

Machine Antidote 101: How to Apprentice a Human

Nuclear meltdown, the chosen vs. the given, and three essentials



In the Bathtub by Christian Krohg, 1889

“Without the hope of posterity, for our race if not for ourselves, without the assurance that we being dead yet live, all pleasures of the mind and senses sometimes seem to me no more than pathetic and crumbling defences shored up against our ruin.”

— P.D. James, *The Children of Men*

During Lent I (Ruth) gave up scanning news sites, and have not returned to regularly reading them since. The one instance where I do encounter headlines is during my gym visits, where a dozen screens lined side-by-side alternate between Halloween horror bake shows, music hot takes, and breaking news. A couple of weeks ago, the announcer reported soberly that the average cost of raising two children in Canada ranges from around 250,000 to over 500,000 dollars and could be much higher should the child have special needs. The accompanying image loop showed children eagerly completing worksheets and filing down school hallways, while experts discussed the various costs of daycare, housing, clothing, and other living expenses in a disinterested, factual tone. The clear (but unstated) message was: kids are expensive and you can likely not afford more than one.

It struck me that this news piece sounded like an eerie precursor to the scene in *Children of Men*, where the news reporter laments that the last human being to be born on earth was killed in a pub brawl. In P.D. James’s novel, the human race had mysteriously lost the ability to procreate, and the world’s population was rendered hopeless in facing a certain end. While we do not face sweeping infertility, populations are cratering in South Korea because of “[anti-natal engineering](#)”, and our excessive self-focus, and disinterest in the other, is leading us into an unprecedented future of a [world without babies](#)¹.

Before you start to worry that this piece will meander down doomsday lane, let me assure you that we remain focused on hope, and directed action. There is no use to be found in painting a hopeless future, as Myles Wertz noted in his most [recent article](#): “Ethics, after all, may begin in moral description, in criticism and judgment, but must offer something of a vision of how to move forward.”

Nowadays, something uncomfortable tends to creep around the word “family”. The mere mention of the word with any degree of sympathy can be construed as flag waving for one political or social group, or animosity toward another. It’s a sign of our times that even the commonplace things of life are ground down to gunpowder and packed into ideological bullets.

This is not our view. We value family not for what it might or might not represent ideologically, but because we have lived it, experienced it, suffered with it, rejoiced in it, failed in it, hoped in it. The experience is in our marrow. It’s also in the historical marrow of every people in every age²—whether the nuclear families of 1955, or the tribal families of our nomadic ancestors.

In our last post we explored the [3Rs of Unmachining](#), the third of which was a return to embodied human relationships. Today we pick up that thread within family and its unique role in forming human beings, and how it offers us a natural antidote to the Machine.



Children Painting Flowers by Viggo Johansen, 1894

Nuclear Meltdown

It's been all over the internet the past few years: the nuclear family is in [decline](#), [officially over](#), [no longer the norm](#), [dead](#), [a historical mistake](#).

Loosely defined, the nuclear family means a mother and father and a couple of kids. But all these things, whichever way we parse them up—mothers, fathers, children, marriages, households—have been statistically shrinking. In his 2020 article [The Nuclear Family was a Mistake](#) David Brooks cites the statistics:

- In 1960, 72 percent of American adults were married. In 2017, nearly half of American adults were single.
- Over the past two generations, people have spent less and less time in marriage—they are marrying later, if at all, and divorcing more. In 1950, 27 percent of marriages ended in divorce; today, about 45 percent do.
- From 1970 to 2012, the share of households consisting of married couples with kids has been cut in half.
- The general American birth rate is half of what it was in 1960.
- In 1970, about 20 percent of households had five or more people³. As of 2012, only 9.6 percent did. In 2012, **most American family households had no children**.⁴ More homes today have pets than kids.

Brooks's article is long and historically sweeping—a highly recommended read—and one of his main points is this: The nuclear family that dominated society from about 1950 to 1965 was a freakish historical moment that obscured the fragility of this kind of family.

That fragility is plain to see. If one of the two parents in a nuclear family gets sick, dies, or leaves the family, then the family system becomes far less stable, and more susceptible to stress and breakdown.

According to Brooks, one of the reasons nuclear families functioned as well as they did in the (pre-feminist) past, is because married women tended to stay at home caring for the children. An atmosphere of front porch community also prevailed in many neighborhoods, and nuclear families often informally supported each other, so that, for instance, friends felt free to discipline one another's children. All this created a kind of “modified extended family”, which presumably offset some of the inherent frailty of the nuclear family.

But if that “freakish” moment of history is now gone, what is the risk if the nuclear family dies?



Die ältere Schwester by Albert Anker, 1889

The Given and the Chosen

When we step into the family, by the act of being born, we do step into a world which is incalculable, into a world which has its own strange laws, into a world which could do without us, into a world that we have not made.

- G.K. Chesterton

For those who cringe at talk of salvaging the nuclear family, or any of its constituent parts, there is hope: choice.

Some things are given to us, and some things are chosen. We don't choose the families we were born into, or our native society and culture. These are givens. We get a certain mother and father without any say in the matter, and a certain language, a religion or no religion, traditions, habits, practices, and powerful stories about our identity—all this before we're old enough to read and think rationally about whether we like it or not.

It seems unfair. The given puts a yoke on us, steering us at times in directions we don't want to go, and giving rising to struggles we didn't ask for. Why did I have to be born in this family, or in this country? Why do I have to deal with these people?

It might help to remember that struggles like this aren't always bad. We build mental and emotional muscle mass from having to deal with the challenges in life we didn't choose. Paradoxically, it is limits that stretch us and push us toward growth. As Ruth noted in a [recent interview](#):

“When I first anticipated motherhood I did so with the realization that there would be challenging times, but also with the delusion that I would be able to manage them swiftly and smoothly. I was thinking with the mind of an individual who had not yet learned that having children stretches one’s emotions and patience to extremes that cannot be imagined, only experienced. In her most recent piece Rachel Fenton stated “...in no other place will I see my flaws more clearly. These souls I’ve been given to steward will encourage me to work towards wholeness; towards holiness.” I think while we are single, we can be under the illusion that we are a strong and patient person. Little ones will tear that illusion down pretty quickly and start to expose the weaknesses that we need to work on.”

And if, in the end, we need to make a change to be free of the struggle of our “givens”, we have a choice: We can divorce our spouses, and we can change our friends, lovers, communities, jobs, and sometimes our languages and countries and our gods. There is seemingly no end to our capacity for inventing and reinventing ourselves.

Between these two polarities—the given versus the chosen—we face a fine balance. If we turn too far from what is given to us, if we have too much choice, then we might define ourselves and the reality outside of us too heavily based on how we feel in the present moment, or on what fits with our personality. We might also become susceptible to whatever situational influences are strongest in our environment—media, entertainment, peer groups, marketing.

This can create problems. Our feelings and personality preferences can mislead our perceptions, and situational influences don’t always have our best interests in mind. Trying too hard to invent ourselves can leave us with a self-focused or highly distorted idea of social reality. It can be disastrous for children, who are already emotionally vulnerable. Having too much freedom to invent ourselves can also lead to the constant stress of needing others to affirm us in our invention—and there’s no guarantee that others will do that.

“It seems to me that those who experience the world this way simply don’t have an inward sense of being a complete person, except inasmuch as this is scaffolded from outside....A few years back I wrote a long [essay](#) in Palladium about how this reflects a worldview that rejects shared meanings as oppressive by definition, in favour of radical self-creation. But the problem with insisting that you are the sole arbiter of yourself is that self-creation means nothing until someone else agrees with the truth of whatever you’ve created.”

from [Denying my existence](#) by Mary Harrington

Still, there’s a great virtue in the freedom of the “chosen”. If we remain too attached to what is given to us, then we might never discover who we are and where we belong. We might live a life according to a preordained template that doesn’t map well onto our minds, our inclinations, our unique needs and unique perception of life. To be trapped within a traditional set of familial or social givens can be stifling, even a torment. Nobody wants to live tangled up in somebody else’s barbed wire, no matter how much others insist it’s for our own good.

Whichever way we lean, whether toward the given, or the chosen, or some combination of these, the problem of learning to be human never leaves us. We still need an apprenticeship where we learn essential social skills, cultivate long-term stability and commitment in our relationships⁵, and witness and practice self-sacrifice.



Grandmother Spooning the Soup by Albert Anker

Extended Family and Expanded Community

In her [recent interview](#) with [Ivana Greco](#) , Ruth commented on the positive impact that living with extended family had on our lives:

“I had a very unique situation that allowed me to have immense support in daily homemaking tasks: we lived with my mother-in-law. To some readers this would be a “never would I ever in a lifetime” scenario, and I have to admit that this had been my initial reaction as well (I used to think I could make it work for three weeks at most). Yet, when my husband and I experienced our conversion, we also decided to turn back toward our family and open our hearts to connecting closely with them. I especially insisted on this, much to my own surprise. Thus after having lived over 2000 km removed for five years, we moved into my mother-in-law’s townhome with our baby daughter. It was truly a blessing. “Baba” (as Macedonian grandmothers are called) readily helped with dishes, cleaning, folding laundry, and even cooking and baking treats.

This practical support allowed me to focus my energy fully on mothering, educating, and using my gifts to coordinate various programs in my community including an early education co-op, public speaking groups, spelling bees, speed math, and hands-on science classes for middle and high school students. I could not possibly have done this without the practical support from Baba on the home front, and she is thus in part responsible for offering so many families these opportunities. Reflecting back on her support brings into relief how a woman who grew up in a small Macedonian mountain village, with only basic elementary schooling, nevertheless contributed substantially to the education of her grandchildren and droves of my homeschool co-op students over the last decade.”

In his [2020 article](#), David Brooks suggests that the extended family is a more stable structure compared to the nuclear family. Extended family includes not only parents and children, but potentially other family members, such as grandparents, uncles or aunts, or other relatives.

Despite the decline of traditional nuclear family, the extended family in the form of multigenerational households is becoming more common. According to a [Pew Research](#) study in 2022:

*“Multigenerational living has grown sharply in the U.S. over the past five decades and shows no sign of peaking. When asked why they share their home with relatives, Americans often give practical reasons related to finances or family caregiving. **But the experience also has an emotional component.** About a quarter of adults in multigenerational homes say it is stressful all or most of the time, and more than twice that share say it is mostly or always rewarding.”*

These findings suggest that extended families can have a robustness—both financially and socially—that isn’t always possible in nuclear families. The same research found that 57% of adults in multigenerational households have found the experience positive or very positive.

Apart from multigenerational families, there’s evidence of a [growing preference for larger families](#), according to journalist Jim Dalrymple II, who writes at [Nuclear Meltdown](#). Dalrymple compares large family to a ship: the ship is big enough that, even if one or two members hop off, the vessel continues to float. Dalrymple also makes a fascinating observation about diversity of thought in large families:

“There are a range of ideological views in the family, which makes for more interesting discussions. And if someone gets hurt feelings during, say, a political conversation, having a big group means there are more people to diffuse the situation. It also means returning to the group after a heated discussion doesn’t have to mean one-on-one time between the offender and offeree. It’s the ship metaphor again; the group is bigger than any one person, and the family culture transcends any particular political identity, so you can get back on board without having to confront a person or idea with whom you might have clashed.”

In this way, large family provides not a “safe space” where no conflict can happen, but a secure foundation in which conflict can happen in a tolerable way that does not disrupt the overall stability of the social situation. Imagine if we could expand such model to campuses, institutions, and workplaces?

And it is here that we can see some of the virtues of the given. We didn't choose that brother whose politics drives us crazy, or that anxious aunt who catastrophizes about everything. They are givens. We are compelled to be patient with people whose personalities and opinions are different from our own. It's harder to develop this kind of patience and tolerance when we can choose all the people in our group, as we will tend to follow the line of least resistance, choosing those who are similar to us. Still, we need that freedom, especially when our families don't function well or if we just don't fit.

In his 2020 article, [Brooks](#) describes a different kind of extended family, one that stretches across kinship lines by bringing together people who are not biologically related into family and family-like relationships. For example, at [CoAbove](#), single mothers can find other single mothers who want to share a home, on the principle that “two moms raising children together can achieve more than one going it alone”.

There doesn't seem to be any one structure to these “chosen” extended families. It all depends on the people who come together to form them. Brooks himself is part of a chosen (“forged”) family, involving two other adults who have their own child, who have also taken in a number of youth from impoverished or troubled homes. Brooks also heads up an organization called [Weave](#), which exists to draw support and attention to other groups who are engaged in building chosen communities.

One of the best-known examples of such communities is cohousing. According to [a recent piece](#) by David Larson in the Front Porch Republic, *“a cohousing development is just like a typical subdivision, with an HOA [Homeowners Association], some common areas, and a bunch of privately owned houses. But those who live in the community are generally family and friends, or at least have agreed to the shared statement of values and have gone through a trial membership before being allowed to buy in.”*

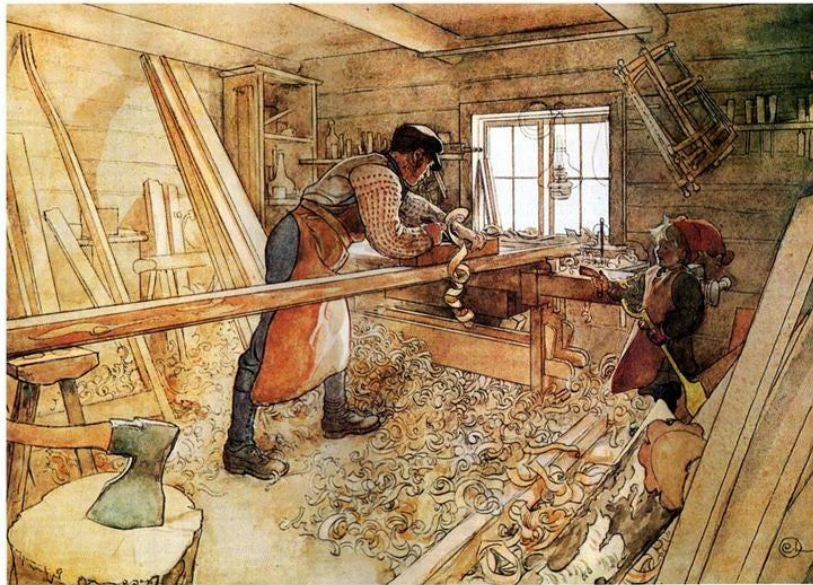
At the same time, Larson notes that the vast majority of co-housers are educated white Democrats. This homogeneity might reflect the fact that cohousing is mostly a fringe movement, with only [163 communities](#) in the US. But the movement is also growing fast, so it may eventually diversify.

If cohousing still sounds a bit weird (especially to conservative ears), Larson makes an interesting observation:

“Think of the cohousing brand as analogous to what might happen a century from now, if marriage rates continue to fall: Someone might come up with the idea of “corooming,” where two people commit to sharing a bedroom, sexual exclusivity, raising children, and splitting chores for the rest of their lives. They might see it as a brilliant idea that would solve a lot of their social problems—and it would—but most human beings across history would laugh at the idea that this universal human institution (marriage) had to be introduced as a novel model.

“Cohousing” feels about the same. People from every other time and place would likely say, “Yeah, you mean like a village or a city neighborhood?” But that should be all the more reason to bring back the arrangement. Maybe we can just call it something else, like,

“Living with family and friends in a neighborhood designed to encourage the building of social capital, relying on them in real and tangible ways (rather than just manufacturing reasons to occasionally interact with them), and overcoming the isolating dynamics of modern life.”



In the Carpenter Shop by Carl Larsson, 1905

The Essential Skills

Whether we're in a nuclear family, or some form of extended family or emerging community, we still need to learn a basic set of social skills. We need a good apprenticeship for being human. Our own view is that family, within the context of an extended family and/or extended non-biological community, provides the strongest foundation for such an apprenticeship, as it can include hybrid features across both “given” and “chosen” models of family: the instinctive bonding and self-sacrifice of marriage and parenting; greater emotional, social, and economic stability over time; a diversity of individual personality and viewpoint; and a rich training ground for learning social skills.

We recognize that hybrid arrangements are not always possible. They won't always work, either. Some of us may also be averse to any notion of family, either because we are [hermits](#) by nature, or else because we suffer from that uniquely postmodern syndrome—hyper-individualism.

One way or another, we need a good apprenticeship in being human, no matter our family arrangement. Are there people in our family or community who love us, to the point of **self-sacrifice**? Are there people who will be with us for the long term, providing temporal **stability** to our lives? And finally, are we learning a full complement of **social skills**?

As no family is perfect, we don't usually get a full measure of these 3 S's—sacrifice, stability, and social skills—and we might get them with distortions and failings. But some is better than none.

And if we don't get the 3 S's in good measure as children growing up, we can still work on them as adults. In a recent article in the New York Times titled [The Essential Skills for Being Human](#), David Brooks observed that being “openhearted” is a prerequisite for being fully human, yet it's not enough:

“People need social skills. The real process of, say, building a friendship or creating a community involves performing a series of small, concrete actions well: being curious about other people; disagreeing without poisoning relationships; revealing vulnerability at an appropriate pace; being a good listener; knowing how to ask for and offer forgiveness; knowing how to host a gathering where everyone feels embraced; knowing how to see things from another's point of view.”

Brooks, who's just written a [practical book](#) on the subject, highlights some of the more important skills in his NYT article, including:

- **The gift of attention, or “reverential attention”**, communicates respect, value, and dignity for another person as a real human being who has priority to us. This form of attention is active and engaged with the other person, through conversation or shared activities.

- **Accompaniment** is an “other-centered way of being with people during the normal routines”. It's more passive than the gift of attention, and involves the “art of presence”, or just being with people in a way that supports them while they do something or are experiencing something, much as a pianist might accompany and support a singer's performance.

Within our own family, accompaniment has happened, for instance, when our younger son goes to the climbing gym. We're with him, although we're not climbing with him. We might occasionally interact with him in a supportive way (e.g., “Great climb!”), but for the most part we're just “there”.

In the case of the gift of attention, we've found this skill to be important at all ages, but especially during the teenage years, where staying close to our kids has meant having a lot of conversations that have demanded enormous empathy and patience on our part—sometimes stretching us to our limits (and beyond).

When people are good at seeing and understanding others, they are “illuminators”, according to Brooks:

“Illuminators...have a persistent curiosity about other people. They have been trained or have trained themselves in the craft of understanding others. They know how to ask the right questions at the right times — so that they can see things, at least a bit, from another's point of view. They shine the brightness of their care on people and make them feel bigger, respected, lit up.”

The opposite of an illuminator is a “diminisher”—a person who is self-focused, makes others feel insignificant, and may stereotype and label them based on simplistic assumptions.

There’s also a spiritual dimension here. Brooks describes a pastor who, when he sees a person—any person,

“is seeing a creature with infinite value and dignity, made in the image of God. He is seeing someone so important that Jesus was willing to die for that person. You may be an atheist, an agnostic, a Christian, a Jew or something else, but casting this kind of reverential attention is an absolute precondition for seeing people well.”

This observation also brings us back to the importance of sacrifice. The most instinctive form of this sacrifice is the willingness of parents to give anything for the welfare of their children. Marriage itself also includes sacrifice, although perhaps less instinctive, and more dependent on intentional commitment.

But the highest skill in the apprenticeship of the child, once they are fully developed, is to extend a sacrificial attitude toward those who are not in their family. To be capable of recognizing, and responding to, the inestimable value of “the other”.



Little Girls Knitting by Albert Anker, 1892

Family and the Machine

Family can offer a natural antidote to the Machine, and perhaps the most potent. The nature and tendencies of family are diametrically opposed to the impact of certain forms of technology, particularly digital and other emerging tech that, increasingly, are coming to dominate our mental functions and social lives in ways that were never possible before.

For instance, family encourages other-centeredness in the context of “given” realities, while digital technology often exposes us to an excess of “chosen” experiences. We choose to look at images that will stimulate us. We choose to read the media that will affirm us. We choose our screen friends. We block our screen enemies. We curate our pictures and our words. We play with pixels as a child plays with sand in a sandbox, building up self-validating realities on a shifting foundation. Always getting what we want may seem desirable, yet it invites us to live out the proverbial curse “may you get what you wish for”.

At the same time, our digital devices can manipulate us, as Big Tech and other interests profit by feeding us advertising and content that influences our behavior. This is the “given” of the online experience, yet a predatory given with its own agenda. Because this screen experience is so eminently portable, it is difficult to turn away from it, even if we recognize its malignant effects⁶. The temple of self-focus rarely moves out of our sight, and should we manage to shift our focus on reality, notifications quickly summon us back to offer up more prayers.

Together, the chosen and given aspects of digital technologies simultaneously incline us toward our own self-absorption and somebody else’s sociopathic tendencies. Rather than becoming fully known, we end up bubbled in self-customized realities and unwittingly exploited, and increasingly isolated from real-world, embodied human relationships.

These same technologies erode the pillars of sacrifice, stability, and social skills. For example, rather than practicing the “gift of attention”, a parent or child—and sometimes both—may be more occupied with gazing into their screens. Each time we turn away from each other and toward our devices, we tacitly affirm and reinforce that the virtual is more precious than the real.

If digital technologies have a harmful impact on social attention, they might, by extension also begin to eat away at the long-term stability of family relationships and our willingness to sacrifice. It’s not just that excessive time on our devices can dilute the quality of our relationships. It’s that many of the self-focused narratives and values that we absorb while online may subtly weaken our commitment to the real people in our lives.

Although we've focused mostly on digital technology, the rise of AI and advanced robots will—within a few years—almost certainly create a new set of complexities and vulnerabilities in the family fabric. In a [recent article](#) in Mere Orthodoxy, Nadya Williams explores the Pandora's Box that is inherent in machine-made companions:

“Yet in some ways, the temptation of these “relationships” is understandable. The ads for AI girlfriends play on this overtly: as they say, here is the dream girlfriend who will never disagree, never criticize, never disappoint. The subtext, of course, is: any other girlfriend will. Or, in the case of a [robot] baby, here is an infant who will never wake you up at night, will never spit up or get sick and make you miss work, will never just inexplicably cry for hours on end as your nerves fray from exhaustion and pity and guilt, as you pace the room trying to comfort this crying infant, sobbing yourself and thinking that you will never ever sleep again. But what do we miss when we settle for such “relationships”? We miss humanity, but we also, in the process, miss God, whose image we get to encounter in every imperfect human being whom we love in this life.”

We have said it before, yet it's worth repeating: not all technology is bad. But technology should not be our central reference point in understanding what it means to be human.

We need to turn away from the virtual reality and toward the embodied reality. That doesn't mean getting rid of technology but prioritizing our relationships. You may feel that your family is messed up. You may feel alone. You may feel alienated from the people around you. Yet we can each practice the skills of attention and presence with the people we encounter. We can demonstrate a willingness to sacrifice for others and to support them over time. We might have a family already, or we might not. But we don't need one to begin. It's by becoming apprentices again in our human relationships that we maintain the desire to build a family, in whatever form it may ultimately take.

Before two people can connect, they encounter a space between them, a gap of unknowing. Digital technologies have bridged that gap by turning us into simplified representations of who we are and passing them off as true. AI and robots will attempt to do something similar, by passing themselves off as real. All this can make it harder to turn back to the gap of unknowing, harder to reach toward the real other, and instead draw us back into the coddling arms of a faux reality⁷.

But we can choose to reject the curse of the Machine's embrace. We can reach into the gap, into the mysterious space between ourselves and others, not always knowing what we will find, not always quite sure if we will come away better or worse, yet sure of one thing: we will have a chance to know, and be known.

“Many things apart from relationships matter in life, of course, but our view is that unless we prioritize our marriages, families, and the wider spheres of our human connections—unless we make this the alpha and omega of our efforts—nothing else will work—not religion, not philosophy, not nature, not even technocracy. It will all flounder, because it will either miss or misuse something more basic than all of these things: we are embodied relational creatures who thrive only when we are known and loved.”

[The 3Rs of Unmachining](#)



First Steps, after Millet, by Vincent van Gogh, 1890

Unmachining Toolbox

If you are a recent subscriber (or if you have not dug into the archive), we hope that you will find encouragement and practical guidance in these posts:

How can you arrange your home so that humans have precedence over technology?

[Beyond Digital Detox: How to Make a Home for Humans](#)

How can we guide our children and teenagers to remain “captains of their souls”?

[Charting the Course for Family Tech Use](#)

How can we make use of change catalysts to remove roadblocks to changing minds and habits?

[A Hostage Negotiator's Guide to Cognitive Liberty](#)

How can you get started on moving toward ‘digital minimalism’?

[From Feeding Moloch to 'Digital Minimalism'](#)

For more on social skills, see David Brooks’s [NYT article](#), which summarizes the gift of attention, accompaniment, the art of conversation, asking big questions, standing in other people’s standpoint, and other strategies and insights

Also see Brooks’s book [8 How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen](#).

We will continue to add to this *Unmachining Toolbox* and would love to hear from you about what Machine “antidotes” you use, what has worked, what remains a challenge, and what questions you would like us to address in future.

If you found this post helpful (or hopeful), please consider supporting our work by becoming a paid subscriber, or simply show your appreciation with a like, restack, or share.

¹See also Alex Berenson’s post: [Why are so many adults in rich countries refusing to have kids?](#)

²The Free Press recently ran an encouraging [quartet of parenting stories](#).

³The shrinking of families has an additional side-effect that James F. Richardson draws attention to in [this article](#): “As you reduce the average number of children in a family, the odds grow exponentially that any given child will grow up *without* a cross-sex sibling – *without access to platonic, behavioral learnings about the opposite sex from an age peer.*”

⁴Spencer Klavan talks about the disillusionment that many young people living alone face in [Working 9 to 5](#): “Because if housebound motherhood really was “a comfortable concentration camp,” as Betty Friedan [claimed](#) it was, then it should have been liberating to flee suburbia and enter the workforce. Instead, the granddaughters of second-wave feminism are trapped and isolated in shoebox apartments. Many of them are bitterly unhappy and can barely find the words to say why. “How do you have friends, like how do you have time to like, meet a guy?” This is not just a spoiled rant. It’s a cry from the heart.”

⁵In [Relationships are coevolutionary loops](#), Henrik Karlsson reflects back on the development of his relationship with his wife and making a home.

⁶[Cognitive Liberators of Substack](#), is a collection of posts from writers who shared their experience stepping away from digital tech and social media.

⁷We call it *faux reality* because “virtual” reality has the connotation that is somehow “almost” real and also in a sense carries the echo of virtuous, neither of which is true.

⁸We noted that Joel J Miller has Brooks’s book on his newly arrived “to read” pile, and hope that he will review it soon!