

Beyond Survival

Part One: The Manifesto

“Give everyone a floor through reciprocal contribution and you will get a civilization where friends of virtue are prioritized and cherished over friends of utility.”

We have spent our lives surviving.

We have turned everything into a transaction because we had to. We traded our time for rent. We traded our dignity for a paycheck. We traded our love for security. We traded our esteem for status. We did not do this because we are selfish. We did it because we were afraid.

There are only two types of interactions in the world: transactional and relational.

Transactional is: I do this for you, you do that for me. If I give, I must know what I get back.

Relational is: I do this because we are in this together. Because I belong to you and you belong to me.

Right now, almost everything is transactional because it has to be. You cannot afford to be relational when you are worried about surviving today and tomorrow.

We believe people are good, with rare exceptions. People are only evil when they are forced to compete for survival, security, love, esteem, or self-actualization. If competition did not exist, only good would remain.

Aristotle knew this. He called it friends of utility versus friends of virtue. Friends of utility are useful to each other. When the usefulness ends, the friendship ends. Friends of virtue love each other for who they are. That friendship does not end when usefulness ends, because it was never about usefulness.

Most people cannot get past utility today because they need to be transactional to survive.

Maslow knew this too. When you are stuck on physiological and safety needs, you cannot focus on love, esteem, and self-actualization. Those upper levels are not luxuries. They are what makes life worth living. But they are impossible when survival anxiety dominates your mind.

So we propose a simple order:

Civilization exists first to secure survival through meaningful reciprocal contribution, so that liberty becomes genuinely attainable, opportunity remains available, and individuals are free to move from transactional survival to relational community and determine for themselves what makes life worth living.

We call that floor LMN, Least Minimal Necessity. Not luxury. Not equality. Not comfort. Just enough, as decided by each society based on its resources, geography, climate, and culture, to remove survival anxiety. A person should know: I will survive today. I will survive tomorrow.

When the floor comes, transactional leaves the building for a large portion of life. Trade remains, but you no longer have to trade love for security. You no longer have to trade dignity for shelter. What is left is relational. What is left is community again.

The floor has a price. Everyone capable must contribute something to receive the floor. Reciprocity is required without exception. Contributions don't have to be equal. But contributions must occur to ensure people earn what they receive. If you don't contribute, you don't enjoy the floor.

That will be scary. Most of us have only known artificial love and artificial esteem. Artificial love has rules: do X, get love. Artificial esteem has rules: achieve X, get respect. Real love has no rules: I love you because you are you. Real esteem has no ranking: I respect you because your contribution was meaningful.

When we experience the real versions for the first time, we will be terrified. We will not know how to receive love that we do not have to earn. But once we do, we will not want to go back.

This is not my idea. This is Aristotle, Maslow, Mill, and the social contract, put together. I am just putting them all together in the right order and adding the one piece they were missing: the Floor.

We are not proposing utopia. Competition will not disappear. When survival and security become less of a concern, competition for love, esteem, and self-actualization will become more intense. That is the next work. To make love and esteem non-competitive. To make them relational, not transactional.

That is Beyond Survival. Not survival as the end. Survival as the beginning.

Part Two: The Full Philosophy

This attempts to separate:

- Foundational Axioms (must be true first)
- Derived Principles (flow logically from axioms)
- Civilizational Requirements (what civilization must build)
- Government Functions (how civilization operates)
- Individual Realm (what belongs to the individual)

LAYER I: FOUNDATIONAL AXIOMS

Axiom 0: Human Nature

People are good, with rare pathological exceptions, such as Jeffrey Dahmer. Evil is not a trait. Evil is a response to being forced to compete for survival, security, love, esteem, or self-actualization.

If competition did not exist, only good would remain. Competition will not disappear after survival is secure. Competition for love, esteem, and self-actualization will become more intense when survival and security are less of a concern. That is why relational community is required, not just the Floor.

Axiom 1: Survival

Life is the prerequisite for all human values.

Without survival there can be no: liberty, meaning, opportunity, relationships, achievement, happiness, purpose.

Everything begins with survival.

Axiom 2: Mutual Survival

Humans survive through cooperation better than isolation.

Because individual survival depends upon collective survival: humans owe obligations to themselves, humans owe obligations to the community that sustains them.

A civilization that abandons mutual survival eventually collapses.

Axiom 3: Liberty

Liberty is an intrinsic good.

Liberty is not merely useful. Liberty is itself one of the outcomes civilization should protect.

A person should possess the freedom to direct their own life.

Axiom 4: Harm

No person's exercise of liberty may unnecessarily obstruct another person's exercise of liberty.

This is the Mill axiom. It becomes the primary limit on freedom.

LAYER II: DERIVED PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Civilization Exists To Guarantee Survival

If life is prerequisite to all values and cooperation increases survival, then civilization's first purpose is: Secure survival.

Not prosperity. Not growth. Not productivity. Not property. Survival.

Principle 2: Membership Requires Contribution

Because survival depends upon cooperation: Every capable member must contribute. Contribution is the obligation of membership.

Principle 3: Contribution Must Be Meaningful

Contribution: need not be equal, need not be enjoyable, need not be economic, need not align with personal ambition.

Contribution must simply be meaningful to sustaining civilization.

Examples: food production, teaching, caregiving, maintenance, healthcare, administration, infrastructure, community service, and other recognized contributions.

Principle 4: Capability Creates Obligation

The obligation arises only when capability exists.

Therefore: Exempt: children, many elderly, severely disabled, temporarily incapacitated. Obligated: People capable of contributing.

The distinction is not successful vs unsuccessful. The distinction is capable vs incapable.

Principle 5: Refusal Ends Membership

A capable person who refuses all meaningful contribution rejects the social contract.

The floor is a benefit of membership. The floor is not a universal entitlement.

The philosophy therefore asserts: Rights and obligations are reciprocal.

How a society handles refusal is up to that society. It may allow a person who does not contribute to stay, to be forced, or to leave. Each society is different.

LAYER III: THE FLOOR

Principle 6: The Floor (LMN)

Civilization establishes a floor called: LMN, Least Minimal Necessity.

LMN exists to eliminate survival anxiety.

The exact implementation may vary. The existence of the floor may not.

Necessary is what the civ decides removes anxiety, nothing more. Each society decides the point where survival anxiety no longer exists. It will be different for all based on resource availability, geography and climate, and cultural norms.

Purpose of LMN

NOT: equality, luxury, comfort, prosperity

Instead: Survival security. A person should know: I will survive today. I will survive tomorrow.

Components of LMN

Currently defined as: food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, education, utilities. Future societies may refine implementation.

Principle 7: Contribution Sustains the Floor

The Floor does not exist independently.

Contribution sustains LMN. LMN guarantees Survival.

LAYER IV: LIBERTY

Principle 8: Liberty Requires Survival

This may be the most distinctive proposition in the doctrine.

The philosophy rejects: Liberty first. Instead: Survival first. Liberty second.

Reason: A person dominated by survival anxiety is not genuinely free.

Liberty without survival security is theoretical. Liberty after survival security is real.

Principle 9: Liberty Is An End In Itself

Liberty is not merely a tool. Liberty is one of civilization's purposes. Civilization exists partly to protect the individual's right to self-direction.

LAYER V: OPPORTUNITY

Principle 10: Liberty Requires Opportunity

People must have pathways available.

Opportunity means: access to learning, skill acquisition, mobility, experimentation, adaptation, reinvention without catastrophic consequences.

Principle 11: Rational Hope

Hope is no longer an axiom. Hope is now an outcome.

When survival exists, liberty exists, opportunity exists, people can rationally believe meaningful futures remain available.

This creates: Rational Hope

LAYER VI: RELATIONAL LIFE AND THE MASLOW TRANSITION

The Floor secures Maslow's first two levels: Physiological and Safety. That allows people to really focus on the upper levels for the first time at scale: Love and Belonging, Esteem, Self-Actualization.

Principle 12: There Are Only Two Types of Interactions

Transactional and Relational.

Transactional: I do this for you, you do that for me. Conditional. Measured. If I give, I must know what I get back. This is required when survival is insecure.

Relational: I do this because we are in this together. Because I belong to you and you belong to me. Not measured. Not conditional. This becomes possible when survival is secure.

Right now, almost everything is transactional because it has to be. When the Floor comes, transactional leaves the building for a large portion of life. Trade and markets remain, but love, dignity, time, and belonging no longer have to be traded for survival.

Principle 13: Aristotle's Friends of Utility vs Friends of Virtue

This is Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics applied to the Floor.

Aristotle distinguished: Friends of utility: I am useful to you, you are useful to me. Lasts as long as usefulness lasts. This is transactional. Friends of pleasure: We enjoy each other. Friends of virtue, or character: I love you because of who you are, not what you do for me. This is relational. It does not dissolve when usefulness ends because it was never about usefulness.

Aristotle believed virtue friendship requires time, trust, and that the people involved are already good and self-sufficient. You cannot have it if you are scrambling for survival, because you will turn the other person into a tool for survival.

Most people cannot get past utility today because they need to be transactional to survive. They are not selfish. They are insecure.

When the Floor provides self-sufficiency in the sense of security, not wealth, people can move from utility friendship to virtue friendship. From transactional to relational. From network to community.

Principle 14: Real Love and Esteem Will Be Terrifying

Most people have only experienced artificial love and artificial esteem.

Artificial love: I love you because you provide, because you are useful, because you make me safe. There are rules. Do X, get love. Fail X, lose love.

Artificial esteem: I respect you because you have the title, the money, the status. There are rules. Achieve X, get respect. Lose X, lose respect.

Real love: I love you because you are you. Not because you earn it. You do not have to perform it.

Real esteem: I respect you because your contribution is meaningful. Not because you have the most. Because what you did mattered, in its own way.

People will be scared when they experience the real versions for the first time, because they have spent their whole lives performing to be loved and accumulating to be esteemed. Real love and esteem have no scoreboard. They require vulnerability without a guarantee. They require being seen without survival armor.

The Floor removes survival anxiety. It does not remove love anxiety or esteem anxiety. It reveals them. That fear is the transition between Opportunity and Self-Directed Living.

Principle 15: Community Returns

When transactional leaves for a large portion of life, change is inevitable. We become more about community again.

A community built on friends of utility is a network, a market, a set of transactions. A community built on friends of virtue is a community: people who share values and are there for each other because of who they are, not what they can do.

Contribution becomes the first relational act. You contribute not because you are paid to, but because you are a member of the civ that sustains you.

Once people experience a relational interaction that is real, they will not want to return to a world where every interaction is a contract.

LAYER VII: SELF-DIRECTED LIVING

Principle 16: Meaning Belongs To The Individual

Government does not determine purpose. Society does not determine purpose. Markets do not determine purpose. The individual determines purpose.

Principle 17: Self-Directed Pursuit

After fulfilling contribution obligations: The remainder of life belongs to the individual.

People are free to pursue: wealth, family, faith, art, science, philosophy, service, leisure, adventure, simplicity, or anything else.

Principle 18: Outcomes Belong To The Individual

Civilization does not rank outcomes.

Property is a valid outcome. A family-centered life is a valid outcome. A scholarly life is a valid outcome. A simple life is a valid outcome. The individual owns the outcome.

Supply and demand post survival is not addressed by this philosophy. It is part of self-directed living. Once survival is secure, individuals and societies choose how to handle scarcity, markets, and trade.

LAYER VIII: GOVERNMENT

Principle 19: Government's Legitimate Purposes

Government exists to: Maintain the floor. Protect liberty. Preserve opportunity. Prevent harm.

Principle 20: Government As Coach

Government is: coach, mentor, guide, protector, educator, cheerleader.

Government may: advise, train, educate, incentivize, identify societal needs.

Government may not: assign meaning, choose purposes, dictate lifestyles, direct lives.

Government as coach now includes a new role: to guide people through the fear of real love and real esteem, and through the intensified competition for love, esteem, and self-actualization that will follow survival security. To say it is okay to be scared when love is no longer transactional. To help people learn how to receive relational life after a lifetime of transactional survival.

Principle 21: Government Does Not Choose Destinations

Government helps people find paths. Government never chooses where those paths lead.

LAYER IX: MILL'S GUARDRAIL

Principle 22: Maximize Opportunity, Minimize Harm

Beyond maintaining the floor: Government should seek Maximum opportunity, Minimum harm.

No person's chosen path may unnecessarily obstruct another person's chosen path.

THE COMPLETE CHAIN

Survival ↓ Mutual Survival ↓ Meaningful Contribution ↓ LMN Floor ↓ Secure Survival ↓ Liberty ↓ Opportunity ↓ Rational Hope ↓ Transactional to Relational ↓ Community ↓ Self-Directed Pursuit ↓ Individual Outcomes

In Maslow terms: Physiological and Safety secured by the Floor, then Love, Esteem, and Self-Actualization become possible for all members, not just the elite.

Current One-Sentence Thesis

Civilization exists to secure survival through meaningful reciprocal contribution so that liberty becomes genuinely attainable, opportunity remains available, and individuals are free to move from transactional survival to relational community and determine for themselves what makes life worth living.

These ideas are not new in their pieces. They are Aristotle, Maslow, Mill, and the social contract, combined. The new piece is the order and the Floor that makes the combination possible for everyone.