

PRINCIPLES ARE YOUR SCAFFOLDING

You could build a building by throwing some sand and dirt around, creating a small hovel. That's what humans did in the earliest years of our civilisations. You could make it more stable by adding some water to make it muddy, thus it would dry out to be stronger. You could make it stronger still, by adding some long grass and sticks to add a bit more structure to it.

In the modern age, we use scaffolding made of giant steel beams and rebar. That's how we scaled it up to make the buildings not only last longer, but encompass more, making more dreams come to life.

In our lives our **principles** are our scaffolding. Using them in our lives can make stronger, more encompassing businesses and families alike. Principles are the rules and behaviour by which we live our lives. It's basic and essential element of our world view and values. These, naturally, are reflected in both the people that we choose to be around and the business we build.

Defining Your Principles

Principles are for helping people with that happen over and over again in similar situations. Things like buying equipment, seeking suppliers (and staying with them or leaving), hiring or not hiring people, and even if you'll accept a project. Principles can help you define your entire work culture. It goes beyond ethics into expectations.

Defining your principles takes a lot of reflection on your values as well as mistakes. You'll need to think independently, too. Thinking independently means they are your true values, not based on what other people have pressured you into.

EXAMPLE: My husband's primary concern in life is abundance. Abundance with both money in the bank and stuff. Over the years of being with him, I've started to sway to agree with abundance in financial terms, but not with physical things. His primary concern is not mine. I would still value flexibility over being weighted down by things. I'm sure in a few years, though, you'd not be able to tell that abundance is not one of my values.

Take a moment to **write down your values**. List all the values you can think of.

Life is full of mistakes. Reflect on one that you've made recently. What was it? What lesson did it teach you? How can you apply your values to the lesson as you move forward?

Being able to make a mistake, formulate your own lessons from what life hands you, and learn from the lessons is imperative to growth. It only works, though, if you apply the lesson to the next time you find yourself in a similar situation.

Let's not kid ourselves, though. Learning from the lessons also works best if you don't fantasise about the what-ifs. Embrace reality as it is, and the methods you apply will be all the more powerful.

Pain + Reflection = Growth

As we go through life we come across a lot of different scenarios. We need to be willing to learn from all experiences and apply the lessons.

The most important lessons usually have a lot of pain associated with them. But not all.

| Recently, I had a person ask me if I could do some science ghost writing for |
| them. They would provide all the research, the background literature, etc. All |
| they needed was someone to compile their notes into a paper form since they |
| didn't have time. It would be considered a rough draft that they would edit. |

| I was on the fence about accepting. It's not unethical since they technically did |
| all the work. I know of many undergrads that had to do this for their professors. |
| And, I really need the money to pay off student loans. The problem is that is |
| isn't in my area of expertise. |

| We went back and forth a bit, but in the end I decided that it wasn't a good fit. |

See, it isn't painful (except the fact that it will take longer to pay off student loans). But, it teaches me about accepting a project.

Think of a recent lesson you learnt. It could be painful or not. Write it down below.

Take look at that lesson. Why did you decide what you did?

I decided to not take the work because it wasn't in my area of expertise which would translate to more time and effort I'd have to spend on getting the wording acceptable for the client. I value providing a valuable exchange for people. This means a great service or product for them with minimal stress on my part.

Refine to State Your Principles

With any experience you have, you can refine the above exercise to state your principles. Each experience shows you how you can express your values through your decisions. Each decisions builds up to make a set of principles on one aspect of your life.

While I'm not experienced (yet) in doing a lot of project proposals when others approach me, I am experienced in hiring. We've gone through several cycles and many mistakes. I'm able to share with you my refined principle around this.

My principles are:

- ➔ Know the goals and the culture I'm aiming to build.
- ➔ Find the people who can work the way we need to right now.
- ➔ Give people with good character a chance, help them build the skills.
- ➔ Let go of those that can't adapt or are not hungry enough.
- ➔ Must have a high degree of integrity and honesty.
- ➔ Must be able to take criticism and DEAL criticism.

Each one of those bullet points came from one (or more) experiences with terrible colleagues.

Your Turn

Think of an area of your life where you've had repeated experiences. Start listing out all the lessons you've learnt. Then, bullet point your conclusions on how you can approach a similar situation in the future.

THAT is your principle scaffolding.

