

EDITORIAL

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Is It Possible To Raise A Happy Child?

By MARIE PACE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LAFAYETTE TUTORING CENTER

I have observed with increasing frequency as we near the new millennium a wide range of comments and opinions on the effects of home life on the successful—or more often—unsuccessful rearing of children. With the advent of psychology and psychiatry in the early 1900's and their attempts to modify behavior to make a more tractable child, the "prob-

lem" of child behavior was introduced.

As a professional educator for 10 years, I am constantly working with children and have found two things vital to the successful maturation of a child. A current, but erroneous, fad belief is that it is peer pressure which forms the path of growth. The fact, however, is that the path of growth is defined by two vital factors.

What are they? The first is the home environment. Author and humanitarian, L. Ron Hubbard, wrote that the

family was the building block of any society. In the book *What is Scientology?*, it goes on to state that the reason family relationships improve so much with Scientology is because it teaches an individual to communicate more freely with family and friends.

The second is the quality of education. Mr. Hubbard, through exhaustive research developed an innovative technique for studying that enables the student to not only fully grasp the subject matter being pursued, but to proficiently

apply it in life or work. What is exceptionally effective about this study method is that any student can learn to use it and succeed regardless of his or her economic or social situation.

I have heard it said that children join gangs due to socio-economic circumstances. Factually, however, the main thing these young people have in common is an illiteracy that bars them from reading even the street sign on the corner. So how could they be expected to survive on their own?

Conversely, children with a sound family life and effective study skills, have the inner strength on which to build a future of their choosing and the ability to strive for and achieve their goals.

I have found, through the use of the philosophy of L. Ron Hubbard, a sure-fire approach to raising a happy child. If you have not explored it, then I urge you to find out for yourself—get the book *What is Scientology?* And see how you can ensure a successful future not only for your child but for your whole family.

What Does A Person Deserve By Being Alive

By RUTH ORON, MIRIAM WEISS, MERYL SIMON

This year, the US Department of Agriculture published these: "Facts About Hunger in America"; "Eleven to twelve million Americans experience moderate to severe hunger. An additional 23-24 million people are 'Food insecure,' i.e., either cut the size of their meals or skip meals...Some of the consequences of chronic hunger in children are infant mortality, poor cognitive development, and increased risk of disease."

As three representative women, we say it is appalling that infants are dying and growing children's minds and bodies cannot develop as they should in this, the richest nation in the world. That a person in America of any age suffers from hunger, be it "moderate" (whatever that might mean!) or "severe," is a crime.

We respect persons working to alleviate hunger, but as reported in a New York Times article, even the massive, nationwide effort—"40,000

soup kitchens and food pantries...with more than 900,000 volunteers"—cannot keep pace with the increasing need. Meanwhile, a basic right such as nourishment should come to people not out of charity, but because they are entitled to it as human beings.

Eli Siegel, the great American historian and founder of the philosophy Aesthetic Realism, has explained the cause of all injustice, including the fact that children are starving in America: it is contempt. He defined contempt as "the addition to self through the lessening of something else." Contempt, he showed is at the basis of our profit economy where some few people get rich from the labor of many. And in 1970, Eli Siegel explained this tremendous thing—that history had come to a point where the profit system had failed and would never recover. He stated: "Man has lived with economic ill will for hundreds of years; but that doesn't mean that ill will was ever right or, for that matter, efficient. The inefficiency of ill will is now becoming

apparent all over the world." We see this in 1999, despite the lying reports about a "booming" economy. The fact is, a few people are getting richer while increasing numbers of people are getting poorer, forced to worry where their next meal will come from.

Aesthetic Realism is completely clear—the one measure of the success of an economy is the well-being of every person. Stated Eli Siegel: "While any child needs something he hasn't got, the profit system is a failure."

In the international journal, *The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known*, the Class Chairman of Aesthetic Realism, Ellen Reiss, describes magnificently what must be for the children of America to get what they need:

As corn is in a Kansas field in summer, with the sun hot on it; as Texas earth is rich with oil; as glowing oranges of California grow and people pick them with aching fingers and get so little for their labor—to whom should these belong? A little child in Harlem is going to bed hungry while somewhere in America there are cows ready with milk that won't get to that child. And the child wants that milk and deserves it. That child is, with her fellow citizens, the rightful owner of that Kansas corn and Texas oil and those California oranges.

We have learned from Ms. Reiss that in order to keep the failed profit system going at all, so that the big money interests in America stay happy, most people have to become poorer, and this means more of our countrymen will go hungry. In order to keep profits coming in, corporations have forced people to work longer hours, laid off men and women in massive numbers and moved jobs abroad where labor is even cheaper.

The only thing that will bring hunger to an end is for every government official and citizen to ask this ethical

Selling Our Souls

By MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

The manufacturers of one of the guns used most frequently in violent crime has reaped about 60 percent profit on every sale. Many of the guns on the streets are cheap to make and a very lucrative business proposition for the makers.

Since the profits are so high, one would think most manufacturers would be willing to sacrifice a little of that margin to add some inexpensive safety devices like trigger locks that might save the lives of children who find a way to get hold of a gun. But very few firearm manufacturers do or will unless Congress passes a law requiring it.

So instead schools must spend money. It is sad but necessary in today's America that our tax money must be invested in video cameras, security guards, and metal detectors our school must buy to try to protect our children.

This September many children throughout the country are returning to schools with automatically locking doors, alarms, and police officers on the premises. I applaud the efforts of schools to try to create a safe place for children to learn. But if this country would wake up and demand that our lawmakers decide once and for all to protect children instead of guns, how much better use we could put that money to! Schools need books, computers, and enough classrooms and teachers earning decent salaries to ensure our children get the education they need to succeed in life.

One county in Maryland near where I live spent nearly \$700,000 this fall just to install surveillance cameras in its high schools. Is this what it's come to in our efforts to prevent almost 13 children a day from being killed by guns? Unfortunately, the answer is yes.

Between 1979 and 1996, nearly 75,000 children and teens were killed by firearms. That's 20,000 more than the number of American battle casualties in the Vietnam War. I lived in Washington, DC during the Vietnam War and remember the huge and numerous demonstrations against the war that ultimately forced the United States to reexamine its priorities. I cannot help

but wonder why I do not see demonstrations in our streets, at the U.S. Capitol, the White House, in our state capitals, and in every city in America protesting the fact that U.S. children under age 15 are 12 times more likely to die from gunfire than children in 25 other industrialized countries combined. Black children under the age of 15 are twice as likely as White children to die of gun violence, black youths aged 15-24 are four times more likely than White youths, and Black males in that age group are ten times more likely than their White counterparts to be a victim of firearms. Nearly one million Americans have been killed by guns since 1968. If anything else you can think of was killing adults and children at these alarming rates, the wheels of government would come to a virtual standstill until something was done.

I know I'm not alone. Survey show that three-fourths of gun owners support mandatory registration of handguns as does 85 percent of the general public. Two-thirds of gun owners and 80 percent of the general public favor mandatory background checks in private handgun sales such as gun shows. Eighty-eight percent of those surveyed feel that new handguns sold should be designed so that a child's small hands cannot fire them. And when asked if there should be a mandatory background check and a five-day waiting period in order to purchase a gun, 82 percent of the people owning a gun and 85 percent of the general public agreed that position was a good idea.

I call on you—every one of you reading this column. First, say a prayer for your child as he or she begins a new school year, and then write, call, fax, and email your national, state, and local government representatives demanding action against guns and for children. Help mount a massive moral witness and mobilization against violence in our society in every nook and cranny of America. Parent by parent, youth by youth, doctor by doctor, religious congregation by congregation, school by school, and neighborhood by neighborhood, help breathe life and security again into our communities and nation. Join me, won't you?

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Editor, Reader Response The Portland Observer
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Thank you for taking the time to give us some feedback.

question stated by Eli Siegel: "what does a person deserve by being alive?" This emergent question is at the center of the powerful public service film on homelessness and hunger titled "What Does A Person Deserve?" by filmmaker and Aesthetic Realism consultant, Ken Kimmelman. The film premiered at the Washington, D.C. summit meeting of the National Coalition for the Homeless and is being aired on television stations around the county and

abroad. It concludes with these kind and completely practical sentences by Eli Siegel:

"The world should be owned by the people living in it...All person should be seen as living in a world truly theirs." (Self and World, Definition Press, 1981)

The Aesthetic Realism Foundation is a not-for-profit educational foundation located at 141 Greene Street, New York, NY 10012. (212) 777-4490; www.AestheticRealism.org



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