

Drafting My Credo

WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

Credo stems from the root *cred*, meaning “to believe,” which appears in other words such as *incredulous*, *creed*, and *credence*.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How do Fulghum’s diction, syntax, and punctuation help convey his tone and theme?

During Reading

- In the following excerpt, Robert Fulghum creates a list of precepts in order to present his **credo**: his personal statement about life. As you read the credo, consider what the precepts have in common and highlight those that most appeal to you personally.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Fulghum (b. 1937) grew up in Texas. He was a minister for many years before turning to writing, painting, and sculpting. He is the author of several best-selling books that primarily focus on thoughts about how to live a full and happy life. Fulghum has said, “The tragedy of modern man is not that he knows less and less about the meaning of his own life but that it bothers him less and less.”

Nonfiction

Credo from **All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten**

by Robert Fulghum

1 Each spring, for many years, I have set myself the task of writing a personal statement of belief: a Credo. When I was younger, the statement ran for many pages, trying to cover every base, with no loose ends. It sounded like a Supreme Court brief, as if words could resolve all conflicts about the meaning of existence.

2 The Credo has grown shorter in recent years—sometimes cynical, sometimes comical, sometimes bland—but I keep working at it. Recently I set out to get the statement of personal belief down to one page in simple terms, fully understanding the naïve idealism that implied. . .

3 I realized then that I already know most of what’s necessary to live a meaningful life—that it isn’t all that complicated. I know it. And have known it for a long, long time. Living it—well, that’s another matter, yes? Here’s my Credo:

4 All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate-school mountain, but there in the sand pile at Sunday school. These are the things I learned:

- Share everything.
- Play fair.
- Don’t hit people.
- Put things back where you found them.
- Clean up your own mess!
- Don’t take things that aren’t yours.
- Say you’re sorry when you hurt somebody.
- Wash your hands before you eat.
- Flush.

