

Choosing the Rules You Live By

Jerry Fallenberg

Of all the guidelines that you have attempted to use in your life, which ones have you found to be most rewarding and motivating?

Examples of Personal Guidelines

In the Comments section following Gretchen Rubin's article [Six tips for designing your happiness commandments](#), readers shared personal commandment lists that included:

- Progress, not perfection
- Live your values
- Simplify
- Never stop learning

Which versions of the [Golden Rule](#) do you prefer and why?

[The Four Agreements](#) (Don Miguel Ruiz)

1. Be impeccable with your word. . .
4. Always do your best.

Examples of Confucian values:

- Determination for an outstanding life
- Respect for knowledge and knowledgeable people
- Pursuing an excellent education
- Thrift; saving for a better life
- Caring for your family, in particular, devotion to the next generation
- Developing desirable friendships

(from *The Chinese Secrets for Success: Five Inspiring Confucian Values* by YuKong Zhao)

Essential Life Learnings (Maria Popova)

1. **Allow yourself the uncomfortable luxury of changing your mind.**
2. **Do nothing for prestige or status or money or approval alone.**
3. **Be generous.** Be generous with your time and your resources and with giving credit and, especially, with your words.
4. **Build pockets of stillness into your life. Meditate. Go for walks.**
5. **When people try to tell you who you are, don't believe them.** . . . the assumptions made by those that misunderstand who you are and what you stand for reveal a great deal about them and absolutely nothing about you.
7. **"Expect anything worthwhile to take a long time."** (Debbie Millman)
The myth of the overnight success is just that — a myth.
8. **Seek out what magnifies your spirit.** Who are the people, ideas, and books that magnify your spirit? Find them, hold on to them, and visit them often.
14. **Choose joy.**

From *The Success Principles* by Jack Canfield

- Take 100% responsibility for your life
- Act as if
- Use feedback to your advantage
- Commit to constant and never-ending improvement
- Exceed expectations
- Clean up your messes and your incompletes
- Face what isn't working
- Transcend your limiting beliefs
- Stay focused on your core genius
- Build a powerful support team and delegate to them
- Tell the truth faster
- Keep your agreements
- Find a way to serve

Revising Your List

Take note of your activities over a 24-hour period. How do you actually spend your time and interact with people? Based on those observations, what would you conclude are your current priorities and operating values?

Review the conduct guidelines you were using earlier in life. What results did they produce?

• Childhood	• Adolescence	• Young adulthood
• Previous marriage	• Your times of greatest prosperity and happiness	

Additional Study

Dave Logan's [Mountains and Valleys](#) exercise. This involves identifying positive and negative milestone events from your life. For positive milestone events he suggests answering the question, "What values were present or honored that made it so satisfying for me?"

Dan Buettner: *Thrive*; research on [the happiest regions on earth](#) "a garbage man makes as much as a lawyer" [The Blue Zones of Happiness](#)

[Values in Action \(VIA\) 24 Character Strengths](#)

John Wooden's [Pyramid of Success](#)

Books and videos by [Shawn Achor](#), [Angela Duckworth](#) and other leaders of [positive psychology](#)

[Zappos 10 Core Values](#)

Tim Ferriss: [Tools of Titans](#) and [Tribe of Mentors](#)