

All I Ever Really Needed to Know, I Learned in Kindergarten

Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in Kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at the nursery school.

These are things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life - learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work some every day.

Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the plastic cup. The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the plastic cup - they all die. So do we.

And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned - the biggest word of all - LOOK. Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology, politics, equality and sane living.

Take any of those items and extrapolate it into sophisticated adult terms and apply it to your family life, your work, your government, or your world and it holds true and clear and firm. Think what a better world it would be if all- the whole world - had cookies and milk about three o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankies for a nap. Or if we had a basic policy in our nation and other nations to always put things back where we found them and to clean up our own mess.

And it is still true, no matter how old you are - when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

By Robert Fulghum