

# GLOBAL BIOETHICS

*Building on the Leopold Legacy*

by

Van Rensselaer Potter

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## Appendix 2

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### A BIOETHICAL CREED FOR INDIVIDUALS

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**1. *Belief:***

I accept the need for prompt remedial action in a world beset with environmental and religious crises.

***Commitment:***

I will work with others to improve the formulation of my beliefs, to evolve additional credos, and to seek a worldwide movement that will make possible the survival and improved development of the human species in harmony with the natural environment and with fellow humans.

**2. *Belief:***

I accept the fact that the future survival and development of humankind, both culturally and biologically, is strongly conditioned by present activities and plans that affect the biotic environment.

***Commitment:***

I will try to adopt a life-style and to influence the life-style of others so as to promote the evolution of a better world for future generations of the human species, and I will try to avoid actions that would jeopardize their future by ignoring the role of the natural environment in food and fiber production.

**3. Belief:**

I accept the uniqueness of each individual and his or her instinctive need to contribute to the betterment of some larger unit of society in a way that is compatible with the long-range needs of society.

**Commitment:**

I will try to listen to the reasoned viewpoint of others whether from a minority or a majority, and I will recognize the role of emotional commitment in producing effective action.

**4. Belief:**

I accept the inevitability of some human suffering that must result from the natural disorder in biological creatures and in the physical world, but I do not passively accept the suffering that results from inhumane treatment of individual persons or groups.

**Commitment:**

I will try to face my own problems with dignity and courage, I will try to assist others when they are afflicted, and I will work toward the goal of eliminating needless suffering among humankind as a whole.

**5. Belief:**

I accept the finality of death as a necessary part of life. I affirm my veneration for life, my belief in the need for brotherhood now, and my belief that I have an obligation to future generations of the human species.

**Commitment:**

I will try to live in a way that will benefit the lives of my fellow humans now and in time to come and that will be remembered favorably by those who survive me.

**6. Belief:**

I believe that society will collapse if the ecosystem becomes irreparably damaged and unless human fertility is brought under worldwide control, given the concomitant increase in the competence of its members for understanding and maintaining human health.

**Commitment:**

I will try to master a skill or a professional talent that will contribute to the survival and improvement of society and to the maintenance of a healthy ecosystem. I will try to assist others in the development of their potential talents while at the same time maintaining my sense of self-caring, self-esteem, and individual worth.

**7. Belief:**

I believe that each adult person has a personal responsibility for his or her own health as well as a responsibility for the development of this aspect of personhood in any offspring that may be produced.

**Commitment:**

I will endeavor to carry out the eight obligations described as a Bioethical Commitment for Person and Family Health. I will limit my own reproductive powers in accordance with national and international goals.

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**bi-o-eth-ics** (bī'ō-ěth'iks) *n.*

*(used with a sing. or pl. verb)*

Biology combined with diverse humanistic knowledge forging a science that sets a system of medical and environmental priorities for acceptable survival.

by

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