

Everything Voluntary – Preface

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Preface

If I may take a personal route, this book is the culmination of the last 7 years of my academic life. It's been quite the intellectual journey. I've evolved from a progressive liberal to a free-market conservative to a *laissez faire* libertarian, and finally, a voluntarist (or voluntarist). Of course, it wasn't until very recently that my focus turned toward my parenting. I certainly didn't approach my children as a voluntarist. More like a barbarian.

The pieces finally fit when I was introduced to Alfie Kohn's *Unconditional Parenting* by a very good friend of mine, a mentor, and author of my foreword, Chris Brown. As my wife and I implemented his philosophy, it became obvious that sending our children to public school would most likely reverse everything we wanted to accomplish. The schools still reward good behavior and punish bad (as if children can "misbehave"). Well-meaning teachers would raise our children in ways that we believe are unhealthy for them as individuals and as human beings.

I had read a little about a homeschooling philosophy called "unschooling" a year prior, when our son first started preschool. With our recent change in parenting style, and realization that school would hinder our efforts, I jumped online to find out more about this unschooling. I was quickly "converted" and managed to convince my wife to give it a go.

My son would be in Kindergarten right now, but instead is discovering all sorts of amazing things via museums, recreational activities, books, television, the Internet, and video games, ie. *the world*. He insists on asking my wife and I a thousand questions about every little thing he's discovered, every chance he gets. It can be very tiring those days I'm not in the mood (I work multiple jobs, you see), and he's learning to trust me when I tell him that I need some quiet time. He knows it'll be short order before we can have another conversation about whatever it is that's caught his interest.

His first year's almost up (that is if we can still call it that), and our relationships with both of our children are simply amazing. Our home boasts the complete absence of violence. Sure my kids (my son is 6½ and my daughter is 2½ as of this writing) tussle from time to time, but they're getting very good at working it out, and their relationship is wonderful. They adore each other.

In November of last year, I decided to launch a blog that would focus on "everything voluntary." Politics, the market, parenting, education, all of it; if it was based on mutual

consent, I wanted to promote protecting it, and if not, then I wanted to bury it. It has no place in the civilized world, and sure as heck has no place in the home!

When I set out to put together a book on these topics, a voluntaryist primer, I soon questioned my approach. I thought, “Why reinvent the wheel?” I had already discovered so many gems on my journey these last 7 years; why not just put them all together under different sections, introducing the reader to the voluntaryist argument? Others have said it better than I could, anyway. Other books on voluntaryism focused on politics, the market, and homeschooling in general. I wanted this one to focus more on the parent/child relationship and on childhood development, where I believe liberty will be saved, within our families. (It came out to about half dealing with the outside world and half in the home.)

That became the plan, as did self-publishing my book. I wanted complete control over the content. As far as that’s concerned, this is a bit of an experiment. I’ve never self-published a book before, nor have I ever edited, formatted, typeset, or marketed one. Now I have. It’s been incredibly fun, and I’ve got plans for more! I hope you enjoy it, and I hope you pay attention to my admonitions in the Afterword.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend a gigantic heartfelt “thank you” to Jan Hunt and her Natural Child Project (naturalchild.org). She provided me a considerable amount of aid in gathering permissions to reprint several essays found via the Project. Her website is a wonderful collection of some of the best essays and books I’ve discovered on peaceful parenting and childhood learning. Please visit the Project and if you like what you see, consider making a donation.

A special “thank you” also goes out to the following individuals for their assistance: Chris Brown, Nic Hooton, Spencer Morgan, Mark Skousen, Jesse Thomas, Wes Bertrand, Lou Gignac, Vahram Diehl, and to all of my contributors, whose work has been an invaluable source of wisdom for me and millions of others.

Saving the best for last, “thank you” to my beautiful and wonderful wife, Julieta, for the amazing children she has given me, and for her much needed love and support. Nobody can compare to the companion she has been on this wild ride we call our life.

Technical Note

I also want to make it clear that one contributor’s opinion is not necessarily the opinion of every other contributor. Their ideas are their own.

- Skyler J. Collins, Editor

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