

# IDEAS 93

**International Online Teachers Society  
Debate  
Educational Materials For  
Advance and Upper Intermediate  
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society  
Publishing Committee**



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## SIMPLICITY IN MY SLUM BOOK DAYS

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Back during the days when the start of summer vacation signaled the beginning of slum book preparation, one quote that was written by a classmate on another classmate's slum book caught my eye. Simplicity is beauty. One very unassuming statement that declared how being simple in whatever aspect is equivalent to beauty. I was impressed, third grade student that I was, about the wisdom that my classmate possessed. I happened to glance at the writer of that remarkable quote and indeed, it was not at all surprising that she had come up with such a lovely statement. My classmate possessed that unpretentiously beautiful face. She was fair, had naturally well-shaped eyebrows, great skin and glowing eyes. She also happened to be my best friend at that time.

Since time immemorial, I have been drawn to simple people, those who do not need to do anything about themselves just to get the attention of others. Women who are able to wake up with a clean face that still radiates with great beauty have amazed me. They do not need to tweak their faces with make-up nor use tweezers to harm their faces. There was a time when the rage to have penciled-in eyebrows that were also thinned out considerably was something that women liked to have done on them at the beauty salon. Admittedly, I underwent that phase, only I wouldn't have anyone do it on me. Wielding a wicked-looking pair of tweezers, I'd pluck out those stubborn eyebrow hairs that grew beyond an imaginary growth line and endured the pain that doing so inflicted. I even experimented at using women's razors since they were quicker and gave less pain. The downside was, once the hairs grew back in, they were thicker and the eyebrow line ultimately was much more "unruly". I just simply gave up hoping that I'd be able to tame my eyebrow line. It simply is impossible.

Then I read an article on Brooke Shields. She it was who was (and still is) gifted with a beautiful face- sans make up- and a great body. Literally, hers is the face that launched a thousand ads. She had thick eyebrows, and that article said she never needed to pluck her eyebrows when she was still active at modeling. She may have decided to tame her eyebrows a little when she got older, but people will always remember how her thick eyebrows in her younger years only added to the total package of loveliness she presented back then. The article also stated that thick eyebrows make a woman look younger.

Now I certainly do not profess to have beauty such as my third grade best friend and Brooke Shields possessed (and certainly still possess). But I've decided to just let simplicity take over as far as my face is concerned. Besides, simplicity is more of an attitude that should permeate all aspects of our lives. The simpler we are, the lovelier our lives will be.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define simplicity in your own terms.
2. How does the saying "less is more" apply to women?
3. What, to you, constitutes simple living?
4. What are the simple values in life that you adhere to?
5. How will you teach your own children about simplicity?



## HELL NOW ON EARTH

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Life nowadays has become less simple, definitely more complicated. Our fundamental needs might have remained the same, but they have somehow grown to encompass being (qualities), having (things), doing (actions) and interacting (settings) (from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamental\\_human\\_needs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamental_human_needs)). The 36-cell matrix that classified human needs in a taxonomy of sorts outlines the other requirements that people have in order to survive, this time in a modern setting. As the world has grown, so has the needs of man. It can be difficult to determine whether this is a good or a bad thing, since diversity may be good or bad also. But one thing is certain: our needs have broadened so much that addressing them sufficiently has become problematic.

In Dan Brown's latest book entitled *INFERNO*, the reality of the world's burgeoning population becomes the central gist of the whole story. With the way global population increases in unprecedented levels, the earth may not possess enough resources to feed or satisfy its human inhabitants. The radical solution may only be an epidemic similar to the Black Death in Europe during the Dark Ages in order to bring down the population to a more comfortable level. The question that is ultimately thrown to the protagonist is "If you could throw a switch and randomly kill half the population on earth, would you do it?...What if you were told that if you didn't throw that switch right now, the human race would be extinct in the next hundred years?" (From *INFERNO* by Dan Brown)

Now comes the respiratory corona virus in the Middle East that has been called by the World Health Organization as "a threat to the entire world." The implications of its deadliness are scary. Hopefully, the threat will die down, but what would happen if it doesn't? Is this perhaps heaven's way of purging the world's population so that the human race will not grow extinct? There's still no need to panic, but the what ifs are still there.

I am a single parent to seven children. My family and I have managed to keep everything simple in our lives. Making ends meet is a circadian battle that my family and I have to face and try hard to triumph over. There have been times when the simpler thing to do is just do nothing and wait for the tide to just turn, but most times, doing nothing is just irresponsible. In order to survive, my children have learned to ask for nothing more than the basic and expect nothing greater than the simplest rewards for their efforts. Safety from global threats-including the corona virus-is a prayer that I need to say now. To have any of my kids go sick would be a complication I can not afford to even imagine.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Why is life nowadays more complicated?
2. How can people live in simplicity? Elaborate on your answer.
3. Who is your role model on simplicity? Why is that so?
4. Can you answer the theoretical question put forward by Dan Brown in his novel? Explain your choice of answer.
5. Why was life in the old days much simpler than it is today? Expound on your answer and use examples, as needed.



## SIMPLICITY IN PARENTING

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In order to survive in today's times, we need to keep our goals simple. We teach our children to dream big, yes, but we also need to make sure they keep well-grounded in their values. Failure to do so would give our children a false sense of vanity or a mistaken notion that they can do whatever they want in order to become who they want to be. By all means let us encourage them to reach higher and grow stronger. But let us not blind them with promises that they'll always have an all-encompassing blanket of protection from us.

It can be tempting to give everything we can to our children. They are, after all, our offspring and they deserve nothing less. However, unless we teach our children to temper down their desire for the grander things in life with the simplest values of life, they may grow up believing that the sun rises and sets for them and the world is always at their feet. Children who have been raised to be too proud and sure of themselves grow up to be too assuming and arrogant of themselves. The spoiled brats that we teach them to be in their childhood grow up to be the tyrants of the future. If our children never get a taste of defeat, they can never relish their triumphs. If our children grow up to believe they can get whatever they want, they won't ever find satisfaction in their future.

We live in a world where those who do not hold tight to the train of life may end up getting left behind. However, holding tight to the train of life does not give us the warrant to step on the rights of people just to get things our way. All people have rights and those rights are fundamentally the same. Just because we live in a wealthier sphere of existence does not mean we can easily sideswipe other people on our way to the top. Keeping everything in proper perspective and in simple terms for our kids makes them more compassionate towards their fellowmen. Leaving no one behind, not even your greatest sworn enemy, is the Christian way. Paying mere lip service to good old fashioned values is hypocrisy of the highest order. Unless we truly live what we teach and become good examples of simple living to our children, we will never be able to teach them humility and brotherly love.

Let us inspire our kids to live good lives with simple values and concepts. Let us motivate them to reach farther than they can grasp, but always remind them that their feet need to be planted on the ground. In doing so, we would be doing what we have been preordained to do as their parents: teach them to live simple, holy lives.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How have you been taught by your own parents? Use concrete examples, as needed.
2. Why is it important to teach our children about humility and simplicity?
3. Would you call living in today's world simple? Why or why not?
4. Why is it easier to indulge our children with whatever they want than to argue with them?
5. If our children grow up being spoiled rotten by us, what would be potential problems for them and for us in the future? Cite examples, as necessary.



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