

Simple Wisdom for Life - All I Ever Needed to Know, I Learned in Kindergarten

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For almost twenty-five years, I taught kindergarten and preschool. I believe that I learned as much or more than all the students that I had the privilege of interacting with each day. Learning to be more present and authentic brought me the personal satisfaction. Developing more patience and willingness to try new things enhanced my life beyond the classroom.

I learned that I didn't have to know everything and admitting mistakes was refreshing. Young children are refreshingly honest in their observations as well as being forgiving and accepting without too much judgement. Asking questions and really listening to what kids have to say is a wonderful way of empowering them to feel secure and to be curious about life and the world around them.

More than thirty years ago, Robert Fulghum published a simple credo that went on to become a New York Times bestseller. As an author he has written several other books, but this credo is still crucial and relevant wisdom for us all—that the most basic aspects of life offer the most important opportunities.

I share it with you here and hope that you can find wisdom to guide your daily choices in your family, workplace, community and beyond.

All I Ever Needed to Know, I Learned in Kindergarten - Robert Fulghum

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 sand box at nursery school.

These are the 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 are 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 some and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day.

Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out in the world, watch for traffic, hold hands, and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup? The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why but we are like that. Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seeds in the Styrofoam cup—they all die. So do we.

And then remember that book about Dick and Jane and the first word you learned, the biggest word of all: LOOK! Everything you need to know is there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation, ecology, and politics and the sane living.

Think of what a better world it would be if we all, the whole world, had cookies and milk about 3 o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankets for a nap. Or we had a basic policy in our nation and other nations to always put things back where we found them and clean up our own messes.

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