



EMPATHIC PARENTING

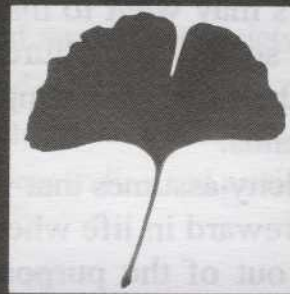
Journal of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Volume 23

Issue 3

Summer 2000

SIMPLICITY



Notes, Stories and Exercises
for Developing
Unimaginable Wealth

MARK A. BURCH

**Simplicity sounds like an invitation to be cold
and hungry and bored.**

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The Best Things in Life...

What is life for anyway? The answer to this question may be very different for different people. For some, it may be based on the feelings of pleasure they derive from various activities, from relationships or from achievements. For others, the purpose of life may be related to religious faith, spiritual beliefs, a calling or craft or trade. Others may want to make a contribution of some kind to our society or culture, or perhaps they find the purpose of their lives in caring for family members, children or friends.

Voluntary simplicity assumes that we will find greatest satisfaction and reward in life when our daily round of activities grows out of the purposes and goals we believe are most important. Experiences of great pleasure and deep meaning are often themselves the signposts to what we value and what is best for us. A simple life is one in which we focus our energies on the things we know are best for us. Often, however, the pace of modern life leaves us little time to remember or re-centre our activities on the "best things in life."

Mark Burch
(see pages 12-16)

WHAT IS EMPATHIC PARENTING?

Being willing and able to put yourself in your child's shoes in order to correctly identify his/her feelings, and

Being willing and able to behave toward your child in ways which take those feelings into account.

Empathic Parenting takes an enormous amount of time and energy and fully involves both parents in a co-operative, sharing way.

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EMPATHIC PARENTING

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Many articles from past issues of Empathic Parenting are available on the Internet at:

<http://www.empathicparenting.org>

There you will find links all our sites:

- Empathic Parenting
- Crime Prevention
- Psychopathy and Consumerism:
Two Illnesses That Need and Feed Each Other
- Daycare is for Parents Not
Infants and Toddlers
- The Fastest Growing Religion
- Physical Punishment in the
Home
- A Certificate for Parenting

Letters

How wonderful to do a mass printing of Attachment Parenting. I would be happy to distribute in local drop-in centers, doctors offices, etc. When I'm feeling alone in my parenting I read an old issue of Empathic Parenting and breathe a big sigh — a grateful one!

Keswick, Ontario

Thank you for 50 copies of Attachment Parenting. I find the CSPCC'S publications very educational, informative, encouraging, and look forward to receiving it four times a year. Sometimes I wish it came more often!'

Victoria, BC

I give every pregnant parent a copy of your booklet to help spread the word. Keep up the good work.

Deep River, Ontario

Thank you for sending 50 copies of Attachment Parenting. I am a third grade teacher. I am happy to distribute them at my school.

Fairfax, California

Thank you for your wonderful journal and all you do for children. Please send 50 booklets to distribute. Thanks for your inspiring work.

Snohoniish, WA

As a social worker in the early childhood initiative program, I have read the booklet and find it contains very good information. I would like to pass it on to parents. Please send 100 copies.

Bathurst, New Brunswick

What a wonderful opportunity to get

information out. I have raised 5 children all with attachment parenting concepts. I find myself surprised that this knowledge is not everywhere. I had assumed that all new parents did a search for information and found what I have found - not so. I would be delighted to distribute the copies wherever I can and give them to new parents.

Picton, Ontario

As a prenatal instructor for 12 years, I have tried to teach and encourage the principles of attachment parenting. I am sure your booklet will be helpful and I would be happy to distribute them to my clients. Best wishes for continued success for your very excellent periodical.

Windsor, Ontario

What an incredible response. 7,000 requested, requiring yet another printing!

ETB

Attachment Parenting



Letters

Feb 27/99

Why Can't I Have a Father:
Cory's Life Without a Father:

I once had a father who was around for six months of my life, he didn't spend that much time with me, but since I was 6 yrs. old I was looking for him, until I finally found him at 12 yrs old.

I thought I saw a ghost, I felt a lot of things go threw me. I more like felt happy to even see him, and then still 12 yrs. old father still not around to spend lots of time with me. Since I was 6 month old father never called to say Happy Birthday. Or Merry Christmas. Oh well, I promised my self one thing – don't ever do what my father did to me – leave me behind with my mother and never came back or tryed to get a holed of me. Now strait up – that is being a fucking asshole.

I have been hurting since he left my life I have been so hurt, depressed, lonely. He's not there when I need some one to talk to, when I need a sholder that I've been needing for the last 17 yrs.

I saw my Dad in the bank and I went in and ask him for \$5.00 and he said he's broke, and I had to bug (beg) for it. then he gave it to me. then I hugged him but he didn't hug back. then he said, – "OK, go away". I was hurt, pissed off. it's like he felt ashamed about me. Like I was not even his son.

But his day will come in court for

not even trying. I'm now 17 years old I see him down town and he looks at me and doesn't say hi, he waits till I say it. Then he waves, but it still does not change anything in my life. I wish he would call me, I'm living on my own now and he still does not want my number.

I talk to my Mom one day (cuple days ago) and she said where does he work, what's his number. I told her then she said ok. Bye. hung up. then I called my Dad to say hello. I talk to him and I asked him do you want to go to for lunch some time this week no, – NO NO NO NO, I fucking hate NO from him.

If this private letter ever gets to him – DAD YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL NOW. But anyway why does my Dad have a life with some one else he has a new family now. since then he paid more time with that family, and almost forgot me.

Well, I will shout up now I am to pissed off to write. My Daddy promised my he'll take me camping – he did not fishing in his boat – he did not. I have never in my life been out in a motor boat fishing. When I cot my first fish, he was not around like I was hopping he would be. I will give up on trying to get my Daddy back. I am a warm, kind hearted person. What is he. Is he really my Dad, I thought fathers spent time with their kids sometime. I don't know what to think anymore. Well I'll talk to you later paper.

From
Cory

Love the tie that bonds

Lisa Jennings
Scripps Howard News Service

Eddie Love's family told her she was spoiling her baby when she responded to the child's every cry.

She saw 'open-mouthed stares' when people spotted her breast-feeding her nearly three-year-old old in public.

And she knew a lot of people would think that allowing the children to sleep with her was a very bad idea.

But Love did it anyway — because she felt it was right for her daughters, now four years and 9 months.

Love practices an increasingly popular parenting philosophy called "attachment parenting."

Coined from a phrase used by popular child development author Dr William Sears two decades ago the concept of attachment parenting has grown into something of a social movement.

Attachment parenting support groups have sprung up all over the United States, offering something for everyone: attachment parenting for feminists, attachment parenting for Christians, etc. All essentially advocate what Sears calls the "baby Bs:"

* Birth bonding, or connecting with your child immediately after birth. Asking to have your child stay with you in the hospital is recommended.

* Breast-feeding. It's strongly recommended by doctors for the first year, but Sears advocates continuing beyond the first birthday.

* Sharing your bed with your baby. The family bed facilitates breast-feeding and also fosters connectedness between parents and child, according to Sears.

* Baby "wearing," or carrying your baby in a sling, carrier or backpack. Widely practiced in other cultures, it also fosters closeness and makes life easier for mom.

* Belief in the signal value of your baby's cry.

Babies cry because they're trying to tell us something, contends Sears.

Though it may take time for parents to understand the child's cues, a quick response fosters trust. And a parent's sensitivity to a child's needs is crucial to that child's healthy emotional growth.

In an interview from his office in Southern California, Sears said attachment parenting is essentially what parents would come to naturally without the "help" of doctors and baby books.

"We feel in some ways ridiculous that we have had to give a name to what is such a natural style of parenting," said Sears.

The concept grew from his decades of pediatric practice and raising his eight children with his wife, Martha Sears, a nurse.

Records kept

"I wanted to know what works most of the time," said Sears. So he kept records

Reprinted with permission from Scripps Howard News Service and the author. Special thanks to Evan Grant for drawing this article, which was printed in the Windsor Star, to the attention of the editor.

of parenting techniques used by the parents in his practice and how the children turned out.

Those who turned out well he described as "connected kids," whose parents practiced at least some components of what is now known as attachment parenting.

Sear's next book, due next year, is scheduled to be called *Kids Who Turn Out Well: What Their Parents Did*.

Though Sears has written many books over the years promoting his ideas, attachment parenting seems to have taken off within the past two or three years.

Why? "Because the other stuff isn't working."

The rise in youth violence has many concerned. "Parents are saying, 'What can I do to keep my child from shooting up a high school?'" Sears said.

It is one of the reasons Sharon Dodson and Christie Watts Kelly decided to launch an attachment parenting support group in Memphis, Tenn.

"It was our response to all we were hearing about teenagers lashing out and the violence in our communities," said Kelly, the mother of two, age six and two.

Kelly said the group's emphasis is less "extremist" than some. People often can't get past the bed sharing and breastfeeding issues, she said.

All the techniques of attachment par-

enting may not work for everyone. Some children don't like sleeping with their parents. They may need their own space said Kelly.

An attachment parent may feel more comfortable with the baby in a bassinet in the same room

"We advocate flexible sleeping arrangements," said Kelly.

"It's like any style of parenting, you have to adjust it to your lifestyle," said Dodson, who has four children.

"Certainly in our opinion, breast-feeding fosters a secure attachment, but a bottle-feeding mom may be able to foster just as secure an attachment," said Dodson. "She might have to work a little harder.

"Our group is focused on not making anyone feel guilty."

Working mothers may be put off by the fact that many who practice attachment parenting eschew day care, saying children need a consistent care giver, preferably a parent, for the first three years of life. But Dodson said the group includes many working parents — some with kids in day care.

In fact, the group has recently changed its daytime meetings to 6:30 p.m. so more working parents can attend — including fathers, who play a critical role in the attachment process.

Most important to Kelly and Dodson is promoting the ideas of responding to a child's cues and positive, "non-violent"

The concept of attachment parenting has grown into something of a social movement.

Attachment parenting support groups have sprung up all over the United States.

Attachment parenting is essentially what parents would come to naturally without the “help” of doctors and baby books.

disciplinary techniques.

“We feel like a child’s needs and wants are the same, said Kelly. “Babies can’t be spoiled or manipulative.”

Yet it’s still common to hear the classic advice of past generations: Don’t pick up a baby every time it cries; let it cry it out say opposing voices. And don’t spare the rod.

“The South has a history of corporal punishment”, said Dodson. “You often hear the classic: I was spanked, and I turned out fine.”

To that Dodson says, “You do the best with the best you know. But when you know better you do better.”

Kaleigh Donnelly, a member of the group said she “stumbled into” attachment parenting after reading one of Sears’ books before her first child was born two years ago. Donnelly said she had planned to take maternity leave, then return to work with her daughter in day care. “What you don’t know is what kind of parent you’re going to be until your baby is born,” she said. “You don’t know how much you’re going to love her.”

Donnelly found she wanted to be with

her baby all the time — at night in bed and carrying her in a sling during the day.

Donnelly’s mother and others thought the idea was “a little wacky,” she said. But her children are happy and secure. “I just point to the kids and say obviously it’s working.”

Her daughter Emma, had no trouble moving to her own crib about a year old, said Donnell. Now 9-month-old Roland shares the family bed.

After Emma was born, Donnelly returned to work full time as director of education for First Unitarian Church in downtown Memphis — and Emma came with her. After Roland was born, she decided to work part time at a bank. Now she runs her own business at home, selling ‘attachment parenting’ gear, such as hemp diapers, breast-feeding supplies, slings and more. (See <http://www.natureandnurture.com> on the Web.)

For many practicing attachment parenting means making financial sacrifices, said Donnelly “It’s a priority shift. So often I hear people say ‘I wish I could afford to stay at home’ when they’re getting into their brand new Jeep Cherokee.”

“You often hear the classic: I was spanked, and I turned out fine.”

To that Dodson says, “You do the best with the best you know. But when you know better you do better.”

Attachment parenting is the antithesis of techniques that encourage "training" babies at a young age which Sears said do nothing but promote detachment.

Parenting "educators" teach parents to establish themselves as authority figures when their children are infants by putting the babies on rigid schedules and setting expectations for respect early on.

"Such theories are often presented as quick fix formulas," said Ann Zambetti, manager of women's health education for the Partnership for Women's and Children's Health.

Rearing a child by the book -- no matter what the book -- won't work. "Every child is an individual," she said.

Zambetti approves of attachment parenting because it encourages parents to follow their instincts. "I don't think there is a parent in the world who hasn't practiced some of it," she said.

Bed-sharing

But pediatrician Dr Scott Kloek said he doesn't encourage some attachment parenting elements, such as bed sharing.

"With these ideas, a child becomes the ruler of the family and calls all the shots," he said.

But its those attitudes that attachment parenting is designed to counter said Kelly.

"Attachment parenting is an attitude," she said. "We're probably more willing to put our own needs aside for the needs of our children.

"But these things can really change society.

"People might feel their heart is pulling them one way and society is telling them something different. We're out there saying there is this other way. Listen to your heart." ☺

Attachment Parenting International



Peaceful Parenting For a Peaceful World

Affiliating with API to start your own Attachment Parenting support group is helping to establish a network of like-minded parents, professionals, and organizations throughout the world.

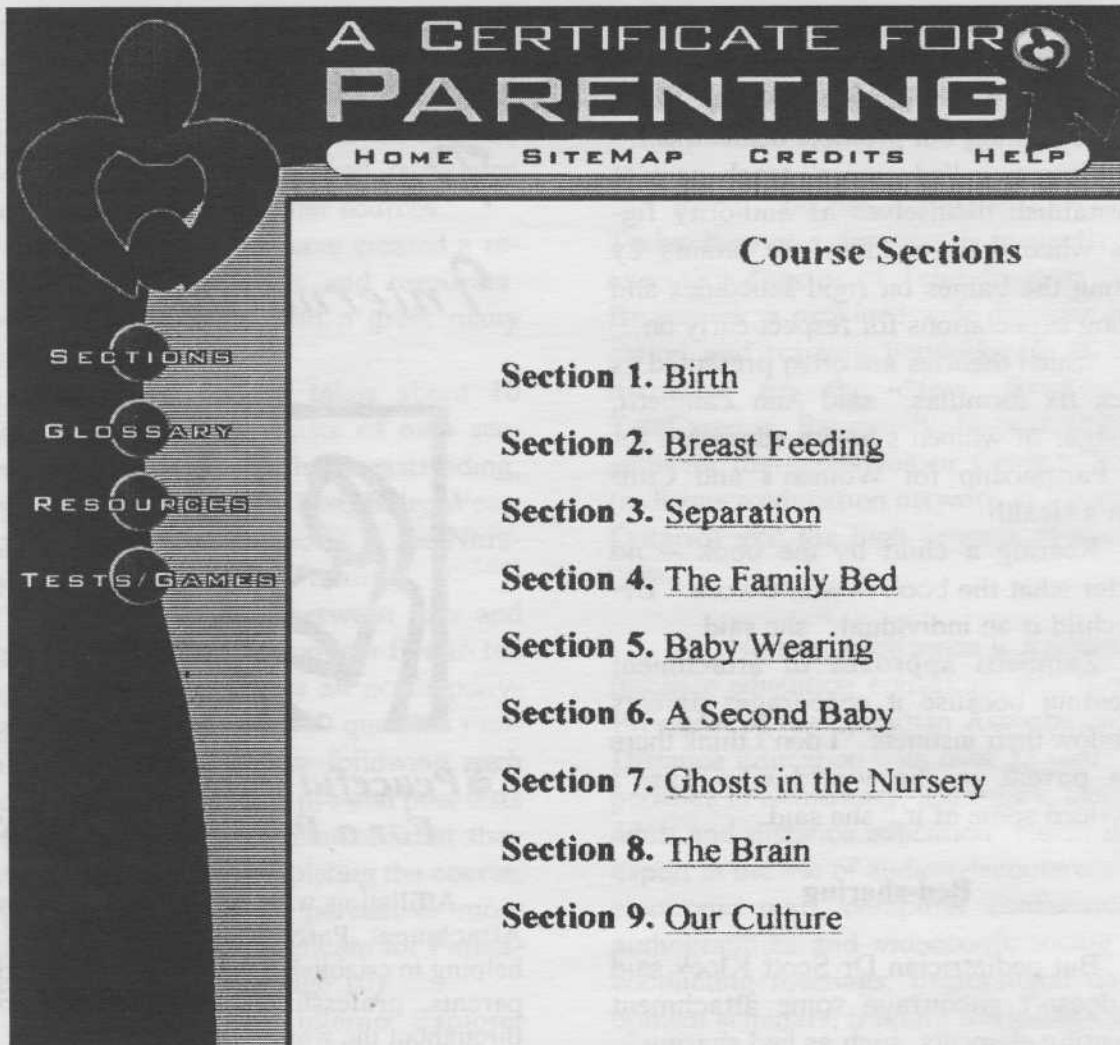
There are already support groups in Europe and the USA -- Alabama, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Washington and Washington, D.C.

Groups usually meet monthly in a library, church, or someone's home, and we have heard wonderful stories about how these groups have helped parents find the information, guidance, and empowerment they need.

Become a member and start a support group!

Attachment Parenting International
1508 Clairmont Place
Nashville, TN 37215
(615) 298-4334

www.attachmentparenting.org



A CERTIFICATE FOR PARENTING

HOME SITEMAP CREDITS HELP

Course Sections

- Section 1.** Birth
- Section 2.** Breast Feeding
- Section 3.** Separation
- Section 4.** The Family Bed
- Section 5.** Baby Wearing
- Section 6.** A Second Baby
- Section 7.** Ghosts in the Nursery
- Section 8.** The Brain
- Section 9.** Our Culture

A CERTIFICATE FOR PARENTING

<http://parenting.telecampus.com>

In November 1997 the CSPCC applied for and was subsequently granted \$81,900 from the Office of Learning Technologies, Human Resource Development Canada. We also received technical and hosting support from TeleEducation New Brunswick and its Telecampus.

The purpose of the grant was:

“the design, delivery and assessment of a *Parenting Training Programme* focused on the principles of the Society and making them available in an easy-to-use instructional format to new parents and parents-to-be globally on the world wide web in English and French.”

As the introduction to the course states:

Every person, whether they are a parent or not has pretty strong opinions about how a child should be raised. What is more, all of us think we are "right"! Each of us believes he or she has the correct answer, the best way, for bringing up a healthy happy baby.

Not only that, most of us are only too quick to tell other people how they should raise their children. One mother got so much advice from so many people she said she learned that the best answer to all these advice givers was to just smile and say uh huh!

So why take a course in parenting?

There's only one reason: to increase the number of options new parents might consider before having a baby. Why? Because it's very hard to decide about something you've never heard of!

So this course is not about the best way to discipline your child or the best method of toilet training.

In fact, it's not about a lot of things you might expect a course on parenting would be about. We tried hard to deal only with those things you've never heard about! The hippocampus, cortisol, doula's, baby wearing and ghosts!

By the time you've finished this course we hope you'll understand just three things:

ONE

What a human baby has evolved over millions of years to expect and need

TWO

How our culture often clashes with those expectations

THREE

Important new information about a baby's brain development after it is born.

And, of course, the importance of ghosts.

Our objective was to create a program of parenting education that would be of such compelling interest that grade eight students would want to stay in from recess to play with it. A bit grandiose on this budget, but a worthwhile goal to fail at!

There is a jigsaw puzzle game and a matching game (match the words with the picture) for each section and a true/false question following each lesson. Although these give a measure of interactivity, they are far short of what we would have liked.

What a job, to take what seems like the best of what has been written by world-class experts and reduce it to a grade eight reading level. Sadly, we have fallen short of even that goal (though one ten year old grade five student completed the Beta test version (birth and breastfeeding sections)

with only one complaint. "What does the word drudgery mean?"

What a job to credit the sources of every thought expressed, after the original quotations have been reworked, re-worded and re-integrated with other sources.

Given all that, we have created a remarkable list of sources and resources: books, articles, films, and a great many Internet links.

The course, which takes about 10 hours to complete, consists of nine sections, dealing with: Birth, Breastfeeding, Separations, The Family Bed, Baby Wearing, A Second Baby, Ghosts in the Nursery, The Brain and Our Culture.

Each section has between four and eight lessons. Each lesson has five to ten pages. Most pages have an accompanying drawing. There is a 10 question multiple-choice questionnaire following each section. Fifteen question pre-and post tests give a person an indication of what they have learned. After completing the course, a post test score of 80 percent or more lets you print out A Certificate for Parenting in your name. (see page 10).

It takes Microsoft Internet Explorer (version 4.0 or higher) or Netscape (version 3.0 or higher) and at least a 486 computer to work with the course. The advantage of black and white drawings is that they load faster over the Internet with today's predominantly slow speeds.

The course will be available from the CSPCC on CD-ROM in the very near future. And, thanks to the generosity of Swing for Kids (an annual golf tournament organized to provide funds to children's charities doing preventive work) and two bequests to the CSPCC, the CD will be made available to school teachers who request it -- without charge!

From conception to completion we have been blessed by the enormous expertise of the principal partners of the project -- Rory McGreal and Norm McKinnon.

Rory, who has a PhD in Computer Technology at a distance, is presently the executive director of TeleEducation New Brunswick, a province-wide distance education and training network. He is also director of the New Brunswick TeleCampus. Previously, he was responsible for the expansion of Contact North (a distance education network in Northern Ontario) into the high schools of the region.

Dr. Norman McKinnon is a respected distance education consultant and former President of the Canadian Association for Distance Education with over 25 years experience in elementary, secondary, teacher, adult and distance education. Norm is an expert in the use of audio-teleconferencing, electronic mail, computer conferencing, audiographics and videoconferencing for conducting meetings, professional development seminars, training workshops, curriculum design and course delivery. He is currently working with, assessing and investigating the training and educational applications of CD-ROM, CBT, BTV, the Internet and the World Wide Web.

It is difficult to name particular people who have helped with this project -- there are so many. But I owe a special debt to Susanne Arms (*Immaculate Deception II*) for her careful revision of the Birth section, and Karen Walant (*Creating the Capacity for Attachment*) for her inspiration and detailed assistance with the section dealing with Ghosts in the Nursery. ☺

**The Canadian Society for
the Prevention
of
Cruelty to Children**

**Certificate of Completion
Presented to**

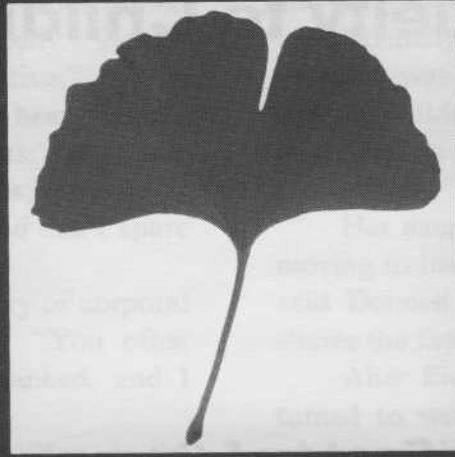
Your Name

**for successfully completing the
online course**

A Certificate for Parenting

<http://parenting.telecampus.com/>
Email: cspcc@bconnex.net

SIMPLICITY



Notes, Stories and Exercises
for Developing
Unimaginable Wealth



MARK A. BURCH

EMPATHIC PARENTING Volume 23 Issue 3 Summer 2000

Simplicity

Mark Burch

Simplicity sounds like an invitation to be cold and hungry and bored.

It's paradoxical that on the one hand, Canada is one of the most desirable places in the world to live, and on the other hand, there is very considerable evidence of personal stress and discontent. Several surveys of job satisfaction in Canada have shown that a large number of people are unhappy with their work. Divorce rates, crime rates, substance abuse rates, assaults of all kinds, increasing child poverty chronic problems with unemployment prejudice and social unrest all suggest that in spite of living in an economically privileged country, many of us suffer dislocation and personal turmoil.

Voluntary simplicity is not a panacea for all of these problems. Nevertheless, a very large number of people are beginning to feel overwhelmed by the *pace* of life in North America as well as its *complexity*. North American society has been built on the assumption that more, bigger, and faster defines better, healthier and happier. Yet many of us have come to question this view. If achieving worthwhile goals requires that we must live at a manic pace, is it any wonder that we yearn for holidays when we then give ourselves permission to live according to the rhythms of our bodies and the cycles of the Earth?

Too often voluntary simplicity has the tone of puritanical renunciation, as if deprivation confers virtue. Simplicity sounds like an invitation to be cold and hungry and bored in atonement for some guilt we should feel for having been warm, fed and challenged. Little wonder that simplicity seldom appeals to many people.

Voluntary simplicity *is* an answer to many personal, social and environmental problems. But simplicity is not an end in itself. We may admire the clean lines of simple living just as we appreciate a Zen rock garden or an elegant mathematical proof. Yet neither of these aims to promote simplicity as such. Simplicity is a side-effect or precondition of working toward a deeper value.

The lives of people who embrace simple living display a passion for some deeper purpose from which power, possessions and the clutter of busy living represent distractions. Like freeing time to spend with a lover, lovers of simplicity free their lives of everything that might draw down their energy or obstruct the way toward their highest goals. For Jesus, it was proclaiming his Father's kingdom; for Socrates, it was the pursuit of Truth; for Thoreau, self-reliance and spiritual

Excerpted with kind permission from Mark Burch's book SIMPLICITY: Notes, Stories and Exercises for Developing Unimaginable Wealth. Published by New Society Publishers. ISBN 1-55092-269-6 All bookstores can order this book if they don't have it on the shelf, or it can be ordered directly from New Society Publishers by calling toll free at 1-800-567-6772 from Canada or the U.S. \$15.95 Can, \$12.95 U.S. The author's latest book, STEPPING LIGHTLY: Simplicity for People and the Planet, has a much more in-depth treatment of how simpler living can contribute to enriching family life and community - also from New Society Publishers. ISBN 0-86571-423-1 It will be available in October — \$18.95 Can, \$15.95 U.S.

communion with his beloved New England; for Buddha, it was self-liberation. Though most of us keep less exalted company, we still know the pleasure of time with our children, our spouses, a craft or art form, the calling of our work or contributions we wish to make to our communities, which leave no room in our lives for excess baggage.

And here we find the evil of addictive acquisition: *that it distracts us from what is best in our lives*. Voluntary simplicity brings us nothing of its own, but it clears a space within which we can rediscover and honor our highest loves. It may be that we choose personal simplicity because of the benefits it brings to the planet and to other people. Yet these benefits must bring us personal satisfaction as well.

Thus, for many of us, the pathway to simplicity will not be found through feeling guilty about what we own. A surer route is remembering when we have felt the most profound joy and fulfillment in our humanity. These moments are still possibilities for the future. Finally, falling in love with what is truly worthy of our love, we claim the courage to dispense with whatever would cause us again to forget and go back to sleep. We simplify only partly to atone for the guilt of over-consumption. More crucial is that we shed clutter as we shed clothing to be with a lover, to be close, to join, to merge and be

joyful.

Simplicity is not prerequisite to a meaningful life; it is co-requisite to it. Simplicity enables mindfulness and mindfulness enables peace and delight. The more we find our peace and delight in simplicity and mindfulness, the more completely we embrace them. Simplicity, mindfulness and peace arise gradually and together as co-requisite aspects of a self-strengthening pattern. The more they are chosen and coexist, the less room remains in our lives for unthinking hyperactivity. Voluntary simplicity is good because it makes possible attentive devotion to those

experiences that define our fullest humanity rather than conferring on someone else a maximum of wealth. Only a simple life can be concentrated mindfully upon its art — whatever “art” that may be. Only a simple life is free enough from distraction to focus deeply upon its sacred goals

without haste or diversion. Only a simple life can lay hold of inner riches.

Voluntary simplicity can also be an *act of self-enrichment* in that living simply, we realign our involvements away from things and toward self, other people and the ecosphere. One of the fruits of simple living is time. But clearly we aren't here merely to vegetate! We naturally want to use the time for something. We meet the difference between simplicity and consumerism precisely at this point: given

Like freeing time to spend with a lover, lovers of simplicity free their lives of everything that might draw down their energy or obstruct the way toward their highest goals.

And here we find the evil of addictive acquisition: *that it distracts us from what is best in our lives.*

some time, how shall I use it? Modern society allows us to face this question only very rarely because most of our time is structured for us by the demands inherent in a wasteful, consumption-oriented way of life. Many people have trouble planning a holiday without money. In fact, we may even save money all year so that our holidays become special occasions for over-consumption!

Consciously deciding how to use time is something that is usually connected with crises in our lives such as unemployment, completing a higher education and searching for a first job, retirement, holiday planning, or some forced life change like an illness that imposes the need to radically restructure our use of time. Simple living implies making conscious decisions about how we use more and more of our time and orienting our activities around the goals we find most satisfying and meaningful. Exercises in the second part of this book are designed to assist with this process...

Attachment Parenting



Voluntary simplicity brings us nothing of its own, but it clears a space within which we can rediscover and honor our highest loves.

We must recognize and respect the great force of past learning and the incessant reinforcement of consumerism through the media, advertising and personal relationships.

Our habit of thinking of simplicity either as stark deprivation or as nostalgic utopia causes us to miss the opportunity to explore and indeed *develop* meanings of simple living that involve neither destitution nor wishful thinking. Simplicity contains values that elude us if we maintain the prejudices and preconceived ideas supplied by the media and entrepreneurs whose vested interests lie in complexity and consumption.

Voluntary simplicity is a *matter of degrees*, not of meeting an absolute standard. If we point to examples of simple living such as the Greek philosophers Diogenes and Socrates, Jesus of Nazareth who had "no place to lay his head," Francis of Assisi or Henry Thoreau, it is only to define the yonder end of a journey that begins with ourselves, as we now live, where we now live. If I advocate simplicity it is not to urge that everyone live like a philosopher-ascetic, but rather to suggest a general direction for decisions that lead toward ever-increasing lightness of being. The life of the philosopher-ascetic, however romantic it may be, is hardly an

option for most people who live in families, marriages or other relationships of mutuality.

Like conservation efforts that reduce not what we *need* but what we *waste*, voluntary simplicity affirms every person's right to freedom from material want. It merely goes on to claim that the purposes of human life are more diverse and exciting than addictive materialism. Most of all, voluntary simplicity affirms human freedom and independence in the face of the powerlessness, dependency and despair that are the spiritual fruits of affluence.

Many of us live within families or relationships wherein the generousities and compromises made for love often preclude radical individual actions. In these relationships, the choices we might make for ourselves need to be discussed with the partners, children and friends who might be affected by them. In so doing, we seek the common ground upon which we can both live according to our personal vision of simplicity and also in relationship with others.

The purposes of human life are more diverse and exciting than addictive materialism.

The Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

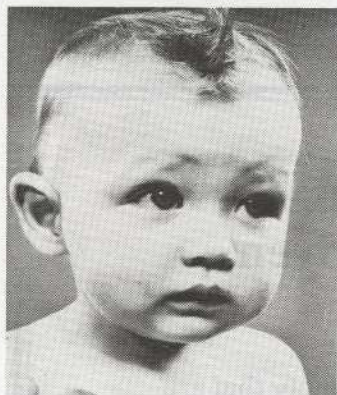
The CSPCC is working to change those things in Canadian society that are making it difficult for parents to give their children the care they need to grow into healthy, confident, non-violent, loving adults.

In general we are working for:

- ◆ a shift from arbitrary male dominance to no-one's arbitrary dominance
- ◆ a shift from the essential beliefs of our society's consumer religion -- envy, selfishness and greed -- to trust, empathy and affection in a community-centred, sustainable society
- ◆ a shift from violence and sexism as the warp and woof of entertainment
- ◆ a shift from treating children as sinful or stupid to empathizing with them and fulfilling their expanding and particular needs

In particular we are working to:

- ◆ raise the status of parenting
- ◆ implement universal parenting education from kindergarten to grade eight
- ◆ encourage parents to make their children's emotional needs their highest priority during the critical first three years
- ◆ facilitate a positive birthing experience for every father, mother and baby
- ◆ promote extended breastfeeding with child-led weaning
- ◆ make it easier for parents to meet the emotional needs of each child by encouraging a minimum three year spacing between siblings
- ◆ increase awareness of the potential long term hazards of separations between children under three and their mothers.



Recognizing that the capacity to give and receive trust, affection and empathy is fundamental to being human.

Knowing that all of us suffer the consequences when children are raised in a way that makes them affectionless and violent, and;

Realizing that for the first time in History we have definite knowledge that these qualities are determined by the way a child is cared for in the very early years.

CREDO



WE BELIEVE THAT:

- The necessity that every new human being develop the capacity for trust, affection and empathy dictates that potential parents re-order their priorities with this in mind.
- Most parents are willing and able to provide their children with the necessary loving empathic care, given support from others, appropriate understanding of the task and the conviction of its absolute importance.
- It is unutterably cruel to permanently maim a human being by failing to provide this quality of care during the first three years of life.

THERE IS AN URGENCY THEREFORE TO:

- Re-evaluate all our institutions, traditions and beliefs from this perspective.
- Oppose and weaken all forces which undermine the desire or ability of parents to successfully carry out a task which ultimately affects us all.
- Support and strengthen all aspects of family and community life which assist parents to meet their obligation to each new member of the human race.