our community. Most individuals that I knew of returned to work on their family's farm after getting a degree. Those that did not return, I really didn't know about. Without being able to perceive a direct benefit from a university degree, I did not initially consider higher education very seriously. Our father was actually the person who first gave me a specific purpose to get a university degree. He told me that if I got an engineering degree, then I could provide engineering stamps for building and bridge designs for the family construction business. Our dad mostly created his own designs for sheds and other custom structures that his business built, but sometimes he had to have his designs stamped by a professional engineer. If I became a professional engineer, not only could I stamp our designs, but I could probably also be more flexible in the design to save additional costs in fabrication materials. The idea captured my interest, but I was concerned about being able to finish an engineering degree. At the time, I was about sixteen, and four years of classes in a university seemed like a very long time. Neither of my parents had actually graduated. I considered that the only way to make sure that I could graduate would be to win a four-year full-tuition scholarship; at length, that is what I determined to do. Tara was correct that my father often fought me to go to work rather than study.

Part of the application for the scholarship that I wanted (a Trustee's scholarship at BYU) required writing an essay response to a quote by Blaise Pascal. Again it was our father who provided the best advice on how to approach the essay. He suggested that I spend a full day in the library at Utah State University to read all I could about Blaise Pascal to find the context of the quote and perhaps additional complementary quotes. I followed my father's advice and won the scholarship. Years later as I was finishing a bachelor's degree in engineering at BYU, Purdue University offered me a fellowship for graduate school. I was excited to go but also very hesitant. It was important to me that I marry someone who shared my religious beliefs, and that seemed much less probable in Indiana than in Utah. After much deliberation and hearing some negative stories about graduate school in far-away places, I had almost decided to turn down Purdue's offer and stay in Utah. Before I made my final decision, though, I consulted my parents for their advice. They both recommended that I go to Purdue. I particularly remember my father's advice. He told me not to let fear of the future cause me to miss such a great opportunity. With that reassurance, I decided to go, and after five years, I earned a Ph.D. from Purdue.

Undoubtedly, Tara's experience talking about higher education with our parents was much different than mine. After reading a memoir, I would hope that readers have new questions

Postscript Note: I have received some negative comments on the review above from people who think that I am trying to impose my experiences on Tara. That really is not my intention. In her book, in numerous places, Tara interprets for me and other members of my family things that we did, said, thought, and even felt. I cannot speak for the other members of my family, but in my case I think in many instances she greatly incorrectly conveyed my experiences. In the interest of a balanced viewpoint, it seems that I should at least attempt to share a part of my perspective, while still supporting her as much as I can. I do recognize this is her memoir, and she describes her experiences from her paradigm. However, it seems reasonable for me to explain my perspective and outline events that demonstrate the validity of my perspective, in my review."

105 Likes · [Like](#) · [12 Comments](#) · 11 Months Ago



Lori Delman Did Tyler, Tara's brother, mention that their parents had gone to college but not graduated? I didn't pick this up in the book.

5 Likes · [Like](#) · [2 Comments](#) · 7 Months Ago

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