



Man Must Work

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Whenever I walk through this beautiful city, my thoughts may wander back to its very beginning. I may see the pioneer farmer who, some one hundred-fifty years ago, labored from dawn to dusk to clear the land. Or I may reflect on the labors of the stone masons, carpenters, roofers, and plumbers who built the stores and office buildings, or the craftsmen who labored in gasworks and glassworks, in metalworks and paper works. I am sure most of them have long since left the stage of life, but their work will continue to benefit many generations of Americans. Their vision and their labor created monuments of service for hundreds of years, perhaps a thousand years.

Some men work as if they would live forever. All men must work for subsistence and well-being, yea, our very existence on this earth depends on our ability to produce food, shelter, and clothing, on our ability to master the world. Our ability to create buildings, such as this, depends entirely on our will and willingness to labor.

Every society, no matter what its economic organization may be, whether capitalistic or socialistic, must solve the problems of production to sustain human life. It may do so on a basis of voluntary labor or mandatory labor. As you undoubtedly know, in our system, no political author-

ity forces you to labor; no one threatens you with arrest and punishment if you fail to work. It is different in a socialistic system such as that of the Soviet Union, where everyone must work according to a central plan. Refusal to work may lead to arrest and imprisonment in a labor camp.

In our society, the problems of economic production are the same as in the Soviet Union, but we proceed along voluntary lines. We work, not because a law threatens us with fines and imprisonment, but because we seek an income to sustain us and our families. We work voluntarily, but out of economic necessity.

Our incomes are determined by the value of the service we render to our fellow men. Consumers as customers, clients, and patients buy our services in various markets at a price they choose to pay. The price they set is our income. We enjoy high incomes when we render highly valued services; we earn low incomes when we render less valuable services. We go without income when, for any reason, we fail to do any work.

If you feel poor and needy, economists have a simple answer to your problems: produce more in quality or quantity, render more valuable service to your fellow men. In economic terms, you must become more productive. Labor income tends to be directly proportional to the

service you render to other people. If you bear this principle in mind, you will also understand the phenomenon of unemployment which plagues some people.

Unemployment is a price and cost matter. If your labor costs more than it is worth to the buyers of your service or product, if you inflict losses on your employer, you are likely to be unemployed, or soon will be unemployed. In short, if your employment impoverishes other people rather than benefits them, you are destined to be unemployed.

Man must work. That is as certain as that he must eat. You may work grudgingly or you may work joyfully and gratefully. Since you must work, you may as well do it willingly and joyfully. It will improve your constitution and make you cheerful company. **There is no work so crude that you cannot improve it, no work so dull that you cannot enliven it, no work so base that you cannot ennoble it.**

I know some people who are always unhappy about their work, especially about their employers and their fellow workers. They go through life complaining and protesting about their working conditions. They would like to be anywhere except at work. They are forever unhappy about the compensation for the work they grudgingly perform. Continuously asking for

higher pay and lighter work, they may even join a labor union which seeks to enforce their demands. They just do not understand that **labor income is not determined by what we demand from others, but by what we do for others.**

I pity these people; they are an unhappy lot who make poor company. Their very attitude toward work condemns them to low incomes; their work is likely to be careless and superficial, always short of what is expected of them. In other words, if you work as little as possible for as much money as possible, you are not likely to make much money nor find much satisfaction in life.

Good work habits instill pride and joy and are a reliable guidepost for success. They are more constant and have greater force than deliberation and good intention. Wisely and skillfully formed, they become second nature. For instance, when a student practices good study habits, setting aside certain hours of the day for reading and writing, they become easier to follow every day. Before he knows it, he may become the most productive and the most knowledgeable member of his class.

Parents can lay the foundation of poverty or riches by the habits of industry or idleness in which they train their children. By teaching them right habits, they can make their children's futures safe and pros-

perous. Unfortunately, many parents, especially in one-parent families, who are preoccupied with their own professional advancement or their pursuit of income and wealth, neglect to impart the discipline of labor and to lay the proper foundation. Your years in school probably offer you the last opportunity to form productive working habits. If you failed to experience the joy of work in your home and you failed to discover it in school, your life after school is bound to bring many disappointments and much frustration.

There is no more abiding happiness than the knowledge that you are free to do, day by day, the best work you can do, thereby supporting yourself and the people you love. Perfect freedom is reserved for the man who lives by his own work and is happy in that work. If you love the labor of your job or profession, apart from any pride of success or recognition, you are truly chosen.

Dependability and integrity in your work are of greater value than all the degrees you may earn. They confer the self-confidence which softens the disappointments that are bound to occur and which reassures you when ungrateful men deny or rob you of your reward. Self-confident and dependable in your labor, you can stand firm when others fail.

Yet, there are at all times millions of

people who are without work because they don't care to work. They prefer to live by the labors of others. The welfare state is a vast transfer system that seizes income and wealth from people who work and transfers them to a vast army of political grantees who do not work. It is perhaps the greatest evil of our time. It weakens an important asset of any nation—the courage and will to work. When it finally leads to economic stagnation and decline, it may give rise to the call for the command system which forces everyone to work. There are many voices today who would force idle people to work and would issue labor-ID cards to all of us. The welfare-transfer system, by breaking down the spirit of work, is breeding the command system.

To look upon political action for personal success is to look in the wrong direction. To depend upon legislation and regulation for enrichment is likely to be frustrating, corrupting, and wasteful in time and energy. **Do not let the welfare state corrupt you. You can do better than stand in line waiting for political largesse.**

The last point I would like to make may yet be the most important point of all. The physical constitution of man is such that labor has its own reward: it sustains human life. You will not live to an old age unless you keep yourself in good health.

Health is the vital principle of life, and exercise is a basic principle of good health. Inactivity has ruined more people than excessive labor. Exercise and work actually strengthen the body and keep it healthy. And if you should strike it rich, live as if you were poor: labor regularly and live frugally; they are the major requisites for good health, physical and mental.

God is just toward us. He rewards us for our labor.

Additional copies of *Man Must Work* and several other pamphlets by Dr. Sennholz are available from:

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