

Principles

WES MAHLER

297 principles · 35 topics

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What's inside

35 topics, each with its own fern.

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About these principles

These principles are the result of many years of living, experimenting, writing, and reflecting. Through my own life and by learning from others, I've found that the shortest principles are often the easiest to remember and put into practice. This collection represents **some of the best** principles I've come up with so far.

They are still a work in progress. I hope they continue to evolve as I learn, grow, and discover better ways of living. I'd rather change my mind than hold onto an idea simply because I wrote it down. My goal isn't to create rigid rules, but to continually refine a principled way of living.

Many of these principles were developed and refined over several years, especially during my annual Think Weeks.

— Wes Mahler, wesmahler.com



Reality

22 PRINCIPLES

- ¹ Extraordinary results can be produced in life by improving decision-making based on accurate, truthful assessments of the reality in front of us.
- ² Reality can hit us hard when we're not aware of it — though that's not always a bad thing. We can learn from it.
- ³ Seek to understand and embrace the reality of our universe and life as they actually exist — not as an idealized or notional version of them — as best and as reasonably as we can.
- ⁴ How we're thinking about something is simply how we're thinking about it — we may be wrong, and it isn't reality itself.
- ⁵ Acknowledging that we may be wrong is the first step toward discovering what the actual reality is.
- ⁶ We come up with stories, interpretations, and beliefs about situations that we think are true, when they may not be — a lot of what we think is simply made up in our imagination.
- ⁷ Embrace the cold, hard truth that we don't know everything — and even when we think we know something, it can be hard to know for certain if it's true.
- ⁸ The easiest person to fool is ourselves.
- ⁹ Let go of the ego that cares about being right or wrong — with others or with ourselves. Care instead about discovering the truth of a matter, as accurately as possible, together with other people.
- ¹⁰ Seek out and engage with others who also seek to understand the realities of life, and who will work with you to find the truth of what's being discussed.
- ¹¹ Be humble, truthful, and honest — acknowledge to yourself and others that your expressed thoughts may or may not be the actual truth, and may be biased by a variety of factors.
- ¹² The same goes for everything shared here — this is, to the best of my knowledge, the most truthful and accurate representation of these principles I can present, but they may be wrong and in need of correction.
- ¹³ It can be difficult to receive feedback and accept being wrong. Try to get past that, and celebrate gaining a better understanding of what is.

- 14 Cherish those who can give you honest, sincere, truthful feedback in a kind, loving, and non-judgmental way — these people are rare.
- 15 As hard as we try, we may not always learn the true reality of something we wish to know — it may present itself later, or never. Sometimes we can't know for certain, and that's life.
- 16 We can only act with the best knowledge we can gather at the time, and continue course-correcting as we gain a better understanding of the realities we're facing as time progresses.
- 17 The most effective dreams, visions, and goals are those that align our individual future desires with a strong understanding of how the reality of the universe works.
- 18 Your reality may differ from someone else's — seek to discover what the true, natural, universal reality actually is.
- 19 There is far more we don't know than what we know.
- 20 Question our thoughts, and test our ideas by getting out of our own heads and gathering feedback from the outer environment.
- 21 Producing tangible results in this world requires producing results in a reality that actually exists — not something made up only in our minds.
- 22 Understand, embrace, and work within reality to produce real results for yourself and your life.



Dream

6 PRINCIPLES

- 23 Allow yourself to dream up what's possible for yourself and your life.
- 24 No matter how crazy or impossible it may seem to yourself or others at the time, give yourself the freedom to dream what could be possible.
- 25 Dreams are an important part of the creative process — the beginning of what could become something spectacular.
- 26 We won't bring every dream into reality, and that's okay and normal — even the most successful people have dreams they never accomplished.
- 27 What matters is to keep dreaming, and when one calls to us, take notice and try to bring it into reality.

- 28 Regardless of whether we succeed at bringing our dreams into reality, it's arguably better to have dreams than to have none at all.



Change

8 PRINCIPLES

- 29 One thing we can be most certain of is that the future carries with it many uncertainties. This is the reality.
- 30 Practice peacefulness in the face of uncertainty, or risk living in constant fear of the unknown future.
- 31 Develop a deep resolve — strength, ability, and belief — to work through the changes the future will certainly bring.
- 32 Things are changing all the time — they always have, and always will.
- 33 Some things don't change — identify those over a lifetime, and become a master at dealing with the recurring things that stay constant.
- 34 Sometimes the most effective thing is simply to focus on being the best at the things that don't change, since they'll always be there.
- 35 Be willing to change — especially as we age, since staying flexible and adaptable is one of the qualities of youth, or the lack of it.
- 36 Be willing to let go of who we were, to become who we want to be.



Authenticity

19 PRINCIPLES

- 37 Be yourself. This is way easier said than done. It's a practice.
- 38 One of the top regrets of the dying is living a life of what others expected of them, instead of a life true to themselves.
- 39 Explore what it means to live your own, authentic, self-expressed version of who you are.
- 40 Know yourself.

- 41 Understand who you are — your roots, what you're like, your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, challenges, what excites you, your vices, and everything meaningful about yourself. Understand who you aren't too, as uncomfortable as that may be.
- 42 Be real with yourself when reflecting on who you are and are not. There will be opportunities to change — the person to be most honest with is yourself.
- 43 It's difficult to be honest with yourself, if you're not honest with others.
- 44 It's difficult to be honest with others, if you're not honest with yourself.
- 45 Living an honest, self-expressed, authentic life can be incredibly freeing — free of the heavy burden of constant fear that comes with trying to be someone we're not.
- 46 As we age, we tend to carry more burdens we're ashamed or embarrassed of — these do nothing but drain our psychic energy and pull us further from what we actually want.
- 47 Accept the reality of who we've really been, for whatever has or hasn't happened in our life.
- 48 Authenticity can be difficult to find in others, but it can be found.
- 49 Realize that everyone has their own disappointments in life — many will never be revealed to you.
- 50 We're conditioned to try to look good to everyone else, for fear of looking bad. It could also be said that showing our full selves — the good and the bad — is, in itself, its own way of trying to look good.
- 51 You've likely already, without much thought, weighed the risks of sharing yourself fully with others. Consider them deliberately, and compare how truly risky it is against the outsized fear we build up around it. Weigh the rewards too — not just for the other person, but most importantly, what it helps you become.
- 52 Sharing our authentic self may bring criticism and disconnection from some — but it can also create new, profoundly deep connections with others. The latter is what matters most.
- 53 Cherish those who share themselves fully with you — it takes courage to do that. Deep conversations are possible with these people; explore sharing fully with them too.
- 54 An authentic and free life allows us to blossom in the most unimaginable ways possible, because we have nothing holding us down.
- 55 Embrace the reality of ourselves — including all the good and bad that comes with it.



Vision

15 PRINCIPLES

- 56 Focus on what you want.
- 57 Invest your energy in thinking, writing, and reflecting on what it is you want.
- 58 Create powerful visions for anything meaningful that you're desiring to fulfill in the future. The clearer and more detailed the vision, the better.
- 59 Vision what it looks like before, during, and after whatever it is you want to be, do, or have.
- 60 You may not always get what you want, and that's okay — the practice of living a life pursuing what you want is worth it in itself.
- 61 Be careful what you wish for — you may get exactly what you wanted, and realize shortly after that it wasn't really what you wanted after all.
- 62 It's equally important to invest time thinking about what you don't want — what we want often brings unintended consequences we never considered. Think about them ahead of time.
- 63 Being clear about what we don't want can matter more than what we want — it helps clarify what we do want, which is often simply the opposite.
- 64 When you get what you want, celebrate.
- 65 Celebrate having a vision in the first place, and celebrate recreating it each time — your life and its vision are worth celebrating.
- 66 Over time, navigate a path toward what you want by sincerely facing the truthful realities of your future — the hard work, opportunities, and challenges that come with it.
- 67 Refine your vision as needed.
- 68 Find ways to experience your vision. Make it feel real.
- 69 Close your eyes: see it, hear it, feel it, smell it, taste it, believe it, experience it — as if it's here with you right now. Make it feel real, if only for a moment, and return to that experience often. It makes a difference.
- 70 It's not nothing — it's something. Over time, may you come to understand the power of the subconscious mind, and how to make it work for you.



Pain

11 PRINCIPLES

- 71 As hard as we try to navigate life in the best possible way, it's likely inevitable that the universe will deliver some very harsh realities to us.
- 72 Embrace the reality that we'll almost unavoidably experience extraordinarily difficult moments of pain, challenge, and adversity in our lives.
- 73 We can't always control what happens to us — we can only control what we do about it.
- 74 It's not about the event that occurred — it's the mental story, belief, and interpretation we form about what it means, which can either empower or disempower us going forward.
- 75 Pain can become our greatest teacher in life, bringing with it the most profound lessons life can offer.
- 76 Pain can also become an increasingly heavy burden — especially when it's tied to a mistake we've made, failed to learn from, and kept repeating, with more anguish added each time.
- 77 Knowing we'll experience pain in life, what makes the extraordinary difference is building a practice of reflecting on it, learning from it, and developing new ideas and principles for navigating similar situations going forward — without that practice, we're destined to repeat the same mistakes.
- 78 Capture the pain — clear your mind about what's so painful, and what it is, in writing. Then, once that's exhausted, go further and write the exact opposite in vivid detail, and focus on that as best you can, since that's ultimately what we want.
- 79 All emotions are beautiful, and pain can be one of them. Be with the pain — spend time with it, think about it, reflect on it — and ultimately choose the next meaningful emotion to tap into.
- 80 With practice, we get better at reflecting on pain, and can eventually experience it with gratitude — knowing the profound, positive lessons it gives us once we're through it.
- 81 Embrace a healthy respect for pain, and for managing and dealing with it — it will show up in our lives, we can be sure of that.



Vocabulary

6 PRINCIPLES

- 82 Our words are defined by other words in our vocabulary.
- 83 As we grow our vocabulary, so grows our ability to more clearly think, define, and describe whatever we're involved with.
- 84 You'll be a professional in your field when you can speak the distinct vocabulary specific to what you do.
- 85 Improve your vocabulary of words for all important areas in your life.
- 86 It's a profound experience to clearly articulate, to yourself and others, your reality — using the most effective words to describe it.
- 87 The more precisely we can describe our reality — using the specific vocabulary that best fits the situation — the more clarity we get on how to deal with it.



Anger

3 PRINCIPLES

- 88 Anger, like all emotions, has a place — but be wary of it.
- 89 Being consumed by anger, even briefly, can quickly exhaust our energy — costing far more lost time than the time actually spent angry.
- 90 Be mindful when you're triggered into anger, and find effective ways that work well for you to handle it.



Clearing

11 PRINCIPLES

- 91 Without clearing our minds, our brains quickly become cluttered with repetitive thoughts — unresolved feelings, relationship conflicts, issues, tasks, ideas, and other draining items.
- 92 Clearing allows us the possibility of regaining our clarity and our free mind.

- 93 While it's useful for our minds to remember something, dwelling on the same thought over and over, getting nowhere new, becomes an exhausting waste of energy.
- 94 Spend time identifying what's on repeat in your mind, and find the most effective way to get it out.
- 95 Move repetitive thoughts down onto paper — it immediately frees space in the brain, which recognizes the thought has been recorded.
- 96 Often, once we write down what's on our mind, we realize it's much simpler and shorter than it felt — compared to the endless, tangled mix of thoughts it was in our head.
- 97 Clear the air with other people, ideally directly — be upfront and honest about any unresolved issues, feelings, or conflicts that keep persisting in your mind when you see them.
- 98 If you can't clear the air directly with someone, the next best thing is to write it down, get your mind clear about it, and send it to them if possible.
- 99 The mind doesn't need to work as hard repeating itself once a thought has been clearly written down or said to others and is already out.
- 100 We can't think well when we're not clear — we want to think clearly.
- 101 A clear mind is helpful in almost every way imaginable moving forward.



Journaling

9 PRINCIPLES

- 102 A life well lived is generally a life well reflected on and improved over time — journaling provides that practice of self-reflection.
- 103 Being able to look back at ourselves, our lives, and our thought process from an outside perspective gives us a profound self-awareness that becomes deeply empowering over time.
- 104 Our writing can be one of the most significant pieces of treasure to be passed down to friends and family upon our passing.
- 105 One of the best ways to understand who we've been and who we are is by reviewing our writing from various points in our life — especially the most difficult ones.

- 106 In its simplest form, journaling can just be recording the date, time, place, and a single word that comes to mind — once that first word is down, it's easier to flow into more.
- 107 There's no right or wrong way to journal, no absolute musts or don'ts — what matters most is clearing our mind and capturing it in writing.
- 108 Come to the journal during periods that are difficult, wonderful, or when nothing much is going on at all. Come when the mind is challenged, excited, or free — it doesn't matter. Come whenever you choose.
- 109 What matters is keeping it with you over time. A journal's purpose is to serve you, and only you — unlike other media, it has no conflicting interest other than letting you be yourself.
- 110 The most important books in your library will likely become your own collection of journals over time — their importance can't easily be replaced.



Sincerity

7 PRINCIPLES

- 111 Be truthful and honest with others. Mean what you say.
- 112 What you say has meaning — make it count.
- 113 Sharing sincere, direct feedback with others gives them the chance to more clearly see a better reality, without being misled.
- 114 It can be challenging to practice sincerity with others, but it's worthwhile to try, and it can be done in loving, kind ways.
- 115 Allow others to be sincere with you.
- 116 Spend time developing relationships that feel safe and encourage others to be sincere with you — and share why that matters to you.
- 117 Profound relationships can be built over time between two people who are sincere with each other in all their interactions together.



Integrity

20 PRINCIPLES

- 118 Without integrity, nothing works.
- 119 It's of critical importance, over the course of a life, to live with integrity, for what it can create for ourselves and our lives.
- 120 Having integrity doesn't mean being rigidly stuck to our words forever, without change — it's the practice of honoring our words as best we can.
- 121 It's inevitable we'll fail to accomplish what we said we'd do, especially when we try to play a big life. When that happens, we restore our integrity by honoring our words.
- 122 Honoring our words means being sincere in what we say — and when something doesn't happen the way we said it would, acknowledging it to ourselves and others, then resetting expectations. That's what restores integrity.
- 123 Setting expectations, forgetting them, and never coming back to them — without having met them — is a complete disregard for integrity.
- 124 A lack of integrity erodes trust between ourselves and others — it's rarely forgotten, and over time it erodes how we and others believe in us.
- 125 Restore integrity quickly when out of integrity.
- 126 Restore integrity with yourself, and others.
- 127 It's uncommon for people to actually restore integrity with others — do it, and people will come to deeply admire and respect you for it.
- 128 Cherish those who spend the energy to restore their integrity with you and create new, empowering possibilities for the relationship — these are rare people, and profound relationships can be built with them.
- 129 Take stock of your integrity across different matters by writing down all the expectations you've set — for yourself and others — and where you stand in keeping them.
- 130 If you don't even remember the expectations you set for yourself and others, start by acknowledging you forgot — and that you don't know how much you've forgotten. Then reset everything and start over.
- 131 Staying in integrity requires remembering everything, big or small, that we've said we'd do.

- 132 It's a mistake to write off small broken commitments as inconsequential — the small task isn't what matters, it's the erosion and distrust it creates in our word. That's a big deal.
- 133 Strive to be a person of integrity in all areas — it's not something you pick and choose who, what, or when to apply. You're either a person of integrity, or you're not.
- 134 One of the most common challenges we face is committing to too many things at once — more than we can maintain integrity with simultaneously.
- 135 It's prudent to regularly remove the things we can't actually do at the same time, freeing us up to restore integrity by focusing on the few things that matter most.
- 136 Maintaining integrity with a few things is easier than many.
- 137 With our integrity whole, intact, and working effectively, it's far easier to move forward and create extraordinary possibilities for ourselves and our lives.



Identity

8 PRINCIPLES

- 138 Our identity can change over time, sometimes bringing anguish with it — facing the reality that we're no longer that.
- 139 Our identity does not define who we are.
- 140 Our identity does not define our self-worth.
- 141 We're much more than a single identity — we carry many identities, whether or not we're aware of them.
- 142 It's a grounding practice to distill our identities down into the deeper, more rooted essence of who we really are.
- 143 Our outward-facing identities may change over time, but our deeper, rooted identity — who we truly identify as — can stay with us for life, continually mastered over time.
- 144 Cultivate a relationship with our deepest, rooted identity — it empowers all the other, outward-facing identities when they're at play.
- 145 It's important to establish healthy identities for ourselves and our life.



Purpose

9 PRINCIPLES

- 146 Aligning any of our identities with a clear purpose for why we choose to be who we are clears the path toward a powerful way of experiencing life.
- 147 Developing a profound, deep, and sincerely meaningful purpose may take time.
- 148 Some are fortunate to know their purpose early in life. For others, it doesn't come, and that's okay — be patient, it'll arrive over time as you become more self-aware of what matters most to you.
- 149 Purposes can be discovered at any age.
- 150 Purpose can change over time — have peace when adjusting to that change.
- 151 When a purpose is no longer what we're focused on, for whatever reason, it's important to acknowledge it and move on. That's okay.
- 152 Purpose doesn't always have to be so serious — it can be joyful, fun, and pleasant. Design whatever purpose feels in true alignment with who you are and how you want to be.
- 153 Find ways to effectively share your purpose with others — it creates the opportunity to build partnerships with those who share the same one.
- 154 Finding and creating with others who share similar values and purpose can produce some of the most amazing experiences work has to offer.



Forgiveness

16 PRINCIPLES

- 155 Left unresolved, resentment has enough toxic energy to drain our psychic energy over the entire course of a life.
- 156 A practice of forgiving lets us let go of that energy drain, hopefully bringing us nearer to closure.
- 157 Forgiving doesn't mean we don't hold others — or ourselves — accountable for what happened. It's possible to both hold accountability and forgive.

- 158 Forgiveness becomes more sincere when we develop deep empathy for humanity as a whole — understanding that no one, including ourselves, is perfect, and everyone makes mistakes.
- 159 While it can be more profound to share forgiveness directly, it's also okay to forgive someone in our heart, body, and mind alone — whatever the reason, it may simply not be feasible to reach them.
- 160 We can forgive those here with us and those who aren't — those we may never see again, or who have already passed away.
- 161 Forgiveness can set us free of the encumbrances of the past — though it isn't easy, and it's a practice.
- 162 Some experiences are so hurtful that resentment and anger persist even after practicing forgiveness — that's okay and normal, which is why it's a practice, and sometimes it takes a lifetime of forgiving to finally feel free.
- 163 Forgive not just for what it does for others, but, most importantly, for what it does for our own mental well-being.
- 164 Often, the person we need to forgive the most is ourselves.
- 165 Forgive yourself for the mistakes you've made and any resentments you carry about yourself — you're not perfect, no one is. What matters is acknowledging it, forgiving the mistake, holding yourself accountable to learning from it, and moving on as a better version of yourself in the next moment.
- 166 Accept that you, and everyone else, will make mistakes — that's the reality of life.
- 167 Practice forgiveness, and practice it often — daily if need be. You'll likely find a moment of relief each time you do.
- 168 Life is too short to hold onto resentment for the whole of it.
- 169 Forgive the small things, forgive the big things — a forgiveness practice can start with the smallest of acts, if that's what it takes.
- 170 Forgiveness is one of the best ways to find peace for yourself and your life.



Measuring

2 PRINCIPLES

- 171 Whatever is watched and measured, can be improved.
- 172 Watch and measure what's most important, most often.



Understanding

6 PRINCIPLES

- 173 Seek to discover the truth in the matter, as best as possible.
- 174 Seek first to understand others, then be understood.
- 175 Be curious, ask questions, and seek the truth.
- 176 It's more important to seek understanding than to try to look good by not asking and never fully understanding.
- 177 Show others you understand them by reflecting back what they said and how they said it — see that they acknowledge you've understood them.
- 178 The ability to help others feel understood will help you realize whether you're being understood by them too.



Assuming

5 PRINCIPLES

- 179 Proceed with caution when making decisions based on assumptions that you don't know to be actually true.
- 180 Proceed with even greater caution when a decision depends on several assumptions that all have to be true for it to succeed.
- 181 Acting on a single assumption can be risky enough — stack a few more on top of it, and we're suddenly even more likely to be wrong.
- 182 It's safe to assume a lot of our assumptions may be flat-out wrong.
- 183 It's all about the accuracy of your information — making the best decisions in life generally relies on having the most accurate, truthful information to base them on.



Compassion

3 PRINCIPLES

- 184 Be open to the possibilities of others, without completely limiting them based on past experience — be mindful of how past relationships shape our future ones.
- 185 It's often difficult for people to change. It's certainly possible — but it's generally best not to count on it happening.
- 186 There's always a possibility people can change — it may not happen, or seem like it never will, but it's hard to write off entirely, because the future is never fully certain.



Resolution

14 PRINCIPLES

- 187 It's inevitable that we'll have conflicts with other people throughout our life — what matters is how we resolve them.
- 188 When an issue arises with another person, try to resolve it directly with them first, before bringing it up to others.
- 189 If you're unable to resolve it directly with them, try bringing someone else into the conversation and working through it together.
- 190 If you're unable to talk with the other person and must discuss it with others, avoid the trap of talking negatively about them when they're not in the room, especially in an unproductive way.
- 191 Talking negatively about others without any real intent to resolve the matter productively is drama, and it becomes a toxic behavior among people.
- 192 How we talk about people who aren't in the room is exactly how others will assume we talk about them when they're the ones not in the room. This will happen.
- 193 Whatever is said about someone not in the room should be consistent with what you'd honestly say to them directly — ideally with the intention of doing so, right after seeking guidance from another.
- 194 Become known as someone who, when something's unclear, brings it up directly rather than gossiping behind people's backs. This is critical, especially in social groups.

- 195 Difficult conversations are generally best resolved in person, or by video or audio — these higher-bandwidth conversations convey far more information than text or email, and give a quicker feedback loop between the people involved.
- 196 Try to stay in a disagreement and seek resolution, even when it's challenging. If you need a break, set clear expectations to revisit it later — and follow through.
- 197 Understand that the timing of a message can be as important as the message itself — sometimes more.
- 198 Understand there may never be a perfect time for the message — sometimes we have to convey it as best we can, even when it's incredibly inconvenient for us or them.
- 199 Reaching resolution isn't always possible, and that's okay — what matters is honestly giving it our best shot, being direct with the other person, and letting them try to resolve it with us too.
- 200 It's okay to sometimes agree to disagree — that's better than creating drama without giving the other person a chance at a real conversation.



Friendship

18 PRINCIPLES

- 201 Everyone's definition of what a friend is, is different.
- 202 People's definition of a friend changes over time.
- 203 It's important to realize there are different types and levels of friendship — understand what those mean to you.
- 204 To develop a profound friendship, it's critical at some point to understand what matters to them in a friendship — and equally important to share what matters to you.
- 205 Having intentional friendships creates meaningful bonds that can last a lifetime.
- 206 Friendships, like all things, change over time — two people may, intentionally or not, grow closer together, stay the same, or grow further apart.
- 207 Unless a friendship is tended to — intentionally sought after and discussed — it's not uncommon for it to fade out.
- 208 Know how and when to end a friendship that isn't working, especially once you've lost the faith and willingness to try to improve it.
- 209 We don't have to keep the same friends all of our life.

- 210 Not everyone wants to be our friend forever — life happens and changes all of us, including how we think about our friendships.
- 211 Be honest with your friends if you don't wish to spend as much time together, and why.
- 212 It's sometimes better to be alone than to stay in friendships that aren't good for our well-being — being alone creates space to find new ones.
- 213 Knowing we may lose friends in the future, it's important to keep developing new ones over time, so we still have some as we age.
- 214 One of the top regrets of the dying is not keeping in touch with friends as they aged. Remember this, and be intentional about staying in touch.
- 215 Cherish those who've been friends for long stretches of life, whether close or distant — it doesn't mean spending all our time with them, but don't take them for granted.
- 216 Acknowledge friends for who they are, and when they were there for you.
- 217 Meaningful friendships over the course of a life can bring immense gratification as we reflect back on fond memories as we grow old.
- 218 Friends may come and go for a variety of unexplainable reasons — celebrate them while you have them, they won't last forever.



Expectations

9 PRINCIPLES

- 219 A significant part of our experience with others is how well we manage expectations with them.
- 220 Whether intentional or not, expectations are being set every single day between ourselves and other people.
- 221 Setting expectations too high and delivering less can be seen as a negative — setting them low and far exceeding them can be seen as a positive.
- 222 It's generally best practice to under-promise and over-deliver — but it's still important to promise something worth receiving.
- 223 Sometimes it's best to not set any expectations at all.
- 224 Having no expectations can be empowering, disempowering, or neither — it depends on the situation.

- 225 Discover for yourself when it's best to set expectations, and when to not.
- 226 Set clear expectations with others — what it is, who's doing it, by when it's happening, and anything else relevant.
- 227 If the expectations you set were not met, be fast to reset expectations with them.



Channels

5 PRINCIPLES

- 228 Every form of communication channel has its pros and cons.
- 229 Understand the differences and nuances of each, and use the one that's most effective given your situation.
- 230 Low-bandwidth, one-way messages are often best for quick, real-time, shorter exchanges — but they're generally poor at resolving emotionally charged conflicts with other people.
- 231 Higher-bandwidth, real-time audio and video conversations allow a greater flow of energy — tone, volume, expression, and more — which is often necessary to make others feel not just heard, but seen and felt. Best for resolving conflicts and having fluid back-and-forth conversations.
- 232 A written record matters for any potential legal or business issue — you need evidence if you're going to make a future claim about something. That's the one downside of voice conversations: generally nothing is recorded, so it can't be relied on as evidence later.



Debt

4 PRINCIPLES

- 233 Match the type of financing to how long the borrowed money will actually be used — short-term debt for short-term uses, paid off once done; longer-term debt for needs that last longer. People get into trouble when they use short-term debt for long periods of time.
- 234 Use short-term debt for short-term deals that are less than 1 year long.
- 235 Use medium-term debt for medium-term deals that are between 1-5 years long.

- 236 Use long-term debt for long-term deals that are greater than 5 years long.



Cashflow

6 PRINCIPLES

- 237 Generally prioritize in this order: (1) positive cash flow, (2) cash and credit reserves, (3) insurance, then (4) additional capital for future investment.
- 238 Have enough cash flow to stay positive, with a healthy profit margin.
- 239 Have enough reserves to last at least 6+ months in case cash flow dies, which it can — 1.5+ years will help you last through an extended downturn.
- 240 Understand the difference between income, profit, and cash flow. Income doesn't mean much on its own; profit is hypothetical until it's actually collected as cash; cash flow is what you're actually collecting and earning. In many cases, cash flow is the most important of the three.
- 241 Having positive cash flow matters more than just having cash and reserves — cash can run out, but positive cash flow keeps you operational. A business can only be cash-flow negative for so long; it can be cash-flow positive forever.
- 242 It's often important to share more ownership and control in order to grow faster and increase the value of your equity — but be cautious giving up control, since losing the ability to decide what happens can also lead to a severe loss of value.



Insurance

2 PRINCIPLES

- 243 Have enough insurance to cover yourself in the event of an unrecoverable, but insurable, loss.
- 244 If you have enough money to self-insure, higher deductibles that reduce premiums can make sense — insure only for the most catastrophic events, and pay out of pocket for anything less.



Investing

15 PRINCIPLES

- 245 You can't grow a million dollars, if you can't even figure out how to grow a single dollar.
- 246 Put anything left over toward investing and keep saving — stay ready to invest when good deals come along.
- 247 It's important to understand the distinction between a short-term trader and a long-term investor, and to know when it's necessary to be one or the other.
- 248 Purchasing some assets can make you rich over time, while others can make you poor. Understand the difference between a good asset and a bad asset.
- 249 It's best to invest money you don't need.
- 250 The way to get rich through investing is to keep investing, and let compounding do its work.
- 251 It takes even more effort and higher returns to recover from a loss — avoiding losses in the first place can sometimes be the more effective way to grow your wealth.
- 252 Compounding unrealized gains is the fastest way to grow.
- 253 Borrow against unrealized gains to access cash without realizing those gains or paying tax on them.
- 254 It can be an extraordinary buy when an asset's replacement cost is higher than what it actually costs to purchase it.
- 255 Be a contrarian investor — purchase assets when people are selling, and dispose of them when everyone is buying.
- 256 When interest rates are low, asset prices will likely be pushed higher, and it can be a better time to sell investments.
- 257 When interest rates are high, asset prices will likely be lower, and it may be a better time to purchase investments.
- 258 The ability to time selling investments well comes down to how well-capitalized we are — our ability to hold through recessions and sell when the timing is right during expansions.

- 259 There are cycles in investing — a great investment will still go up and down in value over time, remember that. Mr. Market may offer you double one day and half the next; every day he presents a new offer. Remember this, and sell to Mr. Market when he's offering the most.



Real Estate

2 PRINCIPLES

- 260 We make money when we buy, not when we sell — if we buy right, we should already have upside and equity in the deal.
- 261 We don't hope for the market to go up — we make money on the buy, then add value to the property to make it more valuable. This is the way.



Banking

3 PRINCIPLES

- 262 Fiat currencies lose value over time because central banks can simply print more money, diluting purchasing power. Only hold enough cash to cover future wants and needs — invest any excess cash held for the long term in other assets, to reduce exposure to devaluation.
- 263 If cash is invested and liquidity may be needed later, choose assets that allow quick liquidity — either to sell, or to borrow against through loans or lines of credit, so you can access cash without selling the asset.
- 264 Banks are businesses like any other — sometimes they fail. Spread deposits across as many as necessary to reduce losses if any single bank goes down.



Borrowing

1 PRINCIPLE

- 265 Return what was borrowed — ideally in a timely manner, and in better condition than when it was borrowed.



Investor Relationships

1 PRINCIPLE

- 266 Every investor is different — determine what they need to feel comfortable and understand their investment, and provide it to them regularly.



Legal

3 PRINCIPLES

- 267 Always have a contract when dealing with any significant amount of money with others, even trusted partners — make it short if need be.
- 268 Act within the law, and strive to be as compliant as possible — it's necessary to grow a substantial business.
- 269 When dealing with potentially litigious situations, formalize any complaint against the opposing party in writing, with as much documentation as possible, to help yourself if a lawsuit follows.



People

3 PRINCIPLES

- 270 Many with great strengths often come with corresponding great weaknesses. Where there are peaks, there are often valleys.
- 271 Hire slow, fire quickly.
- 272 It's easier to find someone with what you want than it is to change someone. Generally, people resist change.



Personal Finance

2 PRINCIPLES

- 273 We're financially independent once our passive income exceeds our expenses and we're running positive cash flow.
- 274 Purchase used vehicles — buying new is generally a waste of money.



Other

23 PRINCIPLES

- 275 Live in rhythm with the natural cycles of the universe and life.
- 276 Build a real estate portfolio that's easy for lenders to finance, with returns that show healthy profit margins.
- 277 The best way to game is fully immersed, relaxed, and okay with whatever happens. Just have fun.
- 278 Practice gratitude before a meal, and take in the smells while you do.
- 279 Set an alarm for important events during the day, especially when you're meeting someone.
- 280 Be intentional about the people and communities we spend time with.
- 281 Eating vegetables first helps digest the proteins and carbs that follow, and keeps blood sugar — and energy — more stable.
- 282 Practice being joyful right now, instead of deferring happiness to what may happen in the future.
- 283 Protect one of our most important assets — health, mind, and spirit. Get that right, and almost everything else becomes possible.
- 284 Learn to seek out and embrace reality, so you avoid a painful "reality check" later on.
- 285 Time can lead to better decisions and more options. Without it, decisions get rushed and poorly thought through — that's the real cost of having no time.
- 286 Feeling rushed leads to poor decisions. Create space to think clearly, and better decisions follow.

- 287 Organizing what's in front of you now, while it's still fresh in your mind, saves more time later than it costs now.
- 288 The ultimate goal, at least for me, is a joyful, meaningful life — more important than any task or objective, since those only matter because they're in service of it. Focus on happiness and joy first.
- 289 Protect our greatest asset — health and vitality. Without it we can't do much; with it, we have the time and means to focus on what matters. That protection matters most exactly when we're under stress.
- 290 Ask good questions — ones that make you think. Some take real time to answer, so write them down and revisit them later, one at a time. Take a walk and focus on just one question.
- 291 Focus on one thing at a time. Ideally one that will make everything else easier or unnecessary.
- 292 Practice active, engaged reading — there's a difference between reading a book and getting the most from it. Mark it up: underline, use stickies for pages worth returning to, and flag questions to answer later.
- 293 There's more in life we can't control than we can. Accept that, and go with the flow of nature instead of fighting it — do your best, then let go. Fighting to control what you can't only leads to stress and suffering.
- 294 Life evolved from the salty oceans, and so did we — our bodies are roughly 70% water, essentially salt water we carry around.
- 295 Microbiomes evolved in the ocean — 99% of ours now live in our gut, a kind of capsule that carries that sea-life around inside us. Feed it well: a diverse range of quality foods to nurture what we carry.
- 296 Breathing, hydration (with enough salt), and sleep have the biggest impact on health, and take up more time than any other health habit. They're the foundation everything else is supplementary to — get them wrong and the rest won't matter as much.
- 297 There's a reason we die fastest without breathing, hydration, or sleep — in that order: we can survive far longer without food than without any of those three. They're the most foundational basics to master.



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