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Guest Editorial - Essentials of a Good (Normal) Life

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Guest Editorial—

Essentials of a Good (Normal) Life

1. A normal life for human beings includes *family life* (not just married life, but family life). If I am right about this, then two current prevalent ways of living are unacceptable: atomized, individualized life and, its opposite, centralized and totalized life. The family is the custodian of that precious responsibility, the human bloodstream. The individual comes and goes; the stream of life goes on forever. The individual is challenged to nobly discharge this trust.

2. Living which satisfies the norms of human living calls for *country life*. Pragmatic, deductive and metric tests can be applied to prove this. Human beings cannot possibly live well when they are a part.

3. The good or normal life calls for *community* and world life, not nationalized life. History makes nothing clearer than that every man is properly the citizen only of his local community and of the world. The creation of nations with their national citizenships has been a tragic error.

4. The good or normal life calls for both *competition* and *cooperation* — fraternal competition and voluntary cooperation. If this is true, current social systems which permit predatory, exploitive competition, and those which compel cooperation, by law or force, are abnormal.

5. The life normal to human beings is *creative* life (the life of imagination, design and beauty, production and conservation). If this is true, then mechanized life — the repetitive life of factory and assembly lines, life as a spectator of sports and life as a mere consumer of goods — is abnormal.

6. Normal life is *compassionate* life, the considerate, understanding and tolerant life. If this is true, then the aggressive, dogmatic and fanatic life — the life of fear and hate — is abnormal.

7. Finally, man's normal life is *cultivated* life — the life in which his perceptions are made sensitive to the universe, his emotions are understood and allied to life-giving values, his intellect is devoted to learning how to live, his actions are harmonized and humanized. If this is true, then the ignorant, fashionable and superstitious life is abnormal.

To live such a normal, or good, life, each of us — and not somebody else — must organize his own personal and family life properly. Each of us — and not somebody else — must help to reorganize all our institutions, to make it possible for this good life to be lived by everybody. Our schools and universities, our theaters and publications, our civic and financial institutions, our laws and customs, should help make it possible for every family to acquire the land and the equipment — and help every individual acquire the vision and techniques — necessary to live this good life successfully.

Nothing less than this should be our goal. No single reform or movement by itself can provide the good life. Political reform, racial equality, land reform, monetary reform, conservation, cooperation, world peace — all are necessary. But no one of them alone — nor indeed all of them together — can provide a good life for everyone. We must first have *right education*. An adequate philosophy of living is the first and the continuing requirement. I believe a study of the (seventeen) major, or basic, problems of living can help greatly in building an adequate philosophy of living.—Ralph Borsodi

Ralph Borsodi founded the School of Living in 1936, for research in how a human being should live. His latest book, *Education of the Whole Man* (\$6.00 from School of Living), was published in India in April, 1963. The above editorial is from a 16-page pamphlet introducing the School of Living. Order copies for your friends. (5c from School of Living, Brookville, Ohio).

Letters To The Editor

Contact

To the Editor:

Green Revolution really helps make contact. On a recent trip to British Columbia we wanted to find a homesteader whose letter we had seen in your paper. We recalled the town, Kaslo, but the man's name escaped us. So we went to the postoffice and asked who there subscribed for the *Green Revolution*. They told us it was Harry Griswold. When we found the Griswolds they welcomed us with open arms.—Oregon reader.

Prescription For Rebellion

To the Editor:

To Gene Kreve's letter in July *Green Revolution*, you attached a conjecture about not publishing rather than have people vicariously live out their rebellion. (Lindner.) From 8,000 miles distance, let me urge you to persist. My wife and I were motivated in no small measure by the *Green*

Revolution to seek homesteading possibilities. We came out to beautiful New Zealand, and although we now live on a sheep station, we will soon have our own homestead. This final resolution to get on the land is, again, highly influenced by *GR*. *Go Ahead and Live. A Way Out*, etc. They serve as inspiration. And inspiration is like food, you need continual replenishment. Tales of actual homesteaders, their trials, tribulations and successes, ignite smoldering desires. I have lived many vicarious moments: The experiences people write about and the letters you print are real fodder or manna that feed our desire.

This world lacks leaders. You have exhibited a sustained enthusiasm over many years. It is difficult to imagine the work, sorting, reading, meetings, organizing, writing that you carry on. But we must have *GR* for the ever-widening circle of rebels. Never even mention that you

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might consider discontinuing the paper. That would destroy a pulsating, breathing, fresh and compelling source of vicarious living. When one has enough vicariousness and compares it to his present city-bound existence, he must make his dreams come true. He is compelled to seek the land and a semblance of individuality. If only Lindner could see this, I think he could then write a healing Prescription for Rebellion.

I've gotten some young couples together and discussed the problems of living. Help us establish a School of Living in New Zealand. Where do we go from here?—Earl Conroy, D. C., Napier, New Zealand.

Editor's Note: Let's keep in mind the newer concept of shared leadership. Leadership is to help get things done, and members are as much or more important in this than a "leader." Leadership consists in a number of functions — imagining, suggesting, aiding, organizing. Members can do these things too. I enjoy them but find that the additional persistent details of bookkeeping, mimeographing, changing addresses, folding, mailing, etc., are the "difficult" jobs, and there is never enough money or people to get them done otherwise.

I've done what I could for 22 years. I never have considered, nor do I now consider, the School of Living my "job" any more than anyone else's who believes in it. Could I've earned a secretary or the sabbatical I plan to take soon? Appreciation to Mr. Conroy for his understanding, and for his HELP or LEADERSHIP in forming a branch School of Living.—M.J.L.

Education At Home

To the Editor:

The arrest of the Coles for home education of their children makes me wonder how most people have let responsibilities slip away from them because someone else didn't want theirs. In our own family struggle to get our children educated (25 miles from the closest school), I taught them at home using the Calvert Course (the one the Coles use), with the school board buying the courses and the county superintendent checking on our progress. We had to fight, originally, to get that. The next year we pooled resources with two other families and hired a teacher. But things have changed fast, and I'm trying to discover just what our school system would do now in a case like the Coles'. Will let you know if they could force us into school. I'm becoming more interested in the Summerhill approach, and would like to hear from others who are. We have wonderful possibilities here for a free school—mountain air, trails, skiing, hiking, nature study, farm animals to learn from and care for. All that's needed is willing hands and dedicated hearts, for youth's sake.—Grace Wade, Box 6, Walden, Colo.

United Cooperative Industries

To the Editor:

We are about 85 miles from Los Angeles. With some competent labor to make some needed preparations, we would be glad to receive School of Living people or any others. These 8 acres belong to Burt Taylor whose beliefs are along the same line as yours. Our most difficult task is recruiting new members; educating said recruits is the next hardest job. People talk about India, China, Ghana, Cuba and way points. They seem unable



A Child's Heritage

Some people may argue that country life is not essential for all adults. Fow, if any, will hold that children do not need the country. The country gives them an environment similar to their nature—open, growing, natural. Here are things and processes at once simple but ever-changing, challenging but understandable. Here is opportunity for exploration, creativity, enjoyable work that contributes to their own survival and maintenance.

In the above picture, Joe, Barbara, George and Rachel Treichler, children of Bill and Martha Treichler, are selling their organically raised vegetables on the roadside of Birch Lake Farm, Walker, Iowa. The family has now moved to Carbondale, Colo., and Bill and Martha report on their new life as instructors in Rocky Mountain Farm School on the west side of the mountains:

They are settled in a rambling old log ranch house, in which the school first started. They use the entire first floor, with the school infirmary on the second floor of its mid-section. Students join them in the afternoon as work crews in garden and farm work. In addition Martha has an activity in color, while Bill has a group for reading and discussion in constitutional government.

Quotes Famous Educator

John Holt, author of *Why Children Fail* and *How Children Learn*, is a former teacher at Rocky Mountain School. On a recent visit there he said that children in the average school are much too regimented and should have time to explore and learn, as is available on most farms and homesteads. He thinks that young children learn with phenomenal speed, but that they do it in a random and haphazard way. Their natural way of learning, he thinks, is by trial and improvement.

But where adults think of mistakes as failure, the child himself isn't dismayed by error. In fact, he doesn't know it if it isn't pointed out to him. He later discovers that what he thought before doesn't fit the order of things and puzzles out a better way.

Bill Treichler quotes Mr. Holt as not agreeing with B. F. Skinner's ideas of programmed learning and protecting children from making mistakes. Holt thinks that it is necessary to make mistakes in order to develop the capacity for judgment which seems lacking in so many adults today.

to concentrate their minds on village planning or food production, or digging another well, or getting out printed matter to interest potential producers. Psychology lecturers and manicurists do not amount to much when it comes to cement foundations, adobe walls, piping, wiring, septic tanks, etc.—Walter Millsap, 22800 Grand Ave., Rt. 1, Wildomar, Calif. 92395.

Rio Grande Valley

To the Editor:

As a possible site for intentional communities, I recommend considering the Rio Grande Valley, especially the Brownsville,

Who's Cheating Whom?

I don't envy the youngsters today With antiseptic, streamlined play; Rather I pity the poor little tykes— Scientifically geared for rubber-tired bikes!

What does a kid of today know about Making his fun . . . or doing without! Back in the time of home-made quilts Kids (like me) made their own stilt.

And what a vast difference it makes to the soul Swimming, sans clothes, in the ol' swimmin' hole, And dressing in cute little panties that rules Force them to wear in concrete pools.

When I was a lad out of school for a day, Well, gosh, how I raced in pursuit of my play; Looking for gophers or a new grape-vine swing . . . Trapping for rabbits—or any old thing.

Today's free youngster, now, where does he go? As straight as an arrow he seeks a "good" show; And sits in a seat, eyes strained and lips mum; His only activity . . . chewing some gum!

Whistles and sling shots . . . we had 'em galore; Today's kids still like them . . . bought from a store; But we had the fun of making the things With knives and sticks and pieces of strings.

Well . . . give the best your money can buy— We couldn't compensate . . . although we try . . . For the things we have robbed them; the things they don't know— Poor modern babies! They NEED a good show!

—Chesta Holt Fulmer

Tex., area.

The climate here is semi-tropical and the winters are mild. We have one of the richest soils in the country and all sorts of tropical fruits grow prolifically (i.e., mango, papaya, citrus, and most all vegetables). We have plenty of water for irrigation available. We also are near one of the finest ocean beaches on the gulf, Padre Island (which is now mostly a national park), and Boca Chico Beach. We are within a stone's throw of Mexico where all varieties of tropical fruits are available at a fraction of USA prices. There is also an abundance of locally grown produce available for those who do not wish to grow their own. There is plenty of fine citrus land still available at about \$300 per acre. This may sound high but this land is highly productive and 5 acres should enable one to raise practically all their own food.

In case any of your readers are interested in coming down here "to see for themselves," I'll be glad to help in any way I (continued on page 4)