

My very first memory of school happened sometime during kindergarten. I believe I had been spacing out, missing the instructions the teacher was giving us on how to trace. As I regained focus, I realized Mrs. Bird was passing out papers. Fortunately, it was just a black outline of a butterfly, and I knew she had said something about a black crayon and tracing. Unsure of what to do, I looked around to see what my neighbors were doing. All of them had picked up their black crayon, carefully going over the already black lines. Skeptical, I checked out what a few others were doing. Each and every person in the room performed the same useless task – outlining an already black butterfly. I distinctly remember being slightly confused; this could not possibly be our assignment – that does not make sense. After some deliberation, I flipped the piece of paper over and began tracing through the paper, creating a new, but almost identically shaped, butterfly. About halfway through my drawing, Mrs. Bird began walking around, passing out candy to those who were doing it right. Patiently, I waited for her to recognize my ingenuity and superior intelligence with a piece of candy. Instead, she passed me by, making me the only person in the class who did not get a piece of candy. Grudgingly, I flipped my paper over and began the daunting, stupid, absurd task of making the black butterfly black.

I learned several life lessons from this experience, some of which are not necessarily good. First and foremost, I learned I need to pay attention better. I did not learn this lesson very well, however, because I still have a bad habit of spacing out exactly when professors begin explaining assignments. Secondly, I learned that I really dislike doing things I find unnecessary - and that I really like candy. Mostly though, which can sometimes be a bad thing, I learned that, when in doubt, see what everyone else is doing; even if it is stupid, it is probably what I am supposed to be doing. I think I remembered it this long because I felt cheated. Here I am, doing something that could at least potentially make sense, and I'm the one that gets punished for it. Forget thinking outside of the box – that means you do not get candy. Even if what you are doing is tracing, it is not the right kind of tracing. Either go along with the masses and get candy, or fight the system and don't. Also, I like being right.