Building Your Philosophy of Engagement

The Scenario

You wake up this morning feeling a little off, a bit dizzy. You go to work "as usual" and while parking your car you smack right into the tree that's been there for years. You didn't see that tree. Come to think of it, you have lost most of your peripheral vision and it scares you...

By lunch you recognize the seriousness of the matter so you have someone drive you to the hospital. Your eyes are not working properly so a CT scan is ordered. Blood tests are ordered. You wait...

Two hours later you are called into a small waiting room and finally... the doctor arrives. She looks serious, but smiles affectionately. She begins:

"I'm sorry to inform you that we've discovered a large tumor on the back side of your brain. It seems you have a rare type of brain cancer and your time is short... very short."

You inquire hesitantly: "How long do I have?"

"Perhaps 30 days" comes her reply.

After a week to process your disbelief you recognize it's time to consider your last will and testament. While there are some financial and tangible items you wish to leave behind to your family and friends, you feel there is something more you could give them, so you bring them together in a room.

They reply: "Because of how much we love and respect you, what we want most from you is your philosophy of life. We want to know what you valued and how you lived—how you have led—who you've most aspired to become!... What's your creed? What's your code? What's your philosophy?

You want to give them this most significant and final gift—one that will be part of your "will" and will be given to every member of your family and closes friends. This is an exciting prospect and you are up for the challenge.

It's now time to dig deep...

Operational Definitions For Building Your Philosophy of Engagement

Key Word	Definition
Principles	A comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption (1): a rule or code of conduct (2): habitual devotion to right principles.
Beliefs	A state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing.
Attitudes	A mental position with regard to a fact or state <a helpful attitude> b: a feeling or emotion toward a fact or state.
Perspective	The interrelation in which a subject or its parts are mentally viewed <places the issues in proper perspective>; also : point of view b: the capacity to view things in their true relations or relative importance.
Qualities	A characteristic or feature that someone or something has : something that can be noticed as a part of a person or thing.
Virtues	Morally good behavior or character.
Rules	A prescribed guide for conduct or action.
Standards	Something established by authority, custom, or general consent as a model or example.

Adapted from: www.meriam-websters.com

Principles & Beliefs: Ways of Knowing

Abraham Lincoln's Creed

I believe in God, the Almighty Ruler of Nations, our great and good and merciful Maker, our Father in heaven, who notes the fall of a sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our heads.

I believe in His eternal truth and justice. I recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history that those nations only are blest whose God is the Lord.

I believe that it is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, and to invoke the influence of His Holy Spirit; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon.

I believe that it is meet and right to recognize and confess the presence of the Almighty Father equally in our triumphs and in those sorrows which we may justly fear are a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins to the needful end of our reformation.

I believe that the Bible is the best gift, which God has ever given to men. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book.

I believe the will of God prevails. Without Him all human reliance is vain. Without the assistance of His divine Being, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail.

Being a humble instrument in the hands of our Heavenly Father, I desire that all my works and acts may be according to His will; and that it may be so, I give thanks to the Almighty, and seek His aid.

I have a solemn oath registered in heaven to finish the work I am in, in full view of my responsibility to my God, with malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives me to see the right. Commending those who love me to His care, as I hope in their prayers they will commend me, I look through the help of God to a joyous meeting with many loved ones gone before.

I Believe
John D. Rockerfeller Jr.

I believe in the supreme worth of the individual and in his right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

I believe that every right implies a responsibility; every opportunity, an obligation; every possession, a duty.

I believe that the law was made for man and not man for the law; that government is the servant of the people and not their master.

I believe in the dignity of labor, whether with head or hand: that the world owes no man a living but that it owes every man an opportunity to make a living.

I believe that thrift is essential to well-ordered living and that economy is a prime requisite of a sound financial structure, whether in government, business, or personal affairs.

I believe that truth and justice are fundamental to an enduring social order.

I believe in the sacredness of a promise, that a man's word should be as good as his bond: that character, not wealth or power or position, is supreme worth.

I believe that the rendering of useful service is the common duty of mankind that only in the purifying fire of sacrifice is the dross of selfishness consumed and the greatness of the human soul set free.

I believe in an all-wise and all-loving God, named whatever name, an that the individual's highest fulfillment, greatest happiness, and widest usefulness are to be found in living in harmony with His will.

I believe that love is the greatest thing in the world: that it alone can overcome hate: that right can and will triumph over might.

"Ethics and Religion are the practice of ideas...The former sets forth duties that spring from man, and the later sets forth duties springing from God...Religion is for the common people what formal philosophy is for the educated man"

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Consider your most profound life experiences. Now take some time to identify the most important principles and beliefs that have defined you and/or have been the most valuable to you in your life. Summarize below:

Summary of Principles (always true despite opinion):
Example: “What goes around comes around” (Karma).
Example: The 80/20 Principle (20% of efforts = 80% of results).

Summary of Beliefs (personals constructions):
Example: Hard work and persistence = success!
Example: Everyone is inherently valuable with unique potential.

After completing your rough list, identify the five most important principles & beliefs from each list and summarize them below:

Summary of Principles (always true despite opinion):

Summary of Beliefs (personals constructions):

Attitudes & Perspectives: Ways of Seeing

Promise Yourself
Optimist International

1. To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.
2. To talk health, happiness, and prosperity to every person you meet.
3. To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.
4. To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.
5. To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.
6. To think only the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best.
7. To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit troubles.
8. To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.
9. To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.
10. To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

Philosophies of Helen Keller

- One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar.
- The only real blind person at Christmas-time is he who has not Christmas in his heart. The bulk of the world's knowledge is an imaginary construction.
- We differ, blind and seeing, one from another, not in our senses, but in the use we make of them, in the imagination and courage with which we seek wisdom beyond the senses.
- Strike against war, for without you no battles can be fought.
- Be not dumb, obedient slaves in an army of destruction. Be heroes in an army of construction.
- When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one, which has been opened for us.
- Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing.
- I do not want the peace that passeth understanding. I want the understanding, which bringeth peace.
- Tyranny cannot defeat the power of ideas.
- The Bible gives me a deep, comforting sense that "things seen are temporal and things unseen are eternal."
- If it is true that the violin is the most perfect of musical instruments, then Greek is the violin of human thought.
- No matter how dull, or how mean, or how wise a man is, he feels that happiness is his indisputable right.
- Most people measure their happiness in terms of physical pleasure and material possession... If I am happy in spite of my deprivations, if my happiness is so deep that it is a faith, so thoughtful that it becomes a philosophy of life, — if, in short, I am an optimist, my testimony to the creed of optimism is worth hearing.

- It is a mistake always to contemplate the good and ignore the evil, because by making people neglectful it lets in disaster. There is a dangerous optimism of ignorance and indifference.
- Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it. My optimism, then, does not rest on the absence of evil, but on a glad belief in the preponderance of good and a willing effort always to cooperate with the good, that it may prevail. I try to increase the power God has given me to see the best in everything and every one, and make that Best a part of my life.
- I have found out that though the ways in which I can make myself useful are few, yet the work open to me is endless.
- To know the history of philosophy is to know that the highest thinkers of the ages, the seers of the tribes and the nations, have been optimists. The growth of philosophy is the story of man's spiritual life.
- The highest result of education is tolerance. Long ago men fought and died for their faith; but it took ages to teach them the other kind of courage, — the courage to recognize the faiths of their brethren and their rights of conscience. Tolerance is the first principle of community; it is the spirit, which conserves the best that all men think.
- The test of all beliefs is their practical effect in life. If it be true that optimism compels the world forward, and pessimism retards it, then it is dangerous to propagate a pessimistic philosophy.
- Who shall dare let his incapacity for hope or goodness cast a shadow upon the courage of those who bear their burdens as if they were privileges?
- Every optimist moves along with progress and hastens it, while every pessimist would keep the worlds at a standstill. The consequence of pessimism in the life of a nation is the same as in the life of the individual. Pessimism kills the instinct that urges men to struggle against poverty, ignorance and crime, and dries up all the fountains of joy in the world.
- Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement; nothing can be done without hope.
- Optimism is the harmony between man's spirit and of God pronouncing His works good.
- A happy life consists not in the absence, but in the mastery of hardships.
- Happiness is the final and perfect fruit of obedience to the laws of life.
- A happy life consists not in the absence, but in the mastery of hardships.
- It all comes to this: the simplest way to be happy is to do good.
- If we spend the time we waste in sighing for the perfect golden fruit in fulfilling the conditions of its growth, happiness will come, must come. It is guaranteed in the very laws of the universe. If it involves some chastening and renunciation, well, the fruit will be all the sweeter for this touch of holiness.

http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Helen_Keller

“My formula for greatness in a human being is amor fati: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity...Not merely bear what is necessary...but love it”. (1968, P. 714)

— Nietczhe

Consider your most profound life experiences—the best and the worst. Now take some time to identify the most important attitudes and perspectives that have supported you, defined you and/or have been the most valuable to you. Summarize them below:

Summary of Attitudes (thoughts that produce light/heat/elevation/inspiration):
Example: Seeing the glass as half full.
Example: When life gives you lemons—make lemonade!

Summary of Perspectives (thoughts that produce angles of vision):
Example: “From an eternal perspective it’s not a big deal”
Example: “What am I supposed to learn from this challenge?”

After completing your rough list, identify the five most important attitudes & perspectives from each list and summarize them below:

Summary of Attitudes (thoughts that produce light/heat/elevation/inspiration):

Summary of Perspectives (thoughts that produce angles of vision):

Qualities & Virtues: Ways of Being

13 Virtues
Benjamin Franklin

1. Temperance: Eat not to dullness and drink not to elevation.
2. Silence: Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.
3. Order: Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.
4. Resolution: Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.
5. Frugality: Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; that is, waste nothing.
6. Industry: Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.
7. Sincerity: Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly; and, if you speak, speak accordingly.
8. Justice: Wrong none by doing injuries or omitting the benefits that are your duty.
9. Moderation: Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries, so much as you think they deserve.
10. Cleanliness: Tolerate no uncleanliness in body, clothes, or habitation.
11. Tranquility: Be not disturbed at trifles or at accidents common or unavoidable.
12. Chastity…
13. Humility: Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

"Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile."

— Mother Theresa

Consider the men and women who you have most respected. Now take some time to identify the most important qualities and virtues that you have sought to acquire and internalize. Summarize them below:

Summary of Qualities (noticeable personal characteristics):
Example: Being persistent in spite of challenges.
Example: Being understanding of others.

Summary of Virtues (morally good behaviors):
Example: “I eat and drink knowing my body is a temple.”
Example: Giving time, talents, and treasure to meaningful causes.

After completing your rough list, identify the five most important qualities & virtues from each list and summarize them below:

Summary of Qualities (noticeable personal characteristics):

Summary of Virtues (morally good behaviors):

Rules & Standards: Ways of Doing

Thomas Jefferson's Decalogue

1. Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.
2. Never trouble another for what you can do yourself.
3. Never spend your money before you have it.
4. Never buy what you do not want, because it is cheap: it will be dear to you.
5. Pride costs us more than hunger, thirst, and cold.
6. We have never repented of having eaten too little.
7. Nothing is troublesome that we do willingly.
8. How much pain has cost us the evils, which never happened.
9. Take things always by their smooth handle.
10. When angry, count ten, before you speak: if very angry, an hundred.

Consider your most profound life experiences that gave you insight on your behavior. Now take some time to identify the most important rules and standards that have defined you and/or have been the most valuable to you in your life. Summarize them below:

Summary of Rules (personal committed actions or inactions):
Example: Do the hardest daily tasks first.
Example: I exercise 5 times every week.

Summary of Standards (authority-based committed actions or inactions):
Example: “I avoid swearing or using fowl language”.
Example: “I make and keep my commitments”.

Ponder the rules and standards that you current live by or espouse to live by. Answer the following questions by completing the following sentences up to 10 times:

One should always...
Example: Always pause before taking rash actions.
Example: Always give full effort without excuse.

One should never...
Example: Never take away other people's choices.
Example: Never give up on yourself or family...

After completing your rough list, identify the five most important rules & standards from each list and summarize them below:

Summary of Rules (personal committed actions or inactions):

Summary of Standards (authority-based committed actions or inactions):

My Philosophy of Engagement

Living Your Philosophy of Engagement
Choosing Your "One Thing"

Consider for a moment your personal Philosophy of Engagement… It is yours to give to your loved ones. But miraculously, upon discovering that you will live long and prosper, it's time to internalize this document and begin to live it every day of your life—even refine it from time to time to add new and important insights for yourself and for the benefit of others.

As you refine and review this document, consider the words of Benjamin Franklin within his own biography:

"…to acquire the habitutude of all these virtues, I judged it would be well not to distract my attention by attempting the whole at once, but to fix it on one of them at a time; and when I should be master of that, then to proceed to another; and so on till I should have gone through the thirteen…"

Therefore, as you consider the many factors that comprise your newly drafted document, consider which single factor you would like to live more intently. Now, declare the single belief, principle, attitude, perspective, quality, virtue, rule or standard that you would like focus on. Declare this "one thing" below:

Now clarify a daily ritual or routine that will support the long-term development and habituation of this new factor. Clarify a SMART Goal for mastering this aspect of your Philosophy of Engagement:

As you begin to develop these new habit patterns, identify your own method and strategy of review, re-focus, practice, and habit formation, such that you can live your Philosophy of Engagement to its full extent.

"Excellence is not something attained and put into a trophy case. It is not sought after, achieved and, thereafter, a steady state. It is a momentary phenomenon, a rare conjunction of body, mind, spirit at one's peak. Should I come to that peak, I cannot stay there. I must start each day at the bottom and climb to the top. And then beyond that peak to another and yet another."

— George Sheehan, M.D.

Sample Creeds

I do not choose to be a common man. It is my right to be uncommon...if I can. I seek opportunity – not security. I do not wish to be kept citizen, humbled and dulled by having the State look after me. I want to take the calculated risks; to dream and to build, to fail and succeed. I refuse to barter incentive for a dole. I prefer the challenges of life to the guaranteed existence; the thrill of fulfillment to the stale calm of Utopia. I will not trade freedom for beneficence, nor my dignity for a handout. I will never cower before any master nor bend to any threat. It is my heritage to stand erect, Proud and unafraid; to think and act for myself, enjoy the benefit of my creations, to Face the world boldly and say: 'This I have done.' All this is what it means to be an American.

— Theodore Roosevelt

My Purpose

To awaken each morning with a smile brightening my face;
To greet the day with reverence for the opportunities it contains;
To approach my work with a clean mind
To hold ever before me, even in the doing of little things,
The Ultimate Purpose toward which I am working;
To meet men and women with laughter on my lips and love in my heart;
To be gentle, kind, and courteous through all the hours;
To approach the night with weariness that ever woos sleep, and the joy that
Comes from work well done –
This is how I desire to waste wisely my days.

— Thomas Dekker

Ten Rules of Happiness

1. Develop yourself by self-discipline.

2. Joy comes through creation – sorrow through destruction. Every living thing can grow; use the world wisely to realize soul growth.

3. Do things which are hard to do.

4. Entertain up building thoughts. What you think about when you do not have to think shows what you really are.

5. Do your best this hour, and you will do better the next.

6. Be true to those who trust you.

7. Pray for wisdom, courage, and a kind heart.

8. Give heed to God's messages through inspiration. If self-indulgence, jealousy, avarice, or worry has deadened your response, pray to the Lord to wipe out these impediments.

9. True friends enrich life. If you would have friends, be one.

10. Faith is the foundation of all things – including happiness.

— David O. McKay

My Task

To be honest, to be kind:
To earn a little and to spend a little less:
To make upon the whole a family happier for his presence:
To renounce when that shall be necessary and not to be embittered:
To keep a few friends, but those without capitulation:
Above all, on the same grim conditions, to keep friends with himself –
Here is the task for all that man has of fortitude and delicacy.

— Robert Louis Stevenson

Ten Spiritual Tonics

1. Stop worrying. Worry kills life.
2. Begin each day with a prayer. It will arm your soul.
3. Control appetite. Over-indulgence clogs body and mind.
4. Accept your limitations. All of us can't be great.
5. Don't envy. It wastes time and energy.
6. Have faith in people. Cynicism sours the disposition.
7. Find a hobby. It will relax your nerves.
8. Read a book a week to stimulate imagination and broaden your view.
9. Spend some time alone, for the peace of solitude and silence.
10. Try to want what you have, instead of spending your strength trying to get what you want.

— Abraham L. Feinberg

My Symphony

To live content with small means

To seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather than fashion;

To be worthy, not respectable, and wealthy, not rich;

To study hard, think quietly, talk gently, and act frankly;

To listen to stars and birds, to babes and sages; with open heart;

To bear all cheerfully, do all bravely, await occasions, and hurry never.

In a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious, grow up through the common.

This is to be my symphony.

— William Ellery Channing

Resolution

Let then our first act every morning be to make the following resolve for the day:
I shall not fear anyone on earth.
I shall fear only God.
I shall not bear ill toward anyone.
I shall not submit to injustice from anyone.
I shall conquer untruth by truth.
And in resisting untruth I shall put up with all suffering.

— Mahatma Gandhi

My Creed

I would be true, for there are those who trust me:
I would be pure, for there are those who care:
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer.
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.
I would be friend to all – the foe, the friendless:
I would be giving, and forget the gift.
I would be humble, for I know my weakness:
I would look up – and laugh – and love – and lift.

— Howard Arnold Walter

Creed

I give thanks daily, not for more riches, but for wisdom with which to recognize, embrace, and properly use the great abundance of riches I have at my command.

I have not enemies because I injure no man for any cause, but I benefit all with whom I come in contact, by teaching them the way to enduring riches.

I have more material wealth than I need because I am free from greed and covet. Only the material things I can use while I live.

Napolean Hill. The Science of Personal Achievement, preface to Vol. 1, Napolean Hill Foundation.

— Napolean Hill

Formula for Success

To will is a great thing. for action and work follow will

And almost always work is accompanied by success

Will opens the door, work passes them, and success is waiting to crown one's efforts

These three things, will, work, and success, between them, fill human existence

— Louise Pasteur

"Two sets of three" philosophy of life

1. Never lie
2. Never cheat
3. Never steal

1. Don't whine
2. Don't complain
3. Don't make excuses

— Joshua Hugh Wooden (Father of John Wooden)

1. Be true to yourself
2. Help others
3. Make each day your masterpiece
4. Drink deeply from good books, especially the Good Book
5. Make friendship a fine art
6. Build a shelter for a rainy day
7. Pray for guidance, and count and give thanks for your blessings each day

"My dad believed that people should have a worthwhile and productive philosophy of life if they are to amount to anything."

— John Wooden

Yamas

A yama (Sanskrit), literally a “restraint”, is a rule or code of conduct for living virtuously. The yamas comprise the “shall-nots” in our dealings with the external world.

Ten Yamas are codified as “the restraints” in numerous scriptures including the Shandilya and Varaha Upanishads, the Hatha Yoga Pradipika by Gorakshanatha, and the Tirumantiram of Tirumular. Patañjali lists only five yamas in his Yoga Sutras.

The ten traditional yamas are:

1. Ahimsa: abstinence from injury, harmlessness, the not causing of pain to any living creature in thought, word, or deed at any time. This is the “main” yama. The other nine are there in support of its accomplishment.

2. Satya: truthfulness, word and thought in conformity with the facts.

3. Asteya: non-stealing, non-coveting, non-entering into debt.

4. Brahmacharya: divine conduct, continence, celibate when single, faithful when married.

5. Kshama: patience, releasing time, functioning in the now.

6. Dhriti: steadfastness, overcoming non-perseverance, fear, and indecision; seeing each task through to completion.

7. Daya: compassion; conquering callous, cruel and insensitive feelings toward all beings.

8. Arjava: honesty, straightforwardness, renouncing deception and wrongdoing.

9. Mitahara: moderate appetite, neither eating too much nor to little; nor consuming meat, fish, shellfish, fowl or eggs.

10. Shaucha: purity, avoidance of impurity in body, mind and speech.

(Note: Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras list Shaucha as the first of the Niyamas.)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia