

You Learn by Living Study Guide

You Learn by Living by Eleanor Roosevelt

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Plot Summary

You Learn by Living by Eleanor Roosevelt is an educational book written by the former First Lady of the United States of America in order to make helpful suggestions in response to letters she has received. Feeling that the sum of the letters she receives asks what she has learned in her lifetime that will help with a given problem, Eleanor Roosevelt writes this book to reach out to a greater number of people with her advice, though she repeatedly emphasizes the fact that one method does not necessarily work for everyone. You Learn by Living is an inspirational book that provides hope for the reader and perhaps the urge to follow Eleanor Roosevelt's advice to become successful.

Eleanor Roosevelt receives many letters asking for her help in solving a difficulty. She stops to think about what she has learned through living and decides that one's philosophy is best expressed in the choices one makes. An avid factor in Eleanor Roosevelt's life is her avid desire to experience everything she can as deeply as she can. She feels that book education alone is not enough; it must be supplemented by the stimulus of exchanging ideas with others. People should never lose interest, but they must understand the meaning of what they look at and adjust their knowledge to the new information in order to continue to learn and grow. Fear is the worst imaginable stumbling block. Overcoming an impossible situation proves to the individual that they can live through anything, while the danger lies in avoiding one's fears. One common fear is being afraid to use one's capabilities. In the long run, courage is easier and more exhilarating. Eleanor Roosevelt offers four tips to making the best use of time: retain inner calm, learn to concentrate on one thing at a time, organize time with flexibility, and use common sense in health for the energy to carry through even the most strenuous day.

A mature person has self-knowledge and knows how to temper praise with negative remarks. Many people fear self-knowledge because they assume it is only about discovering the negative things about oneself, but actually it is mainly about learning one's inner strengths. It is important to accept one's own limitations, as well as the limitations of others. One should never try to change others, as this stifles individuality. A mature person will set their values on things in life that give them satisfaction. Readjustment is inevitable, causing each period of life good only to the extent that a person uses it. People must learn to cope with disasters, such as death which is inevitable and natural. All people have the need to feel useful. Usefulness to others is a sign of love and respect. Being useful is a justification of one's own existence. Although there are many charitable organizations, there are less dramatic, but just as real, needs everywhere.

There is a great problem modernly with the loss of individuality. People are faced with the problem of conforming or not conforming. This problem arises with children, and while it is necessary for parents to explain the reason their children must be different, they should not conform. People's ambition should be to get as much as possible out of life, rather than trying to live up to society's standard of success. People cannot afford to



lose their individuality. Everyone also has the need to be recognized as an individual, and to do so, must respect and have interest in other people. It is important to be able to deal with a wide variety of people. When dealing with other cultures and races, it is important to learn and respect their different customs, modes of thought and background. These differences are superficial, while the similarities among all humankind are more important. People create themselves by the choices they make daily, though they often blame their mistakes on others instead. They should regard their mistakes as experiences that will guide them to wiser decisions in the future. It is important to be optimistic because no one has ever achieved anything when they believed they could not.

Politics is the participation of citizens in the government. Citizens' minimum duty is to vote intelligently, and they obtain information to do so through the President, the media, commentators and discussion. It is important to find facts and learn both sides. Politics is not a career for professionals, and it is possible for citizens to accomplish certain things for their children and their community, but it is not enough just to wish for a change. A major key to success in democracy is the individual's responsibility for the well-being of the community. Few people deliberately prepare to become public servants because the future is uncertain and there is less financial reward than in other careers. There are many problems for public servants which come at the high cost of personal sacrifice, and Americans owe our public servants gratitude and respect. At the end of her book *Knoro* Roosevelt is filled with misgivings because she has not written anything new, but she decides that it is acceptable since she means well in her advice.



Foreword

Foreword Summary and Analysis

You Learn by Living by Eleanor Roosevelt is an educational book written by the former First Lady of the United States of America in order to make helpful suggestions in response to letters she has received. Feeling that the sum of the letters she receives asks what she has learned in her lifetime that will help with a given problem, Eleanor Roosevelt writes this book to reach out to a greater number of people with her advice, though she repeatedly emphasizes the fact that one method does not necessarily work for everyone. You Learn by Living is an inspirational book that provides hope for the reader and possibly the urge to follow Eleanor Roosevelt's advice to become successful.

Eleanor Roosevelt receives many letters over the years from people asking questions to help solve their problems. The sum of these questions asks what she has learned in life in order to solve a specific difficulty. No one has all of the answers, but Eleanor Roosevelt stops to think about what she has learned through living. She offers guideposts to steer others away from pitfalls but considers that it may only be possible for one to learn through their own mistakes. People must learn from all of their experiences. One's philosophy is best expressed in the choices one makes, but each person is responsible for her/his own choices.



Ch. 1, Learning to Live

Ch. 1, Learning to Live Summary and Analysis

Eleanor Roosevelt repeatedly receives the same interesting question in her mail; people want to know how she planned and prepared for her career. She finds this question interesting because she does not feel she has had a career. Perhaps the most influential factor in her life has been an avid desire to experience all she could as deeply as she could. Eleanor Roosevelt shares the anecdote of journeying to Italy at the age of five with her mother and father. The most important ingredients in a child's education are curiosity, interest, imagination and a sense of the adventure of life. Learning is more than formal education. Eleanor Roosevelt recalls training her memory as a young child by memorizing the New Testament in French, an allusion to the Christian Bible. This assists her when she attends a French school in England where the teacher, Mlle. Souvestre, wants the girls to sift the information she teaches through their own intelligence. This provides one example of a unique teaching method. People obtain their education at home, at school, and from life itself. It is never enough to teach children mere information; the children must relate the information to their immediate surroundings.

Eleanor Roosevelt receives many letters from young wives who feel alien in their husbands' worlds. Following Mlle. Souvestre's example, she tells them that it is not what is read but what one sifts the information through their own mind that will help them. A book education alone is not sufficient; people need the stimulus of exchanging ideas with others. Eleanor Roosevelt learns a taste for languages, specifically Latin and French, as a young child. She encourages people to try to find others' interests interesting and learn from them. Ruth Bryan Rohde explains her alphabet game, in which a host comes up with a word for each letter of the alphabet and attempts to make conversation on that topic. Eleanor Roosevelt details her unsuccessful attempt at a dinner party with Governor and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge. In addition to the allusion to the governor, she also alludes to President and Mrs. Wilson in this anecdote.

Children often ask the question "why?". They usually stop after a while because they are not answered, making them stop wondering about the world. Eleanor Roosevelt is often surprised to hear of someone's death because she thought them dead long ago because they had stopped growing. She describes her aunt, Mrs. Cowles, who, though handicapped and deaf, extended her interests and not only held discussions with her young visitors but actually listened to them, opposed to most adults who think they know all of the answers. Mrs. Douglas Robinson, Mrs. Cowles younger sister, writes a poem about Mrs. Cowles entitled "Soldier of Pain." The moral of this section is that someone who is interested generally and genuinely never has to look for new interests. Eleanor Roosevelt is often asked how she acquired an interest in politics. While traveling abroad with her husband, Ronald Ferguson and his wife, Lady Helen, question her about the United States' government, but, unsure of the answer, she refers to her husband, Franklin. Similarly, she is horrified when asked to open a flower show, so Franklin



volunteers to open it but mistakenly says that Americans cook all of their vegetables in cream. The moral of this section is that people must be interested in anything that comes their way. It is necessary to keep a flexibility of mind since knowledge often changes.

Children rely on their imagination rather than experience, and Eleanor Roosevelt remembers her dream world with her father. An imagination is often children's defense to the harsh realities surrounding them. Eleanor Roosevelt is thankful her husband loved to argue with her sons because it is a loss for children to grow up in a family without conversation. The type of education that family conversation allows provides a sharpening of children's awareness of their world. There is great value in surrounding children with objects of beauty, but parents must ensure their children understand the objects. Eleanor Roosevelt provides the example of her children learning the distinction of fine furniture. She also recalls an anecdote concerning her grandson, Curtis, being confused about being told Teddy Roosevelt was President when he thinks his grandfather was President; the child is unclear about the terms of the Presidency so Eleanor Roosevelt explains them to him. The most essential thing for continuing one's education is the capacity to know what one sees and to understand what it means. Eleanor elaborates on this idea by her example of checking the conditions in department stores for the Consumers League and realizing that the salespeople have no stools. People must understand the meaning of what they look at and readjust their knowledge to this new information in order to learn and grow and have a wonderful time doing so.



Ch. 2, Fear-the Great Enemy

Ch. 2, Fear-the Great Enemy Summary and Analysis

Fear is the worst stumbling block. Eleanor Roosevelt is an exceptionally timid child who overcomes her fear of nearly everything through self-discipline. Her grandmother raises her from the age of seven. Eleanor Roosevelt desires love and affection but is usually told "no" to anything she requests. Her fear of the dark is diminished when she goes outside in the dark to retrieve ice from the icebox for her sick aunt. This anecdote serves as an example of overcoming fear through self-discipline. Eleanor Roosevelt is forbidden to attend the play "Tess of the d'Urbervilles," so she lies and says she is going to the fair instead; the torment of the lie teaches her not to lie. In the early part of her marriage, she accidentally tears a page of her husband's book; his bewilderment and amusement at her tearful confession lessens her fear of displeasing people. Meeting and overcoming an impossible situation teaches people they can live through anything. The danger lies in avoiding their fears. As a young woman, Eleanor Roosevelt is terrified of insanity but is forced to treat the insane during World War I.

Imaginary fears, such as shyness, do more harm than reasonable fears. Thinking about others instead of oneself will defeat such fears. Courage comes from sheer desperation in having to face the inevitable. Eleanor Roosevelt demonstrates this principle through her examples of having to face the fear of childbirth, learning to cook, dealing with her babies without a nurse, and nursing her sick family. Overcoming one's fear is a victory of sorts; this can inspire confidence to overcome the next fear. Many people are afraid to use their own capabilities. Eleanor Roosevelt describes the time she was asked to give a speech, and though terrified, this experience taught her the necessary skills to give speeches in the future. There is a problem in the theory of parents raising their children free of fear because the parents must be free of fear themselves in order to do this. Parents must also know when children are ready to discipline themselves. All children and all families are different. Eleanor Roosevelt provides many examples of children who are ready and those who are not ready to discipline themselves as an example of this doctrine of differences. Many fear the instability of the world. Eleanor Roosevelt points out the irrationality of this fear by comparing the modern world to the courage of the pilgrims in relocating to the New World. Courage is more exhilarating and easier than fear in the long run; this seems to be the moral of this chapter.



Ch. 3, The Uses of Time

Ch. 3, The Uses of Time Summary and Analysis

Since Franklin D Roosevelt and his wife, Laura, have no children, their nieces and nephews often visit them. When the children arrive late saying they had no time, Laura chides them because they have all the time there is; it is their responsibility to make the best use of their time. Eleanor Roosevelt has several hints toward using time wisely. First, one must retain an inner calm. She exemplifies this by describing James, her son, becoming sick and being required to lie still for one hour each day. She requires that this time be spent listening to reading in the midst of the family; eventually, James learns to block out the noise and concentrate only on the reading. Secondly, Eleanor Roosevelt suggests that one learn to concentrate. It is necessary to give all one's attention to the thing at hand and then put it aside and move on to the next thing. In this hint, she alludes to her husband and his ability to concentrate on one thing at a time. Giving an object or task undivided attention allows less time to be spent on it. Eleanor Roosevelt cautions that no matter how hard one tries to escape the inevitable, time wasters are unavoidable. Her third hint includes organizing time with flexibility, for which she provides examples of her general schedule in the country and the city. These two schedules are compared and contrasted, but each can be broken up for unexpected things that come up. There is also enough unscheduled time in each to allow her to make up time missed during trips. She takes two types of trips: to lecture or to travel for the AAUN.

Eleanor Roosevelt's fourth tip is to use common sense in health in order to have energy to carry through even the most strenuous day. Eleanor Roosevelt suggests two remedies for weariness caused by over activity: relaxation and change, such as taking a trip or visiting her grandchildren. These tips presuppose a desire and a need to use time wisely. Unhappy people have no idea what to do with their time, such as in the case of a mother whose children have grown up and left home. Eleanor Roosevelt warns against giving up one's friends and interests when having children. It is important to teach children to be independent which will allow a parent to further pursue their interests when the children leave home. An example of this is demonstrated by her youngest son's visit to Arthurdale, a small miner-turned-farmer town; Eleanor Roosevelt later overhears her son praising this chance to widen his horizons. A parent's interests broaden their children's horizons, as does meeting different people. Eleanor Roosevelt recounts how interesting her children found her friends. Everyone is an individual, and different things may work for different people; Eleanor Roosevelt only attempts to point out suggestions that have been helpful to others.



Ch. 4, The Difficult Art of Maturity

Ch. 4, The Difficult Art of Maturity Summary and Analysis

Several years ago, someone asked Eleanor Roosevelt for the definition of a mature person. Since then, she has revised her definition to include self-knowledge. Unfortunately, there is a danger of becoming absorbed in self-evaluation which can only be evaded by tempering praise with derogatory remarks. Eleanor Roosevelt inherits her good will from her husband being President. Self-knowledge requires humility. Many people fear self-knowledge because they assume it is about discovering only bad things about themselves. This is not true; self-knowledge is mainly about learning one's inner strengths, but it is necessary to accept one's own limitations. It is also necessary to accept others' limitations, such as in the example of a young woman whose feelings were hurt when her husband constantly forgot birthdays and anniversaries. Eventually, she realized that this was one of his shortcomings and began reminding him in advance to avoid either of them feeling badly. There is a danger of seeing others' strengths as limitations, and it is important not to try to change others since that stifles individuality. One must not demand what others cannot give. Maturity also means the ability to take criticism and evaluate it. A mature person will adhere to constructive criticism while ignoring malicious criticism. Mature people will also attempt to eliminate faults in themselves even though no one else may see them. It is important to set one's values in life on things that are satisfying to the individual.



Ch. 5, Readjustment is Endless

Ch. 5, Readjustment is Endless Summary and Analysis

Readjustment, or change, is inevitable. Women have an advantage over men because they are taught from their youth to readjust constantly in order to satisfy others, particularly the men in their lives, while men are taught to dominate. Readjustment occurs constantly. The most obvious readjustment is the physical and emotional changes that are involved with growing and aging. Adolescents get the most attention in this category, but the enhancement of the adolescent is much easier than the deterioration of old age. The best years of a woman's life varies by the individual. As an example of this, Eleanor Roosevelt describes an uncomfortable dinner party that she attended while her husband was President. Each period of life is good only to the extent that a person makes use of it. People must acquire the ability to cope with disaster, such as when Miss Hickok, a reporter is diagnosed with arthritis and diabetes which takes her eyesight. She writes children's stories and is greatly loved by the children in her neighborhood.

After her husband's death, Eleanor Roosevelt faces a future alone, but she is saved from this by her secretary, Miss Malvina Thompson. She lives with Eleanor Roosevelt for many years, and when Miss Malvina Thompson dies, it is much easier for Eleanor Roosevelt to live alone. Death is inevitable, natural, and easier through belief in God. Personal relationships always change, whether they grow or diminish. Many American businessmen separate their work from their home lives which alienates their wives and denies their children the precious gift of a relationship with their father. Readjustments are often caused by war or relocation. Eleanor Roosevelt provides the example of a foreign doctor who immigrates to the United States; not only is he forced to learn English, he must restudy medicine to meet American education requirements. Immigration is compared to retirement. Retirement is a waste of resources, since mankind should use their experienced people rather than force them to retire. One question results from a change in family income and how to use the extra income. There is an adjustment in one's sense of values when this occurs. It is important that people do not neglect their own development.



Ch. 6, Learning to be Useful

Ch. 6, Learning to be Useful Summary and Analysis

Happiness is the goal in life. Part of this is the fact that people need to feel useful. It is easy and fatal to slip into self-absorption. Eleanor Roosevelt's mother's cousin lapses into self-pity after her husband's death. She pretends to be an invalid in order to procure the attention she desperately desires, but it does not lead to happiness. Everyone should be taught not to feel sorry for themselves and slough their burdens onto others. Eleanor Roosevelt shares the story of a young child staying at the White House who she taught this responsibility. Delinquency is surprisingly less proportionate among the poor because these children feel that they are needed by their family. Eleanor Roosevelt remembers an annual picnic she hosts for delinquent children; one child in particular drilled his name into her head due to his strong need for identification and recognition. Italian families work together, but immigrant children are often ashamed of their parents, which causes the children to lose respect for the parents.

Usefulness is a kind of love, or better yet, a kind of respect. Eleanor Roosevelt recounts her granddaughter organizing an annual picnic effectively. To be useful is to justify one's own existence, such as in Eleanor Roosevelt's work with the Consumers' League investigating sweatshops in order to learn the truth about the conditions and correct them. She alludes to her husband, Franklin, in this anecdote. There are many ways to be useful and add to others' enjoyment. Harry Belafonte performs for a school of delinquent boys, as well as visits children in the hospital; his attention makes the children feel special. Eleanor Roosevelt mentions a man who faithfully volunteers at the veterans' hospital and is renowned for his loyalty, an important feature in a volunteer. Also, there are the boys who volunteer to baby-sit for a poor family in order to allow the young couple to have private time. Many charitable organizations exist, but there are less dramatic needs everywhere. One instance of this is Eleanor Roosevelt's anecdote about the girl who gets stuck between the train and the platform on the Subway. A large group of men band together to shift the car so she is safe before continuing to push one another into the train. Though they immediately resume their normal actions, they all come together for one moment to be useful.



Ch. 7, The Right to be an Individual

Ch. 7, The Right to be an Individual Summary and Analysis

The loss of individuality is a great danger, as is the problem between conforming versus nonconforming. Eleanor Roosevelt shares the example of when she disagrees with sentencing a kidnapper to capital punishment, despite pressure to agree with the general public opinion. Pressures to conform have existed since the beginning of time. Two types of conformity are compared and contrasted; there is social conformity and conformity to alien standards, ideas or values because it is easier to agree than disagree. The Soviet Union begins reconditioning men as babies to iron out uniqueness. There is an instance of *modus vivendi* in the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations; the Soviet Union and the United State interpret it differently because the governments view their citizens differently.

The question of conformity versus individuality begins at home with children's question of why they have to be different than others in the rules to which they are subjected. Parents must answer this question, though they do not need to yield to conformity. A common problem is the idea of "keeping up with the Joneses." People's ambition should be to get as much as possible out of life, rather than try to live up to society's standards of success. Success means two things, the development of the individual to his or her utmost potential and a contribution of some kind to one's world. Mozart is an excellent example of this, though he is buried in a pauper's grave. It is important to teach children early to think for themselves and to encourage them to express their opinions. Parents must also practice what they preach. Likewise, it is important that children know when it is not acceptable to offer their opinions in society unless asked explicitly. Children may worry their parents when they do not conform, but it is important to allow them to develop their individuality.

Certain aspects of social conformity equate to good manners; however, it is impossible to please everyone so it is important that people live their lives for themselves. Eleanor Roosevelt provides the example of her elderly friend, Wanda Landowska, who ignores fashion and social expectations to dress the way she is most comfortable. It is also important to have confidence in one's own taste. When Miss Thompson first moves into the apartment on Eleanor Roosevelt's land, she is hesitant to choose furniture, but as time passes, she learns confidence in her own taste. Being an individual is not just a right; it is an obligation. There is a growing tendency of organizations to promote conformity in the workplace, and people often believe they must conform in order to be promoted in the company; however, they cannot afford to lose their individuality because it is too important. They must learn to compromise without losing themselves. If one does not make up one's mind, someone else will do it for them. Grown children also have the right to make their own decisions, and parents should not inhibit their individuality by attempting to impose their opinions on their adult children.



Ch. 8, How to Get the Best Out of People

Ch. 8, How to Get the Best Out of People Summary and Analysis

No one does anything alone, yet everyone has the need to be recognized as an individual. This entails the need to respect others. There is an allusion to Antaeus in this chapter. Eleanor Roosevelt recalls the Queen Mother Elizabeth of England coming to America and making friends simply by looking at the individuals rather than the group. Eleanor Roosevelt attempts to mimic this act at the White House by shaking hands with everyone possible. She also pretends to remember soldiers she has not seen in years. It is necessary to be interested when meeting new people in order to show respect for their individuality. Eleanor Roosevelt recalls her experiences with the miners' wives and the necessity of this principle in that situation. Another important factor in dealing with people is estimating the extent of one's success in communicating with them. Helen Gahagan Douglas is trained as an actress, which means she has been taught to estimate her success in communicating with people; this helps her greatly in her political career. Another young man excels at speaking to students about joining the military because he addresses each of their personal concerns. Employees feel a need for employers' acknowledgments, but many employers' self satisfaction appears as arrogance and inhibits these acknowledgments. While working, it is necessary to deal with a wide variety of people. In group work, it is important to work toward the result rather than the credit. If one's idea is not accepted, it is important to attempt to adjust the accepted idea closer to one's original idea.

In the modern world, it is also important to learn how to deal with people from different cultures and races. It is important to learn their customs, modes of thoughts and background. One young man offends an office full of people in Japan by suggesting gender equality, unaware that the Japanese do not see women as equal to men. On the other hand, at a reception in Bombay, Eleanor Roosevelt notices that the hosts bring their hands together as a greeting rather than shaking hands. When she is asked to address everyone, she mimics their greeting and receives an ovation for the gesture. Unfortunately, she also blunders in Thailand when she offers to touch a Buddhist priest, though she immediately realizes her mistake and apologizes. It is a mistake to travel abroad without knowing the customs of the peoples that are being visited since it can potentially be offensive. The United States is often despised by other nations, though it donates generously to those in need, because Americans do not understand other nations' cultures. It is very important to know and respect others' customs. In cases where a custom cannot be condoned because of personal beliefs, it is possible to show disapproval in an inoffensive way. An example of this is Eleanor Roosevelt's subtle refusal to walk behind the men in Japan. Immigrants used to assimilate into American culture, but now they do not so it has become more important to understand and respect the cultural differences. There are many differences, but they are superficial; however, all people have more similarities which are focused around more important

desires and needs. Americans must learn to deal with foreigners for the welfare of everyone.



Ch. 9, Facing Responsibility

Ch. 9, Facing Responsibility Summary and Analysis

People create themselves by the choices that they make. People often blame others for their mistakes, as illustrated by a reference to Kierkegaard. Children must learn to face responsibility for their actions, but it is also important to allow them to make their own mistakes. Parents often demand that children begin to make choices at too young an age, which can be dismaying if the child is not yet ready to make their own decisions. Families should share responsibilities, such as budgets. Each member of a family should have their own sum to spend, which will teach children how to make choices. For example, Eleanor Roosevelt's grandnephew chooses to buy scientific equipment instead of clothes. Likewise, her husband buys books instead of clothes. Eleanor Roosevelt knows a family who wears silly hats when it is necessary to discuss family matters because the absurdity of the hats prevents arguments. People make choices daily, some trivial and some more important. It is also important to choose a broad range of people to interact with since this broadens one's experiences. People choose their beliefs, mainly through their ability to stand up for their beliefs. An example of this is a young couple who are offended at their neighbors' blatant racism; although they explain that they do not feel badly about the neighbors, they feel that they cannot condone that type of thinking. There is not a generalization for the age that is appropriate for allowing children to make their choices, since everyone makes mistakes. Although young drivers tend to be more reckless, adults also have accidents. Eleanor Roosevelt feels a deep interest in a youth who admits his mistake in choosing a career and decides to try something different. People should regard their mistakes as experiences that will guide them to wiser decisions in the future. Young people tend to believe in perfection; Eleanor Roosevelt does not believe in perfection, but she is an optimist. No one achieves anything unless they believe they can.



Ch. 10, How Everyone Can Take Part in Politics

Ch. 10, How Everyone Can Take Part in Politics Summary and Analysis

Politics is the participation of citizens in the government. Each citizen's minimum duty is to vote intelligently. The way to obtain information in order to vote intelligently comes from four main sources: the President, the media, commentators, and discussion. It is important to learn the facts from both sides. It is also necessary to discuss politics with people whose opinions differ radically from one's own, but in doing so, one must also re-examine one's own opinion to make this worthwhile. One failure of the President to act as a means for information is discussed; Congress becomes aware of executive orders to turn over nuclear knowledge to Germany. The President should have brought this plan to the attention of the People. It is important to pay attention to local politics in order to gain understanding of politics as a whole.

Politics is not a career for professionals, and citizens are capable of accomplishing certain things for their children and their community. However, it is not enough to wish for change; a person must know the status of things as they stand and what they desire to change about them. It is also important to study human nature. Digging out the facts leads to a greater understanding of politics as well. Eleanor Roosevelt recalls the first time she evaluates the conditions in prisons and hospitals. When her husband questions her about the conditions, she is unable to answer many of his questions which leads her to find her yardstick by which to measure the conditions. The King of England visits a CCC camp in America. His manner of paying special attention to the boys individually strikes Eleanor Roosevelt as important. Also, the King of England attends a tea party at the White House where Eleanor Roosevelt is supposed to introduce him to each person in attendance and explain their role in government. Her fears of being unable to do so are assuaged as the King of England recognizes each individual and their position due to his initial briefing upon arriving in America. Eleanor Roosevelt's training in getting facts helps her to know what to look for when examining the practice of teaching trades to prisoners.

Each individual is responsible for the well-being of their community, and this is the key to success in democracy, according to Thomas Jefferson. The Rotary Club organizes a model assembly where each student represents a different country. Eleanor Roosevelt is amazed at the girl who studies Ghana and represents the country so well. In a discussion with her relatives, Eleanor Roosevelt discovers their discontent with the idea of desegregation, especially since their children do not seem opposed to it. This proves that children are not born prejudiced but are taught to be prejudiced. The Encampment for Citizenship is a multicultural group of youths who assemble to discuss politics; the percentage of these students who vote is far higher than the national average because



they are informed. It is difficult not to get involved with the life of the community. Eleanor Roosevelt shares the story of volunteer firemen who save prisoners from a fire. The public is very proud of the firemen at the same time that they are ashamed of the conditions of the prison and their unawareness of this. Many people claim that politics are corrupt; corruption exists in politics because there are humans in politics. There are two sides to every wrong. For example, in bribery, there is the person being bribed and the person doing the bribing. Ignoring any law, even one such as speeding, undermines the fabric on which society rests. The chief duty of a citizen is to make the government the best possible medium for a peaceful and prosperous conduct of life.



Ch. 11, Learning to be a Public Servant and Afterword

Ch. 11, Learning to be a Public Servant and Afterword Summary and Analysis

Few people deliberately prepare to become public servants because of the uncertain future that it holds, as well as the fact that it offers less financial reward than other careers. There are several things that one must face before becoming a public servant. First, it is necessary to earn and save enough money to support oneself and one's family if the career does not last, or it is important to have enough influential connections to reacquire one's job. Secondly, a public servant must consider whether their family is willing to accept their way of life. Finally, a public servant must have a genuine love of people and the desire to accomplish something. There are many expectations for a congressman or senator. They must have an international concept. Also, they must understand the people of the area where they work and have an overall interest in the big questions touching the community. They should acquire a sense of timing, be patient, and have the ability to attract and draw people toward them. Women in politics should beware of men "keeping them in their place." One downfall to women in politics seems to be that they are more sensitive to criticism.

It is important for a public servant to have elasticity and flexibility of mind in a changing world. Eleanor Roosevelt recalls a debate with Mr. Khrushchev about the happiness of the workers in the United States versus those in Russia. Politics can be unsavory due to bribery, but bribery does not extend only to money. There are also many ways bribery can be more subtle, such as an appeal to friendship. An example of this is Big Tim Sullivan in Ireland who encourages people to vote for friends. The United States has often considered whose arm they can twist within the United Nations in order to obtain votes for specific policies. There is a general public outrage at such practices. Public servants are required to compromise. At some point, they will have to face the question of whether they will take a firm stance and accept defeat, or if they will yield and attempt to tackle different problems. There are many problems for public servants; the position comes at a high cost of personal sacrifice. Americans owe public servants gratitude and respect above all else.

Eleanor Roosevelt is filled with misgivings at the end of her book because she has written nothing new. She quotes Norman Douglas' "South Wind," which basically states that one should not worry about other people's opinions as long as they mean well in their actions.



Characters

Eleanor Roosevelt

Eleanor Roosevelt is the author of the book. She receives many letters asking what she has learned in life to help solve certain dilemmas; this is the reason she decides to write the book. She thinks about what she has learned through living and offers guideposts to steer people away from pitfalls. Eleanor Roosevelt believes that one's philosophy is best expressed in the choices made, which are one's own responsibility. She does not feel she has had a career but believes that the most influential factor in her life has been an avid desire to experience all she could as deeply as she could. She journeys to Italy with her parents at the age of five. Eleanor Roosevelt trains her memory as a child by memorizing the New Testament in French. This helps when she attends a French school in England under the supervision of Mlle. Souvestre who teaches her that learning has to do with the way one sifts learned information through one's own mind. Eleanor Roosevelt unsuccessfully attempts to mimic Ruth Bryan Rohde's alphabet game at a dinner party with Governor and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge.

Eleanor Roosevelt is a timid child who is afraid of nearly everything, but she overcomes this with self-discipline. Her grandmother raises her from age seven. Eleanor Roosevelt wants love and affection, but her requests are usually denied. Her fear of the dark is diminished after fetching ice in the dark for a sick aunt. Her fear of displeasing people is lessened after her husband's amused reaction when she tears a page of his book. Treating the insane during World War I lessens her fear of insanity. Eleanor Roosevelt organizes her time with flexibility so she can make up time when she travels for one of two reasons, lecturing or for the AAUN. She also uses common sense in her health so she can deal with even the most strenuous days. Eleanor Roosevelt keeps a wide range of friends and interests in order to broaden her horizons. She inherits a certain sense of good will as a result of her husband being President.

When Eleanor Roosevelt's husband dies, she has a hard time being alone, but that difficulty is eased when her secretary, Miss Malvina Thompson, comes to live with her. By the time Miss Malvina Thompson dies, Eleanor Roosevelt is much better able to live alone. She throws a picnic for delinquent children where she recognizes their strong need for identification and recognition, and she works with the Consumers League to investigate sweatshops. Eleanor Roosevelt respects the right and obligation, to be an individual by refusing to conform and agree that a kidnapper should be sentenced to capital punishment. She attempts to imitate the Queen Mother of England by recognizing individuals. She also expresses interest in the soldiers and miners' wives that she meets. Eleanor Roosevelt receives an ovation in Bombay for the gesture of mimicking a cultural greeting of placing her hands together. She errs in Thailand by offering to touch a Buddhist priest but quickly apologizes since she knows the custom; she had simply forgotten for a moment. Eleanor Roosevelt inoffensively shows her disapproval of the lack of gender equality in Japan by refusing to walk behind men on the sidewalk.



Eleanor Roosevelt believes that people create themselves by the choices they make and encourages everyone to learn from their mistakes. She is an optimist who believes that no one ever achieves anything if they believe they cannot. Eleanor Roosevelt discusses the ability of everyone to participate in politics. She is impressed by the King of England when he knows the names and positions of every guest at a White House tea party. She believes corruption exists in politics because humans exist in politics. Eleanor Roosevelt warns women in politics that men will try to "keep you in your place." She debates with Mr. Khrushchev about the happiness of workers in the United States compared to those in Russia. She believes that Americans owe public servants gratitude and respect. At the end of her book, she is filled with misgivings because she has written nothing new, but she quotes Norman Douglas' "South Wind," stating that her book is acceptable since she means well.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Franklin Delano Roosevelt is the President of the United States of America from 1933 until 1945, during the Great Depression and World War II. He is also Eleanor Roosevelt's husband. With his wife, he attends a dinner party with Governor and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, at President and Mrs. Wilson's request. Unlike his wife, he enjoys himself talking to Mrs. Calvin Coolidge. When Ronald Ferguson and Lady Helen ask Eleanor Roosevelt about the United States government, she is unable to answer, but Franklin Delano Roosevelt explains the government in his wife's stead. Later, when Eleanor Roosevelt is asked to open a flower show, Franklin Delano Roosevelt takes her place and mistakenly states that Americans cook all their vegetables in cream. This error on both sides convinces them that it is important to be interested in anything that comes one's way.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt enjoys arguing with his sons, for which Eleanor Roosevelt is very grateful since she believes it is a loss for children to grow up in a family without conversation. Franklin is bewildered and amused when his wife laments over tearing a page in his book, stating that he probably would have done the same shortly anyway. Franklin Delano Roosevelt accompanies his wife when she investigates sweatshops for the Consumers League. He also gives her guidelines by which to judge when investigating prisons and hospitals. He teaches his children to think for themselves and encourages them to express their opinions. Franklin Delano Roosevelt dies in 1945, leaving Eleanor Roosevelt alone until her secretary, Miss Malvina Thompson moves in with her.

Mlle. Souvestre

Mlle. Souvestre is Eleanor Roosevelt's teacher at the French School in England. She wants her students to sift the information that she teaches through their own intelligence rather than just memorizing what she tells them.



Mrs. Cowles

Mrs. Cowles is Eleanor Roosevelt's mother's aunt who is deaf and handicapped; however, she never loses interest in life. She listens to her young visitors and has discussions with them, rather than acting like she knows everything like most adults. She is greatly missed after her death. Mrs. Cowles' younger sister, Mrs. Douglas Robinson, writes a poem about Mrs. Cowles entitled "Soldier of Pain."

Laura

Laura is Franklin Delano's wife who is childless. Her nieces and nephews frequently visit her, and when they arrive late, complaining there was not enough time, she objects that they have all the time there is.

Miss Hickok

Miss Hickok is a friend of Eleanor Roosevelt's who has the ability to deal with disaster, unlike many people. She is a reporter until she is attacked by arthritis and diabetes which affects her eyesight. She retires to the country and writes children's stories. The neighborhood children love Miss Hickok.

Miss Malvina Thompson

Miss Malvina Thompson is Eleanor Roosevelt's secretary. She lives with Eleanor Roosevelt after Franklin Delano Roosevelt's death. Though she doubts her taste in furniture at first, Miss Malvina Thompson learns to trust her taste.

Harry Belafonte

Harry Belafonte is a renowned musician whom Eleanor Roosevelt praises for performing for delinquent boys and visiting children in the hospital.

Teddy Roosevelt

A picture of Teddy Roosevelt, the former President of the United States of America, hangs in the Roosevelt's family home. Eleanor Roosevelt's grandson, Curtis, is confused because he has heard people say that both Teddy Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt were President; Eleanor Roosevelt explains Presidential terms to her grandson.



King of England

The King of England travels to America. While in America, he visits a CCC camp where he acknowledges each boy in the camp. Later, he knows the names and positions of each guest at a tea party at the White House. The King of England teaches Eleanor Roosevelt about the training that a monarch receives.

Mr. Khrushchev

Mr. Khrushchev is a Russian who argues with Eleanor Roosevelt about the happiness of Russian workers compared to American workers.

Big Tim Sullivan

Big Tim Sullivan is an Irish politician who appeals to friendships to gain votes.

Queen Mother of England

The Queen Mother of England, then simply Queen Elizabeth, visits the United States of America. She makes a positive impression on the people whom she encounters by her attempt to recognize individuals rather than the mass of people before her.

Helen Gahagen Douglas

Helen Gahagen Douglas is an actress turned politician. She believes that her training as an actress includes learning to communicate with people which helps her political career.



Objects/Places

French School

The French School in England is the school that Eleanor Roosevelt attended as a teenager. Mlle. Souvestre is the teacher.

Alphabet Game

The alphabet game is a game that Ruth Bryan Rohde invents. It is a method of initiating conversation by working one's way through the alphabet and suggesting the first word that suggests itself starting with that particular letter of the alphabet.

"Soldier of Pain"

"Soldier of Pain" is a poem written about Mrs. Cowles, Eleanor Roosevelt's aunt, by her younger sister, Mrs. Douglas Robinson.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles

Tess of the d'Urbervilles is a play that Eleanor Roosevelt wants to see but is prohibited because she is too young. She lies and says she is going to the fair, but she sneaks to see the play.

Arthurdale

Arthurdale is the mining town where Eleanor Roosevelt takes her youngest son to visit as a chance to widen his horizons.

Maturity

Maturity entails self-knowledge. A mature person must be able to accept the limitations of themselves and others. They must also be able to evaluate criticism.

White House

The White House is the home of the President of the United States, where Eleanor Roosevelt lived during her husband's Presidency.



Consumers League

Eleanor Roosevelt worked for the Consumers League, investigating the working conditions of department store workers.

Soviet Union

The Soviet Union reconditions men, starting from birth, to eliminate individuality.

Hyde Park

Hyde Park is the Roosevelt's country home.

CCC camp

The King of England visits the CCC camp and talks to the boys individually.

Rotary Club

The Rotary Club holds a model assembly where each student represents a different country.

Encampment for Citizenship

The Encampment for Citizenship is a multicultural group of high school students; the percentage of members who vote is significantly higher than the national average.

Political Corruption

Corruption exists in politics because humans exist in politics. One example of this is bribery. Another aspect is that breaking laws undermine the law which leads to corruption.

U.N.

The U.N., or United Nations, is a collection of countries. This institution is corrupt from bribery, as shown in Eleanor Roosevelt's example of the United States "twisting arms" to get other countries to vote for policies.



Bombay

Eleanor Roosevelt attends a reception in Bombay where she receives an ovation for her attempt at the cultural greeting of placing her hands together rather than offering to shake hands.

Thailand

In Thailand, Eleanor Roosevelt blunders by offering to touch a Buddhist priest.

New York

Eleanor Roosevelt lives in New York.

Japan

A young man offends a group of people in Japan by suggesting gender equality. Eleanor Roosevelt shows her disapproval of this inequality by refusing to walk behind men in Japan.

Tea Party

The King of England attends a tea party at the White House and knows everyone's names and their positions in the government.

Themes

Respect

One theme throughout this book is respect. It is important to respect others and oneself by finding people interesting and learning from them. When children ask the question "why," as they often do, it is important to answer them so that they do not stop wondering about the world. Mrs. Cowles is cited as an example of someone who maintained her interest of people during her life and always respected the youth who came to visit her by truly listening to them, rather than assuming that, as an adult, she had all the answers. Many people have fears, but these fears can be assuaged by thinking about others instead of oneself. Likewise, it is important to accept others' limitations, such as in the example of the young woman whose husband constantly forgot birthdays and anniversaries; instead of becoming angry and hurt, she would simply remind him of the pending dates to avoid agony on both sides. It is important not to attempt to change others since this will stifle their individuality. Similarly, it is important not to demand what others cannot give.

In discussing the waste of retirement, Eleanor Roosevelt expresses her belief that the United States workforce should respect and utilize the experience of the elderly, rather than forcing them to retire. Delinquency is less an issue among the poor because they feel useful to their families. Usefulness is another form of respect when it is handled well. Immigrant children tend to lose respect for their parents once they settle in America because they become ashamed of their parents' old fashioned ways. Contradictorily, Harry Belafonte showed his usefulness, and therefore his respect, when performing for a school of delinquent boys and visiting sick children in the hospital.

There is a common need to be recognized as an individual, and also there is a common need to respect others. The Queen Mother Elizabeth of England made friends when she visited the United States of America simply by looking at individuals and giving them her respect. The King of England acted similarly by acknowledging all of the boys at a CCC camp and knowing the names and positions of all of the guests at a White House tea party. When traveling abroad, it is important to know and respect the customs, modes of thought, and background of different races and cultures. Eleanor Roosevelt demonstrated this in her effort to imitate a local greeting in Bombay. Though Americans make large donations to countries in need, they are generally despised because of their lack of understanding and respect for others' cultures. It is important to realize that the differences between cultures tend to be superficial, while the similarities are of the more important aspects of life.

Individuality

A key theme throughout this book is individuality. Eleanor Roosevelt begins the book by stating that one's philosophy is best expressed in the choices one makes, which are



one's own responsibility. Also, education is not a result of what is read but how it is sorted through one's mind. It is important to be interested in anything that presents itself and to have flexibility of mind since knowledge changes. Self-evaluation is important, but it is not only about discovering the negative aspects of one's personality; it is mainly about uncovering one's strengths. It is still important to accept one's own limitation and attempt to eliminate faults one sees in oneself regardless if anyone else sees them as well. It is important to set one's values on things that give one satisfaction. Readjustment is inevitable, and each period of life is good only to the extent that the individual makes use of it.

The loss of individuality is a great danger in the modern world due to the problem of conforming or not conforming. Eleanor Roosevelt received public disapprobation when she disagreed that a kidnapper be sentenced to the death penalty. Pressures to conform have existed since the beginning of time, and there are two types of conformity: social conformity and conformity to alien standards, idea and values because it is easier than dissenting. The Soviet Union reconditions men from birth to iron out their uniqueness. Children begin questioning early why they have to be different from their friends; while it is important for parents to answer the question, it is not necessary to yield to conformity. It is important to live up to one's own standards of success rather than society's standards. Parents should teach children to think for themselves and express their opinions to develop their individuality. Organizations have a tendency to promote conformity, but it is important to compromise somewhat without losing one's self because one cannot afford to lose one's individuality. People do not just have a right to individuality; they have an obligation to be an individual.

Child-Rearing

Child-rearing advice is given freely throughout this book by Eleanor Roosevelt. She begins with listing the most important ingredients in a child's education, which are curiosity, interest, imagination and a sense of the adventure of life. Learning is more than formal education, and it is never enough to teach a child mere information; they must relate the information to their immediate surroundings. Children often ask "why," but they usually stop eventually because they receive no answer which makes them stop wondering about the world around them. Imagination is a child's defense, while conversation sharpens a child's awareness of his world. While there is a great value in surrounding children with objects of beauty, it is also important that children understand the objects. An example of this is given concerning Curtis, Eleanor Roosevelt's grandson, who was confused about a picture of Teddy Roosevelt, being told that he was the President while Curtis thought his grandfather, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was President.

There is a problem with parents attempting to bring children up free of fear because that entails parents also being free of fear. It is important to recognize when children are ready to discipline themselves, but it is equally important not to allow them to discipline themselves too early. Children should be taught not to slough their burdens on others, as well as being taught responsibility for their actions. Parents should teach their



children to be independent and open-minded. American businessmen often separate their work lives from their home lives which denies their children the precious gift of a relationship with their father. Families should share the responsibilities, including the budget. It is useful to allow each member of the family to possess his or her own sum to spend which teaches children how to make choices. An example of this is Eleanor Roosevelt's grandnephew who spends his money on scientific equipment rather than clothes. Children should be allowed to make their own mistakes, but parents should be present to guide them to know how to correct their mistakes.

Style

Perspective

Eleanor Roosevelt wrote "You Learn by Living" in the first person. She was raised in a well-to-do family and married young to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who later became President of the United State of America. By being the first lady, she attained insight into politics and was also privy to many private matters that concerned international relations and certain organizations.

Eleanor Roosevelt was also a social activist who advocated reform in many institutions such as prisons and hospitals. She published *You Learn by Living* in 1960, previously having published *This is My Story* in 1937. She followed these up with *My Day* in 1962 and *Tomorrow is Now* in 1963.

Eleanor Roosevelt wrote this book in response to the frequent questions for help she received in her mail. People seemed to want to know what she had learned that would help them through dilemmas in their personal lives. Eleanor Roosevelt mapped out a plan that would help people work their way through dilemmas, including anticipatory steps. The intended audience for this book is American adults, specifically those who feel overwhelmed with their responsibilities. The audience should finish reading the book feeling encouraged and inspired.

Tone

The tone of the book is informational. The foreword outlines the basic reason for writing the book, which is to answer the question "what have you learned to help me solve a problem I am now facing." Each chapter represents a different aspect of solving problems that may arise. Throughout the book, Eleanor Roosevelt remains optimistic about humankind in general.

The tone generally attempts to be objective but occasionally diverts to the subjective as Eleanor Roosevelt shares her experiences with the reader. She excuses this factor by repeatedly stating that her suggestions are just general guidelines that she has noticed throughout her life that have helped other people. She constantly emphasizes the necessity of the individual discovering what works best for him or her.

This tone creates a feeling of confidentiality and optimism in a reader. Optimism is slightly contagious, and Eleanor Roosevelt exudes optimism about the difficulties of life. Readers will finish this book feeling they can accomplish what they need to by following Eleanor Roosevelt's advice.

Structure

The book is divided into eleven chapters, plus a foreword and afterword. Each chapter is titled to refer to the specific idea upon which the chapter will focus. The chapters are all between ten and twenty pages long, the bulk of them being over fifteen pages long. The foreword and the afterword are both simply short reflections of Eleanor Roosevelt's feelings about her book; they both emphasize the inability for one person to possess all the solutions to every problem.

This format is very useful since it allows the reader to comprehend what each chapter will be about before they begin reading. Within each chapter, there are a set of standards for which each objective can be achieved. Most objectives also contain at least one example of how someone else has achieved the objective. Throughout the book, Eleanor Roosevelt constantly refers to her own life experiences as well as to those around her.



Quotes

"One's philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes. In stopping to think through the meaning of what I have learned, there is much I believe intensely, much I am unsure of. But this, at least, I believe with all my heart: In the long run, we shape our lives and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility." Foreword, p. 2

"What counts, in the long run, is not what you read; it is what you sift through your own mind; it is the ideas and impressions that are aroused in you by your reading. It is the ideas stirred in your own mind, the ideas which are a reflection of your own thinking, which make you an interesting person." Chapter 1: Learning to Learn, p.7-8

"The withholding of information from a child either frustrates him or makes him seek it for himself. And the trouble with the latter method is that it is apt to make the child feel both guilty and dishonest." Chapter 2: Fear-the Great Enemy, p. 28

"The encouraging thing is that every time you meet a situation, though you may think at the time it is an impossibility and you go through the tortures of the damned, once you have met it and lived through it you find that forever after you are freer than you ever were before. If you can live through that you can live through anything. You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face." Chapter 2: Fear-the Great Enemy, p. 29

"When things that happen to you are inevitable there is a kind of courage that comes from sheer desperation. If it is inevitable and has to be met, you can meet it." Chapter 2: Fear-the Great Enemy, p. 33

"There is another kind of fear that is prevalent. Very often people seem afraid to put their own capabilities to use, as though one could save one's abilities and draw interest on them. The only interest, of course, comes from spending. Or they believe that if they make use of their own assets, some demands will be made upon them...This particular kind of fear is impoverishing because such a person never dares to find out how much he is really capable of doing." Chapter 2: Fear-the Great Enemy, p. 36-37

"There is another fear problem which is growing more widespread and which, I think, we must do all we can to check at the source. Increasingly people are growing afraid of what is in store for the world. They wonder whether they should plan to go in for professions and build homes and bring up families... Well, what security did our first settlers have when they embarked on the Mayflower? Only what they could create for themselves with their own courage, their own activities, their own trust in themselves to be able to meet any situations- all unknown, all threatening- that they might encounter. It is the only way anyone can plan his life." Chapter 2: Fear-the Great Enemy, p. 40-41



"Age needs the company of youth, I think, and it always does me good." Chapter 3: The Uses of Time, p. 55

"A mature person is one who does not think only in absolutes, who is able to be objective even when deeply stirred emotionally, who has learned that there is both good and bad in all people and in all things, and who walks humbly and deals charitably with the circumstances of life, knowing that in this world all of us need both love and charity." Chapter 4: The Difficult Art of Maturity, p. 63

"There is another and perhaps greater danger involved in this matter of accepting the limitations of others. Sometimes we are apt to regard as limitations qualities that are actually the other person's strength. We may resent them because they are not the particular qualities which we may want the other person to have. The danger lies in the possibility that we will not accept the person as he is but try to make him over according to our own ideas." Chapter 4: The Difficult Art of Maturity, p. 68-69

"Readjustment is a kind of private revolution. Each time you learn something new you must readjust the whole framework of your knowledge. It seems to me that one is forced to make inner and outer readjustments all one's life. The process never ends." Chapter 5: Readjustment is Endless, p. 78

"Whatever period of life we are in is good only to the extent that we make use of it, that we live it to the hilt, that we continue to develop and understand what it has to offer us and we have to offer it. The rewards for each age are different in kind, but they are not necessarily different in value or in satisfaction." Chapter 5: Readjustment is Endless, p. 81

"It is easy to slip into self-absorption and it is equally fatal. When one becomes absorbed in himself, in his health, in his personal problems, or in the small details of daily living, he is, at the same time, losing interest in other people; worse, he is losing his ties to life. From that it is an easy step to losing interest in the world and in life itself. It is the beginning of death." Chapter 6: Learning to Be Useful, p. 95

"The need to be needed is much stronger in most of us than we are aware. We hear a great deal about the need for self-expression but, by and large, it rarely brings the same returns in basic satisfaction that come with going beyond the self to meet another person's need." Chapter 6: Learning to Be Useful, p. 96

"We are facing a great danger today- the loss of our individuality. It is besieged on all sides by pressures to conform: to a standardized way of living, to recognized- or required- codes of behavior, to rubber-stamp thinking. But the most threat comes from within, from a man's or woman's apathy, his willingness to surrender to pressure, to 'do it the easy way,' to give up the one thing that is himself, his value and his meaning as a person-his individuality. It's your life-but only if you make it so. The standards by which you live must be your own standards, your own values, your own convictions in regard to what is right and wrong, what is true and false, what is important and what is trivial. When you adopt the standards and the values of someone else or a community or a



pressure group, you surrender your own integrity. You become, to the extent of your surrender, less of a human being." Chapter 7: The Right to be an Individual, p. 111

"It is a brave thing to have courage to be an individual; it is also, perhaps, a lonely thing. But it is better than not being an individual, which is to be nobody at all." Chapter 7: The Right to be an Individual, p. 114

"Mozart, who was buried in a pauper's grave, was one of the greatest successes we know of, a man who in his early thirties had poured out his inexhaustible gift of music, leaving the world richer because he had passed that way. To leave the world richer- that is the ultimate success." Chapter 7: The Right to be an Individual, p. 119

"Remember always that you have not only the right to be an individual; you have an obligation to be one. You cannot make any useful contribution in life unless you do this." Chapter 7: The Right to be an Individual, p. 127

"One of the essential points we must bring home to our children is that there is comparatively little they can do entirely by themselves. So, along with the need for individual development, there is also an equally pressing need to work cooperatively. This, of course, involves learning about people and finding out how to draw the best from your association with them. Mutual respect is the basis of all civilized human relationships. It is necessary in the family group, it is inseparable from friendship, it is a requirement in the work one does with one's associates on whatever level, and it is increasingly necessary in seeking cooperation among the peoples of the world." Chapter 8: How to Get the Best Out of People, p. 133

"We talk so often about the differences between people, yet here in our country we find that, in spite of circumstances which create great differences, we have certain great similarities. Rich or poor, we want our children to be well education. Rich or poor, we want them to do better than we have done. Rich or poor, we want the respect of our neighbors and perhaps their affection. Love and death come to us all, no matter what the circumstances of our lives. In the big things that matter, the similarities are far greater than the differences." Chapter 8: How to Get the Best Out of People, p. 147-148

"It is impossible to be a cynic if you live a good deal with young people. Fundamentally, every young person has a feeling that the future is going to hold something of value for him. Cynicism seems to me a form of philosophical defeat. It comes only when you have given up any thought or hope of achievement." Chapter 9: Facing Responsibility, p. 166-167

"What matters now, as always, is not what we can't do; it is what we can and must do." Chapter 9: Facing Responsibility, p. 167

"Surely, in the light of history, it is more intelligent to hope rather than fear, to try rather than not to try. For one thing we know beyond all doubt: Nothing has ever been



achieved by the person who says, 'It can't be done.'" Chapter 9: Facing Responsibility, p. 168

"The minimum, the very basic minimum, of a citizen's duty is to cast a vote on election day. Even now, too few of us discharge this minimal duty. By such negligence, such indifference, such sheer laziness, we discard, unused, a gift and a privilege obtained for us at gigantic cost and sacrifice." Chapter 10: How Everyone Can Take Part in Politics, p. 171

"It is not only important but mentally invigorating to discuss political matters with people whose opinions differ radically from one's own. For the same reason, I believe it is a sound idea to attend not only the meetings of one's own party but of the opposition. Find out what people are saying, what they are thinking, what they believe. This is an invaluable check on one's own ideas. Are we right in what we think or is there a different approach that might be more effective? Are we clinging to an outmoded theory? Which policy is best for the people, best for our government, best for the world? If we are to cope intelligently with a changing world, we must be flexible and willing to relinquish opinions that no longer have any bearing on existing conditions." Chapter 10: How Everyone Can Take Part in Politics, p. 174

"Because it is the most highly developed type of government, democracy requires the most highly developed citizens. Whether we, as a whole, are willing to accept this responsibility and live up to it is something of which I cannot be sure. But we cannot be reminded too often that each of us is responsible for our attitude and our way of life, because they will in turn affect our government." Chapter 10: How Everyone Can Take Part in Politics, p. 184

"Given half a chance, the young, I think, can be trusted not only to accept political responsibility but to welcome it, for with each effort to shoulder a burden comes strength, and with strength comes confidence. With confidence enough, a nation is invincible. No man is defeated until he has first been defeated within." Chapter 10: How Everyone Can Take Part in Politics, p. 187

"Often a man will have to face a choice: Will you stand firmly for a certain principle and risk defeat, or will you compromise on the issue so you will not be defeated and will still have an opportunity to accomplish other things?" Chapter 11: Learning to Be a Public Servant, p. 203

"A good public servant becomes so at a high cost of personal sacrifice. We need such men; when we find them we owe them our gratitude and, above all, our respect." Chapter 11: Learning to Be a Public Servant, p. 203



Topics for Discussion

Explain education according to Eleanor Roosevelt's point of view.

Why are imaginary fears more harmful than rational fears?

Organize a flexible schedule for your average day.

Why is self-evaluation important in becoming a mature person?

Compare and contrast men's and women's reactions to readjustment.

How is respect related to usefulness?

How can one compromise individuality with social conformity?

What was the importance of Queen Elizabeth looking at people when she visited the United States? How did Eleanor Roosevelt attempt to imitate this act?

What are some ways to teach children to accept responsibility?

Why is voting so important?

What are the three most important aspects of a public servant? Why did you choose these aspects?