

## THE ESSENTIALS OF GOOD LIVING

Henry Harap

IN THE BROADEST SENSE the aim of education is to improve individual and group living. A study of life needs is inescapable in the search for the goals of teaching. Needs originate in the life of the individual, in the ways of group living, and in what we regard as the common welfare.

### Needs for Security and Affection

The young have certain basic needs for security and affection. They need the self-assurance which comes from the esteem of other members of their group. They need a minimum degree of freedom from sheer physical want; they want to feel perfectly safe in the immediate community around them. Children and youth need free and easy contacts with the persons with whom they live continuously. They want to feel at home. In the course of daily work, they should have outlets for self-expression and some small recognition of their achievements.

### Needs in Everyday Living

The needs of life are most conveniently organized around areas of living—home, leisure, citizenship, communication, consumption, and production. At present, young learners give very little time to the activities of current everyday living. The growing person needs to do well all the things which make a full and balanced life. He needs to get along with people, attain good health, play joyously, enjoy beauty around him, understand current happenings, share in the work of the home, join in the life of the community, value a good book, talk

and write fluently, and help in doing the work of the world. We need to raise man's daily experience to the highest level of excellence.

The familiar daily habits of living are essential ingredients of an abundant life, but not the whole of it. To enjoy a beautiful sunset, a sweet song, an absorbing play, a lovely poem, an interesting story, a graceful dance—these, too, are elements of a good life. The cultivated person is not the one who is the most abundantly stocked with facts; rather he is one who lives richly in all the ways of life.

The needs of life are not met by a continuance of things as they are. Man is inventive; he is impelled to move onward and upward. The young person is confronted by new discoveries and constantly changing conditions. As a potential citizen he needs to have the will to play a more active role in attaining higher levels of living not only for himself but also for all the people. He and his distant neighbors will have to live together peacefully in a smaller world.

### Group-Centered Needs

We have not yet scratched the surface of social living. There are strong inborn group-centered drives for which there is no outlet in the classroom. The learners have an innate need to work cooperatively in groups. They need not only to respect each other as individuals; they need to respect the decisions of the group. Children and youth need opportunities to work together harmoniously in small groups under their own leadership to-

ward the achievement of a common goal. The school should cease to be an institution and become a little community.

#### Need to Preserve and Extend Democracy

Life in a democracy demands certain ways of learning together, working together, and living together. Co-operative and purposeful learning to meet the needs of good living is still in its infancy. Pupils do not have a part in determining or accepting the learning goals. They are not in the habit of directing their own learning enterprises or their own discussions. Growing persons need to have a part in

planning; they need to gather from time to time to share what they have done. They need to know how to give and take constructive criticism cheerfully. They need to learn to value the rights and perform the duties of a potential member of a free society. Living in school should be an apprenticeship to citizenship in a democracy.

In this discussion we have identified needs as they arise in self-adjustment, in everyday living, in group behavior, and in preserving a free state. To summarize, the needs of life are those things without which individual and group living is incomplete or imperfect. Life needs are, therefore, the essentials of good living in a free society.

## Progress in Life Adjustment Education

J. DAN HULL

There is a growing recognition on the part of those who teach in our secondary schools that instructional programs must be geared to the life needs of the youth they serve. The Commission on Life Adjustment Education for Youth was appointed by the U. S. Commissioner of Education to encourage the development of functional programs for high school students. In this article J. Dan Hull, assistant director of the Division of Elementary and Secondary Schools, U. S. Office of Education, tells the story of the Commission.

"IN OUR HIGH SCHOOL out here in the state of Washington," the White Salmon superintendent said, "we have only 200 pupils, but twenty states and two foreign countries are represented in this



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