



Do-Nothing Cultivation, by Masanobu Fukuoka

The usual way to go about developing a method is to ask, "How about trying this?" or "How about trying that?" bringing in a variety of techniques one upon the other. This is modern agriculture and it only results in making the farmer busier.

My way was opposite. I was aiming at a pleasant, natural way of farming which results in making the work easier instead of harder. "How about not doing this? How about not doing that?" -- that was my way of thinking. I ultimately reached the conclusion that there was no need to plow, no need to apply fertilizer, no need to make compost, no need to use insecticide. When you get right down to it, there are few agricultural practices that are really necessary.

The reason that man's improved techniques seem to be necessary is that the natural balance has been so badly upset beforehand by those same techniques, that the land has become dependent on them.

This line of reasoning not only applies to agriculture, but to other aspects of human society as well. Doctors and medicine become necessary when people create a sickly environment. Formal schooling has no intrinsic value, but becomes necessary when humanity creates a condition in which one must become "educated" to get along. [...]

In raising children, many parents make the same mistake I made in the orchard at first. For example, teaching music to children is as unnecessary as pruning orchard trees. A child's ear catches the music. The murmuring of a stream, the sound of frogs croaking by the riverbank, the rustling of leaves in the forest, all these natural sounds are music -- true music. But when a variety of disturbing noises enter and confuse the ear, the child's pure, direct appreciation of music degenerates. If left to continue along that path, the child will be unable to hear the call of the bird or the sounds of the wind as songs. That is why music is thought to be beneficial to the child's development.

The child who is raised with an ear pure and clear may not be able to play the popular tunes on the violin or the piano, but I do not think this has anything to do with the ability to hear true music or to sing. It is when the heart is filled with song that the child can be said to be musically gifted.

--Masanobu Fukuoka, (from Chapter 4 [1] of One Straw Revolution)

Links:

[1] <http://www.charityfocus.org/blog/view.php?id=1666>

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