

Summary Writing

I wonder how many of us are fully aware of just how socially and culturally toxic our environments have become as we race to embrace the hype of modern living. This usually means living in the ever present by keeping up-to-date with the latest consumer brands or lifestyles. We think we are buying not only a quality product, but also an image that we believe can magically transform us into better persons.

A common symptom of the modern lifestyle is the highly individualistic and materialistic personality. Individualistic and materialistic people usually oppose any call to be socially responsible, and live by the mantra “every man for himself”. They are insensitive to the welfare of others and some will not hesitate to maim or kill, directly or indirectly, in order to achieve their desired material status and power. For them, human lives, including friends and associates, are seen as products. They are enjoyed for the moment and are easily disposable.

The real cost of modern living makes it unsustainable. It has a heavy price which includes the spread of poverty, environmental pollution, chronic diseases caused by unhealthy lifestyle choices, and social chaos resulting in crime and violence. These outweigh the alleged benefits. In the end, the heavy burden, the fall-out and casualties, will fall on our fragile economies and on our young people, our future.

Now is the time to revisit our development priorities if we seek to survive. Let us look at education, for example. Our education system will continue to fail the masses because its mission is not to develop the whole person. If you asked most people why education is important, a typical response would probably be “to equip us to earn a living”. Earning a living usually means that the primary motive for being educated is to make money. Hence, we cannot be surprised by those people who place little value on education, and instead seek illegal ways to “earn a living”. What is lacking is an education that teaches us “how to live” while earning a living. Unfortunately, too many of us put money at the center of happiness.

Fortunately, some of us ordinary folks are awakening from our self-imposed suffering in modern living. Some have become advocates for a more humanitarian approach to life — a journey our “education system” should have taken us on a long time ago. The old saying, “Each one, teach one” is certainly the way to go.

Dekenu Shepherd, “The Real Cost of Modern Living”. Next Generation: Empowering the Caribbean Family, Issue No. 2, June–September 2010, p. 5.

Identify the five (5) main ideas in the text.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Formulate your summary using the main ideas selected.