

“Those things that are most important are the intangible things and they cannot be measured.” — Ben Cohen

THE FIFTH PRACTICE: Take The High Road To Profit

Our First Real Job

I certainly do not have the first dollar that I made at Adams and Adams Building Services, but I do have the first cancelled check that I issued to the two men who performed our first real job. It was issued to Rich and his brother Tony, who were also striking air traffic controllers.

The complex manager was interested in what we could do for him. He also seemed particularly interested in my fledgling company and me. I put Rich and his brother to work on ladders underneath the eaves, while the manager showed me around to see several other jobs. The manager was a little bit shorter than my six-foot stature, shaped like a bowling pin and at least ten years older than I. He escorted me into a vacant unit. He wanted a price to clean the apartment after it was vacated. With clipboard in hand, I figured the time it would take. Dollar signs appeared in the place of each task that needed to be done. I envisioned a long relationship with a customer who appreciated our professionalism and good work. That is, until the manager bent closer to me and grabbed me between the legs. It was the first time in the company that my values and boundaries were tested under fire.

“You must have gotten me wrong. I’m strictly heterosexual and I’m just interested in your cleaning needs and nothing else.” I said.

It would not be the last time that a customer, male or female propositioned me. It was one of the many trials of my values and ethics. Soon afterwards, I began making notes of what I felt were the highest standards of a business.

What Do We Stand For?

The Fifth Practice concerns our ethics, values, and principles. These virtues embrace all of the Principles and Practices because this is the method by which you weigh your decisions. All-important choices must withstand the test of your principles and values, which include universal concepts such as truth, justice, fairness, equality, and social consciousness. Your statement of principles, along with your mission and purpose, is the foundation upon which you build your enterprise. Clarity of vision and purpose and strong ethics will put your company on solid ground. But if you fail here, what you build, no matter how creative and well conceived it is, will never achieve the depth of accomplishment, self-satisfaction, and peace of mind that comes when you are dedicated to the highest standards.

We have witnessed the disgrace of Enron, the Arthur Anderson Group, WorldCom and others. Even the money their officers made from their despicable practices will not set them free. They are now prisoners of their greed and dishonesty. The millions of dollars the company officers embezzled will never buy back their integrity. What value has any person who has sold his or her soul?

As with any other endeavor, our right intentions are most important here. A mistake in judgment, a slip as some might call it, or wandering off-course, requires a correction, a re-dedication to our ideals. This is not a perfect world. We cannot expect ourselves to be flawless in everything we do and every decision we make. As “works in progress” with “right intentions” we will get better and better at not only doing the right thing, but also doing what is right. Our statement of beliefs and principles, just like a government constitution, needs review, updating, and modification with the best intentions of speaking from a higher consciousness.

A declaration of our principles can be long and complex or it can be short and concise such as the Rotary International four-way test, which Rotarian Herbert J. Taylor discovered in a dream. The test simply asks:

*Is it the truth?
Is it fair to all concerned?
Will it build good will and better friendships?
Will it be beneficial to all concerned?*

Consider the Jaycee creed, which states:

*We believe that economic justice can best be won by free men through free enterprise;
That government should be of laws rather than of men;
That the brotherhood of man transcends the sovereignty of nations;
That earth's great treasure lies in human personality;
And that service to humanity is the best work of life.*

A Statement Of Principles And Beliefs

What are your core beliefs? What teachings, discoveries or schools of thought have introduced you to a consciousness that speaks of a joining of all humankind for the eternal good of all nations, including our entrepreneurial world?

Commonly held beliefs are part of our lives. They are found in the Bible, Torah (Judaism), Bhagavada-Gita (Hinduism), Koran (Islam), and the constitutions of modern democracies. Writings of the great philosophers and thinkers, words of the poets, and music of the composers speak of the truths that reside in the depths of our being. They sing out with phrases that begin with statements such as, “We believe that all people are created equal....”

The statement of principles and beliefs for Life Without Limits states, “We respect one another as individuals and God’s creation possessing unique talents and unlimited potential.” Each of us holds a key position in our company. Honoring the value and importance of every member of our organization creates an attitude of respect, trust, and caring.

The principles of *Life Without Limits*, established by a colleague and me several years ago, are included below. This document will continue to evolve as our company does, but the concepts will remain the same.

LIFE WITHOUT LIMITS

STATEMENT OF MISSION, PURPOSE, BELIEFS, VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

MISSION: *Life Without Limits* is dedicated to advancing corporate leadership, wellness and integrity through a business philosophy based on Miracles at Work: The Principles of Upside-Down Thinking, Practices of Business Success, and Action Steps to Business Creation or Transformation.

PURPOSE: To engage, promote, entertain and guide organizations through values-based, results-oriented design systems, that align the power of business with the spirit and talent of its members.

RESULTS EXPECTED: Greater harmony and individual self-fulfillment leading to increased quality, performance and profit.

AUDIENCE: Business owners, managers and leaders seeking meaningful, effective, transformational systems for building or managing their company, organization, team or their inner business.

We Believe:

- That one's work is a divine expression of one's being, and when people are free to express themselves through their work they feel whole, fulfilled, and successful.
- That service is a path to spiritual, personal, and professional growth leading to financial prosperity and corporate health.
- That fulfillment in our work has a powerful, positive impact on our inner peace.
- That inner peace will result in world peace.

Our Values:

1. We exist for the common good and consistently strive to benefit our community, nation and world environmentally, socially, economically, and spiritually.
2. We foster relationships based on open communication, integrity, honesty, trust, and love.
3. Our organization serves as a continually evolving model for a paradigm of business based on spiritual self-expression and sound business practices.
4. We support others who share our philosophy by returning a percentage of all pre-tax profits to selected charitable endeavors.

VALUES, BELIEFS AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Our Beliefs

The four main concepts are:

1. Personal expression
2. Service to God and others
3. Personal reward
4. World peace

We believe:

- That one's work is a divine expression of one's being and when people are free to express themselves through their work they feel whole, fulfilled and successful.
- That Service is a path to spiritual, personal, and professional growth leading to financial prosperity and corporate health.
- That fulfillment in your work has a powerful, positive impact on inner peace.
- That inner peace will result in world peace.

Our Values

The 4 main concepts are:

1. World Community
2. Integrity in relationships
3. New paradigm/heart-centered leadership
4. Actions:
 - We exist for the common good and consistently strive to benefit the world.
 - We foster relationships based on open communication, integrity, honesty, trust, and love. We respect one another as individuals and God's creation possessing unique talents and unlimited potential.
 - Our organization serves as a continually evolving model for a paradigm of business based on spiritual self-expression and sound business practices.
 - We support others who share our philosophy by returning a percentage of all pre-tax profits to selected charitable endeavors.

Our Operating Principles

The 6 main concepts are:

1. Organizational Health
2. Individual Human potential
3. Leadership
4. Team Spirit
5. Profit sharing
6. Development of world wide network

- Organizational health, flexibility, and profit are a result of the development and expression of the individual team members.
- Major emphasis is placed on inner spirit, greater self-awareness, and realization of human potential. We foster a corporate culture of open communication, respect, honesty, and the recognition of the spirit within us all.
- Heart-centered, quality-focused leadership creates a team environment, which supports individual and corporate growth.
- Within our team exists the soul of the company through which our essence, presence, and power flourishes. It is through that soul that we work together, grow and prosper in mind, body, and spirit.
- Compensation and financial rewards for our associates are based on fair compensation for the position they hold, the work they do, the results they achieve, and their investment of time and energy in the organization. We share our success and failures through partnering, profit sharing, and other expressions of corporate gratitude.
- Partnering through a development network creates great opportunities for the growth and evolution of our program. The network is a powerful tool that we utilize to build relationships and grow our company.

Consider the following credo, written by R.W. Johnson, Jr. of Johnson & Johnson in 1943, that has only been slightly revised since its conception. Johnson put his customers, company members, and community first, which resulted in the right results for his stockholders.

The Johnson & Johnson CREDO

“We believe that our first responsibility is to the doctors, nurses, hospitals
 Mothers, and all others who use our products.
 Our products must always be of the highest quality.
 We must constantly strive to reduce the cost of these products.
 Our orders must be promptly and accurately filled.
 Our dealers must make a fair profit.

Our second responsibility is to those who work with us—
 The men and women in our plants and offices.
 They must have a sense of security in their jobs.
 Wages must be fair and adequate,
 Management just, reasonable, and working conditions clean and orderly.
 Employees should have an organized system for suggestions and complaints.
 Supervisors and department heads must be qualified and fair-minded.
 There must be opportunity for advancement—for those qualified
 And each person must be considered an individual
 Standing on his own dignity and merit.

Our third responsibility is to the communities in which we live.
 We must be a good citizen—support good works and charity,
 And bear our fair share of taxes.
 We must maintain in good order the property we are privileged to use.
 We must participate in promotion of civic improvement,
 Health, education and good government,
 And acquaint the community with our activities.

Our fifth and last responsibility is to our stockholders.
 Business must make a sound profit.
 Reserves must be created, research must be carried on,
 Adventurous programs developed, and mistakes paid for.
 Adverse times must be provided for, adequate taxes paid, new machines purchased,
 New plants built, new products launched, and new sales plans developed.
 We must experiment with new ideas.
 When these things have been done the stockholders should receive a fair return.
 We are determined with the help of God’s grace,
 To fulfill these obligations to the best of our ability.”

You do not need to seek divine intervention to discover our business principles and beliefs. When you look to the institutions you honor, you find a reflection of your company's founding principles. If you weigh your decisions with universal truth, wisdom, and ethics as your guide, you will never lose your way.

The rewards of business come in many different forms. For many people money, power, and notoriety are attached to their drive to succeed. But these are never the real rewards because they never satisfy the longing to be fulfilled, to be complete. They are of no value spiritually and cannot be part of a valid statement of ethics because they separate rather than join us.

“Let the buyer beware” is not being on the high road to profit. It is being in the gutter. Achievement of self-centered financial wealth, power or fame violates our customers and company members. We cannot witness true fulfillment without others. *We cannot teach good values and ethics either by ignoring universally held standards of truth, justice and fairness.*

Universal truths and ethics are put to the test where the real work gets done on the production floor, with the crew that is cleaning a building, the technicians developing new computer solutions, or an assembly line team. Getting out there in those trenches is the subject of our next chapter.

“With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.”

— President John F. Kennedy

***“The best leaders operate in four dimensions:
vision, reality, ethics and courage.”***

— Peter Koestenbaum