

Chapter 1

Philosophies That Drive You



*Ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things.
Success simply requires a commitment to see something
through to its end.*

—ANN EL-MOSLIMANY

In this chapter, our contributors describe the life philosophies that have driven them and their actions the most and have helped define who they choose to be. In other words, they describe the underlying principles or motivators that they follow as they live their lives each day. Reading through their responses to these questions, several recurring themes emerge: Our contributors focus on behaviors related to self, relationships, choices, and lifestyle.

The behaviors related to self help define a set of values, which, in turn, help us define our character—who we choose to be. Love and

respect yourself, live in the present, and resist spending too much time analyzing and too little time taking action. Remember to be humble, demonstrate integrity, surround yourself with positive people, and take pride in who you choose to be. Control your attitude. Resist peer pressure and be your authentic self. Recover from mistakes and move on. Respond to untruths maturely, avoid anger, maintain a sense of humor, and look for the good in every situation. Finally, deliberately learn and grow from each day's lessons.

On the theme of relationships, we are advised to foster meaningful relationships, be mindful of the power of words, and universally accept and love others. Don't underestimate the little things. Judge others by their actions, and build relationships from common ground. Seek out what is unique and special in every person. Graciously accept help, reach out for advice when necessary, believe in the people around you, and savor your friendships.

Another theme covers the choices we have in our lives and the assertion that we have far more control over our destiny than many people believe. Your decisions define your life. To fulfill your potential, you must be persistent in achieving whatever is most important to you. Be mindful of the consequences of your actions. Don't blame others or the System for your problems. You can turn lemons into lemonade, and you can simply choose to enjoy your life's journey.

On lifestyle, our contributors cover a wide range of subtopics, including the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance, living within your means, living a full-throttle life, staying physically fit, taking advantage of educational opportunities, being a minimalist, giving to others, and constantly renewing your spirituality, relationships, healthy habits, and thinking.

Some of the themes touched upon in this chapter are addressed in full chapters on the subjects later in the book. The passages appearing in this chapter reflect our contributors' base philosophies, which make up a fundamental part of how they think and act.

* * * * *

Make Family a Top Priority

A regret I had over many years of my working life was that, although my family was important to me, they were not a priority. Once I began treating my family as a priority, I became much happier and more fulfilled. Your family is forever. At my age today, the really important people in my life are in my family. As much as I enjoyed the people I worked with over the years—and I still connect with a lot of them—I just don't make them the same kind of priority that I do my family. If you don't ensure early on that family is given top priority in your life and that your family recognizes their importance to you by your actions, you may find that you and your family will have a hard time making changes to raise that priority level for each other later in life.

PAT MCCARTY

Do the Right Thing

A philosophy that drives me is doing the right thing. You know you are doing the right thing when you feel it in your very soul. It may be letting a car that's been waiting drive ahead of you, giving your seat up to an elderly person, or comforting someone who's confused walking through an airport. Doing these things helps me feel whole, connected, and fulfilled.

JENNY LIND BERRY

Love Yourself

Many people do not love themselves as much as they should. What they think about themselves is reflected in the way they appear, the messages that they transmit, and the way they perform at work and in life. Love yourself and be the person you want to be—especially if you expect others to love you.

HILDA O. BYRD

Take a Humble View

We are each *a part* of this world, not the center of this world. By taking a more humble view, we are better able to be in harmony with all life and wonderment around us. We also are better stewards in helping protect, preserve, and appreciate that to which we have been entrusted.

ELIU CAMACHO

Count Your Blessings

Develop an attitude of gratitude for whatever comes your way. Be grateful for what you have instead of bitter and resentful about what you don't have. Count your blessings each and every day, and be thankful that you are here to see the sun come up.

HAZEL LOWE

Make Careful Decisions

Life is pretty much what you make of it. You are mostly in control, and you are constantly making decisions about what to do or not to do. Each decision takes you in a certain direction. Your life becomes a sum of the decisions you have chosen to make.

SANDRA HARGSEN

Look Forward

Don't live your life looking in the rear-view mirror. When you make a mistake—big or small—don't sit there and kick yourself forever. Do what you need to do to recover, learn from it, and move on.

PAT MCCARTY

Stand Tall

Stand tall and meet life as it comes. When faced with a problem, don't stop and question whether you have the courage to deal with it. Don't dwell on all the reasons why the task at hand will be difficult. Instead, focus on dealing with the problem head on—just deal with it. Resist spending too much time analyzing and too little time taking action. Dealing immediately and resolutely with issues prevents them from festering and becoming much bigger problems later on.

MARTIN (MARK) CASEY

Control Your Own Life

Don't worry about what other people think of you. Follow your principles and do your thing. If someone else approves of your choices, fine; if somebody else does not, so what? Of course, you can learn and grow from the lessons that other people teach you, so you should always be aware of and consider other people's perspectives and suggestions with regards to your life and the choices you make. But what other people think of you should never be more important to you than what you think of yourself. If you do rely on others' opinions of you as a way of understanding yourself and approving the way you conduct your life, then you are simply allowing those people to control you. Why would

you want someone else to control your life when you have the choice to control it yourself?

OLIVER BANCROFT

Be a Trusted Confidant

Don't kiss and tell. Don't gossip. Learn to keep confidences. When someone shares something with you, don't pass that information along to others. Earn the noble and respected reputation of being a trustworthy friend, a trusted confidant.

ROYCE BREEDLOVE

Continuously Improve

A great sense of accomplishment and pride comes from completing a project that is flawless. I build furniture as a hobby. When I first started, my woodworking projects turned out just fair. I knew where the flaws were. I wasn't sure whether others would notice, but those flaws would just glare at me. I vowed to improve my skills with each and every project. I'm not quite there yet, but I delight in the improvement process. I haven't made the same mistake twice, and someday I plan to give a piece of my own perfectly hand-crafted furniture to each of my children and grandchildren.

PHIL ZEISS

Minimize

My husband is a minimalist. He is an engineer by profession, and function is much more important to him than form. I adopted his minimalist philosophy over time and have found that its influence in our lack of materialism is particularly valuable—especially during weak economies. We buy mostly what has functional purpose

and avoid impulsively buying things that we would rarely use or that wouldn't add value to our lives. We have always lived conservatively and within our means. We could afford to spend more money but don't because we don't need to. The more you own the more time you spend worrying about and taking care of what you own. Having fewer things can relieve a lot of stress.

VAL SCHEMITT

Enjoy Your Journey

You have this one life. It's very short and you go through it fast. Enjoy your journey.

BOBBIE CASEY

Give Hope and Encouragement

I had a teacher in high school who told me that I was not college material. His discouragement stung deeply. Although I likely would have gone on to college in any case, his discouragement pushed me harder to succeed. I was determined to prove him wrong. After I graduated from college and earned my teaching degree, I went back to see him at the high school, and I reminded him of what he had once said to me. My achievements surprised him.

I have always believed that a teacher's job is to inspire his or her students to be the best they can be, not to slot them at a lower level of achievement, which might serve only to cause those students to live out some lesser self-fulfilling prophecy. As a teacher, I was determined to never put down a student and take away their dreams and hope.

VALERIA BEGAY

Help the Less Fortunate

I believe that I have had a better education and am better off financially than most people in the world. For this I feel blessed and am thankful. Therefore, it is my duty to help others who are less fortunate. Those who can need to help those who cannot.

DR. YUNG-CHEN LU

Turn Lemons into Lemonade

People often tell me how quick I am to smile and laugh and feel happy. They sense that I feel good about myself. I developed these traits over time, but I've always had the attitude that you can turn lemons into lemonade. For example, as an only child, I did feel lonely at times, but my strategy was to adopt my friends' siblings as my own. This gave me the best of both worlds: I could have individual attention as an only child and also the grand camaraderie and fun that are possible with a big family.

HAZEL LOWE

Never Take "No" for the Final Answer

If you really want something, don't accept anything less; instead, work harder for it. Here is but one example from my work life: I was a manager at a large company, and I wanted to be transferred into the company's consulting unit, which required considerably different knowledge and skills than what I used in my traditional management position at the time. My application was rejected. I believed that they were making a big mistake, and I built a case for that claim. They finally did hire me in the consulting unit, but they cut my paycheck, too. In six months they restored my former

pay and provided yet another opportunity for my career to take a different direction. “No” is the final answer only when you accept it to be.

SANDRA HARRSEN

Surround Yourself with Positive People

Negative people will almost always be present in your life because that’s just the way life is. But make an effort to surround yourself and maximize your time with positive people. Positive people help lift you even in bad moments; they make your life brighter and happier.

PAT MCCARTY

Live a Full-Throttle Life

Given the option to live an exciting life of 40 years or a mediocre life of 80 years, I would easily choose the more exciting life of 40 years. I would rather live a shorter, more exciting life, pushing my limits and partaking in adventures, than a longer, highly conservative life. The shorter, more exciting life represents who I am and what I believe in. I am not referring to a life of excess alcohol, drugs, gambling, and other such things. I am talking about having passion for everything I do—giving 110 percent to learning, doing, caring, laughing, playing, and exhibiting boldness. For me, playing life too safe would be slow torture and agonizing.

JENNY LIND BERRY

Be Proud of Who You Choose to Be

I have always been proud to be a Navajo. As a teacher, I encouraged parents and students to learn about their culture and to identify themselves by their clans. I asked my young, 5–6-years-old Navajo

kids in one class, “How many of you are Indians?” No hands went up. “How many are Navajo?” No hands. “What are you?” They said, “Cowboys.” After studying a social studies unit on Indians, however, they all raised their hands when I asked how many were Indians. No matter your heritage, be proud of where you came from and who you are. But most importantly, be proud of who you choose to be.

VALERIA BEGAY

Control Your Attitude

The only thing I can truly control is my attitude. But by doing so, I can exercise a power over myself that not only gives me a sense of control, but also can greatly influence the relationships I have with the people around me.

CHARNA COHEN

Keep Doing What Makes You Happy

One of the things I have chosen to do in life is to keep doing the things that make me happy for as long as I am able. I still run competitively, for example. I never placed very highly in races until now. There aren't many of us 70-plus-year-old guys running around anymore. Now I can usually finish first or second in every race that I enter. I intend to keep running and entering races as long as I am comfortably able to do so. It's fun, maintains my good health, lifts my spirits, and makes me happy.

CHUCK SOUKUP

Don't Shut the Door on New Ideas

Be careful that your views aren't so narrow that you shut the door on new ideas. Listen to and consider other people's views. Life

is much about learning and growing. We don't know what we don't know—and yet it may enrich and enlighten our lives to find out.

OLIVER BANCROFT

Make Your Own Path

Resist the urge to keep up materially with your friends and neighbors. What someone else does is no business of yours; nor is what you do the business of anyone else. People who think for themselves are far more likely to feel good about the choices that they have made throughout their lives.

MALCOLM (BUCK) MARSH, JR.

Turn the Other Cheek

I believe in turning the other cheek—up to a point. For example, if a person has misstated something about me, I will correct them in order to maintain control of my reputation, but I will also work hard to continue treating the person with respect and dignity.

HAZEL LOWE

Remember the Big Picture and Stay Positive

As a salesperson, I sometimes think that if I had a nickel for every “no” I encountered, I would be a millionaire by now. There was a time when it bothered me to hear “no.” It is easy to feel down after ten people in a row tell you “no.” But all you need is one “yes” to turn your whole day around. The way to remain upbeat is to stay positive. I would tell myself that a sales-related “no” wasn't personal. It was business. I would also consider whether it was possible that a particular sale was just simply out of my control: No matter what I said,

there was no way I could have closed that deal. In life, you have to maintain a big-picture perspective of what you do and stay positive.

SKIP MEDINA

Foster Meaningful Relationships

When I was in college, I thought that there would be a class on the meaning of life. Obviously, I was mistaken. Over time, I realized that there is no absolute, universally accepted meaning of life. The meaning in my life has come in large part from having meaningful relationships—relationships that are genuine and caring.

I recently learned that I have breast cancer and thus have joined a sisterhood that, though it is a loving support group, no one wants to be in. My relationships have flooded me with a level of care, kindness, respect, and genuine concern that has moved me to tears more than once. Were all my wealth, possessions, and insurance stripped away, I would be surrounded by caring individuals, and I would be among the richest of women.

When I am gone, what legacy will remain that makes the world a better place than the one I found? How will I live on and be remembered? It won't be the things I owned; tastes change and an interest in material possessions wanes over time. Instead, I'll pass forward my relationships with family, friends, and even the strangers that I've touched along the way. Who knows all the numerous long-term effects that come about as a result of loving, caring, respectful relationships?

CHARNA COHEN

Forgive Everyone Everything

Truly forgive from your heart. This will prevent negative thoughts from following you around. It will also prevent other people from

having control over you, because you will come to terms with whatever bothers you and move on.

BOBBIE CASEY

Promote Calmness

I am not a proponent of running away from a fight, but I am a strong proponent of calmly dealing with situations so they don't needlessly erupt into something bigger than necessary. Keeping your emotions in check will make you more likely to resolve the situation, maintain some dignity, and emerge from the experience having learned something.

ROBERT (BOB) DOUGLAS BERRY

Enjoy the Experience

For most school kids and adults who play sports, the joy of playing should be greater than the thrill of victory. While all of us would like to be on the winning team, losing a contest should not be the end of all. The “winning is everything” attitude has grown into a “winning at all costs” mentality that robs players from being able to take risks, truly develop their potential, and enjoy each and every sport experience.

One year I coached a little league team of boys with a variety of skill levels. (In fact, about half the team didn't know how to properly hold the ball in order to throw it!) That year our team won one game and lost 17, but the boys had a lot of fun, perhaps more fun than players on teams with more wins. I had the boys play different positions each game so they could all develop their skills and decide which positions suited them best. We made sure that every boy had a chance to play the position he was most eager to play, which made the games fun and exciting for everyone. I would rather play on a losing team than

sit on the bench of a winning team. Winning can be great, but not if it means overlooking the joy, adventure, and benefit of the journey.

ROD RANDALL

Take Care of Yourself

Prioritize yourself before all others. By this I mean be whole and happy; be your authentic self. The greater your self-fulfillment, the more you will have to offer others. If you don't take care of yourself first, you can lose yourself and lose your happiness and sense of fulfillment. I was once married for seven years and placed myself and my happiness second in that relationship. Parts of me were disappearing, which was not a good thing. In a marriage you have to ensure that the real person you are doesn't disappear. Don't forget about who you are. Placing yourself first may seem like a selfish way of thinking, but it provides great benefits not just for you, but also for those you care the most about.

PAT MCCARTY

Graciously Accept Help

As a handicapped person, I am always grateful when people offer to help me. I often will graciously accept their help—even when the help may not be required—so they can feel good about themselves and there is no risk that they feel rejection if I say no.

HAZEL LOWE

Use the Name That Means the Most

I like to be called, simply, Jenny Lind. Not Miss Jenny Lind or Jenny Lind Berry. I feel like Jenny Lind is who I am and who I have been all my life. I have had a connection with the names of my parents and my two husbands, of course, but none of those names have represented me alone the way Jenny Lind does.

Another reason I choose to call myself Jenny Lind is that it allows me to assume more personal connections with other people than I could if I had to use my last name, too. Jenny Lind is more casual, more familiar and friendly; it brings me closer to others. When I managed other employees at work, I asked them to call me Jenny Lind. I wanted their respect, but I also wanted to respect them. It's the same with a child or grandchild of one of my friends: I prefer to be introduced simply as Jenny Lind, to ingratiate myself more easily with the child and to make that child feel more comfortable. (Of course, if a parent introduces me more formally, suggesting a preference in the way his or her child addresses adults, I would be respectful and accept the title.)

JENNY LIND BERRY

Reach for Your Potential

I believe a person can become almost anyone they choose to become and can achieve almost anything they choose to achieve. However, a person should be realistic: Each person has some limitations that should be factored into his or her expectations. Having said this, be careful not to overstate limitations or understate what is realistic. Most of us have far more potential than we realize.

SANDRA HARRSEN

Give Back to Your Community

A number of successful people have done little or nothing for others; instead, they have chosen to focus on just themselves. They define success almost exclusively by their own growth and achievements. These people miss out on the joy and exhilaration derived from giving to others—especially others in their own communities. Witnessing firsthand the great benefits that others gain from your

charitable contributions and their appreciation will hook you on giving back to your community.

ROD RANDALL

Give Love and Compassion

Temper your actions and reactions with love and compassion for others. Treat others as you would have them treat you.

VAL SCHMITT

Seek Advice When Necessary

If you find yourself in a situation in which something illegal or unethical is going on around you—be it at work or otherwise—and are not sure what to do about it or feel uncomfortable, consider seeking out someone who you can trust for guidance. It can be a friend, a company-designated person, a legal counselor, or someone else. Seeking advice before you take immediate action will often be a wise and worthwhile investment of your time.

ROBERT (BOB) DOUGLAS BERRY

Give More and You'll Receive More

I have been an ordained minister and federal executive for 30 years. I also have a law degree. I came to America from the West Indies as a legal immigrant in 1957. I live to help and serve others. As I have helped others to set and achieve their goals, God has also been working with me to ensure that my dreams come true as well. I am a living witness to the truth that the more you give, the more you will receive. My first job in America was picking strawberries for \$3 a day; today I earn much more. As you give joy and peace to others, it comes back to you multiplied.

ST. GEORGE CROSSE

Reject Negativity

Negative people tend to think that they do not have control over anything. I don't live my life that way. I control my thoughts and my actions, and I want to believe that I can make a difference. I refuse to participate in negative, destructive thinking. Instead, I try to live my daily life in a totally positive atmosphere. Life is tough enough when living with purpose; don't add to the weight of living by accepting negativity. It takes much practice, but life can be so much easier, enjoyable, and successful by making this goal of positivity an integral part of oneself.

OLIVER BANCROFT

Win By Playing Fair and By the Rules

Early in life my dad taught me and my two brothers to play competitive sports. Through sports, I developed a strong sense of winning, but not at any cost. We played fair and by the rules, principles that have governed my life in every way. I have learned through my business activities that the drive to win may tempt me to stray from fair play and the rules, but that kind of winning is only short-term. To win fairly over the long term projects an image of honesty and integrity, which encourages people to seek out your business. Winning at any cost creates only a hollow victory and, eventually, it could lead to real liability issues. Whereas winning by the rules leaves one with a wonderful feeling of achievement.

MALCOLM (BUCK) MARSH, JR.

Maintain a Healthy Work-Life Balance

I read a quote somewhere: Don't sacrifice one thousand "tomorrows" for a few "todays." If you focus solely on work, you can lose what could have been outside of work. Here's an example: A bright

young lady who worked for me wanted some time off to hear her mother speak at a conference in Europe. We were right in the middle of a huge project at the time, and this employee played a key role. Over major objections from my boss, I decided to give her the time off. We found someone to cover her work and slowed down the schedule a little bit over the days she was away without coming to a complete halt. Life went on, and that lady was very grateful for and happy with the time she spent supporting her mother. It's important to maintain a healthy work-life balance. To do so, you will have to take the kind of action we took during that project, even when it doesn't always happen conveniently.

PAT MCCARTY

Demonstrate Integrity

Living your life with integrity and striving to do the right thing will not necessarily be a cake walk. You will have your detractors. You can expect some people to disagree with your decisions and actions. But through this all, you are also likely to earn the respect of many.

FREDERICK A. LAPLUME

Build Relationships from Common Ground

People come from widely diverse backgrounds, environments, and situations. For this reason, sometimes you might need to change your expectations of others in order to meet them on common ground and work together satisfactorily. Once you reach a common understanding of one another, you can consider incrementally raising your expectations to raise performance levels and increase the effectiveness of the relationship.

DR. YUNG-CHEN LU

Teach Acts of Kindness

In attempting to teach some of my grandchildren to care for others, I gave them several umbrellas to store in their car. When they see someone running in the rain they say, “Mother, blow the horn.” Then they hand that person an umbrella. This is a simple little thing but it can teach a big lesson to care about others—even those who you do not know.

JENNY LIND BERRY

Choose Your Achievement Level Thoughtfully

I am a hard driver when it comes to achieving things that are important to me, both in my professional and personal lives. To achieve goals and objectives is a great motivator for me. I love the feeling of success—of achievement. A note of caution, however: Choosing to be a high achiever may not always be the healthiest route to take in your career and life. It can make your life more stressful. You could find yourself making personal sacrifices such as losing family time, personal time, and sleep. If you were more laid back, you may live longer. I am not saying that being a high, medium, or low achiever is best; rather, I am saying that your level of achievement is a choice you have to balance carefully. There will be benefits and drawbacks to any route you choose. Choose thoughtfully.

SANDRA HARRSEN

Never Tell a Lie

Never tell a lie. Apart from the obvious moral motivation, never lying means I never have to worry about covering my words later or getting caught.

CHARNA COHEN

Believe in the People Around You

Always look for the potential good in people rather than prejudging them and, therefore, slotting them in a box that will likely not inspire, motivate, or encourage them to be their best. Many people do not concern themselves with giving others a chance to grow and shine. It is remarkable what a person can do when someone gives them the opportunity and believes in their ability to succeed. Whether you are a parent, a boss, a mentor, or a friend, make it a philosophy and a habit to inspire, motivate, and encourage the people around you. Believe in them. Give them that chance.

ROD RANDALL

Weigh the Value of What's Said

Everyone has something to say, but it is up to each of us to think for ourselves and fairly weigh its value.

OLIVER BANCROFT

Savor Your Friendships

When spending time with a friend, truly listen to what he or she is saying and be in the moment. Observe his or her body language. Focus exclusively on that person. Help them feel comfortable and fully express themselves. When you show you care about others, not only do they feel enriched, but you will, too.

VAL SCHEMITT

Constantly Renew Yourself

Stephen Covey's book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, has had a huge influence in my life. I was first introduced to the concepts presented in this book at a two-day course taught by Covey at least

25 years ago. I have since listened to his tapes over the years and am a big believer in his philosophy. The main lesson for me is that we often get caught up in doing regular, everyday things that are easy to do, and we tend to ignore other, often more complicated, important things. Covey has helped me remember that life is made up of a constant renewal in the areas of spirituality, relationships, and healthy habits and thinking.

PAT MCCARTY

Draw Strength from Religion

As a child I did not have parents to call my own, so I drew strength from my religion. Today it is the same: I ask God each day to help me along the way.

VALERIA BEGAY

Seek Out What Is Unique and Special in Every Person

Every person has within them something I call “golden nuggets”—something that is unique and special about them. As I meet people, I assume the golden nuggets are there and look forward to discovering them. When I was first getting to know one friend of mine, for example, I liked her just for her outward personality. What I found in talking with her at length, however, was that she and I shared an interest in scientific literature, eastern philosophies, and other subjects. I loved the breadth and depth of her interests. Her specialness might not have been revealed had I not been willing to engage her in those levels of conversation and seek out her golden nuggets.

CHARNA COHEN

Make the Most of Today, for Tomorrow Is Unknown

In early January, 2006, doctors discovered that my 18-year-old daughter, Katie, had a benign brain tumor. By the end of January she underwent surgery to remove most of the tumor. Though the surgery was successful, there is a chance that the tumor—which had been slow-growing—could grow again. During that whole frightening episode, we all learned how fickle life can be and were reminded of our mortality. You never know what's ahead. You should want to be truly alive every moment. Immerse yourself in your interests and relationships and seize the opportunity to make sure there is room for some new experiences. As I relate this, Katie is a 22-year-old active college student living a full, youthful, and productive life. I hope her experience has given her the perspective to know that we must make the most of today, for tomorrow is unknown.

PHIL ZEISS

Be Consistent

Be consistent throughout your life. Consistency is essential for your steadfast success in everything you do. An example is exercising. We all know that exercising is very good for your health, but talking about it does not get it done. Moreover, if you exercise only on occasion, this will help you only minimally. If you exercise consistently four or five times a week, this will help you significantly. Consistency is important in everything you do, not just for your health.

DR. YUNG-CHEN LU

Look for the Good in a Situation

As a hardcore optimist, I look for all the reasons why things could turn out well, rather than looking for all the reasons why things could fail. I look for the reasons why I can make things happen and be successful.

An old story conveys my point here: This couple had two children, one an optimist and the other a pessimist. The couple took them to a psychiatrist to better understand how they were different and why. The psychiatrist said he was going to conduct an experiment. The optimistic child was put in a room with only horse manure and a shovel. The pessimistic child was put in a room with nearly every toy a child could think of. The psychiatrist met up with the children after three hours. The pessimist was not happy and found all sorts of reasons not to like the toys and the time he spent with them. The optimist, still shoveling manure, said excitedly, “With all this horse manure, there has got to be a pony in here somewhere.”

Sometimes I’ll tell my wife, Wanda, all the reasons why a difficult situation could turn out well and she will say, “You’re looking for that pony again.”

MALCOLM (BUCK) MARSH, JR.

Don’t Confuse Feelings and Facts, Fun and Happiness, or Pleasure and Fulfillment

Decades ago I read the following in a book: Don’t confuse (1) feelings with facts, (2) fun with happiness, and (3) pleasure with fulfillment. This philosophy has been a big help throughout my life for several reasons. First, because I am an emotional person. When things

happen to me at work or in my personal life, my tendency has been to immediately go right to my feelings and get emotionally involved. Now, I have learned to deal with most situations more rationally and unemotionally. For example, a person I worked with on a regular basis was very blunt and sometimes hurtful. She was a good person, but she had weak social skills and seemed to have a difficult time understanding when she hurt others. By disassociating my immediate feelings and focusing on the true message behind her words, I more easily understood her and was able to work with her.

Second, because many of the fun things in life may not be contributing to your overall happiness. A fun thing can be a short-lived event, but having a deep sense of happiness runs over the long term. I've tried to focus more on fun things that will also have a long-lasting impact to my happiness. Performing volunteer work, for example, is not always as much fun initially as, say, going out for drinks with friends, but it makes me feel good for a long time afterwards.

Third, because focusing too much on short-term pleasure may not be contributing to my long-term fulfillment. Take the friends you hang with, for example. Are they friends who will endure over time, or are they really only flashes in the pan? Would you be better served by hanging out with people more in tune with your greater interests?

PAT MCCARTY

Live in the Now

Life is a gift to be celebrated each and every day. I choose not to spend time worrying about tomorrow or wallowing in a past that may not have shown me in my best light. I need to learn from

yesterday and concentrate on today ... and take care of tomorrow when tomorrow becomes today. I choose to live in the present—the now—and to be thankful for what I have at that moment.

VAL SCHEMITT

Choose To Succeed

You can make things happen in your life if you want to, regardless of who you are, whether you have money or not, come from a family of means or not, have great intelligence or not, or have a great education or not. Regardless of any other thing you think may give one person an advantage over another, success is a choice you make. Ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things. Success simply requires a commitment to see something through to its end.

ANN EL-MOSLEMANY

Find a Solution to Every Problem

Over the years I have developed an attitude and belief that every problem has a solution of some kind. This approach has given the people around me the assurance that regardless of the problem they bring to me, we will come up with the appropriate solution.

FERNANDO ARCE

Don't Be a Whiner

Don't be a complainer, a whiner. If you complain and expect others to change, you will likely be disappointed much of the time. Better that you set yourself as an example and show others how to do things and get things done. If you are spending your energy complaining, you are not solving.

DR. YUNG-CHEN LU

Behave As If You Are Being Observed

I behave precisely the same way whether I think I am being observed or not. This philosophy has helped me consistently to do my best in all settings. For example, when I was in high school in Chicago I rode the elevated train. One day I was climbing the stairs to the train and saw a lady struggling to carry a suitcase. I asked her if she would like some help. She accepted my help, was grateful, and I then went along my way. A few years later, I was attending university in Champaign, Illinois, and participating in a sorority rush. A college peer came up to me and said, “I know you, but you don’t know me. I was at the train station when you carried a lady’s luggage up a flight of stairs. I always remembered how kind you were and that image has always stuck with me.” I didn’t know I was being observed that day. I was helping that lady only because it was the right thing to do. But my actions had a positive impact on others, and that came back to serve me years later.

CHARNA COHEN

Judge Others by Their Actions

In the world we live in today, a lot of people have different ways of thinking, different religious beliefs, different political beliefs—maybe your next-door neighbor doesn’t look exactly like you, and so on. Like the old saying goes, treat your neighbors as you would want to be treated. Judge people by their actions, not by your fears or prejudices.

BOBBIE CASEY

Remember the Consequences of Your Actions

It's a good idea to develop the habit of thinking about the consequences of your actions before making decisions—especially important decisions. Younger folks tend to need this advice the most because of their tendency to be impulsive; whereas many older folks have gotten to a point in their lives where they do think ahead.

MALCOLM (BUCK) MARSH, JR.

Don't Blame the System or Allow It to Limit You

If you are not content with your success in life, do not blame the System around you; instead, look inward for a solution. If you just sit back and assume the System will always limit you, you will be right. Sure, it can put lots of hurdles in your way and can make life difficult and uncooperative for all of us from time to time, but you have to learn about the System, understand it, and then make it work for you. This is not always easy to do, but it is almost always possible.

When I went back to work after a hiatus raising three children and then earning a master's degree in mathematics, I was often the only female on a team or in a department. I frequently sensed others implying that I would never get a management position or climb above the proverbial glass ceiling. If I had listened to the individuals implying these boundaries—if I had believed that the System wouldn't let me grow professionally as a woman—then I might have stopped trying to grow. But I did not pay attention to them. I kept

striving to achieve my objectives and eventually became a manager and more.

SANDRA HARGSEN

Define Your Character through Your Actions

If you say you are going to do something, then always find a way to do it. Your word reflects directly on your character and how others see you and relate to you.

PHIL ZEISS

Start Your Day with Quiet Time

My day always seems to go better when I start it with some quiet time for meditation. It helps me let go of the things that I cannot control as much as I would like and reminds me that a power beyond myself controls things. Knowing that God is ultimately in charge relieves me of worrying about the things I cannot change. It also makes me more aware of those around me, my need and desire to serve others, and the importance of deliberately choosing to act upon the things that I can control or influence. This quiet time helps me set my energy level, think about what I want to accomplish, get in touch with who I am, and confirm who I choose to be.

VAL SCHMITT

Refrain from Talking Badly about People

Refrain from talking badly about people, especially your professional colleagues. What you say can come back to harm you.

FREDERICK A. LAPLUME

Evaluate Yourself Daily

Evaluate yourself each and every day. That is, consider your actions and your behaviors daily. Examine what you have done. Did you do anything wrong, or anything that can be improved upon, that day? If you did, can you apply the lessons you learned the next day, so that you are routinely improving? Always ask yourself how you can grow from your daily experiences.

DR. YUNG-CHEN LU

Have a Sense of Humor

Humor is important. Laugh a lot. Don't be easily rattled. Stay positive. This will help lighten your day and any situation. Moreover, people tend to be attracted to those who demonstrate a sense of humor, and humor is often contagious, which brings joy to everyone.

HAZEL LOWE

See, Observe, Remember

A correspondence artists school I once knew of had "See, observe, remember" as its tagline. I have embraced this tagline beyond its meaning in art; it applies to many other areas of life. When I was General Counsel for a company, for example, I would often tell the attorneys working for me to "let there be silence and pay attention to the silence." Being very observant and paying attention to all the cues in a situation going on around you will serve you well.

JUDITH R. NELSON

Don't Underestimate the Little Things

Sometimes the little things can make a big difference in your life and in the lives of those around you. If you take the garbage out before it smells bad, you will make a lot of people happy.

VAL SCHEMITT

Form Your Own Opinion

I would rather not know what you think about other people. I would like to form my own opinion. Committing to this helps me enter relationships with little or no bias initially, which allows me to establish the best relationship possible right from the start.

CHUCK SOUKUP

Respond to Untruths in a Mature Way

Throughout your life people will sometimes speak negative untruths about you. The person initiating the harmful discourse may draw invalid assumptions based on only snippets of information and truly believe that their conclusions are correct—some people like to talk when they do not necessarily know what they are talking about. Or, in some cases, the person may intentionally be instigating an act of nastiness. Never allow untruths that another person says to control your inner thoughts or how you feel about yourself. Obviously there may be times when you may choose to speak up, but depending on how serious and harmful the accusations, I typically choose to ignore such talk. It is not worth my time and energy. I would rather spend my time focusing on my goals and helping others.

ANN EL-MOSLIMANY

Don't Envy the Success of Others

Don't envy someone else because of their achievements in life. Respect what other people have accomplished and be happy for them, just as you would want them to do for you. If you harbor envy, transform that negative energy into taking positive action in achieving the dreams that are most important to you.

HILDA O. BYRD

Love Everybody and Support Nonviolence

Even if someone does something that I don't agree with, I still try to love and not to hate. I came to that conclusion when I decided to be a disciple of Martin Luther King, Jr. As a student from the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, I once demonstrated for public accommodations—offering goods and services equally to all members of the general public. A nun—a woman of God—had decided to join us. During the sit in, I saw a man literally punch her in the face and knock her off her stool. Instead of shouting or fighting back, all she did was get up, put her habit back on her head, and sit back down again. It inspired me to be as nonviolent and strong as she was.

ST. GEORGE CROSSE

Don't Hide from Yourself

When a person does not respect him- or herself, and they take the time to really reflect on that lack of self-respect, they will understand what is causing their inner discomfort. You cannot hide from yourself.

ROBERT (BOB) DOUGLAS BERRY

Avoid Anger

Anger can be a highly destructive emotion and is best avoided. I try to keep myself from getting into situations that might cause me to get angry. When I do get angry, I can feel bad for days. I feel guilty. I feel like I didn't do enough to prevent the situation from arising. Try to foresee the situations in which anger might arise and avoid getting drawn into those situations.

MALCOLM (BUCK) MARSH, JR.

Remember That When One Door Closes, Another Can Open

This philosophy has proven correct throughout my life, but it relies on an open mind, a positive attitude, and never giving up. Good things will happen and opportunities will arise. When I was working as an Operations Manager, for example, a portion of the company was sold and I lost my job. I was very disappointed to say the least. But I was soon offered an opportunity for a challenging assignment at a different location. I took the assignment and it opened a whole new world for me both technically and internationally. Although one door closed, a really big door opened up!

SANDRA HARRSEN

Three Nickels Are Better than a Dime

You do not need to be greedy to achieve the goals that are important to you. In fact, being greedy often can cause you to be less successful, or worse, miss your goal altogether. For example, I have seen cases in which a company builds a new product and sets the price of that product artificially high because there is no competition or limited

competition. What often happens in these cases, however, is that the high price spurns competition—others want to also milk the gravy train. The competition often erodes the profit margins of the original product and may even bring about a new version of the product that outperforms the original. It is often better to have a good steady income than a brief high income followed by marginal income or none at all. I describe this concept by saying that three nickels are better than a dime. Many people want the whole enchilada right away. Again, greed can often harm a business outcome.

ROD RANDALL

Do More than Your Share

Always strive, in any group, to do more than your share. Doing so will help you learn more, achieve more, be more valuable, earn people's respect, and set an example for others.

DR. YUNG-CHEN LU

Carefully Choose the Company You Keep

The company you keep can influence your character—for good or bad.

ROBERT (BOB) DOUGLAS BERRY

Take Advantage of Educational Opportunities

Taking advantage of every possible educational opportunity most defined my path in life. Neither of my parents completed high school, and they never spoke of any educational goals they had for me or set aside money to fund my college education. About half of my high school friends did not go to college. But somehow I never doubted

that I would attend and graduate from college. Luckily, my high school grade point average and the results of my entrance examinations were high enough to allow free attendance at the City College of New York. Upon leaving the Army, I joined a large company in the computer programming industry and took advantage of its tuition-refund program, earning a masters degree at New York University. I also attended as many in-house management education classes as I could. Since retirement, I have taken courses in woodworking and computer programming that have provided me continued joy. Education opened so many doors throughout my life.

PHIL ZEISS

Initiate Your Help

Many of us offer our help to others when asked. Wouldn't it be better to initiate help ourselves? Take the first step; don't wait to be asked. This can help others receive the assistance they need sooner, when it can have the greatest impact.

PAT MCCARTY

Take Pride in Yourself and Your Work

I have told my kids and grandkids if you have pride in yourself, you are going to do well. When I interview somebody to hire and I can see that they take pride in their work because it gives them an inwardly satisfaction to do so, I will hire them in a heartbeat. Some people don't give a damn about the work that they do; they just want to show up to work and get paid. Knowing the difference, I really harped on my children and grandchildren about the importance of developing self-pride and self-assurance. I told them that if they were assigned a project to do in school, they should have enough

self-pride to really want to turn in the best finished project in the class. They should want and need to excel and do things right and to the best of their abilities.

MALCOLM (BUCK) MARSH, JR.

Be Mindful of the Power of Words

Reminding myself often that words are very powerful has helped me keep my mouth shut or, at least, carefully select both my words and the tone of my words. Words can be interpreted differently by different people. Words used to constructively criticize a person's behavior, for example, might be accepted positively as being helpful, or they might be interpreted negatively as a stinging attack. Deliberately choose your words carefully and respectfully, because you don't know how people are going to receive them.

CHARNA COHEN

Resist Peer Pressure

Peer pressure can be incapacitating for people of all ages. To resist it, you have to have the self-assuredness and presence of mind to say, "No, that's not the route I want to go. I'm going a different way, and nobody is going to derail me."

ROYCE BREEDLOVE

Resist Being Vengeful

When someone does you wrong, being vengeful will not serve your best interests or those of society. Being vengeful will only pull you down to their level. It often requires more courage to take the high road than to seek revenge.

ROBERT (BOB) DOUGLAS BERRY

Say Positive Affirmations Out Loud

I believe in affirmations—in self-talk. I sometimes will look at myself in the mirror and say, “My, my, you look good!” Even if I don’t look good, I will tell myself that I do. The more I tell myself something good, the better and better I begin to look and feel. We should use these kind of positive affirmations to fill ourselves with good thoughts. As a man thinks in his heart, so he becomes.

ST. GEORGE CROSSE

Build a Fun Home Life

You need to have a happy environment at home or life will not be a great experience. Your home needs to be a warm, welcoming, and fun place. If you have a strong and happy family life, everything else will fall into place. Don’t overlook the importance of your family life in the big scheme of things.

FERNANDO ARCE

Do More Than Just Try

Saying “I will try” is a half-hearted way of saying “I don’t know if I will get that done.” What value does such a non-committal statement provide? Be more positive and say you will either do it or you will not do it. Be straight up about your intentions and the expectations you are sending to others. I do not use the term “try” or accept the term from those around me. I choose to be specific in my intentions. All parties appreciate and benefit from straight speech.

PAT MCCARTY

Stick To It

If you are going to do something, stick to it and commit to doing it completely. Don't just say, "I can't do this." Get your mind set on it. Go all the way. Keep your goal in your mind and make sure you achieve it. Be determined, driven, and persistent. Push, push, push. Study, study, study. To get what you want, keep working at it. Don't stop. If you stop, you will cease to have passion, and you will drift aimlessly. You will never know the potential that lies within you.

FREDERICK A. LAPLUME

Stay Physically Fit

Staying physically fit has been a priority to me all my life. The benefits of physical fitness have been a great motivator. I feel better and I look better. I am able to participate in the many physical activities I'm interested in. People often respect those who take good care of themselves physically. I respect such people because it tells me that they are disciplined and willing to sacrifice their time and energy to exercise, eat healthy foods, and otherwise care for themselves. It also tells me that they are passionate and share the same value of exercise and physical fitness that I do.

SANDRA HARRSEN

Show Your Humanity

If you are in a position to do something right, then demonstrate fairness and courage in doing so. Throughout our lives, we often encounter people being taken advantage of, discriminated against, or mistreated in some other way—the kind of behavior that most clear-thinking people can see is wrong. In those situations it's

important to try to help people, just as you would want those people to help you if the circumstances were reversed. I am not necessarily suggesting that you do the right thing at the expense of your job or at the risk of being harmed in some significant way. But you may have to push the envelope or ruffle some feathers in order to help someone. It is worth the risk. Not only will helping others likely make for a better community, you will feel very good about who you chose to be. We all need a champion from time to time.

ROD RANDALL

Be Empathetic

Try to see the world from another person's perspective—be empathetic. Every story has two sides. Whatever you read, whether in a newspaper, magazine, or on the Internet, consider what the other (unacknowledged) side of the story might be.

CHARNA COHEN

Forthrightness

I admit sometimes I'm too abrasive. If I see an ace of spades, I call it an ace of spades and let it go at that. But this "abrasiveness" is often just misinterpreted forthrightness, which has been more of a positive personal attribute than otherwise. I believe, overall, people respect and even welcome forthrightness and brevity as long as it is delivered with the best of intentions. Generally, I prefer to stand in the background and observe without making too much noise. But there are times when being frank seems most appropriate.

ROYCE BREEDLOVE

Know Your Contribution to Life's Puzzle

I live my life as though I am a piece of an interrelated puzzle that is formed by all people. This puzzle is an ever-evolving work in progress. I have been placed here to accomplish a unique piece of this ongoing puzzle. My contribution may be inconsequential to a lot of people, but it might be very consequential to one person. Even my contribution to this book will have a unique effect upon readers. It would be a different book if I were not around to be a voice in it.

ELIU CAMACHO

Give Back More than You Take

As you get older, the issue of mortality will likely weigh more strongly. There is an end for all of us. As a philosophy of living, strive to leave things better in your world than they were before you arrived. Don't use up everything that's good; give something back to better serve your family, your neighbors, and all those who are within your reach.

PHIL ZELISS