

## Footnote: Human Needs

*The human life-form is not intrinsically self-sufficient. It has needs that it cannot of itself fulfil. They must come from its environment, from which it must be free to extract them. The human life-form is a composite creature. It has a mind as well as a body. Both have needs, which must be satisfied. [PDF]*

### Needs of The Body

The generic human body is  $175\pm 25$  cm high and weighs  $80\pm 20$  kg. Its height varies within 15% of its norm and its weight within 25%. However, height and weight have very little bearing on what the human body must be supplied with to keep it going.

Moreover, it matters not whether the body is that of the Queen of England, the chief executive of a privatised public utility, a middle class yuppie, an exploited worker, the Old Tramp of Borough High Street or a starving Third World war refugee. Its basic needs are, within very narrow limits, the same. Certainly, they are relative neither to one's social status nor to one's geo-economic location.

#### 1) The Need For Food

The human body needs [food](#). This must contain the correct proportions of [fuel](#) and building materials comprising carbohydrate, fat, protein, vitamins and minerals. These together must contain the 8,640,000 joules (2,072,937 calories) of energy required each day to supply the body's  $100\pm 25$  watt average power consumption.

People in different parts of the world eat different types of food. In hot regions, some of the vital elements of diet are produced by the action of the sun's rays on the human skin. Nevertheless, every individual human machine needs the same  $100\pm 25$  watts of biochemical power to keep it working within its physiologically-determined operational norm. And this is universal. It is the same for everybody. It is the same everywhere.

#### 2) The Need For Clothing

The human life-form also needs a high level of bodily protection from its environment in the form of clothing and shelter. This is particularly so in the colder climates of the northern First World countries. Clothing is also a means through which people express their creativity and personality.

#### 3) The Need For Shelter

The human body also needs environmental conditioning. While vigorously active, the clothed human being can function outside for a limited duration in all seasons. When sedentary, however, it requires some kind of [shelter](#) within which the temperature is maintained at or above at least  $18^{\circ}\text{C}$ . If this minimum is not maintained, the individual quickly becomes mentally lethargic and physically uncomfortable.

The shelter must also envelop enough adequately lighted space and equipment, to allow the human to perform its day-to-day tasks without disturbance.

This need for shelter is relative only to the dimensions and physiology of the human frame. It is also universal. It is the same for everybody. It is the same everywhere.

## Needs of The Mind

The human brain has about  $2 \times 10^{11}$  neurones. It includes a capacity for its owner to know up to 150 fellow human beings well. The mind within it thirsts for knowledge about its surroundings. It also has a desire to express its creativity, and a hunger to interact with others.

Knowledge, work and communication are therefore also needs that are relative only to the physiology of the human form. Hence it is not unreasonable to suppose that these needs are also universal. They are the same for everybody everywhere.

The human body is essentially a device for providing the human mind with access to the outside world. It is the channel of communication - the input/output interface - between the intellect and its environment. When considered as a whole, therefore, a human life-form is a mind or intellect accommodated within a bio-mechanical vessel which provides it with protection, life-support, communication and transport services.

Like the body, the mind cannot survive without food. Without food, the mind also quickly stagnates, atrophies and dies. The food of the mind is knowledge. Its protein is the basic understanding of life, the world and reality. Its fats are the routine tasks and ritual interactions that make up the backdrop of everyday life. Its carbohydrates are the many specific experiences which paint the detail on to the tapestry of life.

### 4) The Need To Know

The primary need of the human mind is the need to know. It has a built-in hunger for information about its physical and social surroundings. Of the two, however, perhaps the most fundamental need is for knowledge about its physical environment.

My mind is always hungry for contact with the world of nature. My eyes must witness the blue crystal brightness of a mountain dawn in the height of summer. They long for the spatial majesty of rolling heather covered-hills and wooded valleys. My thoughts must be awakened by the songs of the birds and the scents of a hedgerow. My spirit must be comforted by the babble of a mountain stream. My fears must evaporate over the rolling sea. An idea is born in the gentle swirl of a drifting cloud.

I look at the trees and marvel. I think of their sturdy trunks of wood - a material still unsurpassed as the fabric for a home, the substance of a table and the fuel of a winter fire. Yet its essence comes not out of solid ground, but is synthesised by sunshine from the water and gas of the atmosphere to whence it returns once it has done its service.

I see a bee alight on a clover head. I marvel at the perfect co-operation through which it and its fellows work together to produce a [biological fuel](#) which yields a staggering 12,400,000 joules per kilogram in a form that does not rot your teeth. Yet this bee has no foreman. Its hive is not managed by a sedentary desk-bound accountant. It does not answer to a board of directors. It has no greedy shareholders passively sucking away its workers' toil. It needed no capital to start it going. There is no tax man who can claim his portion of its gain. Instead, the hive's collective purpose is fulfilled by the bee's unilateral response to its environment and its fellows in accordance with a simple set of prescribed rules of engagement which all the bees inherit in their genes.

A thunder storm gathers. I see a flash of lightening. A bolt of energy so great as to momentarily raise its surroundings to the temperature of the surface of the sun. A crucible in which amino acids - the stuff of life - are formed. I think of the 200 thunder storms that rage somewhere on the planet all the time making the ionosphere ring at about 8 hertz like an electromagnetic bell, and the tiny wave/particle entities we call electrons whose sudden unified motion delivers this immense energy.

Such mental protein is the stuff of which the mind's body-of-knowledge about life, the world and reality is built. It is the singular [quest of science](#). Sadly from where I stand, most appear to get far too little of this basic necessity. They seem satisfied to glean what little they can by casually observing the world around them as they go about their daily business. This inevitably gives them a view of reality which is incomplete, patchy and dangerously inaccurate.

I am frightened when I see an educated mind in a seat of power which simply cannot grasp a fundamental principle of reality that I have seen demonstrated repeatedly in the very fabric and mechanisms of nature. I am doubly frightened when I see a vital policy decision, upon which this principle bears, exact the ruination of people's lives because the policy makers did not understand the natural laws which inexorably governed the mechanism they were desperately trying to regulate.

### 5) The Need To Work

As well as a hunger for knowledge, the human mind also has a need to apply its knowledge - a need to work creatively. The most common manifestation of this need is the economic desire to extract one's own physical needs from one's own natural environment.

This mental need is the seat of that universal dream of the nine-to-fiver. To leave his boring office or factory job and set up an idyllic self-sufficient small holding under a Mediterranean sky. To choose which natural resources to use and how best to use them. To devise the methods and fabricate the means for bringing in the harvest. To oversee it and watch it work. To understand and appreciate the natural laws that govern its operation. To gain knowledge as well as food, and to become part of the process. This need of the mind is also manifested in one's desire to modify one's environment. To design one's home and create a garden. To choose the style and colour of its furniture and decor. To engineer its heating, energy, water and waste systems, domestic appliances and entertainment aids.

To be able to fulfil this mental need, an individual must be granted exclusive control over an adequate portion of the earth's surface and the resources thereon and therein. This necessitates 'ownership' of them. Sadly, in our regimented capitalist world, this basic need of the human mind is almost entirely frustrated. Most people must endure the prime-time of every day of their lives in boring jobs which they are forced to do in places which are not theirs to alter or fashion as they would wish.

That the modern world of work fails to fulfil this human need of the mind is evinced by the fact that everybody is fired by an inner desire to be doing something else, whether it be the job they *wish* they had, running a business, or living a life of thinking, writing and economic self-sufficiency in an idyllic retreat away from so-called civilisation. The result is that they come home each evening, attempting vainly to relieve their creative deprivation with pointless hobbies and pastimes.

Those denied the opportunity to work, and who therefore have no money for hobbies, are unable to express their creativity. Understandably, their frustrated creativity, on occasions, is forced to vent itself in antisocial ways like graffiti, vandalism, ram raiding, joy riding and burglary.

### 6) The Need To Talk

The physiological feature of the human brain which accommodates the details of its owner's [coterie](#) creates within its owner's mind a need for that space to be filled. It creates within the mind a psychological hunger for a rich diversity of human contact expressed in a myriad ways.

The most obvious ways in which human contact is expressed is through the physical needs of food, clothing and shelter. Cookery, fashion and architecture provide a way for people both to express themselves to others and to enhance other people's knowledge and appreciation of the many and varied works of nature.

Art and music are ways whereby individuals can enhance other people's perception and appreciation of life and the world around them. Science and mathematics allow them to probe and expose the deeper secrets of reality to others. Language, geography, literature and history bestow upon us the riches of contact with minds from distant places and times. Sports and recreational activities build confidence, trust and familiarity.

But no matter what form it takes, all human contact must come through a member of the recipient's coterie. I feel that I know a certain number of people who do not know me. Some are media personalities. Others hail from far off places or from far off times. Nevertheless, I consider them to be as much a part of my coterie as are those with whom I have direct everyday contact. A coterie is an essential component of the human life-form. It is its only source of the mental food necessary to build and sustain relationships. Relationships with others are vital to individual survival and well-being.

Unencumbered access to a complete and diverse coterie is therefore as basic a human need as physical food, clothing and shelter.

## Deprivation

The human being has 7 needs. These comprise the needs of the body - food, clothing and shelter; and the needs of the mind - knowledge, expression and communication. The 7th need is for rest and recreation. These needs are present in all instances of the human life-form. If any is lacking for any individual then that individual is deprived.

### Deprived of Knowledge

The only reason a capitalist free-market society finances education is to produce the next generation of skilled human cogs for its faceless economic machine. It cannot justify any expenditure which cannot be seen to lead directly to the generation of profit. It will not therefore support education for its own sake. It will not finance the unconditional pursuit of knowledge.

In my generation, tertiary education was free. Tuition was free. Adequate subsistence was provided for every student who needed it. This led to a serious over-production of highly-educated, highly-knowledgeable, highly-skilled people. This is evinced by the legions, who at the peak of their potential effectiveness, are permanently unemployed.

Capitalists do not want over-qualified cogs for their machines. Over-qualified cogs get frustrated and dissatisfied. What they want are not the best cogs, but *adequate* cogs. Hence the accelerating erosion of what capitalist states provide for tertiary education. It is why my younger son, despite his very high level of academic achievement, is unlikely to be unable to go on to university to get a degree. He will be deprived of the knowledge which others in his society of lesser ability and dedication will gain simply because their parents had the money to support them at university.

### Deprived of Expression

Poverty deprives an individual of the option to express himself creatively by modifying, adapting, decorating, rearranging and deploying his personal space. This deprivation is caused not only by financial poverty but also by poverty of status.

I heard in the news recently that a ten year study of stress was conducted on people in the civil service. It seems that the lower down the pecking order you are, the less control you have over what you do. And the less control you have over what you do, the more likely you are to suffer from heart disease and other stress-related illnesses.

Another study showed that people in societies which have a more egalitarian work structure suffer less, even though they are poorer in material terms. Lack of control over one's daily activities is detrimental to physical, as well as mental, health. So it seems that relative poverty, not absolute poverty, is the real killer of body and soul.

### **Deprived of Communication**

A friend was enthusiastically telling my wife about the foreign holiday she had just had. A foreign holiday is of course something we have never been able to afford. Since we have been existing on State [welfare](#), we could not possibly afford a holiday of any kind. My wife's friend, on realising that foreign holidays were something beyond our experience, said "Well, what you never have, you never miss." That statement is false.

Common experience and common kinds of experience are the basis of communication and mutual understanding. Many has been the time when relatives at family gatherings have reminisced about places they have been. They exchange feelings and impressions about what it is like in France, Italy, Spain, Corfu, Cyprus, Malta, Tenerife, Florida - places we have never been and can never go. Needless to say, my wife, my children and I are out of the conversation. We have not shared actual or similar experiences. We cannot communicate. Eventually this dawns on our relatives. There is an embarrassing silence. They fumble for a subject of conversation we share in common. But we find nothing but pointless small talk with which vainly to bridge our socio-economic divide.

The poor do miss what they have never had and which others in their socio-economic domain enjoy. This is not because they need it as such. It is because the fact that others have, and they don't, cuts them off communicatively. Poverty denies them the physical means through which to communicate. Disparity denies them shared experience, which is the basis for mutual understanding. Lack of mutual understanding leads to open conflict.

### **Conclusion**

A capitalist society effectively confiscates from its people all the terrestrial resources within its jurisdiction and redistributes them to a favoured few. It thus deprives most of the natural means of turning their labour into their needs of life. The favoured few then use their terrestrial resources to produce the needs of life supposedly for all. But they cannot do this unaided. They therefore employ as few of the dispossessed majority as is necessary. In return they pay them enough with which to buy their needs of life.

To avoid insurrection, the State provides those dispossessed, whom the favoured few do not require, with welfare payments. Morally, this is really in lieu of their fair share of the terrestrial means of which they have been forcibly deprived. Calling State welfare a *benefit* is a politically engineered misnomer. It is in reality a partial compensation. Yet in the true spirit of capitalist greed, what is given back in return for what has been taken is honed to the absolute minimum with which the favoured few can get away.

Greed notwithstanding, by any moral argument, State welfare ought to be set at a level which will comfortably sustain 'the whole man': not just the body.

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