

THE HIGH ROAD

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The following statements are not all entirely original with me, but they are a little bit of my life and philosophy. I'll follow the sun as I tread the upward road. I'll display my love, my devotion and philosophy. And I'll not turn back.

You will observe as you read that I have followed no organization of my material; and I have made no attempt to follow the sequence of time in my life.

One of the most beautiful qualities of true kindness is to understand and not to be misunderstood. Animals are wonderful and agreeable friends; they ask no questions; they pass no criticism; and they lick their tongue out to show their appreciation.

It is said that good things are good for good people; Good people will receive good things and many blessings.

I believe there is something else out there for each of us; and I believe there is something beyond our lives. We must behold it.

I may be tempted to brush a little rubbish under the rug. If so, I'll have enough courage to brush it out with the next stroke of the broom. A person realizing his temptation to evil thinking can flush it out of the brain with a strong flush of determination.

I cannot see the wind as it sweeps across the prairie, but can always enjoy the sweet breeze as it crosses the new-mown hay of the meadow.

The son is to his daddy as his daddy is to his son. His daddy has the responsibility.

As the harvest season comes and goes from year to year, I realize the greatness of the productivity of the soil; and my thanks go out to the power on high which brings the seasons of the year for the good of all God's creatures.

It may be bad to be classified as old Foggy, and if one still clings to tried-and-true principles of traditional value; If one walks on an old rug which is jerked out from under him, he is still in a better classification than if he were called an old Foggy.

Perseverance is golden. Hesitation may break the yolk The task at hand deserves immediate attention. Begin it today or it will not be completed. Tomorrow never comes. Participate with all energy; play the game --win or loose the card game, debate or game, then go home happy.

How soon do you hope to have success in your life's career? Will you stop hoping then?

At what age do you plan to rest on your laurels? At 50, 70, 90 or ? Do you expect to gather fruit from trees you did not plant or harvest grain from seed you did not sow?

A few key words:--Fidelity, Priority, Morality, Leadership, Loyalty, Reconciliation, Teamwork, Laughter, Responsibility, Growth, Youth, Compensation, Tolerance, Honesty, Participation, Meditation, Conservation, Love, Sunrise, Optimism, Compromise, Kindness, Patience, Get-up-go, and many more. Think on these words and many more, and put them in use as often as possible.

A great religious leader pointed out one time that he desired to pass on to followers that which he had received, and he indicated that his followers should pass on certain things they receive. Pass the ball. It's no good as long as you hold it.

If I am called upon to select the final battle, it will be fought on high ground.

A billy goat can butt you out of the barn lot; Billy can't do it all or make all the rules. It takes two or more to make a team; and the team must have a leader. The leader must set the direction and plan the strategy. He must prove his leadership and his responsibility. You can become a leader.

Getty-up, getty-up my galloping speeding spotted stallion, Kaye Wood. Carry me to the top of the mountain where I can behold the beautiful green valley stretching far beyond. And in early days of my life by riding the old gray mare around the hills in Monroe County, farming became my first occupational love; and I have followed through until this day.

About the time I was 20, I bought one-half interest in my father's farm. (mainly because he could not pay the indebtedness on it.) And immediately after World War I, my father and I bought a nice little farm about 3 miles east of Tompkinsville. In 1929 I bought 37 acres of the Border's farm on the Russellville Road, where Leta was born. Sometime near 1934, L. C. Curry and I bought a nice little farm on the Old Scottsville Road; Near 1940 Ben Porter and I bought a beautiful little farm in northern Logan County, part of the old Shaker farm. And in 1945 I began to own our present farm belonging to Kerr, Fox

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and Perkins. And through the years we have had on it everything that walks, runs, flies or swims. But we have never owned a billy goat or a jackass. And throughout the 40 years, the farm has meant a great deal to me; and I hope it has meant something to the entire family. With the exception of the fact that we are graining it too much at the present time, it is in pretty good shape; and I am determined to do the good work as long as I can walk.

How could it be? As impossible as it may seem, I have been a farmer all my life - 70 years or more. I taught school for 32 years, I served 34 years as a real estate broker, 5 years in college, having earned my B.A. degree at the Teachers College in Bowling Green and a M.A. degree in Kentucky University. I appraised property for 16 years for the Veteran's Administration under the GI Bill of Rights. I served 2 years in World War I. From the time I began teaching school in 1914, I was employed in some capacity or other for 58 years, having resigned as a real estate broker in 1972. I was never unemployed for 58 years.

In relating my experiences of employment, I have tried to show to my offspring that their grandpapa and great-grandpapa was a busy papa. He did not sit in a rocking chair and bemoan the fact that everything was going down the drain. He believed that there was something else out there. I also like for them to know that he served in many volunteer capacities.

He served for more than a quarter of a century as Elder in the First Christian Church of Bowling Green; Served on the Board of the

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Old T.B. Hospital for seven years; Twelve years as a director of the Warren County Conservation Service, two of which time as State Director; Served years as a member of the Warren County Real Estate Board, one year of which time as State Secretary and Treasurer of the State Real Estate Association; Served several years as member of the Agricultural Council of Warren County and represented this board on the Governor's Agriculture Council; Served as chairman of the drive to raise money for the Red Cross during World War II; Served several years on the Agriculture Committee of Chamber of Commerce; Served as a member of the Retired Teachers Organization for years and as its president for two years; Served as state commander of the Disabled American Veterans; Served as Mayor of the village of Cherryton while in college just after World War I; Served as state commissioner on the principal highways leading out of Bowling Green; Served one year as a commissioner to examine the value of taxable property in Warren County; Served years on the Board of the Salvation Army.

Today volunteer service is in need more than any time in our history. Volunteer services help you more than you help the one you serve. You not only render services, you visit places of importance, you make friends, and you remain as a humanitarian. Remember the real value of a citizen depends upon his contributions and services through his lifetime.

As this day comes and goes and tomorrow is in view, a resolution to serve someone or some group will keep you fresh and on the ball.

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I have received several plaques in recognition of my volunteer services. I have also received recognition by the Governor of the State of Kentucky by presenting me a Kentucky Colonelcy.

I have endeavored to pass a good ball to you, to you, and to you; and you have done a good job in receiving it. I congratulate you on your achievements, your contributions to society. Now, to whom are you to pass it? To your immediate family, of course; but others out there are deserving and society is in need of the best ball that can be thrown. Toss it with speed.

From early boyhood, I have been fascinated by the learning process in American educational system. I believe we have the best system in the world, and it has grown as the years have come and gone. I don't have space to relate the progress I have seen in our system since I began to teach in 1914. I had never known a high school graduate until 1913, and there were not many college graduates until much later. But look now.

Our Society, as never before, is in need of strong men and women, and competent leadership can only come from educated people. The universities and colleges can serve as the base for our great educational advancement. But the learning process must not stop with a college degree. Reading, travel, research, successive tenure, and the leadership carried on by professionals must be continued.

We have always had educational problems, and it is up to the public to solve the problems. I am confident that our schools will be better financed, and our teachers will continue to climb higher and higher on the educational ladder. A ladder must have a base to lean on if it is any use. America must have a good educational system to lean on.

Not only is reading an important part of our education and our way of life; so also is travel a part of our education, our way of life. Education, reading and travel all are tied up together as part of our progress in our great America.

In the following paragraphs, I will briefly sketch a few places I have visited since I left my back yard.

Eastward and northward bound through old Camp Taylor at Louisville; Camp Sherman, Chillicothe, Ohio; Camp Mills, New York, and across the Atlantic to England and France, having been 14 days and nights on the old Axacks, an old cattle ship converted to men in the Army. Back to America by the way of Boston to Monroe County.

Northward through Indianapolis, where twice I visited the internal headquarters of Kiwanis International. And onward to Detroit and to Canada. My family and I visited the World's Fair in Chicago in 1933 or 1934. Then westward through 13 or 14 states to Yellowstone National Park. In 1956 I attended the International Kiwanis Convention at San Francisco and on across the Golden Gate Bridge.

Perhaps the best trip of all was down the Mississippi River from Memphis to New Orleans, rejoicing that the great river carried us in the Mississippi Queen, the biggest river boat in the U.S., around the bends and the crooks into the bright and southland. There we found an

abundance warmth and glow, and with a hospitality of a kind found no where else in the World.

Throughout the southland, I have observed the same friendliness in many cities, such as New Orleans, Mobile, Gulfport, Pensacola, Savannah, Atlanta, Richmond, Panama City. And in all of these places, the glow and the warm hospitality surround one as he travels the High Road.

The road to the East, West, North and South has been made over an expanse of 4 score and 10 years, and as I have left my home each time, I have been singing the Star Spangled Banner, and as I have returned, I sang America the Beautiful; and I had in my heart a prayer, God Bless America.

My High Road venture has shown to me, among other aspects, that we have a wonderful nation, a nation of cooperating states with all the natural resources for a great civilization. But without an explanation here, we have a nation - a union of diversities. No two states are exactly alike; But cooperate in a wonderful way.

The United States is an unique nation. It is a young nation compared to the other great nations. It is governed by a Constitution, the greatest instrument of rule and law ever struck off by the efforts of men. It has a free system of education. It is ruled by a democratic body of two political parties; a free press, freedom of religion, a freedom of occupational pursuit. And it has all the natural resources needed for a progressive and advanced civilization.

Under a picture of Uncle Sam is the following: "Although I am over 200 years old, I am alive in the hearts of all people who yearn to breathe free. I am America."

Yes, America has had a phenomenal growth. Great leaders have carried us forward. We have solved great problems and we will continue to have grave problems - Beginning yesterday and continuing today.

I learned to read when I was 4 years old - no, not print, but pictures. My father was reading the old Louisville paper that portrayed the pictures of the Spanish American War, 1898 & 1899. I would lay the paper down before me on a huge fire place with blazing fire wood, and then I would lay down on my belly and read the pictures. When I was 12, my mother gave me 3 dozen eggs which I sold for 25¢. I subscribed for the old county paper for 3 months. From that day til today, I have much, much interest in reading. Reading is tied to one's education. Reading about noted people, about places you have visited, about historical events of yesterday, today and great events to come. Yes, I have been, and I am now fascinated by our great educational system. Especially the freedom of the press, and the positive outlook we view from the second story window.

I have already tried to show that education and reading are tied together, and that travel and reading are also tied together. These aspects of one's life, if followed, have a good advantage over people who are not educated:-

Your experience is widened.

You can render more and better service.

You have the pleasure of associating with a more cultured class of people.

You understand how to pass the ball.

You know more about the places you have visited.

You have met many wonderful friends along the High Road.

So it is the only way to go. Learn, Read, Travel and Serve.

Time and society are changing, and changing rapidly. The old are getting older and, percentage wise, the older population is rapidly increasing. Many and many of old leaders will, by necessity, drop their powers to be to someone else, and there is only one other source of leaders on whom responsibility can fall.

The youth, who set excellence and the top for their goal, will be our future leaders, and I have tried to show in the forgoing paragraphs that the youth of today have great opportunity to acquire a wonderful education, to continue their education after graduation by research, reading, traveling and by associating with the cultural class. By so doing their desire for excellence and their prayers for success will be achieved. "And if it is to be, It's up to me."

I have never claimed that I have the blue print for a successful life. However, I have witnessed the flight of the eagle, the hero of wild-bird population. He soars skyward with poise, power and agility; and I know that we must proceed with poise and all the wisdom we have. Our society is upward bound. We know that one's life can't be changed by his activities of yesterday. The past has come and gone. Beginning today you can change your lifestyle of all of your activities. We need to renew our faith and our trust in all humanity.

I am confident that when one quits using his mind, it is sure to deteriorate. Be wise, learn early. It is said that by the time one learns to get the best out of life, most of life is already gone. Start now to climb the ladder. You can pass the ball; and when the ball is in your hands, it is up to you to pass it to someone else. Remember, "If it is to be, it's up to me." Widen your experience early, and remember, there is only one way to travel - The High Road.

There are only two kinds of fish - the dead fish which can only float down stream; the live fish which can swim up stream. Are you dead or alive! We need to put the positive into perspective. The negative produces the blues - Bluer than blue. You are influenced many ways other than by words. Sometimes it is better to be quiet.

You may have never thought about it, but there is a similarity of a drop of water and an original idea. A drop of water falls on top of a mountain. Thus it becomes the beginning of a stream of water which increases as it flows down the mountain and through the valley until it reaches a large body of water such as the Gulf of Mexico. An idea may begin with a passing breath. It is passed on and on by one person to another until it becomes an important reality; and a part of our American society. The Wright Brothers never flew a plane as a result of their original idea. Their original idea grew and grew, and was added to for many months until it resulted into one of the greatest inventions in America. It is said that Einstein's brain is still used as a specimen for research. Yes, a drop of water and an original idea keep flowing on and increasing until we have an abundance of water and many, many inventions. A drop of water and an

original idea seem to increase in size and value in accordance with the principle of the Geometrical theory. Thus wise 2 - 4 - 8 - 16 - 64 etc. I hope we will still have many more drops of water and worthwhile ideas.

Someone has said tha a dialogue is more than two monologues. There can be no quarrel or no negotiation between two people or among several people if there is only one monologue. How important it is for any two nations who have differences of opinion about the operation of government affairs to come together around the negotiating table with a dialogue of justice by both nations. Positive thinking solves problems. If an individual and/or a negative thinking nation have and keep a constant negative attitude about men, our country, and the general way of living in America, it is almost impossible to have a positive insight about our wonderful democratic society.

Sometimes it is good to hear people talk, and it is also wonderful to read the newspapers and be concerned about all the news media. You learn much, but sometimes there is so much talk, so much gossip, so much written in magazines and on and on until it produces results - right or wrong. It seems that some acts or movements become self-propelled. What am I saying? I am saying that we are living in the past and also in the present. We have inherited so much; we have invented so much. We are living in a great country which affords the greatest opportunities of any nation on earth. So let us begin today to think positively, to understand and be sure we understand our news media, leave off negatism, and go forth supporting with all your

heart this great democratic system of government. And you don't have to be a gold-medalist participant.

I have dreamed of a life-time walk along the High Road, but I have never thought that the journey would last longer than ninety years. As I have strolled along, I have sung of love in the spring time. I have journeyed through many, many of nature's lovely places; through and across wide spaces of fertile and productive land. I have climbed the steps to the top of the mountain, sometimes stumbling down the slopes to the valley again. The beautiful spring time of youth had vanished.

Summer time with all of its warmth and beauty had crept upon me. The beautiful flowers and the smiling faces were with me. The desire to step a little higher and the bliss of that wonderful feeling that comes to all early summer travelers had overtaken me. A lovely lady had come into my heart; and for fifty-two years, she and I walked hand in hand on the High Road. In the meantime, two lovely daughters joined us; and as time advanced in my life, six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren met us on the way.

Throughout the whole journey, many lovely and gracious friends joined us and til this day, April, 1985, they are marching by our side. The summer time in my dreams had brought the greatest blessings of my lifetime because I had experienced the romance and love of so many Christian-abiding people.

My dream passed from the springtime love and the flowers and romance of the summertime. My dream jumped quickly to the chilly

autumn nights. Many of my faithful companions were still with me, and they, too, dreamed with me of the coloring of the beautiful leaves in the tops of the trees and frost on the pumpkins. And there were still many sparkling brooks on the way side. Nothing had been forgotten. I still heard many sweet voices of those who had, by necessity, dropped out of the journey.

But my dream continued. Winter time with all its blustery, grayish and snow days was upon me all too soon. A great deal of my energy and the love for all humanity were still with me, but wintry wind is beginning to blow through my britches, and I can still shake a leg on the dance floor.

I suppose that it would have been impossible for my dream not to have some difficulties along the High Road. Occasionally a few barking dogs encountered me. But all but one or two, realizing that I was on the High Road began to show love and lick my hand. The other one or two never seem to know what the High Road is all about; but we forgave them, and all continued. I suppose they dropped by the wayside, as we never saw them again. My foot steps began to slow down a bit; and my companions continued on their journey leaving me behind.

So my dream was ended; but as time went on, I could still hear the pit pat pat of the soft steps of the toddlers, the laughter and beautiful love songs of the youth. I also could still hear the sweet songs, the jingle bells, and the push, the rush, and the shove by all at Christmastime. And till this day, I am sure that all my companions are still continuing their journey on the High Road.

So within a short time, I'll ring down the bell and cut the bell rope; and it is possible that in this form, you will never hear it's peel again.

Before I go, I would like to throw out to you and to you a little bit of advice concerning your local community. Yours is especially important to you. Each individual is a part of the community, and it is a part of each individual. Therefore, it is your duty and responsibility to cooperate and support the community. Each individual needs to get a hold and hold on to his community; and so acting, you can be assured that it will hold on to you.

The church; the schools; the arts; the civic clubs; the athletic organizations; and the voting privileges gave you wonderful ways in which you can participate.

Changes come everyday. Some come as a drop or spout of water. Others come as a gushing stream of water; and you must swim or be left as driftwood. Big changes come as an innovation which may cause the tide to flush over into a bigger and more progressive community. So stay with the tide and participate.

I started out by following the sun. The journey upward has been very rewarding. My love and devotion have increased, and my old philosophy has been renewed and added to. And I have not turned back. Back home in the great community of Bowling Green, and enjoying the freedom and the opportunities available to all citizens in this democratic land, I am happy, relaxing, and dreaming of many, many more sunlit journeys on the High Road.

At the end of my journey, I lift my insight and my eyesight to the monumental mountains on High, from which cometh my power; I behold the productive and fertile land in the far flung valleys from which cometh my living. I behold and feel the Holy Spirit as a great satisfaction for Christian asperation. I rejoice with you and you in this democratic land, America the Beautiful.

With love to all, I am

W. B. Kerr - 1894-198

W. B. Kerr
6/9/85

P.S.

Since my pencil is becoming dull, and my brain too; even so the following subjects are in the limelight, it is perhaps better to postpone a "treaty" on them until a later date.

1. Conservation of our natural resources - land, water, minerals, timber and life itself.
2. Inovations - Important changes are taking place as never before. Perhaps our physical bodies may be someday propelled by a robot.
3. Organized athletics - Good and bad aspects should be treated by an expert. But at this time they are playing an important part in American society.
4. How to make and keep friends. As you know, the first step is to be a friend yourself, but that is only a beginning. Friendship brings happiness.

W. B. Kerr