

Individual vs Communal - Auel

At times and under certain conditions individuals can be nearly autonomous. An individual can live alone and have no worry about rank, but no species can survive without interaction between individuals. The ultimate price would be more final than death. It would be extinction. On the other hand, complete individual subordination to the group is just as devastating. Life is neither static nor unchanging. With no individuality, there can be no change, no adaptation and, in an inherently changing world, any species unable to adapt is also doomed.

Humans in a community, whether it is as small as two people or as large as the world, and no matter what form the society takes, will arrange themselves according to some hierarchy. Commonly understood courtesies and customs can help to smooth the friction and ease the stress of maintaining a workable balance within this constantly changing system. In some situations most individuals will not have to compromise much of their personal independence for the welfare of the community. In others, the needs of the community may demand the utmost personal sacrifice of the individual, even to life itself. Neither is more right than the other, it depends on the circumstances, but neither extreme can be maintained for long, nor can a society last if a few people exercise their individuality at the expense of the community.

Auel, J. M. (1985). *The Mammoth Hunters*, (p 375). London: Guild Publishing

[Jean Auel has written a series of novels known as "[Earth's Children](#)" about the way early European humans may have existed and made discoveries about their level of intelligence, their skills and where they came from. The books (of which there are five) follow the adventures of the girl "Ayla". If you are interested in early human history I strongly recommend these books. The first book in the series is "The Clan of the Cave Bear".] - Brian