

I want grandchildren.

My three adult children, American millennials all, are simply not going to have families. If they did, their kids would be nothing like me. They certainly would not share the values that I inherited from ten generations of American ancestors and was unable to pass on. No, they would be indoctrinated in the [poisonous philosophies of the modern American campus](#).

We humans have more in common with the apes than we like to pretend. Like them, we are very much the products of our society. We have always been brought up by our families, clans, tribes and nations. We learn how to be human from the humans around us. Until two centuries ago these were almost always relatives, close or distant.

The modern age has disrupted that pattern in America, some of it inadvertently but a great deal on purpose. Since the industrial revolution few of us any longer practice our parents' professions and we are less likely to live in the same place. Our children are not surrounded by the aunts, uncles and cousins who would teach them what it means to belong to our clan and tribe.

American children are formed according to policies established at a national level by people not like us and far removed from our communities. By federal fiat, they force us to live in integrated neighborhoods and attend integrated schools. The curriculum is established by some combination of State Education Associations, a national Department of Education and textbook publishers among others. Our children learn about sex not from older siblings and young aunts and uncles, but the school. They no longer attend church – the schools see to it that they do not subscribe to such anachronistic superstitions. Few belong to the Boy Scouts – the Scouts proved to be too unyielding on the subject of homosexuality and have been forced into a precipitous decline.

American children have become creatures of their government. That government relentlessly panders to their interests as individuals, promising state benefits in return for loyalty. Our children do not belong to any clans, tribes and nations that would be interested in the perpetuation of their parents' values. Quite the opposite – the American state teaches them, at every level, to reject their parents' values in favor of government-approved wisdom. Political correctness ensures that dissent is stifled.

Raising them to be peers vs. partners. Girls are just like boys. No need to teach them how to get along – expect them to spontaneously combust, to automatically know how to behave in a relationship.

Make the rules impossible to know. In almost all animal species the male displays, the female chooses. Display has to be somewhat aggressive – but it can be construed as "sexual harassment" if it is done awkwardly, or just from the wrong boy.

America has been poison for my adult children. Not just them, but virtually their entire generation. It is a generation that concerns itself greatly with global warming and a panoply of social justice issues, yet hardly at all with its own propagation. After years of observing these trends as a parent, teacher, school trustee and Ed School student, I concluded I had to leave. I chose Eastern Europe.

Ukraine is still traditional. Grandmothers and grandfathers play an active role in raising grandchildren. They teach them what it is to be Ukrainian – nation, clan and tribe. There is continuity in small things such as the recipes for borscht, and big things such as the Orthodox Church. Ukraine is a homogeneous place. The small Jewish, Muslim and Gypsy minorities are accepted, but there is no question as to which culture establishes social mores.

Perhaps most significantly, Ukraine's oligarchs seem to be quite content simply to be rich. Unlike American oligarchs from Rockefeller and Carnegie down through Gates and Soros, they do not meddle in the realms of education, gay rights and the like. Ukraine is delightfully free of gadflies who would turn society upside down to right some perceived wrong. I am pleased to note that a recent gay rights parade organized by foreign do-gooders attracted relatively little attention. The gays I

(think I) know seem to get along just fine. They are discrete enough not to drag me into their sex lives. Neither, for that matter, do straight people. The result is much like the America I remember of the 1950s – a comfortable place run according to the common sense and mores of the majority.

Contrast this with the West. We believe that the individual is paramount, owing nothing to society. A young man is free to shirk military service, owes nothing to civic organizations such as the Boy Scouts and the church, and has no obligation to marry and have kids. A young woman likewise has no obligation other than to pursue her own pleasures, physical and intellectual. This theme, with its roots going back to the Enlightenment, dominates Western Europe as well.

Given the conviction that they have no obligation to anything greater than themselves, moderns can very easily conclude that having children is not worth the effort. They don't bring any benefit. They are expensive and ungrateful. Moreover, western governments have promised to support us in our old age into underwrite our healthcare. Western societies do not seem to need kids, nor to want them.

Eastern Europe has not been like that. Ukrainians claim the Eastern Orthodox faith, though relatively few adherents are familiar with the Bible or the church teachings. What they do claim is to be spiritual, *dukhovnyy*. Like the unarticulated religions of Asia and the Native Americans, they have a profound belief in their people, *narod*. They believe that their people is destined to live forever. While few have aspirations of spreading their faith to the whole world, they feel strongly that they should keep it alive among themselves and their successors. They live not for themselves alone, but as trustees of their culture and civilization, with a felt obligation to pass it forward to future generations.

Regrettably, this portrayal is not as accurate as it might have been a couple of generations back. Young Ukrainians are fairly strongly influenced by Western values. While most young people still express a desire to get married and have children, it is tempered by the desire to complete their education, get a good job, and see the world before settling down. In practice that means that fewer and fewer of the best and brightest are indeed committing themselves to marriage and family. The straw at which I grasp is the fact that they at least express such traditional values. In the West young people seem to have abandoned them altogether.

Having chosen a homogeneous Eastern European country with traditional values to raise our son is a necessary step, but it is not sufficient. Even here, we cannot leave our son's upbringing and education up to other people. We need a substitute for family and clan. He needs to be surrounded by like-minded people.

Those like-minded people need to teach him about God, morality, and society. At his current age of four they are already instructing him concerning crying, lying, the different nature of our neighborhood Gypsies, Muslims, and how to get along with little girls. The girls' mothers are equally dedicated to teaching their daughters how to get along with boys. They are also looking forward to grandchildren.

The style of learning in Ukrainian public schools is different than in America. The teacher remains totally in control. Kids are expected to learn by rote as much as experimentation. The teachers are not afraid to grade kids honestly. They are not tangled up in diversity issues. All this is to the good. However, the classes are relatively big and the kids not necessarily tracked by ability. Just like the factory schools introduced in America a century ago, they waste a lot of the smart kids' time bringing along the not so smart ones.

The teachers are products of their culture. Parents should be thankful that there isn't any gender confusion in Ukraine's public schools. Boys are boys and girls are girls. The Orthodox religion is a background assumption. Teachers respect children of other faiths in the classroom, but they don't apologize for their Christianity. They are not afraid to celebrate Christmas, Easter, Trinity Sunday, and Pentecost are school holidays.

The schools in Ukraine, unfortunately, do not pay well enough to attract the best talent into teaching. The good teachers from the Soviet generation are retiring, and young people can make more money entering almost any other profession.

My children would be better off in Ukrainian than American public schools on two counts. The culture and values that they would be taught are more traditional and more wholesome, and the level of instruction would be better because there isn't the "dumbing down" associated with forced diversity.

Nonetheless, Ukrainian public schools share some unfortunate traits with American schools. They treat education as a factory product. The kid moves along the assembly line having little bits of knowledge installed, one semester at a time, seven subjects per semester. The objective at each level is to move them to the next. For smart kids that means entering a university for another four years of the factory treatment. They emerge, blinking at the bright light of independence, with a shiny college degree which may or may not reflect skills that are useful in the real world, and no work experience.

Therefore, like in America, Ukrainian society is rife with unemployed and underemployed college graduates. Their earnings don't correspond with their expectations. What they do earn goes more towards material acquisitions such as cars and to ephemeral pleasures such as yoga lessons and foreign vacations than to starting families. Trusting the educational system to prepare my son to give me grandchildren would be a huge risk. They don't see it as their job to make him either successful in life or to be interested in marriage.

I need an alternative. So – what's my plan? We need to assemble a circle of like-minded people as a substitute for family and clan, and let our children learn from them. Elements of the plan are:

**1. Home school as long as possible. With the offerings of the Internet, it may be possible never to spend time on campus in his life.**

There is a wealth of curricular material available on the Internet, reasonably priced when not free. I am an experienced teacher, and as a retiree I have the time. I can teach him almost all he needs to know in the academic disciplines. However, it will be better for both of us if we are able to network with other homeschoolers. Other parents will certainly be able to teach certain subjects better than I can, and the children will have the benefit of exposure to different kids and different adults. Our son is already able to help other kids with their English.

**2. Teach him values, especially by our own example.**

At the age of four our son is already learning to contribute to the household. He actively helps in the kitchen and in cleaning up. He helps me with my Russian as I help him with his English. The theme running through all of this is that one should be productive. Even in his unstructured time, he is busy painting, building things out of his constructor kits, and playing in the sandbox rather than sitting and being passively entertained. I make a point of expecting him to follow in whatever book as I read to him. He recognizes quite a few words. He also recognizes that the adults in the household expect him before long to be counting, doing a bit of arithmetic, and reading.

**3. Minimize electronic devices and video entertainment.**

I am conservative in that I believe human nature changes slowly. I cannot believe that so strongly turning our attention from each other and the world around us to our electronic devices is healthy. I have reviewed a number of books, *iDisorder* being one, that support this belief. I do not accept that any good that might come of watching video entertainment and playing video games would offset the wasted opportunities to read, exercise, and engage with other people.

Though I was slow coming around, I have become a conspiracy theorist. I observe that there are strong social messages woven into children's TV programs and even kids' books. The great advantage of books is that I can read them to my son as while he is young, and later I can observe what books he is reading so we can discuss them. He certainly should read books promoting opinions different than my own, but he should also be able to take his father's opinion into consideration. Conversely, children's video consumption, as I know from sad experience, is almost impossible to control

When he does see movies, it is my intent that they be mostly old ones with uplifting messages, such as the Disney movies through the 1950s and Russian ones from the Soviet era. He does not need vapid stories about brightly colored though addle-brained fish and their transgendered friends.

#### **4. We need to teach him how to make a living.**

School is an artificial experience. Classroom exercises are largely made up, not related to real life, simplified so that the majority of students can handle them. The important skills that a child learns in any subject are gathering, organizing and presenting information. In mathematics it involves looking at the problem, figuring out how to structure the problem in order to solve it, coming up with a solution and presenting that solution. In the shorthand of arithmetic or algebra, this can usually be done in one or two lines.

Other subjects require that the student read and listen to teachers or video presentations to acquire information. Meaningful work entails searching for multiple reliable sources of information and taking reading notes that can be used to capture ideas and to cite authorities. Composing an article is a matter of conceiving a structure for presenting the argument, making the argument, wrapping it in an appropriate introduction and conclusion, and ensuring continuity from one topic to another. Along the way the child should observe the rules of grammar and spelling. Mechanically, he has to learn how to get his computer to present the written product in an attractive and useful way. Increasingly, a student needs to learn to make an oral presentation.

Computer programs support all of this activity. Excel supports arithmetic and more advanced mathematics. It is also useful for creating numeric tables and graphics to include within written articles. Microsoft Word is useful for capturing notes, outlining and organizing an article, and writing the article. PowerPoint is useful (albeit generally poorly used) for making oral presentations. Beyond these basic tools a serious student should certainly know how to use vector graphics drawing packages, bitmap photo packages, dictation software and sometimes other packages for applications such as statistics and accounting.

What media the student should use for gathering and presenting information depends on the circumstances. Kids have a natural bias in favor of video because it is passive. The disadvantage is that watching video is about four times slower than reading, and creating a video presentation usually takes more time than writing. While there will be a role for video in homeschooling, my emphasis will be on reading and writing. Video will take care of itself.

The key insight is that everything a person does is a matter of information processing: collect, organize, and present information in a meaningful way, either to an audience or to support one's own activities. For adults, one's own activities might include baking lasagna, building a table, planning a lawn, or investing in stock. In the artificial environment the school the teacher always looks at the output. In the crucible of real life, the student will be judged by whether his meal tastes good, his table holds up, his lawn dies, or he goes bankrupt.

The better able we are to have our children spend their time solving real-world problems, the easier will be to enter the world of work. It is reasonable to expect a kid of fifteen or sixteen to be tackling tasks of real-world significance instead of make-work classroom exercises. The work itself has value, and the experience of doing valuable work is- invaluable.

#### **5. Make him comfortable with adults. Have him involved with the whole family, the way it was generations ago.**

The concepts of childhood and to an even greater extent adolescence are relatively recent. Two hundred years ago boys learned from their fathers and other older males in the community, and girls learned from the older females. There was always work to do as soon as a child was old enough to do it, and the tasks were fairly cleanly divided between men and women.

This was true even in wealthy families. John Stuart Mill learned to write books from James Mill. England had many illustrious families: the Darwin's, the Huxleys and the Spencers. Their biographies tell of playing with the village kids and returning to the manor house to be tutored by adults.

One of the most significant losses in modern society is the continuity of culture from generation to generation. This is largely due to taking children away from their parents and putting them in school. Schools do not teach children the culture of their parents, and have not been preparing them to become parents. Since I want grandchildren, I have to entrust my children's education not to schools, but to people who want to pass along their cultural patrimony.

**6. We cannot do it as individuals – I must be part of a group, and we must believe in something bigger than ourselves.**

Our belief in the unfettered right of the individual to do whatever he wants, and the freedom of individuals from any expectations imposed on them by society, has brought us low.

In casting aside family, clan, tribe and nation we free ourselves from any obligation that would compromise our ability to do what we want. We thereby throw away religion as well. Religion teaches people to honor their father and mother, to respect and care for spouses, and to teach their children their traditions and their religion. Fetters! The West's society of atomistic individuals has thrown them all off. And they are dying out.

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Ukrainian society is healthier than society in the West, but it is under pressure. Cosmo and Maxim magazines pollute our newsstands, and young Ukrainians dream more about travel and fast cars than they do about marrying and starting families. For the moment at least, most young people feel some obligation to get married, and older people push them to get married. But in order to maximize our chances for success, my family will have to form our own circle of like-minded acquaintances. Our son needs to be surrounded by girls and boys who look forward to growing up, getting married, and assuming the responsibilities of adulthood. The most likely way for that to happen is by putting ourselves among parents who share that commitment.

The battle to preserve Western society cannot be won at the level of individuals. Individuals are mortal; we need to reestablish family, clan, tribe and nation. Individuals must again see themselves as one-generation trustees of those inheritances. Salvation cannot come via an extension of Enlightenment thinking, but rather a return to forms that preceded it. We have to believe in something bigger than ourselves. God is as convenient and universal of a formulation as we could ask. If we are not convinced that we are special – God's creatures is a useful way to phrase it – and that our task is to pass on our special qualities to future generations, any fight to retain or restore our civilization is in vain. It must be done through grandchildren.

Second (and overlapping – overlap to be remedied) part of the article [here](#).