

These articles are excerpts from Ruth Jacobs' notebook, selected and edited by Helen Kemp. The original articles were written sometime between 1949 and 1959, when Ruth was guiding the young and growing Guild by her convictions, her thoughts and the inspiration of her personality.

In its 40th Anniversary Year (1949-1989)
Choristers Guild Celebrates the Life of its Founder,
Ruth Krehbiel Jacobs, through the "Notebook"

The Value of Keeping Up Enthusiasm

by Ruth Krehbiel Jacobs
Edited by Helen Kemp

As supervisor of new teachers in a certain school, I was responsible for observing a young woman during her first year of teaching. I found her to be somewhat indifferent. She did her assigned work, but mechanically, without vision or joy. Because of this attitude, I tried to be particularly enthusiastic. If anything had annoyed me, I concealed it; if I were tired I never mentioned it. I looked for every tiny chance to commend. I exaggerated little improvements I saw and elaborated on their importance. After six months I was sent to another district. A year and a half later I met the teacher again and was delighted to have her rush up to me, eager to tell me about the department. She said I had been an inspiration to her from the first; that she felt if it meant so much to me - month after month my enthusiasm increased - it must be worth trying. So you see, if one keeps on putting over the *spirit* of the thing, regardless of any immediate response, sooner or later, it must have its effect.

If you find yourself dissatisfied with your work, ask yourself these questions: Do I perform it with resentment? Is the work beyond my ability? Do I worry about things beyond my control? Do I include a lot of miscellaneous, extraneous activities which might have been eliminated? Am I working in harmony with my associates? Am I taking a

personal interest in incidental personal contacts?

He drew a circle and shut me out,
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout,
But love and I had the *wit* to win,
We drew a circle and took him in.

. . . Edwin Markham

The majority of people who are dissatisfied are usually lacking in various interests. For the fullest satisfaction, a certain number of activities must be shared with others. We believe that social-mindedness is absolutely essential to continued happiness.

Cultivate a spontaneous enthusiasm; one must give out as well as receive. To reach the happy growing state one must be active mentally and alive emotionally. It is not so much what you are doing but the value of the thing you are doing.

One should always be engaged in some form of activity which impels mental alertness. At the beginning of every undertaking, you are confronted with *two* ways of attacking it. One is with doubt and uncertainty; the other is with courage and confidence. To a certain extent you create or destroy the power by which to acquire the knowledge you seek.

Thought of the Month:

Children's choirs - the key to the future. If we turn the key, what will it do?

- It will reveal a richer and wider world of observation, sensitivity and appreciation.
- It will tear down the dark shades from the windows of our own personality.
- It will help us to recognize fundamental human values.
- It will develop our sense of *wonder*, which is the mark of the child and of the truly great.

(from Ruth Jacobs' notebook)

(KEEPING UP ENTHUSIASM continued)

One mental approach weakens and paralyzes; the other strengthens and energizes.

Havelock Ellis in *The Dance of Life* writes that life must be a great adventure, with risks on every hand. A clear-sighted eye, a many-sided symphony, a fine daring, and an endless patience are forever necessary to all creative and vital living. With such qualities alone may the artists continue their search for fulfillment.

A Note from Helen:

The Greek for the word *enthusiasm* is *en + theos*, which means "having God within." I believe that definition comes close to what Ruth Jacobs meant when she wrote this talk for teachers.

. . . Helen