

WRITING
from the
HEART

心 灵 之 声

—— 分享年轻智慧

(中英文对照)

YOUNG PEOPLE
SHARE THEIR
WISDOM



[美] 佩吉·维尔克维克 阿瑟·舒瓦茨 编

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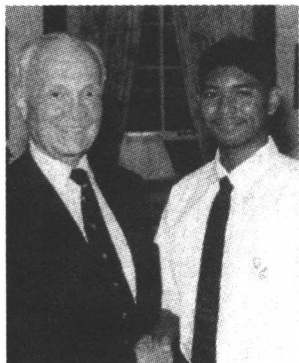
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前

言



爱。宽恕。同情。坚忍。这是跨越时空、放之四海而皆准的为人之道。在我们的人生旅途中，不论我们做些什么，不论我们去往何方，都有成百条这样的思想引导着我们。但我们需要先意识到其存在、并身体力行将其付诸实践，这些原则才真正称得上是我们的向导。简言之，我们必要先亲

自发现这些“人生法则”，然后才能依照这些法则来生活。

我们怎样才能发现自己的为人之道、我们自己的“人生法则”呢？我相信我们每个人都能找到自己想要遵循的原则，如果我们对所经过的人和事，以及生活给予我们的经验教训进行深入的思考的话。通过发现并实践这些原则，我们就有力量改造我们的人生，使之成为更富深义的快乐体验。

我长在田纳西州的富兰克林县。年少时，家庭和学校对我谆谆教诲，告诉我什么是优秀的品质，包括父母在内的身边的人，以及我心目中的榜样的身体力行，又更深

入地倡导着这些优秀的品质。这一切我耳濡目染。我的家乡民风古朴，几乎夜不闭户。人们言出必行，坦诚相待。诚实总是最好的处世原则。正是有了优秀品质的典范和榜样，我才能找到并实践我的人生原则，来引导我的人生之路。是故乡给了我得天独厚的自由和机会来发现自己的“人生法则”。

“人生法则”作文比赛给了青年同样的机会。1987年，我们在富兰克林县发起的第一届作文竞赛，对该县产生了惊人的影响。那次比赛得以进行要归因于两件事。其一是奖金，金额从荣誉奖的100元到大奖的2000元不等。县里的学生们都为能赢得奖金而跃跃欲试，写文章赢奖金，这一念头风一般吹遍全县。两三年后，四分之三的学生都曾参赛一展身手，纷纷写文章阐述自己的价值观。另一条成功的原则是：我们没有告诉青年写些什么。我们就是让他们用自己的话讲给我们。人所共知，青年喜欢与人分享他们的经历，凡事喜欢自己下结论。这正是“人生法则”作文大赛的全部目的所在：为青年提供机会，让他们认真思考自己的信仰及原则，并就此写出文章。然后通过公众的认可对其加以肯定。

《心灵之声》讴歌这些永远的真理以及撰文歌颂真理的孩子们。这本书也同步记录了作文比赛令人称奇的迅速发展的历程——从我的故乡田纳西州的富兰克林县发展到了全世界。

为我们的青年喝彩

首先，《心灵之声》是赞美我们的青年的颂歌。书中所收录的62篇文章，字字句句都记录着青年心中本能的善良。



当我们鼓励他们好好思考一下内心的优良品质的时候，这种向善的本能就变得更加强烈。从 Chattanooga 到中国，不论作者来自何方，本书中的文章篇篇都是好文章。而且，这些文章都因其所包含的思想广度及人生哲理而从当地的众多参赛作文中脱颖而出。

本书中的 62 篇文章不止是为这些作者喝彩。这些文章也代表着全世界六万多名参赛青年。六万多篇文章篇篇精彩，六万多名作者个个是赢家——每位作者都在书写着自己的命运。

请细读慢品每一篇文章。它能够让你一睹全球青年的内心世界，机会难得。你对他们的了解将使你大吃一惊。作者对自己年轻的生命中的重要的人进行思索，他们的文章记录了他们的心路历程。许多是乐观明朗的，也有一些是悲惨暗淡的。以他们的率真和坦诚，作者写出了他们的痛苦、成功，他们的生活片段，他们犯下的错误以及吸取的教训。每篇文章都是一个小小的窗口，使我们一睹作者的人生价值，以及从人生体验中滤出人生价值时所经历的生命历程。

这本文集深深地感动了我。如今的青年要面对太多的艰难！

尽管面临着如许挑战，他们的文章仍洋溢着对生活的乐观、对未来的信念以及强烈的自信。这些文章不只为我们了解青年一代的思想打开了窗口，还鼓舞着我们更加积极地生活。

尽管文中的“人生法则”不尽相同，其所传递的智慧可大体分为以下三种：一、人人都在努力造就的引导人生的优良品格；二、如何积极生活的建议；三、如何对待他人。早在我们意料之中的是，我们从书中发现，世界各地的青年都



有相似的价值观和信仰。我读这些文章时，不禁暗暗称奇，这些人生教训是何其相似，而我们从青年身上学到的东西又是何等的丰富啊！

文章选拔程序

本书中的 62 篇文章选自各个地区各个学校举行的 54 次“人生法则”作文比赛的参赛文章。约翰·泰普登基金会要求每场比赛的赞助者从最近的比赛中选送一篇最佳文章和两篇决赛优胜文章。基金会再从中选出一篇编入本书。绝大多数作文竞赛都有头奖获得者的佳作入选本书。

选拔程序中有一项方案与众不同。第一，约瑟夫家族基金会为一些南卡罗来纳州高中举行作文赛提供了赞助。我从中选出 5 篇文章入选本书，作为约瑟夫家族基金会作文比赛的代表。第二，LEARN 作文活动涉及 26 个国家。世界各地的青年学生踊跃参加这一跨文化的大对话，他们把文章发到因特网上与大家共享。我们没有给这些作者奖励，但不论从何种意义来说，我们从这一活动中所选取的 5 篇文章都已获了大奖。

为地区团结精神喝彩

本书又是一曲团结协作的赞歌，颂扬所有在当地及学校赞助并组织作文竞赛的个人及团体——商界精英、教育家、当地基金会、学校所在的地区、学生的邻居及其父母、宗教组织等等。到今天，和我家乡的情况一样，竞赛一直是一项由当地赞助和组织的地区性活动。



文章的排序依比赛进行的先后而定，从富兰克林县举办的首次比赛开始，到春天在内布拉斯卡的奥马哈举办的最近一次比赛。比赛消息的发布大多是通过人们口头的奔走相告。比赛的发起者都是笃信理想的人。他们相信比赛具有积极意义，并深信比赛将对孩子的一生产生影响。直到今天，这一比赛已进行了 54 次，遍及美国的 23 个州以及世界上包括俄罗斯、中国、印度、南非、加拿大以及英国在内的 30 个国家。

作文比赛是由当地赞助并组织的，因此各具特色，按当地及学校的需要及精神而安排。有些比赛是在单独一所学校内组织进行的，如西费城天主教会比赛，有些比赛是在州范围内进行的，州内所有学校都被邀参加。各地的比赛还有以下的不同：

年龄——多数参赛者是高中学生，但有许多比赛也包括初中学生和小学生。的确，比赛是面向每个人的，面向每一个思考自己的人生价值的青年，也面向希望自己的人生法则得到证实并升华的更有经验的年龄稍长的人。

奖金——多数比赛为优胜者颁发奖金和证书，从最高奖到荣誉奖，奖金数额相差极大。在有些比赛中，优胜者除接受大奖奖金外，还接受另一项奖金，捐给自己选择的慈善机构。有些比赛为优胜者颁发奖金及部分大学奖学金。

表达方式——多数比赛要求参赛者用写作表达他们的“人生法则”。但在有些地方，组织者允许学生运用其他方式来表达他们的“人生法则”。例如：Guilford 县的比赛邀请学生采用除写作以外的手段，如艺术、音乐、电影、摄影等来表达他们的“人生法则”。

甚至比赛的名称也各有千秋：“写给人生”、“转折点”、“人生价值”——凡此种种。组织者选择不同的名称来反映



当地比赛的理想及目标。读本书时，请想像一下，这些小作者就和你住在同一个城市或小镇，想像一下他们在颁奖仪式上宣读自己的文章，而台下坐的是他们的父母、邻居、老师以及当地的官员，想像着你也在这些听众中间——你的支持也为比赛尽了一份力。

这本书也许会使你深受鼓舞，也想在本地进行一次“人生法则”作文比赛。为你们的青年提供一次机会，让他们好好地思考一下爱、善良、友谊、宽恕和感激，这难道不是一件乐事吗？约翰·泰普登基金会为任何有兴趣举办作文比赛的团体及个人提供各种竞赛材料及技术帮助。我希望你能与该基金会联系，以便对比赛有进一步的了解，了解如何把这种塑造优秀品格的礼物带给你所在的地区。

感谢

如果没有数以百计的比赛的赞助者、组织者、志愿者、学生的父母以及所有支持并参与管理这一比赛的校长和老师们的，就不会有本书的产生。“人生法则”作文竞赛能够从一个城镇传到另外一个城镇，多亏了有识之士的不懈热情。他们独具慧眼，相信它必将对青年大有裨益。

年复一年，为青年喝彩的不只是竞赛的冠军，在他们的带动下，当地有关部门及学校也赶来祝贺，祝贺他们对人生的价值进行了认真的思索。对使得本书得以出版的每一个人，我深表谢意。有了他们，我们的读者才能读到这些佳作并分享其中的智慧，从而受益匪浅。

约翰·马克斯·泰普登



Foreword



Love. Forgiveness. Compassion. Honesty. Perseverance. These are universal values, timeless *laws of life* that transcend all cultures and religions. There are literally hundreds of these spiritual principles that guide us, whatever we do or wherever we go on our life's journey. But these "laws" can only guide us if we are aware of them, if we personalize and apply them to our own experience. In short, before we can live by the *laws of life*, we must discover them for ourselves.


How do we discover our own values, our own *laws of life*? I believe that each and every one of us can identify the set of principles we want to live by, if we reflect on the events we have passed through, the people we have known, and the lessons we have learned. By discovering and practicing these values, we have the power to transform our lives into more deeply useful and joyful experiences.

As a young boy growing up in Franklin County, Tennessee, I was privileged to receive abundant lessons on good character that were taught to me at home and school and were reinforced by example, through the behavior of my parents, my spiritual elders, and the members of my community. Very few doors were locked in my hometown. A person's word and handshake were sacred; and honesty was always the best policy. With so many models and examples of positive character, I was able to identify and practice the values by which I wanted to lead my life. I was given the freedom and the opportunity to discover my own *laws of life*.

8

The *Laws of Life* Essay Contest offers young people the same opportunity. In 1987, when we started the essay contest in Franklin County, it had an amazing effect on the county. Two things made it work. The first was the prizes. They ranged from \$ 100 for honorable mention to \$ 2, 000 for the grand prize. The Franklin County students got terribly excited about winning cash prizes, and the idea swept the county. After a couple of years, three-quarters of the students were writing essays on their own values. The other principle of success was this: we did not tell the young people what to write about. We simply asked them to tell us in their own words! We all know that young people love to share their stories and reach their own conclusions. This is what the *Laws of Life* Essay Contest is all about: offering young people an opportunity to reflect and write about their beliefs and principles, and then publicly recognizing them for affirming the values by which they want to live.

Writing from the Heart celebrates these timeless principles



and the children who have written about them. And it chronicles the astonishing growth of the essay contest from my hometown in Franklin County, Tennessee to communities around the world.

CELEBRATING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

First and foremost, *Writing from the Heart* is a tribute to our young people. The 62 essays featured in the pages of this book illustrate the innate capacity for goodness within all young people, especially when they are encouraged to reflect upon the treasures they hold inside. From Chattanooga to China, the essays you will find in this book are all extraordinary. Moreover, they have been honored by their individual communities for the breadth of their ideas and the life lessons they contain.

The 62 essays printed in this book not only celebrate the accomplishments of their writers. They also exemplify the more than 60,000 young people around the world who have participated in a *Laws of Life* Essay Contest. Every one of the 60,000 essays is remarkable, and the writers are all winners—each of them authors of their own destiny.

Take your time as you read the essays in this book. You are being offered a rare opportunity to peer into the hearts of young people around the world. What you will learn about them will astound you. Each of the essays illustrates the personal journey taken by the writers as they reflect upon the experiences they have had and the people who have been most significant to them in their young lives. Many of the stories the writers share are uplifting.



Some are very tragic. With openness and candor, the writers share their trials and triumphs, their everyday moments, their mistakes, and the lessons they have learned. Each of the essays bears witness to a transformation as the writers make sense of their values and beliefs, distilling them from the crucible of personal experience. As I read the essays I was greatly moved by some of the hardships that today's young people have had to face. Despite those challenges, the essays brim with optimism, faith in the future, and belief in oneself. The essays offer us not only a window into our young people's thoughts and beliefs. They inspire us to make the most of our own lives as well.

Although the writers discuss a variety of "laws," the wisdom they impart most often follows one of three types: 1) positive character traits that we should all strive to live by; 2) advice for how to make the most out of life; and 3) how we should behave toward others. The table below highlights the many different themes that the 62 young people chose to write about. (Each of the essays is listed by themes on page 185.)

Not surprisingly, the essays in this book illustrate that young people all over the world hold similar values and beliefs. As I read these essays, I was amazed at how universal these lessons are and how much we can learn from our young people.

THE ESSAY SELECTION PROCESS

The 62 essays that appear in this book were first written for one of the 54 *Laws of Life* Essay Contests launched in communi-



ties, schools, and programs all over the world. The John Templeton Foundation asked the sponsors of each contest to submit their first-place essay as well as two other top finalists from their most recent contest. From those three essays, the Foundation selected one essay to be featured in this book. With few exceptions, each of the essay contests is represented by its grand prizewinner.

Two programs deviated from the selection process. First, the Joseph Family Foundation sponsors individual contests in a number of southern California high schools. We chose to represent the scope of the Joseph Family Foundation contests by featuring five of their essays. Second, the I* EARN Essay Project involves 26 countries. In this program, students from all over the world participate in a crosscultural dialogue as they share their essays on the Internet for everyone to enjoy. Prizes are not awarded to the writers, but in every other sense the five essays we featured from the I* EARN Essay Project are award-winning.

A CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT

This book is a tribute to the business leaders, educators, community foundations, school districts, neighbors, parents, churches—all of the individuals and groups that have sponsored and organized essay contests in their communities and schools. The Listing of Contest Sponsors on page 180 illustrates the wide range of individuals and organizations that have launched essay contests around the world. To this day, as it was in my hometown, the contest remains a *local program*, financially sponsored



and organized in the community in which it is held.

The order of the essays in this book chronicles the growth of the contest, beginning with the first contest in Franklin County, Tennessee on page 3 and pausing for now on page 174 with the newest contest launched in Omaha, Nebraska this past spring. The contest has spread mostly by word of mouth. Each one has been started by individuals who believe in the ideals and benefits of the program and that it will make a difference in the lives of children. To this date, 54 contests have been launched, in 23 states throughout the United States and in 30 countries around the world, including Russia, China, India, South Africa, Canada, and the United Kingdom. You can find out if there is an essay contest in your area by referring to the Listing of Contest Locations on page 179, which catalogues the contests by community, state, and country. (And if there isn't currently a contest where you live, I invite you to start one!)

Because the essay contest is locally sponsored and organized, each contest is unique, designed to fit the needs and spirit of its community and schools. In some cases, as for the West Philadelphia Catholic Contest on page 80, the program is adopted by one school. In others (e. g., the Mississippi Contest on page 21) the program is held statewide, with all schools invited to participate. Here are some other ways in which contests vary:

age—Many contests involve the participation of high school-aged students, but a large number of contests have also been started at the middle school level and in elementary



schools. Indeed, the contest is intended for everyone; the young who each day are introduced to the values that will guide their lives, as well as the older and more experienced who seek confirmation and affirmation of their *laws of life*.

prizes—Most contests give cash prizes and certificates to their winners, from grand prize to honorable mention, and prize amounts vary greatly. In several contests, the winners receive a cash prize and a second cash award that they donate to the charity of their choice (see the Montgomery County Contest on page 18). Some contests award their winners cash prizes as well as partial college scholarships (see the Palm Beach County Contest on page 32).

FORM OF EXPRESSION—For most contests, participants are asked to express their *laws of life* in writing. However, in some communities, organizers have designed the contest so that students can illustrate their *laws of life* in other ways. For example, in the Guilford County Contest (see page 168), students are invited to express their *laws of life* using art, music, film, and photography, as well as writing.

Even the name of the contest can vary! “Write for Life,” “Turning Points,” “Values for Life” —these are all contests whose names have been chosen by their organizers to reflect the ideals and goals of the contest for their community.

As you read the essays in this book, imagine for a moment that the student writers live in your town or city, and that you are



listening to them as they read their essays to an audience of parents, neighbors, teachers, and community leaders who have come together to honor them at the awards ceremony—and that your support helped make the contest possible.

Perhaps this book will inspire you to launch a *Laws of Life* Essay Contest in your community. Wouldn't it be a joy to provide your young people with an opportunity to think about love, kindness, friendship, forgiveness, and gratitude? The John Templeton Foundation offers a wide variety of contest materials and technical assistance to individuals and organizations interested in launching an essay contest. I encourage you to contact the Foundation so that you can learn more about the contest and how you can give the gift of character education to your community.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Without the commitment and hard work of the hundreds of contest sponsors, organizers, volunteers, and parents, and all of the principals and teachers who support and administer the contest, this book would not have been possible. The *Laws of Life* Essay Contest has spread from town to town, thanks to the unflagging enthusiasm of individuals who hear about the essay contest and know right away that the program will benefit young people. Each year these “Contest Champions” bring their community and schools together to celebrate the young people who have thought carefully about the values that will guide their life.

The following Contest Champions helped in assembling the 62

