

Preface

Elke Scholz's *Loving Your Life* is a book that comes along only a few times in a lifetime. It is a direct, passionate but grounded and practical document, one that could change a lifestyle, that could indeed make a life worth living.

That is a tall order, but Scholz has put her whole life into this book... years of advocating on behalf of an arts experience for both young and old, working as a professional artist in her own right and providing both motivation and ongoing support to those who have come to her classes and workshops.

The words are paramount, but one finds in the visuals, page by page, the most compelling expression of a world of experience that has invaded and captured this author in the most compelling manner. A line, a curve, an image... all bring mind and emotion together and go beyond what mere words and phrases can convey.

It is not a book that should draw simply the established artists... it is for *every* person, particularly those who do not consider themselves to be "artistic." Scholz is one of those missionaries who believes there is an artistic centre in every man, woman and child... who believes that releasing that artistic spark is the secret to the concept of "abundant living." And this book is the most extraordinary journey that *every* person could take in seeking out that divine creative urge that lurks in the mind and body of each of us.

However, it is even a "must-read" for the individual who thinks that he or she already has explored that element of life experience, as *Loving Your Life* will bring order and clarity to the often chaotic understanding of the aspects of mind and emotion that give excitement and meaning to every day's experience. What more could a book do in this world of communications overload and the sea of trivia that poses as wisdom?

We live in a world that has been turned upside down. Violence and terrorism have taken over... the democracies have lost their way, believing that you can liberate people by killing them, that you can defeat the enemy by adopting the cruel and inhumane practices that have characterized "the enemy." And behind it all... the maintenance of an economic system that condemns the vast majority of the planet's citizens to poverty, hunger and disease.

Is *Loving Your Life* then but a form of self indulgence, a kind of escape into a quiet and orderly garden, the achievement of an inner peace that can come from exclusion of that ghastly world of unspeakable criminality, both individual and collective? Not at all... this book recognizes the basic truth that one must get one's own internal house in order before seeking to save the world. It is from a grounding of life skills that confidence to confront that negative social environment can come. Finding artistic integrity is the ultimate liberating experience. Scholz's focus is an empowering process.

Without preaching or psychological harassment, Scholz has provided a path whereby all can find loving relationships, powerful opportunities for self-fulfillment, and the strength to face the personal and social disruptions that bring distress and breakdown. And it is so simple. Finding artistic legitimacy is a strategy that connects each of us to the creative force that alone explains the infinite power of the universe. And Scholz has captured the day-by-day understandings, attitudes, practices and behaviors that make sense in this lifelong quest.

No small triumph for a modest book that contains in its pages the decades of experience of an artist and philosopher who has obviously overcome many obstacles through which to hone the truth she expresses.

Walter Pitman, O.C., O. Ont.

Walter Pitman is a former President, Ryerson University, Director, OISE and the OAC, and the author of Louis Applebaum: A Passion for Culture (Dundurn Press), and Learning the Arts in an Age of Uncertainty (AECO).

