

## **Ten Wise Principles**

Ten Wise Principles are observations from society and cultures worldwide, throughout the ages of time. When applied, they enable society to function smoothly, both in areas of civic responsibility and in family life.

1. Accept authority.
2. Honor others first.
3. Fulfill your commitments.
4. Balance work with rest.
5. Respect age and experience.
6. Value all human life.
7. Provide for your family.
8. Honor the property of others.
9. Be truthful.
10. Be satisfied with what you have.

The format and discussion questions have been written and arranged by Jane Fox.

## Principle 1

### Accept Authority

To accept authority means to give in to or submit. Submission is usually done in regard to a person who is superior in position or authority.

*She submitted to the boss's request to hire the applicant.*

Authority is referring to people who have power to enforce laws or decisions that affect others. It could be a group of people such as a government or an individual such as a boss.

*Land titles are issued by the civil authority.*

Submission is also given to a person who has greater expertise or knowledge.

*He will submit to his doctor's wishes.*

### Discussion Questions

1. Pick an authority figure and describe how you submit to them.
2. Make a chart that shows the flow of authority in your workplace or school. What happens when someone refuses to submit
3. If you are the one making the rules, do you also have to submit to the rules?
4. Is there ever a time when you should not obey the authorities? Give an example and tell what the consequence might be.

### Example

David had a reputation for being honorable and honest. His boss liked him. He was a hard worker and very loyal to his company. One day his boss asked him to do something that would help the company but cause him to lose respect for himself. David had to make a decision, agree to his boss's request or, follow his principles. David and his wife have a child and they have just purchased a home.

What are the conflicting issues facing David?

What would you suggest David do?

### Famous Quotes about Respect

Read the following quotes and explain the meaning. Tell whether you think the quote is true/false and why.

"Without feelings of respect, what is there to distinguish men from beasts?" Confucius

"Man does not live by bread alone. Many prefer self-respect to food." Mahatma Gandhi

## Principle 2

### Honor Others First

Do not pursue gain for yourself exclusively. Consider the needs and perspective of others. Think about how your actions and attitudes affect others for good or evil.

#### Discussion Questions

1. What is the attitude of a person who serves others? Name some character qualities.
2. Give an example of someone in your culture who has served others.
3. What happens to our community when people only serve themselves?
4. How can we serve others right where we are: at workplace, in civic life, on the street, at home?
5. What sacrifices are involved in serving others?

#### Example Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa dedicated her life to caring for the poor, sick, orphaned, and dying. She became famous worldwide for starting the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, India. In 1979 she won the Nobel Peace Prize for her humanitarian work.

Mother Teresa was born in Albania in 1910. She became a nun at 18 and went to India to teach daughters of the wealthy. After leaving that position to work in the slums, she started the Missionaries of Charity with the help of volunteers. The purpose was to care for the unloved and unwanted people of society and give them dignity. The Mission started with 13 nuns and now has over 4,500 nuns running orphanages, AIDS hospices, and charity centers in 133 countries. When she received the Nobel Peace Prize she was asked, "What can we do to promote world peace? She answered, "Go home and love your family." She continued her work with the poor for the rest of her life. She died on September 5, 1997. According to an international survey, Mother Teresa is the "most admired person of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

What do you think of Mother Teresa's advice on how to promote world peace?

How can you serve others?

## Principle 3

### Fulfill Your Commitments

The word, “commitment,” is used several ways in English. For the purpose of our discussion, we will look at 1 definition.

An agreement or pledge to do something in the future. “The Uncle is committed to sending his niece to college.”

List some of the commitments we make:

Formal and informal

Personal and public

Why do we sometimes fail to keep commitments? Give some examples.

What is the result of broken commitments?

Financially

In Relationships

Emotionally, personally

What can you do to improve your commitment keeping?

The word, trust, is how we feel about someone who keeps his or her commitments.

Who do you trust?

Why do you trust that person or organization?

Here are two ways we commonly use the word trust. See if you can use these phrases in your own sentence.

**trust someone or something to someone-** to leave someone or something in the possession of someone whom you assume will take good care of someone or something.

*I am perfectly comfortable trusting this money to you.*

**not trust somebody an inch-** to not trust someone at all

*He's charming enough but I wouldn't trust him an inch.*

Keeping your word is basically the core of **integrity (honesty, sincerity)**. It is **essential (absolutely necessary)** to leadership and without it there is no way a person can be an effective leader.

Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

## Principle 4

### Balance Work with Rest

To achieve health and wholeness, one must consider all aspects of human need and potential.

1. As you read the following list, name the needs people experience in each area. Also, talk about how people meet these needs.
  - a. Intellectual
  - b. Physical
  - c. Emotional
  - d. Spiritual
2. Balance in these areas suggests that we give attention to each area on a regular basis. Neglect of any one of these areas leads to illness in one form or another. Look at the list again and name how neglect leads to harmful results. What are some warning signs that our lives are out of balance?
3. Studies in brain function name rest, namely sleep, as essential to optimal health. How much sleep do you feel you need each night? What happens when you do not get the sleep you need?
4. What part does rest and relaxation play in your daily life? What kinds of activities refresh you?
5. What are some other ways you deal with stress?
6. What changes do you need to make in your daily and weekly routine?

## Principle 5

### Respect Age and Experience

Show gratitude for what you have received from others and honor those who contribute to your life. This results in wisdom, peace, and continuity (connection) for the individual and society.

#### Discussion Questions

1. List ways that older people have contributed to your life.
2. Explain how you show honor to the following list of people. Also explain what is difficult about showing honor to them;
  - a. Parents
  - b. Grandparents
  - c. Teachers
  - d. Relatives
  - e. Other
3. Is age and experience honored in the workplace? Describe in how it is or is not honored. Do you think the practice of showing honor is eroding in today's cultures?
4. How can you honor those who have contributed to your life?

#### Quotes and Slang

"The error of youth is to believe that intelligence is a substitute for experience, while the error of age is to believe experience is a substitute for intelligence." Lyman Bryson (1888-1959, American educator and media advisor)

What do you think this quotation means?

Do you think it is true? Why or why not?

*Ripe old age*- meaning very old

Mr. Smith died last night, but he lived to a ripe old age—99. All the Smiths seem to reach a ripe old age.

## Principle 6

### Value All Human Life

People of every race, gender, age, social or economic standing deserve equal value.

1. Where does personal worth or value come from in your culture? For example, in some cultures, honor is inherited from the family you were born to or your ability to make money. Some professions are considered more honorable than others.
2. How do we treat those we consider worthier differently from others, in the workplace, at school, in neighborhoods?
3. Do you think personal value should be based on our ability to contribute to society? Why or why not?

### Quotes

Dag Hammarskjold, 1905-1961 said, "'Freedom from fear' could be said to sum up the whole philosophy of human rights." Do you think this is true? Why or why not? Who has the most reason to fear in society?

Henri-Frederic Amiel said, "Liberty, equality- bad principles! The only true principle for humanity is justice; and justice to the feeble is protection and kindness."

Why do you think Amiel said that liberty and equality were bad principles?

### Further Thoughts

1. Vulnerable means to be easily open to hurt, emotionally or physically. What kinds of people are the most vulnerable, subject to abuse, in society?
2. Do you think we have an obligation to protect them? How do we protect them?

## Principle 7

### Provide for Your Family

Loyalty in the marriage is important for the family.

1. Define "family."
2. Does your definition differ from attitudes 10, 50, 100 years ago? If so, how?

### Marriage

*A great marriage is not when the 'perfect couple' comes together. It is when an imperfect couple learns to enjoy their differences.* Dave Meurer

1. How would you define a great marriage?
2. What kinds of pressures cause marriage to erode? For example, pressures from the job, temptations on the job, erosion (wearing away) of morals in society, or something else?
3. Describe what happens to the marriage relationship when one partner has an affair? How does it affect children?
4. In your opinion, what are the most common reasons for divorce?

### Children

5. In what way do parents protect children? How long do children remain under the protection of their parents?

### Finding a Spouse

6. What qualities should one look for in a marriage partner?
7. How do people go about finding a husband or wife? What system do you think is ideal?
8. Do you think a couple should live together before they marry? Why or why not?

What are some steps you can take to honor your family?

## Principle 8

### Honor the Property of Others

**Do not steal, trespass, or vandalize another person's property. Do not deny privacy.**

"Honesty pays, but it doesn't seem to pay enough to suit some people." Kin Hubbard

1. Has anyone ever stolen something from you? How did you feel afterwards?
2. In what ways do we steal from our employers?
3. In what ways do employers steal from employees?
4. How can things like privacy be stolen?
5. How does theft damage society?
6. What about someone stealing credit for work you have done? Has this happened to you? What can be done about this?
7. Is it ever right to steal?

#### Example

Lynn arrives 15 minutes late to work most days. She likes to take a longer lunch. Often times she says she has some family difficulty, so she must leave early. She doesn't share the workload for the group project. Her salary is the same as her co-workers. Lynn's co-workers are frustrated. The boss is not aware this is happening because the group completes the project on time.

What would you do if you were a part of this group?

#### Idioms

Read the idiom, the definition, and example.

**Steal someone's heart**- to capture someone's affection. *When I first met him, I knew he would steal my heart. And he did!*

**Steal someone's thunder**- to announce something before another person has a chance. *He stole my thunder by announcing our change of plans before I had a chance.*

**Steal the spotlight**- to gain attention away from someone and for oneself. *The children's choir stole the spotlight from the adults.*

## Principle 9

### Be Truthful

**Truthfulness or honesty results in mutual trust, respect and the ability to get along together.**

Read the following quotes. Discuss their meanings and your opinion about them.

*Honest people don't hide their deeds.* Emily Bronte

*He who is not very strong in memory should not meddle with lying.* Michel de Montaigne

#### Discussion Questions

1. What might keep a person from being truthful?
2. Is it ever appropriate to lie? When?
3. How do you feel when a boss or a friend has not told you the truth? Give an example.
4. What is bribery?
5. Where does bribery take place? What effect does it have on your society?
6. What can be done about it?

#### Quote

Recently Warren Buffet said, "I cannot tell you that honesty is the best policy, I cannot tell you that if you behave with perfect honesty and integrity somebody somewhere won't behave the other way and make more money. But honest is a good policy, you'll do fine, you'll sleep at night and you'll feel good about the example you are setting for your coworkers and the other people who care about you."

What do you think of the Warren Buffet quote?

## Principle 10

### Be Satisfied with What You Have

Satisfied, means to be content with what you have.

“Keep a green tree in your heart and perhaps a singing bird will come.” Chinese proverb

1. What is the advantage to being satisfied with what you have?
2. Is it possible to have much and not be content? Why or why not?
3. Can a poor person be content? Explain.
4. Greed and envy are the opposite of contentment. What are some things we become greedy for besides material possessions?
5. Is it possible to be ambitious and content at the same time? Can you give an example?
6. List what you are grateful for.
7. Explain what happens when we compare ourselves to others. How does this contribute or take away from our contentment?

### Famous Quote by Garrison Keillor

*Some luck lies in not getting what you thought you wanted, but getting what you have, which once you have got it, you may be smart enough to see it is what you would have wanted had you known.*

1. What do you think this quote means?
2. Can you give an example in your life, or that of someone you have observed, of how this might be true?