

This is the work of Karl Albrecht,

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We think they offer food for thought, ideas to consider as we progress through life.

## **The (Only) Seven Spiritual Principles We Need to Succeed**

Mindful awareness of these seven key concepts can help us grow.

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Some people call them spiritual laws, spiritual principles, spiritual truths—I sometimes call them spiritual strategies.

They're part of our approach to life—ways of being, doing, thinking, believing, behaving, and engaging with life that can enable us to live toward our highest potential. They're the “rules of engagement,” so to speak. And they're not “religious” in any particular sense.

Most human beings live pretty much mindlessly—on “autopilot” most of the time.

The more mindful we can become, the more aware we are of these higher truths as we “do business” with the world, the less we suffer, the more we grow, and the more meaning and satisfaction we can find in life.

These are seven key principles that I find especially helpful, and which I believe can serve as a foundation for successful living. They also serve well as daily affirmations in meditation and waking consciousness.

## **1. The Principle of Gratitude.**

Every day is a gift; every breath is a gift. We can take nothing for granted in this life. The experience of feeling grateful—generally, generically, and specifically—seems to clear away much of the petty, day-to-day crankiness so many of us experience—the feelings of annoyance, impatience, resentment, anger, indignation. There’s something very uplifting about filling yourself with a sense of gratitude, when you first open your eyes every day, as you go to sleep, and often in between. Gratitude for all you’ve received, and gratitude for all that *has not* befallen you.

## **2. The Principle of Humility.**

Humility may be one of the most misunderstood and underappreciated aspects of human experience. It doesn’t mean putting yourself below others, letting people “walk all over you,” or acting like you’re inferior or unworthy in any way. It just means being neutral—letting go of the need to place yourself above others. Far too much human energy gets squandered in the mindless striving for importance, getting “one-up,” trying to prove we’re richer, better, smarter, wiser, more clever, more capable, or more worthy than others. You don’t have to get drawn into ego-competition and status games with anyone.

Humility is amazingly liberating: you reclaim your creative energy and make it more available for your own growth.

We grow when we free ourselves of the need to feel bigger than others.

### **3. The Principle of Optimism.**

I'll spare you the customary clichés about glasses that are half-full and half-empty. I think of optimism, not as just a childish hope or belief that something good will happen, but as a proactive state of mind. For me, it's a bias toward acting in such a way as to cause good things to happen. A better platitude would be, "Things turn out for the best if you make the best of the way things turn out." It's a belief that many of the outcomes we seek are indeed in our own hands. We can't control all contingencies, but we humans are strategically minded creatures—we adapt our actions to reality as it unfolds to us.

So, never mind the slogans and clichés about "positive thinking." It's about positive *doing*. This version of optimism forms the very core of creativity, innovation, invention, and reinvention. Curiously, optimism is also a way of capitalizing on luck: the pioneer physician and researcher Louis Pasteur said, "Chance favours the prepared mind." Optimism stacks the odds of achieving what we want in our favour.

#### **4. The Principle of Generosity.**

One of the best antidotes for the crankiness, bitterness, resentment, loss of purpose, and self-pity that afflict so many people in their later years is to get them outside their narcissistic ego-bubbles and doing kind things for others. Hans Selye, the pioneer researcher in the field of stress, advised, “If you want to be happy and feel fulfilled, live in such a way as to earn the gratitude of your fellow human beings.” That old feeling of being the martyr, the victim, the one who always gets cheated, causes a person to feel diminished, defensive and reactive.

We feel larger, stronger, fuller, more engaged, and more effective by the simple act of giving to others. Handing your pocket change to the homeless person; offering someone the right of way in traffic when you don't have to; saying something nice to that waiter or store clerk who seems a bit weary and not enjoying life; doing small favors without being asked; greeting your sullen neighbor, even if he doesn't greet you back; showing others you care about them; saying please and thank you.

We grow when we give.

## 5. The Principle of Forgiveness.

Forgiving is also a very misunderstood and unappreciated aspect of living, probably even more than humility. “How can I forgive them, after what they did to me? What am I supposed to do, ‘turn the other cheek’ and let them do it again?” Forgiving is not about approving or condoning what someone has done—it’s about letting go of it. When we get caught up in vengeance, we attach ourselves to the source of our misery. We allow the tormentor to victimize us again. When we divert our precious life energy into anger, resentment, revenge, and retaliation, we give away parts of ourselves.

You might still decide to fire that person from your life, or go ahead with the lawsuit, but if you can do it calmly and without vengeance, you’ve revoked their influence over your emotional state. Just think of forgiveness as acting responsibly, and without malice. Forgiveness lets us reclaim our creative energy, channel it to healthier purposes, get on with life, and continue with our own growth.

We also grow when we *for-give*.

## **6. The Principle of Intention.**

As the old saying goes, “If you don’t know where you want to go, any road will take you there.” Passivity—the inability, or unwillingness, to make the big choices in life and act upon them—keeps many, many people “stuck in second gear.” Psychologist Eric Berne referred to it as “waiting in Destiny’s bus station.” Understanding the principle of intention means realizing that choosing something as a focus of your energy means not choosing lots of other things. Some people can immobilize themselves with the fear of making a wrong choice. Others may be apprehensive about the options they’ll have to give up.

But ultimately, not deciding is actually deciding. One can start with small decisions. Make them consciously, own them, and commit to them. Appreciate that they generally work out fine. Keep the bigger ones on your decision list, and train yourself to “just do it.” A well-formed statement of intent—the outcome you seek to bring about—can help you focus your attention and energy on the things that really count in your life.

## **7. The Principle of Expectation.**

The experts in positive psychology tell us, “There’s no success or failure in life. We get what we ‘program’ for.” That may be a bit extreme, but there’s a huge piece of truth in it. Success and failure are verbal propositions—evaluations the human mind attaches to experience. If you decide you want “A” and you end up getting “B,” why emotionalize the experience by saying “I failed”? Why not just say, “I wanted ‘A’ and I got ‘B.’ If I still want to get ‘A,’ then I’ll have to find a better strategy”?

Whether we realize it or not, we’re constantly “programming” outcomes in our lives. Part of success is just plain luck, and a big part of it is also intention and expectation. The clarity of your intention and the strength of your expectations come together to focus your attention and your energy on results. As the saying goes, “Your energy flows where your attention goes.”

You have a right to succeed in life. When you doubt yourself, or when you lose your sense of purpose, you tend to telegraph that to others. And when you have your eye clearly on the ball, you tend to declare that to others as well. Stress expert Hans Selye liked to say, “To make a great dream come true, you must first have a great dream.”

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More information can be found at - [Karlalbrecht.com](http://Karlalbrecht.com)