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“Community” Academic Essay

In the current world it is easy to get caught up with our own lives rather than participating in the community that surrounds us. With the internet and social media, it is usually normal for people to just stay indoors and in their rooms, not caring for what goes on down the street or at the local barber. To achieve the highest quality of life one must care and be supportive of their community, and more so, their family. Scott argues that Americans should become less individualistic and instead become more concerned with the over the wellbeing of their community. The common life of Scott Russel is an excellent example of how participating with family and community can not only increase the aspect of the community as a whole, but build happiness and shape individual lives as well.

In ”The Common Life”, Scotts conflicts between individualism and communism. He recognizes the importance of individualism when he talks of the seasons of withdrawal from responsibilities, and that individualism is important to providing an incentive for people to work for. This is because most people would find the idea of general welfare and the greater good of society too unclear of its usual terms to really carry for any meaning. On the other hand he also claims that this can lead to a career of no accountability. To strengthen this, throughout the texts Sanders states that on a large planet we better learn to live together, or we will live miserably apart. He stresses that community is the most important aspect of our culture and we must strive to fulfill the common good of our society. He defines community as a web of relationship that humans can’t live without. In order to make this definition more relatable to the readers, Sanders uses personal experiences and anecdotes from others. For example, Sanders starts off his text with an anecdote of a time when he was learning how to cook from his daughter along with other family members and friends. Using this example, he states that these experiences in life, although seemingly insignificant, are characterized by an almost ineffable sense of belonging that every human on earth strives for. This anecdote helps show the excellence and quality of having close family ties and strengthens his argument that community is important.

 To establish this idea and strengthen this idea of interpersonal relationships from family relationships to common relationships, Sanders draws on examples of clubs and organizations, such as the boys and girls clubs, in order to integrate the idea of the common life or community. Saunders believes that the cost of the American obsession comes from the belief that we shall cultivate the self rather than the community, and that we should look to the individual as a source of hope and the center of value. This is mostly American because of our government, economy, religion and present century all encourage this idea following when Sanders states “we have the bill of rights, which protects each of us each of us from the bullying society, but not build responsibilities which will obligate us to answer the needs of others”.

He of course believes that all of these are good things that build and strengthen our nation as a whole, it is clear that Sanders thinks that America has gone a little too far in the direction of individualism. The roots of the bill of rights and the constitution goes back to the days of colonial America, during which there was much of a confusion in the land, and the pouring over into the Revolutionary War. Britain wanted and expected the colonies to maintain a good establishment of “community,” but the colonies wanted individualism. During this time there was still a strong sense of community among colonists. To show this, Sanders uses an example of something that might have happened during this time period: “The old limestone building had once been the town hall, then a fire station and jail, then for several years an abandoned shell. Volunteers bought the building from the city for a dollar, then renovated it with materials, labor, and money donated by local people. Now we have a handsome facility that is in constant use…” This quote that he uses is not only of historical importance, but further stresses his view points on community. By using an example of people putting out a fire, he completely implies that creating a community is important as life and death.

I think that Sanders is exactly right when it comes to the concept of community. As a post on the Huffington Post states: “Throughout high school, college and after college, many of us are on a mission to have the highest number of friends possible. For some reason, we think it’s quantity over quality. We’re certain that we’ll be cooler, happier and more popular based on a higher number…” But are we really happier? Are these “friends” on social media really friends? At this point it is important to note that there should be a difference between a “friend” and an “acquaintance.” An acquaintance is someone you meet on social media or through the internet. They’re fun to socialize with, but the relationship between them are superficial and not of much value. A friend is someone you know personally, and cannot only have a great time socializing with, but can also depend on them for mental and emotional support during rough times. Also Sanders is also correct in his statement about how America should be become less individualistic because community provides support and relief to people facing different struggles in life. Strong shared relationships often involve people helping each other out with no conditions at all. People among themselves take responsibility for the people they share strong i relationships with and are concerned with their well-being. For example a parent and child relationship is formed as early as the start of time. The bond existing between a parent and a child is so strong that sometimes they may find themselves fully dependent on each other. The thing with communal relationships is that they always have an impact on personalities and character. Human beings might naturally be social beings but we must also acknowledge that every human is their own person.

We all have had different experiences in life and the only thing that is common to everyone is change. Change is unavoidable and sometimes changes could be stressing and that is why we need people around us. Developing good interpersonal skills gives us a sense of belonging. For most people changes in life situations such as changing schools, joining college or pursuing a new career has always been hard. It gets harder for those who do not have people to guide them through. Studies show that the highest population of inmates comes from people who grew up in the streets. The lack of family and a community affected their moral growth and this eventually led to their engagement in criminal activities Communities are an important aspect of life. It doesn’t matter what kind of social setting one is currently in; rich or poor, sick or healthy, a good communal foundation always holds us strong. Communities instill a sense of responsibility for others which helps in developing both interpersonal and personal traits. We all need to have a sense of belonging in life. This cannot be established through social media sites, but through interactions with families and communities around us.

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 Personally, I view these shared interactions as a way of life that we cannot live without. However for these relationships to be healthy there needs to be symmetry. Every member of a community ought to have a contribution and responsibility as much as their have needs. In symmetrical communal interactions, the members should each feel a sense of responsibility towards the others. Although modern technology opened new worlds for us through the Internet and social media, it is important that we keep our interpersonal relationships strong and healthy. These relationships include communal interactions, but also the more important family interactions. By strengthening these, we can form a sense of national pride and lead our country to further heights.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/harper-spero/the-importance-of-community\_b\_6978186.html