

Freerangin' on -----

'Living a Free-range Style of Life ----- Keeping the Commercial Beast at Bay' ----

Featuring a case-study of a freerange-style of life .

Mike Robin

Intro -----

'Freerange living – what is it?

Maybe hard to pin down over specifically and perhaps the way to proceed is in an 'exploring the territory' fashion - ? In animal terms, for instance, 'freerange' is a recognisable mode – freerange cows will, unlike many modern 'indoor' herds, not only be free to 'behave naturally' by, say, being able to go into pasture land to graze grass, but maybe even go beyond that mode to then have access all the time to all their grazing territory, to then be able to 'wander graze', probably a natural mode designed partly as the target of predators defence system (such a grazing system here in the UK is called a 'set stocking' system).

For egg laying chickens the freerange system involves the birds having access to a reasonable area of outside ground so that they're able to practice their natural habits of picking over areas of ground, again moving in 'wandering' fashion, rather than being, erm, cooped up in small indoor spaces (eg. cages), a system designed more to the needs of man than chicken.

Producers who run large units of animal production often tend to aim to justify their processes in terms of, say, animal welfare – eg. the animals are sheltered, warm and well fed - and seem to be, unsurprisingly maybe considering the degree of vested interest, unwilling to accept 'natural animal behaviour' as a relevant factor. Many actual livestock producers (this writer had considerable contact with them working as a farming advisor), will maintain that animals 'do' better when contented so there is practical experience evidence to support the 'allowing natural behaviour' approach.

The fact that the 'world cultural' approach over the past period has been rational, logical, and scientific, 'head-based' rather than 'heart' based, may well have contributed to a 'narrowed' vision approach, one in which, for instance, 'economies of scale' have loomed ever larger - ? At least part of the rationale for running animal production systems that cater for 'natural behaviour' within them is 'feeling' based, the inherent feeling that some have that man should not just be exploiting animals purely with self gain in mind (and of course some believe/feel that animal production systems should not exist full stop).

The question then needs to become '*how can 'freerange' relate to people - ?*' The concepts of 'freedom' and 'natural behaviour' would seem to have to apply, but maybe causing some difficulty – is there a situation of natural behaviour, for instance, for people, and if so what is it? Can there in fact be a 'generalised version' particularly if people 'bio-diversity' is a factor - ? There is the potential for common strands of people behaviour – biological motivations are sometimes used as an example – for instance, 'passing on genes' is a pretty prominent biological motivation amongst all varieties of animal, including the human animal ---

Is there such a condition of 'natural behaviour' for the individual, particularly in a world such as the modern version, with its myriad of influence and conditionings potentially acting on people - ? Maybe it was easier, for instance, for smaller gatherings of people such as, say, Native Americans, to experience 'natural behaviour' -some of the recorded speeches of their chiefs would seem to indicate that way ---- The search for 'real self' nature which some are embarked on, might afford the possibility of discovering, for the individual concerned, the form of natural behaviour relevant to themselves - ?

There are, too, patterns that psychologists such as Abraham Maslow came up with as a result of his researches ('hierarchy of human needs') into 'healthy' (mentally and physically) humans,

which may help by 'striking an inner chord' with some, then using such patterns as an aid to try to progress things. And too much 'mind' may be a hindrance rather than a help? Maybe better to 'power the mental side down' and 'let the mist clear' - ? Mindfulness practice, now quite a growing thing, can no doubt help in this respect.

There is too the 'reasonable common sense' view, an underpin probably of democratic systems, that people may well thrive best under 'freerange' conditions that allow them to progress and develop their own selves to become useful, sociable and skilled adults, maybe even then to experience the further benefits (and therefore benefits to society) of the 'self-realisation' state - ?

The culture though in which a person lives can obviously considerably affect their lives, and heavily commercialised cultures reliant on media advertising could well be prominent in this respect.

' ----so much of corporate advertising culture is telling you 'stay asleep -stay asleep—you're much easier for us to manage if you stay asleep.'

(Edward Norton, actor, film-maker)

Not for one person though :

S lives in a 'mud' hut in a wood in west Wales without 'mod cons' - she's a semi-hermit, who found modern life too noisy, too busy and too intrusive to be able to follow her instincts and interests, particularly that of connecting to and engaging with, nature.

Hermit-ing might not be for everyone (although according to reports, there is apparently an increase in such lifestyles), but there are probably many avenues that can be pursued in order to keep 'the insatiable commercial beast' at bay, both full-time and part-time. From simply restricting exposure to the myriad commercial messages - look at how many adverts are screened in the commercial break - to 'downsizing', to changes of lifestyle, to creative pastimes, to meditations - the list is quite possibly endless.

The 'odds' though appear to be stacked pretty much in favour of the commercial system, which is pretty huge compared to the micro-small individual, so help and support for the ('freerange') individual can be useful and needed. The author's 'case study' below is just one example of someone aiming to 'counter' a 'giant' potentially invasive system, to try to retain their own integrity and unique creativity ----- It can only act as an example, one of potentially many, rather than any form of 'blueprint', which anyway would not be relevant to the cause of 'individual bio-diversity' ---

'We can only save ourselves. No-one else may, and no-one else can. We ourselves must walk the path.'

(Buddha)

Freerange Life - a case study :

Outline description :

Aim : to lead a reasonably self-reliant/self-responsible type of life in support of independent living with active participation in life sustaining processes, involving the home premises being a 'life-support' unit.

Overview :

Life on a small smallholding ('micro holding' of half an acre (.2/ha)), in the UK heartlands, growing home consumed vegetables on the organic, permaculture ('self-sustaining') system, plus soft fruit and orchard fruit. A small flock of free-range hens provide eggs and utilise some food waste (eg. stale bread), energy needs met by eco-friendly means, principally by renewable fuel (wood), an air-source heat pump installation and use of 'green' sourced electricity.

The site is geared as far as is possible to be 'wildlife friendly'. This style of semi self-sufficient living lowers living costs by around a third, the finance for the other two-thirds comes from off site, with economic expenditure geared more to 'needs' than 'wants'. It's estimated that the time needed for operating such a lifestyle at this level is approx 8 -10 hours/wk, time spent as a 'labour of love' rather than 'work'. In this particular case this lifestyle unit also acts as a base on which to base a monthly blog on the web (Free-range Living, Mike Robin).

Background :

The author was relatively lucky during his time in mainstream life, in that his first career, that of farming technical advisor/farm business consultant was spent amongst 'lifestyle enterprise' people who were independently minded, self-motivated and often creative in terms of how they solved their lifestyle and business situations – they were self-employed farmers, often, and of necessity, with a wide range of skills. Working with such erudite and self-directed characters, and their families, generally too pretty socially sensitive and 'lifestyle aware', plus involvement with their business problems and decisions, mean't that many diverse learning situations were available to the author, who benefited considerably.

The second career of higher education lecturing also acted to encourage independent enquiry and research, as well as offering significant scope for the furthering of academic interests. The author was also fortunate during his 'mainstream' time to be able to take on 'add-on' activities such as running a stock farm, writing and organic growing, all of which added to the 'mix' informing 'the independent spirit'. It was in this period that a 'self-realisation' process was experienced.

The opportunity then came to be able to take, at the age of fifty-seven, with some energy still available, an early-retirement from mainstream working and a change of lifestyle. The micro-economics of the situation were a little precarious but the decision to 'take the plunge' was taken, with the proviso that part-time paid work would need to be undertaken to ensure economic viability, at least until the state old-age pension became available. The situation was then conducive for some 'own canoe paddling' and creating the opportunity to follow own interests more solidly.

One of those interests, organic growing, started originally out of necessity – i.e. lack of cash to buy chemicals, then proving to be of interest as its longer-term aspects became apparent, particularly its potentially beneficial aspects such as maintaining fertility over time at no extra cost, as well as maintaining/improving the key asset, healthy soil. It seemed logical then and of interest to continue such growing which fitted in with the idea of using the property and its half-an-acre – the 'micro-holding', as an example of a semi self-reliant 'eco life support' module, supporting and bolstering 'the independent spirit', and on which the activities could also work to support, in a 'miniscule micro way, the health of the planet. (see below for more details). The idea was not to go to the 'nth' perfect degree, but rather 'to do one's bit', in terms of what would 'fit' and be viable, including what would 'fit' with the micro-holder ---- (advancing age, lower energy levels etc.)

The produce from the micro-holding would also help out the 'precarious' economics, as would too the lower-cost energy system adopted which basically aims to use renewable fuel sources plus reasonable cost eco-friendly systems. (see below). Such a system could be an example of what could be a low-cost application of an 'eco-friendly' low eco footprint lifestyle, in that it

represents a low capital cost system – a similar one could be run with, say, a garden and an allotment (small area of ground to rent).

To illustrate this, a small publication unit was then set-up based on a website ('Freerange Living', Mike Robin) to detail on a monthly basis some of the activities occurring on the micro-holding, plus comment on aspects of mainstream materialistic life that could potentially negatively affect the more independent freerange-style of life, and potentially then, 'life fulfilment' aspects, plus aiming to support the independent, self-reliant lifestyle. The website also provided a 'books' page on which longer 'e' pieces relating to self-reliant/semi self-reliant freerange living and 'freeranging' in general could be published and accessed.

The combination of physical 'self-reliance' type of activities and writing works quite well, in that when the energy runs a bit low on the physical side, activity switches to the physically restful writing via the computer side, to also help to keep the mind ticking over -----

Rationale of the 'freerange living' case study approach

(the case-study outlines one person's situation and approach to 'semi independent living' - there are undoubtedly many possible differing approaches ---)

One aim is to practise a reasonable degree of self-sufficiency and self-reliance to bolster the 'independent' and self-responsible approach to life, then hopefully leading into the 'self-realisation' side of life ---

Another is to aim to live respectfully on this planet with a reasonably light 'eco footprint', and reasonably responsible use of resources, plus being a contributing community member.

To work in, and work with, nature is a further aim, with an over-riding approach that it's 'more natural' to work 'with' nature, than against it and that such 'working with nature' can nurture spiritual-type aspects.

Re-cycling waste and spare resources is another aim, with, for instance, redundant building materials being used to create useful edifices. Micro-holding and food waste is re-cycled via chickens and the compost heaps, work and other clothing re-cycled via charity shops, motors re-cycled via pre-owned purchases.

To create a lifestyle with active participation and which contributes to living costs and can operate reasonably economically is a further aim, with the associated aim of not borrowing money and paying interest charges built-in.

Self-reliance type activities -----

Home-grown food production

A relatively small area of ground lends itself to the production of home-grown vegetables, potatoes and the like, in that not a huge area is needed to meet the needs of the home dwellers. Nor does there necessarily have to be strict rules such as there has to be 100% of self-sufficiency – there's presumably room for a variety of systems depending on the situation, and on the people involved. The various aspects of this particular case are outlined below :

- **the area of ground** for home production is just over 300 sq metres, which produces maybe around half to two-thirds of total needs, depending on the growing season.

- **the 'mainstay' crops grown** are potatoes, onions, spring cabbage, calabrese, winter greens (eg.s curly kale, purple sprouting), leeks, broad beans, beetroot, carrots, runner beans, peas, celery and swedes. Other crops such as salads, turnips and occasional sweet corn are 'fitted in' here and there. One aim for the growing side is to be able to provide fresh produce all the year round, which the table below illustrates :

Available produce

Oct --- salads, tomatoes, runner beans, calabrese, greens, potatoes, salads, onions, turnips, beetroot, leeks, celery, carrots raspberries, apples

Nov---- tomatoes, greens, potatoes, onions, beetroot, celery, leeks, turnips, calabrese, apples

Dec---- greens, swedes, celery, onions, beetroot, turnips, leeks, parsnips, apples

Jan-----greens, beetroot, onions, celery, swedes, leeks,

Feb----- greens, onions, swedes, leeks

Mch---- greens, purple sprouting, onions

Apr----- purple sprouting, spring greens, onions

May---- salads, spring greens, onions, early potatoes

Jn ----- salads, spring greens/spring cabbage, broad beans, peas, early summer onions, e. potatoes, strawberries, raspberries, calabrese, carrots

Jly ---- salads, calabrese, broad beans, peas, potatoes, runner beans, tomatoes, onions, strawberries, carrots

Aug --- salads, calabrese, peas, potatoes, r. beans, onions, beetroot, carrots, damsons, plums

Sept---- salads, calabrese, peas, potatoes, r. beans, onions, turnips, celery, tomatoes, raspberries, carrots, damsons

Most produce is picked and used fresh. A few broad beans and peas are stored via freezing, onions are stored after drying on bread trays in the utility room, and potatoes are stored after (brief) drying (in sun) in paper bags in a shed. Eggs are available all year round.

- **the soil is easy-worked dark loam**, largely worked on the 'no-dig' (apart from digging in green manures) method -the ground rather loosened by a garden fork, after trash cleared via spade 'slide' action.

- **on-going fertility of the land** is effectively maintained by sticking to needed crop rotations (see below), growing a reasonable amount of legume crops (peas and beans around 20% of-ground area), digging green manure (mainly self-set grass weeds in the onion patch), and the application of compost, made from all the green and veg waste from the site, including, for instance, hedge clippings. A bi-yearly application of woodash courtesy of the woodstove is applied, and credited with adding fertility (potash fertiliser), keeping the soil 'sweet' (i.e. not going too acidic) and reducing growing problems (eg, incidence of club root).

Rotation : 4 year : Potatoes, Legumes (beans and peas), onions, roots (beetroot, swedes, celery etc)

- **costs are low** - no chemicals are bought, the organic system and the yearly application of woodash having greatly reduced 'problems' such as club root, onion white rot and brassica root

grub. Seeds are bought mainly from cheaper mail order sources supplied by a long-standing seed firm, plus home-grown saved seed in the case of beans and peas. Few implements are needed to carry out growing operations (basic ; *spade, garden fork, Dutch 'draw' hoe, rake, hand fork, hand trowel,*) and last a good while (the strong metal spade for instance has lasted thirty plus years so far). Growing operations are carried out manually, with mechanisation in the form of powered mowers to cut grass, an electric hedgecutter to trim hedges and electric chainsaws to saw wood, being used to some extent. The policy recently is to buy electric implements – the latest chainsaw and hedgecutter for instance – that are cordless and hence their batteries can be charged using the home-produced solar electricity.

- **a small chicken flock** (4) is kept to supply home-produced eggs and recycle waste food such as stale bread, cake and the like, plus the 'rough' leaves of brassica plants such as cabbages, purple sprouting. The hens run out into a small paddock and orchard in the afternoon, doing a fair amount of grazing on the grass, as well as making 'dustbowl' type of resting places. Their run has a lean-to covered area where their feed can be placed in wetter weather, and is littered with straw/rough hay to keep them cleaned. This is cleaned out periodically and either put on a 'muck pile' to rot down, or onto the compost heap- all part of on-going fertility for the growing area.

After the last fox attack two/three years ago, there were no chickens for awhile -the place was eerily 'soul-less' - they seem to make it a 'living unit'. There's also the pleasure to be had in looking after them, aiming to ensure they're leading as 'natural' lives as possible, and 'enjoying life' -----

(some these days would maybe say that these birds are being exploited. The view here is that it is a 'symbiotic' relationship, benefiting 'both' parties, and without such an arrangement the birds would have no life at all ----)

Energy matters -----

- **the main fuel used** is wood for the woodstove which operates from 4pm to 10pm wintertime. Roughly half of the wood supplies are bought-in ready 'processed', the other half generally being sourced 'for free', but then in need of 'processing' (sawing, chopping). A small amount of fossil fuel in the form of smokeless fuel is used in colder weather to boost heat in the stove, which can then run radiators. The other key heat sources are the solar panel home electric production unit (powering halogen heaters) and the air-source heat pump which squeezes outdoor air and then blows the obtained heat into the cottage, an operation which in itself uses around 600-700 watts of electricity, then producing around 2,500 - 3000 watts for house heating.

- the solar panel home electric production unit

Twelve solar panels were fixed on the front roof of the cottage to best catch the sun, some years ago now under a government scheme which pays for the electric produced, even if it is home consumed. The twelve panels can produce just short of 3kw's of electric at full strength, and various amounts in between, depending on the amount of light hitting the panels. Besides providing electric for normal home consumption, the unit has another couple of tricks up its sleeve. An apparatus has been attached to it at relatively low cost which facilitates the use of any 'spare' solar-generated electric produced in the day for heating water in the hot water tank, then providing free/cheap supplies of hot water. Often too it's producing enough daytime electric to run the air-source heat pump (see below), to be then heating the two daytime living rooms 'for free' or at low cost.

- **the air-source heat pump** often all or part of the electric needed to run the air-source heater will be provided by the solar panel installation, making this form of heating highly economic in the daytime. Relatively low amounts of bottled gas and electric halogen power are used as support heating at strategic times -generally the strategy is to heat 'as and when needed' rather than 'whole house' central heating. The overall yearly cost of the cottage's energy needs is estimated at around 40% of the national average figure, giving a significant saving.

Reserve capacity

One basic-type strategy is to be able to maintain 'reserve capacity' which helps in terms of experiencing actual 'life security'. Even at its simplest - having for instance, a full-up woodstore at the beginning of winter - gives an active feeling of 'fuel security', a 'direct' experience. A diesel generator adds to such security feelings - power cuts aren't too frequent hereabouts but have been experienced - a three-day cut was the longest. The reserve generator at nearly 3kw output can run freezer and fridge, lights, air-source heat-pump and TV, so is a useful back-up facility to have (there's also a reserve supply of diesel fuel).

- **back-up in terms of main fuel**, wood, consists of two good sized woodpiles down near the paddock, holding around three years worth of good burning wood - a bit more 'direct' fuel security. There's also quite a bit of 'stick' wood for fire starting, plus around a useful supply of wooden pallets that can be sawn up to provide 'small burning wood' which helps the bigger logs to burn up well. Several full gas canisters (gas is used for cooking and has proven to be economical in this respect) plus a stock of smokeless fuel complete the reserve fuel stocks.

- **in terms of food reserves** the idea is that there's always stuff to pick and eat at anytime of the year on site, more plentiful in summertime than, say, late winter/spring . There's generally some supplies of staples such as potatoes, generally bought 'in bulk' (25kg bags - a lot cheaper) and there's always generally eggs available from the chickens. In spring, summer and autumn there's always salad items available to pick, in winter it's more 'winter greens' such as curly kale and purple sprouting.

One crop that's particularly useful is spring cabbage - the seed is sown July time, the plants then planted out September time to over winter, then grow on in the spring, to be cut as 'spring greens' March/April, when there's not too much else available, also to use plants not cut as actual cabbages in May, June and July. Once cut, if a criss-cross cut is made in the top of the remaining stalk, they'll then re-grow to then add to the supply of wintergreens - a useful crop to grow.

- **transport reserve** (no public transport hereabouts) comes courtesy of the fact that there are two main vehicles, both doing relatively low mileages, with virtually zero road tax and good on emissions. If there's just the one vehicle, then if it's not working, either due to breakdown or garage attention, then without public transport, there's a degree of vulnerability. Ideally one of the vehicles would be a light, basic and cheap electric-powered pick-up truck, but not yet available.

- **financially** 'reserve capacity' is created by aiming to put something by into a 'rainy day' fund, as no doubt many do, and to 'live within means', then not creating potential vulnerability through additional costs, such as interest incurred via borrowing, which also adds to the feeling of 'self-reliance' and independence. Such a policy means delaying expenditure at times, then delaying possibly 'consumption' - older generations probably had a reasonably sound 'training' in this aspect in that when they were younger it was 'forced' on them, the possibility of borrowing money not existing at that time. Times have changed ----

'Eco – friendly' living aspects ----

- **aiming for the light eco footprint** in support of the 'treading lightly' aim, micro-holding life aims to work with, rather than against, nature, and where possible to support nature, which in itself feels 'natural' --- Growing via the organic system then makes sense, in that no chemicals are used without any subsequent risk to produce (a year or two ago, for instance, there was a national warning in the UK to peel carrots due to a chemical build-up in the skin). Another important aspect is the preservation and improvement of the long-term basic resource, the soil itself (there have been concerns raised for instance re. the long-term health of farm soils due to 'chemical farming').

- **healthy soil** the signs here at the micro-holding after three decades plus of organic growing are that the soil may well have become 'healthier', in that some of the growing problems such as club root in the soil and onion white rot have disappeared. The fact that the small-scale organic growing system re-cycles its own waste plus other garden waste, via composting, into valuable fertiliser, is another big plus for the organic method, besides claims made for it such as healthier produce, tastier produce and the like----

- **long-term self-sustaining** the fact that the growing system is self-sustaining in terms of longer-term soil fertility and soil health (called a 'permaculture' system) is not only effective from an environmental viewpoint, but also in terms of the longer-term self-reliance aspect, not then having to rely on brought-in /bought-in inputs (and with economic side effects). Healthy soil, demonstrated by the reduction in problems (eg. club root) over the years, also presumably contributes significantly to environmental health, the soil itself being fertile and bio-diverse in terms of supporting soil-life organisms.

- **wildlife support** the plot of the micro-holding is 'designed' to support wildlife in general – there's high hedges/trees for instance to support birdlife (there's currently around thirty wild woodpigeons 'at home' in these hedges/trees, there's a gang of hedge sparrows living in the creepers on the side of the cottage, and there's a host of small birds for instance living hereabouts and sustained with supportive daily feeding in winter). Some of the wildlife occurs 'naturally' as part of the normal processes – some of the top of a small pile of chicken run waste (straw and droppings) for instance was removed recently to reveal a good number of worms busy at work.

The idea too is that the site should support as much as is possible. The suitability of it for birds has already been described, and where possible plants feature that actively support bees, as well as do some of the crops grown (eg. broad bean flowers). Nestboxes are available for bird use, and bee boxes for bee use.

Publication aspects -----

A website ('Free-range Living', Mike Robin) has been set-up at reasonable cost via a helpful computer-based firm ('Interactive Information Services') which facilitates a monthly piece ('blog') to write about current micro-holding events and progress, aspects of general culture that might prove to be problematical to the independent, self-reliant living lifestyle and to support 'honourable individualism' (the business guru, Charles Handy's phrase). The website also has a 'books' page, on which longer 'freerange' pieces are published, as well as 'freeranger' style e-books. Writing about the micro-holding and the 'freerange style of life feels like a natural extension of the actual lifestyle, and so motivation and interest to do the writing is generally never lacking.

Endpiece -----

The independent semi self-reliant lifestyle is no doubt not for everybody, especially maybe in these 'conspicuous consumption' days in which the main 'mass, mainstream' goals appear to be the massing of personal wealth and 'flash, luxurious lifestyles', even though they would appear to conflict significantly with the longer-term health of the planet (- ?). Having said that, in only today's paper (Jan. '20) is a report that a lot more people are now 'climate change/environment risk' aware, thanks to recent public protests, particularly by the young, and by damaging environmental events such as the very considerable fire damage in Australia (Dec '19/ Jan '20). One of the key balances affecting such a modern conundrum is likely to be particularly relevant to the 'freeranger' individual (and maybe, the future of the planet?), which is (at the individual level) 'to what extent does the individual follow the mainstream culture aims and values, and to what extent are the individual's own inner goals and values important and pertinent - ?

This could be a tricky area : on the one hand 'no man is an island', on the other there have been plenty of instances in history illustrating that following the mass, mainstream line has been ultimately unhealthy for the individual. On the basis that the mainstream 'line' is, by virtue of its large scale, powerful, what arguments can be marshalled on behalf of individual priorities to effectively counterbalance such powerful influences, and ultimately effect a needed and working balance between the two - ? Another 'modern trend' identified by several authors has said to be the 'waning' of internal strength in individuals in the face of 'big, big is best' modern culture, to the point where the individual can feel it pointless and meaningless to take their own self-supporting action.

(an understandable but worrying trend. Maybe it can help if it's remembered that cultures can differ, and that many don't necessarily stand the test of time ---- And whilst it's probably true that the individual is 'miniscule-y unimportant' in terms of mass, mainstream culture, in terms of individual being, development and fulfilment, they are of course important. If mainstream culture doesn't work particularly well in favour of 'the individual', then people are entitled to make their own moves in support of their own-wellbeing, and longer-term fulfillment ----(and as supported by 'main men' freerangers such as Buddha ----)

Western consumer-style society in recent decades has been said to have been 'outer directed' with individuals responded to the strong mainstream cultural signals, being then directed from outside their own selves, and being validated by such 'external' influences, maybe the most common one being 'wealth making'. The downside it's said, is that such a society has been somewhat 'narrowly drawn' and lacked some wider dimensions, the negative results of which would only be seen in the longer-run, and of which 'planet degradation' would be one of the most prominent (a degree of 'social disintegration' could be a further example, as could 'inadequate individual representation and respect' - ? And as above, large, 'big is best' type cultures can inhibit individual strength and growth then restricting opportunity for 'foller individual development and fulfilment ---).

Various psychologists (eg Abraham Maslow) have put forward theories (as above) suggesting for instance that man has strong social needs as well as 'out-for-self' free market style of individual needs, which again would then indicate that there's a need to effect a working balance between these two sets of needs. Various American philosophers such as Henri David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson have championed individual self-responsibility and self-reliance as important ingredients in successful societies, both of which qualities would mitigate against any over individual indulgence trends. World spiritual leaders such as Buddha himself championed the need for self-responsibility over self-indulgence :

' No-one save us but ourselves no-one can and no-one may, we ourselves must walk the path'

(Being a man of compassion, he no doubt would support people though getting help ----)

Such is the force and power of 'mainstream' in modern times – take for instance the sheer flow and force of modern mainstream media activity – that it seems clear that individuals need strategies to promote sufficient stability in their lives (one area, for instance, in which younger generations are reportedly having problems in their lives), and which then recognises 'real self' 'inner strength and values' as an important element of peoples' lives, and which then makes strategies and lifestyles which build and support individual inner strength, important and needed.

('real self' inner strength coming from real development of the individual (as opposed, say, to any 'strength' of a 'bullying' type)).

Good freerangin' ----