

Building Better Citizens: Key Ideas

(Jone Johnson, 10/98)

1. Authentic Community
 - A. Grandfalloon vs. Karass (Vonnegut)
 1. Three hallmarks:
 1. Inclusive community of individuals, recognition of individual worth
 2. Participative decisions B inclusive empowerment
 3. Threefold responsibility: care of self, care of others, maintenance of the community
2. Individuality: growing a self
 1. Selfhood as developmental
 2. Integrity: wholeness
 1. Self awareness and self management (feelings, emotions, motivations, assumptions, thoughts, beliefs)
 2. Awareness and respect for boundaries
 3. Balance closeness and separation
 3. Making choices
 1. Broad and diverse experience
 2. Inquiry - exploration
 3. Critical thinking and analysis
 4. AHabits of Mind@ (Deborah Meier)
 5. Decision-making
 4. Making commitments and keeping them
 5. Neither authoritarian nor permissive parenting/education styles
 1. Make their own choices
 2. Learn natural and proportional consequences
3. Respecting and loving others B maintaining relationships
 1. Respect differences, honor uniqueness and diversity
 1. Race, sex, beliefs, style, personality
 2. Empathy & understanding other perspectives -- AAct so as to elicit the best in others, and thereby in yourself.@
 3. Power *to* and power *with* versus power *over*
 4. Exclusive, oppressive, and abusive behavior is not acceptable
 5. Accountability and responsibility
 6. AEthical virtues@ like truth-telling, respect, making and keeping commitments
 7. Choosing intimate relationships
 8. AService is the rent we pay for living@
4. Maintenance of community, of group life
 1. Interdependence rather than autonomy or dependence
 2. Accept and deal creatively with conflict: Avoid neither conflict nor resolution: value of conflict is in getting through it
 3. Group decision-making process and procedures
 4. Group problem-solving skills
 5. Understanding larger interdependences: natural world, politics, economics
 6. Bias towards action, not just reflection
 7. Experimental attitude
 8. Leadership and management skills
5. Summary
 1. The three areas are mutually reinforcing
 2. There are other values in life in addition to building community
 3. Building better citizens is a lifelong process

words to ponder

From Sharon Welch, in her book, *The Feminist Ethic of Risk*:

Resistance to oppression is often based on a love that leads us to value ourselves, and leads us to hope for more than the established cultural system is willing to grant ... such love is far more energizing than guilt, duty, or self-sacrifice.

Love for others leads us to accept accountability (in contrast to feeling guilt) and motivates our search for ways to end our complicity with structures of oppression.

Solidarity does not require self-sacrifice, but an enlargement of the self to include community with others.

From Henry Tam, in his recent book, *Communitarianism*:

Through working in communities of enquiry, young people learn that although questions in life do not always have ready-made answers, possible solutions [are] discovered by co-operating with others in their search; that people with different views should be respected; that people who refuse to comply with the rules of co-operation cannot be allowed to override the wishes of others; and that the most acceptable course of action at the present time could still be subject to revision in the future. Such an approach to education would provide a bridge to inclusive communities dependent on citizens who are inclined, and able, to deal with their common concerns by means of co-operative enquiry.

Act so as to elicit the best in others, and thereby in yourself. Felix Adler

Service is the rent we pay for living. Marian Wright Edelman

What I do and how I live affects me, the world, and other people. B sign in a school in Chicago

