



## The Diary

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By Eleanor Rodgerson, MD

"A NEW BOOK, A NEW PAGE, A NEW YEAR" - begins a diary found in the bottom of a drawer on a cleaning day. It was written in 1973 and, as with many such diaries, this one began with resolution and petered out after a few months. While it was active, however, it told of the happenings in a home and added a bit of philosophy.

Why write a diary?

Perhaps to preserve a golden moment?

Perhaps to excuse an embarrassing event?

Perhaps to express a longing to share a thought?

I'm told that teenage women seem particularly prone to confess their secrets to diary pages and adult men and women simply crave a remembrance. Of course, there are those who simply record events for posterity's use.

This particular diary turned to income taxes and pointed out that it was proper for a certain percentage of net income to go for taxes and the more money made, the more should be paid for taxes. It added explanations of deductions and how there might be punishments if taxes went unpaid.

At the time, the diary noted that the whole atmosphere around the dinner table changed when the tax subject was brought up. There was an almost palpable tenseness in the family.

The diarist commented, "For peace of mind, why don't we think about the reasons for our taxes. They are running the kind of democratic government we want, aren't they? They are protecting our way of life, don't you think? Aren't they holding off the Communist (substitute 'terrorist') threat? And aren't they helping our prosperity?"

"We needn't hypnotize ourselves with happiness over our taxes - we must watch for abuse and waste - but we can keep up our spirits by remembering we are not throwing away chunks of income, lost forever, but are paying for a continuation of the American way of life. Who knows, we may add a few years to our own lives."

Taxes have been with us always. They supported pre-historic leaders, armies, governments, sometimes for the good of all, sometimes not. There have been riots against taxes and modifications resulting.

They always come back. They seem to be the only way a government can provide a people with what they demand. It's the people's money.

Then the diary took on the current doctor cases in court and asked, "If defendants in courts complain of jury biases when no Mexicans are put on them in Mexican defendant

cases, no Afro-Americans in Afro-American cases, why not require doctors on juries that judge doctors?"

And further, "Since the cost of living is going up, consumers are to the fore. It's a consumer's market and they are saying what should be charged and, even in Medicine, what should be done."

Before this diary petered out, it told about how everyone was busy. Running, running, running.

It asked, wouldn't retirement be more rewarding - a day to view the daffodils, a tour of a museum, a trip to Monterey? "The trouble with keeping a diary is that it requires time."

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