



A RETURN TO HONOR

Become a Better Person & Build a Better World

by

SJKeystone

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575 pages, 179578 words

Introduction

Many people would say that as I write this we are living in a time of crisis. Here, in the United States, we have deep ideological and religious divisions amongst the populace that threaten our democratic government and our way of life.

I can tell you from my own personal experience that I feel a sense that things are barely holding together, and we grow nearer and nearer each and every day to some sort of collapse of our economic system, our infrastructure, our food supply, and our democracy itself. I personally have never felt this threatened before.

And on a worldwide scale we all face the very real impending damage that global climate change will do to our quality of life, economic systems, not to mention the millions of animals that will die and become extinct, and wildlands destroyed.

The Earth now has over 8 billion people living on its surface. Are there enough resources to feed all these people? How much damage will they do to our few remaining wild places when they cut down forests to build houses, farmland, and range to raise their cattle and other food animals?

And this is just touching the surface. Many other issues weigh on us, such as violent crime, recreational abuse of dangerous street drugs, prescription drug abuse, alcoholism, government corruption, lack-luster politically/religiously biased public and private educational institutions, a two-tiered justice system, income inequality, corporate influence over governance, government surveillance of its citizens, science denial, mass belief in conspiracy theories, pollution, pandemics, deforestation, willful ignorance, political parties becoming cults, massive groups of fact-averse ignorant citizens, insufficiently regulated capitalism that prioritizes profit over humane treatment of their citizens, extinction of hundreds of species of animals due to human activity destroying their natural habitats, and the list goes on and on.

Some of us have tried to persuade our governments to do something tangible about these issues by passing laws. And many of us have come away disappointed. And most of the world's government representatives are "hired" because they are winners of popularity contests¹ that we call "voting". Therefore, doing something unpopular, like asking people to eat different foods than what they're accustomed to, or to switch their vehicles to a different fuel source, can be

¹ It's worth stating the obvious here – good administrators, which is what most government jobs are, aren't the most extroverted and charismatic people – and that leads to loud, "good looking" extroverted people, including narcissists, psychopaths, and con-artists can have a leg up in an election, and prove that charisma doesn't necessarily make for good leadership or administrative skills.

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deeply unpopular which translates directly to having politicians lose their job. For this reason, we rarely see governments taking effective steps toward long-term problems, because they can negatively affect up-and-coming election.

For this reason, we really can't realistically expect our governments to do anything substantive about these problems. Remember that Albert Einstein famously said "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

There was a time when religious leaders, both of those from our local place of worship, and those on the world scale could influence individuals to change and improve their behavior – the holy book says that you shouldn't steal, so they'd reinforce that message.

At one time religion was so intertwined with government that a religious leader could force destructive persons to behave better with threats of an eternity burning in hell, or being excommunicated from the church. In extreme cases the church would torture or burn people to death or execute them in other disturbing ways².

Excommunication could devastate the lives of people at one time. People in the village or city would shun them, merchants would refuse to sell them food or other supplies, and no one would hire them or purchase their wares.

Thankfully those days are long gone. Some religions have transformed into a kind of entertainment³ - literally a show sometimes held in a former sports stadium - such as those that are seen on television by charismatic televangelists often preaching their Prosperity Gospel⁴.

Fewer and fewer people attend weekly services at their place of worship, so being shunned by their community is an empty threat. Add to this that many younger people find the existence of hell, and eternal suffering, to be a laughably ridiculous idea.

Add to this that religion is on the decline worldwide, and if it hasn't already happened, religious people will soon be a minority. So, in these times it seems that religion can't or won't do anything to resolve these big problems either.

Government passing laws, and religion threatening eternal suffering, and expulsion, were, for many years, the two institutions that could effectively control bad human behavior by saying 'no' to people and having them actually change their behavior. And as we've discussed, that really doesn't happen anymore.

² Often for crimes against the church's authority, rather than actual crimes as we know them today.

³ Ever think about the similarity between a church and a theater? Narthex = lobby, altar = stage, pews = seats, congregation = audience, vestments = costumes, service = performance, choir = orchestra, etc.

⁴ Also known as prosperity theology, the health and wealth gospel, the gospel of success, or seed faith, is a conservative Christian movement that teaches that faith, positive thoughts, and donations to the church lead to health, wealth, and happiness. It's often associated with Pentecostalism, evangelicalism, and charismatic Christianity.

So, I'd like you to visualize a three-legged stool, the kind you sit on. Imagine one of those legs being labeled LAW, and the other leg labeled RELIGION. As you know, a stool needs a minimum of three legs to remain upright and stable.

The third leg on that stool, historically speaking, was HONOR. The definition of this term has changed dramatically over the history of mankind, and in this book I will share with you that history, and provide a redefinition of honor to suit the new role that it could play in saving our civilization and the world. But for this portion of the book, I will give you a simplified and brief definition of Modern Honor:



Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.In other words, a fully honorable person does not need threats of eternal suffering or banishment, or fear of being caught by law enforcement or imprisoned because their behavior is *self-regulated*. They do the right thing because it's in their DNA, it's a personal code that they would never even consider breaking or bending. This is the highest and most noble form of personal responsibility.

**Modern Honor is the Ultimate in Personal Responsibility
It is the Bottom-Up solution to our Civilization's Greatest Problems.**

Our civilization has drifted away from even thinking about honor, nonetheless behaving honorably, that this may seem like a foreign concept to many.

Can you even imagine what it would be like to live in a world where you could determine if a person was honorable so you could completely avoid dishonorable people, and when doing business with, or having a relationship with a person who was honorable, you could be certain:

- They are not trying to deceive, cheat, steal from you, take advantage of, or harm you.
- They would do everything they've committed to do, without having to threaten them with lawsuits or law enforcement with 100% certainty that if something went wrong, they would do whatever it takes to make it right.
- That everything that they represent as fact is indeed true, yet they still may have their personal beliefs and opinions.
- That you could easily and comfortably have a conversation with them, and know that they would actually listen and attempt to understand what you were saying, they would respond in a way that is easy to understand and honest, but most importantly of all you can be confident they could be persuaded by evidence.
- Know their thought process is rational and logical, rather than emotional, and or based on bias, false beliefs or ideology.

I'm sure many of you are thinking that this is an impossible dream. A fantasy that could never come true. That people are deeply flawed and just aren't up to this kind of a challenge.

The good news is that people have done this before in the past and can do it again, and this book is the first step toward an honorable world.

In this book I will discuss the fascinating history of Honor, and the many different forms it has taken. Then I'll provide a more complete modern functional definition of Honor, one that is tailored to our current society and civilization.

Then I will describe how you can attain this personal state of honor. You'll learn:

- Communication skills, including how to speak and write clearly and concisely to maximize other people's ability to understand what you're saying.
- Listening skills, so you can not only listen, but actually hear what people are saying, and how to best understand what they're trying to convey.
- Thinking skills, so you can think rationally and logically whilst avoid common biases, assumptions, logical fallacies, and other traps that make us think and believe irrational and false things.
- Argumentation skills, so you can learn how to have civil, productive discussions to educate, correct, or resolve issues with others without it getting ugly.
- Commitment skills, so you can learn to keep every promise you make, and commit to things only once you've evaluated if you realistically can deliver on those promises, and what to do if things don't go as planned.
- Truth-finding skills, so you can develop a method to determine if something is true or false, so you can believe as many true things as possible.
- Social skills, so you can learn to be happier in part by actively finding and bringing positive, encouraging and honorable people into your life, and getting rid of negative, cynical, and dishonorable people.
- Community skills, so you can learn that you rely on others to survive and prosper, and how to reasonably contribute to your community, and be willing to accept the many benefits it may provide.

You are about to embark on a journey of self-discovery, and yet a journey that will affect everyone around you.

Much of what you learn you will intuit as being "obviously right" but you will also likely struggle with some of these truths. Personal growth is rarely easy, but it's always worth it - together we can get through this.

“If you do not change direction, you might end up where you are heading.”
— Lao Tzu

**“It doesn’t matter how strong your opinions are.
If you don’t use your power for positive change, you are indeed part of the problem.”**
— Coretta Scott King

**“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old,
but on building the new”**
— Socrates

**“The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world
are the ones who do.”**
— Steve Jobs

A Few Words about Repetition

This book is designed to double as a reference guide. If you read through it, you might find quite a bit of repetition. This is intentional to allow anyone to go directly to the subject of interest and get all the information they need without having to look up words or hunt around in the text to find definitions.

A Few Words about Quotes

In this book you'll read many quotes from many famous and some not so famous people. I hope that you find them to be as inspirational as I have.

Although I made an effort to use quotes primarily from people that would be considered honorable, there are certainly those who are honorable only in one particular area but not in others.

And there are also people who were honorable at one point or another in their life, and then they've undergone some kind of life-change which has left them, from a perspective of history, to be perceived as dishonorable.

I have, intentionally, not excluded any quotations because the person who said those words was in some way less than perfect, or has changed for the worse. Those changes do not diminish the wisdom of their words which I have shared with you here.

None of us are perfect, and we all make mistakes now and then. Making mistakes is part of being human, and actually an important part of your lifelong journey to become as honorable as possible.

“I’ve failed my way to success.”
-Thomas A. Edison

Preface

I grew up in the 1960's and '70s in Southern California. I was painfully shy back in those days, in part because I was overweight and initially more comfortable speaking Spanish than English.

I did well in school and was particularly fond of science and mathematics. I threw myself into my school work because it allowed me to avoid some of the many social obligations outside of school that made me uncomfortable.

With my adult eyes I can see that I was quite the introvert. At the time I would have said that people around me were far too loud, emotional, and sure did a lot of talking even though they had nothing to say.

Looking back, all seemed like an uncomfortable blur. I didn't think that I "belonged" in any way, with any group, and mostly tried to keep to myself. It occurred to me that I *could* possibly fit in with the many cliques and groups around me, but I'd have to pretend to be something that I wasn't, and even then, I realized that was no way to live.

Back when I was in elementary school, one day I tuned into a television show that changed my life forever... the original Star Trek.

When in my real life I was surrounded by bullies, street gang members, angry and often drunk adults, and a society that seemed insane, this television show showed me a fictional society that actually made sense to me.

I loved that, in the fictional world of Star Trek, exploration, science and cooperation were the primary goals. There was no money, poverty, and violence only happened when all other options were exhausted.

Remember, that for the first 14 years of my life, a lot of what I saw on television was coverage of the Vietnam war. I watched the news as they showed death and destruction that seemed meaningless, and I saw my father's frustration when he shouted at the television and pounded his fists when he watched the news every evening. After seeing not much more than war and violence on television, the Star Trek universe seemed like such a lovely alternative.

There were two characters that I was most compelled with, and yet they were in many ways opposites: Captain James Kirk and Commander Spock. I truly admired Spock's vast intelligence, unflappable, unemotional, and highly logical personality. Again, I thought people in the real world were all far too dramatic and emotional, and Spock seemed just the opposite. Spock's love of science inspired me.

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And yet I also found Kirk to be incredibly appealing. I liked how confident he was. I liked how he was a good person, yet often bent the rules in order to do what was right, regardless of what the Federation required. I wished I had 1/10 of the confidence that he had.

However, I was equally fascinated with the ship's computer. The notion of having all of the known universe's knowledge at your fingertips, available by only asking for it appeal to me very much.

Through most of my childhood computers were large expensive machines only seen in major businesses and scientific laboratories so all I could really do was read about them at the public library.

On June 10th 1977, just before my birthday, personal computer industry sprang to life in my life changed forever.

Even though my family was large, and definitely low income, I worked hard, and begged borrowed and stole (not really) to finally put together the nearly \$3,000 to buy myself an Apple][personal computer with a floppy drive.

I taught myself how to program, and within a few months I was publishing my own video games.

When I was still in my early twenties, I was hired by a major entertainment software company in California, and without hesitation I packed up my few belongings, move to a new city far from home, and started in earnest my video game career.

It was in for a baptism by fire. I had to learn what it was like to be an employee, and work on projects largely driven by marketing and profit, rather than technology, creativity or how they benefited people. I had to learn how to work with others. However, during this time I was highly motivated to learn these social skills because they would allow me to pursue my passion in creating video games.

Walking the halls of this video game company I was introduced to one of my heroes after another - people who had created some of the coin operated video games that I most loved. I was starstruck!

When the pixie dust had finally settled to the floor, I got down to meeting my coworkers, and team members. I fully understood that this was something I couldn't do alone. My goal was to understand these talented people, understand how they thought, and understand how best to communicate with them with the hope of collaborating with them. This began my crash course at the University of Hard Knocks in learning how to deal with people.

There were a number of different personalities that I encountered. There were a few folks that were very gentle, soft-spoken, humble, and yet very good at what they did. Others were defensive, paranoid, difficult to deal with but also very good at what they did. Then there were a

few folks that were jerks, some seemed like had substance abuse issues, and others obviously had issues with their ego. And, of course, there were a few people who refused to work, and spent most of their time complaining.

What I learned about myself was that I had the ability to be something of a chameleon. I found that by changing my behavior and attitudes on the fly, I could deal with each person in a way that produce the smoothest communication, least conflict, and best productivity toward getting the job done.

I didn't really become lost as a person, as I hadn't yet established who I was. I was raw cookie dough, as my therapist once told me. Too young, too inexperienced, and perhaps too shy to have really figured out what I wanted to do in life, or even had any clue what my likes and dislikes were.

If you're thinking to yourself -- this guy sounds like a codependent, you are correct. For much of my life I put the happiness and well-being of others ahead of my own. I was conflict averse in the biggest way - I would do or say anything to avoid angering somebody, having them become emotional in any way, or getting into an argument. Thankfully I'd was to make progress in overcoming those tendencies in later years.

One of the most pivotal relationships at this particular point in my life was with an electronics technician who I'll will call Katie. Katie dressed in jeans and a plaid shirt and what looked like army boots. She wore no makeup, and had a hairstyle that could only be described as inspired by Moe Howard from The Three Stooges.

I tried to make friendships while at this job. I noticed when I worked with women that I thought I might share interests with and wanted to form a friendship, and I asked them if they'd be interested in hanging out in a non-romantic way, they would often respond by telling me about their husbands or boyfriends or children as if that's somehow would prevent a platonic friendship in their life⁵. This confused me – even then I had come to appreciate that having more than one person to talk to in your life, would enrich a person.

Perhaps I was naive, but I thought that friendships could be healthy and supportive without having the potential for romance, or intimacy being an obstacle to that.

This was different with Katie. I asked her to play racquetball with me, because I had overheard her talking about how much she liked that particular sport, and she simply said "yes". No excuses, stories about boyfriends, excuse making, or complaining – just a delightful and honest "yes".

Katie and I became fast friends, and would often have lunch together, spend time together during breaks, and even play racquetball on the weekends. I found her to be delightful. There

⁵ This was in the early 1980's – things were different then.

was no sexual tension, no expectations for me to say the right things at the right times and the right way. There was no endless guessing what she wanted. We were just two human beings enjoying each other's company.

After some years of being best friends, well after the point that my coworkers were certain that she and I were dating, or perhaps even close to marriage, I had invited her over to my apartment for lunch which gave me an opportunity to practice my cooking skills but mostly an opportunity to ask her a question that had been on my mind for some time.

I asked her if she was in some kind of romantic relationship and if so, why was our friendship not a threat to that. I was eager to learn.

What she said next was something completely new to me. She told me that although physically a woman, she had no sexual drive whatever. She had never had sex, and had no interest in it. She had been taken to doctors as a teen, and seen doctors as an adult in regards to the issue, and was told that there was nothing physically wrong with her - they described her as asexual, or "frigid"⁶. But she was perfectly happy being who she was, and she was equally delighted that I was in a relationship with her without having any expectations.

She described previous attempts at friendship from her perspective - being met with aggravation and anger because of her unwillingness to have sex.

I was preparing our lunch, so I turned back to the gourmet feast in progress, and casually asked her if she had typical female physical attributes, such as developed breasts, vagina, etc.

I heard some shuffling, and then she said to me "Why don't you look for yourself?"⁷

I turned around and she was standing completely naked in my living room. She seemed completely unashamed, and didn't seem to realize how unusual this was.

I can confirm that she was biologically a woman. What she had told me made a lot of sense, and explained a lot of what had happened in the many months that we had been best friends.

She treated sexuality in the same way a young child might... "Eew! Gross!"

I urged her to get dressed, we ate lunch, and from that day on my perception of humanity had shifted slightly -- Katie was a perfectly wonderful human being, and had every right to be who she was, and to be content being that way, and deserved to be treated to be treated fairly and as an equal.

⁶ An outdated medical term that meant "abnormally averse to sexual intercourse" - used especially of women

⁷ I know it sounds like a pick-up line, but she meant it innocently, and literally.

Comments that people had made in the months prior ran through my head. "Why are you dating a lesbian?", "I see what you're doing, you're trying to get her to play on the right team!", "I've noticed how you two look at each other, when are you going to pop the question?", "Maybe you can talk to some sense into her, and get somebody to teach her how to dress and how to put on her makeup properly.", "Is she going to be wearing her lesbian uniform to your wedding?"

Until that day I had brushed off comments like these and some much more bigoted. But now I saw them in a different light, as I saw that they were actually an indictment of her character, people thinking that they knew better, they knew the "correct" way for her to look, and the correct way for her to act - as if she was wrong somehow. These people were convinced that somehow they knew better than Katie did, who she really was. My mind struggled to imagine the casual arrogance, privileged normalcy, and disrespect these people nonchalantly spewed.

From that point forward, when people came to me with judgmental, or bigoted comments about our relationship or her, I would respond differently with something like "She looks fine to me." If people pressed the issue, which often came from religious people, I would say something like "Please explain to me why this is any of your concern?", "Don't people have a right to be themselves? Don't they know best how to be happy?", "Please explain to me why you're so obsessed with this.", or more bluntly, "Why can't you mind your own business?"

In dealing with the bigotry and judgmentalism that surrounded our lovely friendship, I learned an important lesson also about how to deal with people. Initially I would tell people they were wrong about Katie, but that produced poor results, often with people raising their voices and sometimes flinging insults, and more than once the situation becoming potentially violent. So, the lesson I learned was to not tell bigoted, racist, hateful people that they're wrong, instead tried to find out *why they believed what they believed*.

It may not surprise you, that some of these folks didn't really do much thinking about what they accepted as true or false, or even what process they used to choose what to believe and what not to believe. I'd ask questions like these:

*Where did you get that information from?
Why did you choose to believe that?
Do you care if you what you believe is true?⁸
Did you fact check it before believing it?
Do you have a process that you use to determine what is true and what is false?*

⁸ Credit goes to Matt Dillahunty here – I actually used to ask "How do you know that your beliefs are true?" but Mr. Dillahunty coined this better version of this question.

Over a five-year period, using several different social media platforms, I've asked hundreds of people this simple question – "Do you care if what you believe is true?". The results? Less than 1% of people answered the question, the rest dodged it, or became irrational.

Most people at that time, and even now are stumped by these simple questions. They suddenly realize that they don't even know why they hold those beliefs – and they often responded with anger.

**"I don't feel threatened by people who ask questions
It's those who refuse to answer them that frighten me."**
- Jason Bacchetta

Recently, I helped a local veterinarian put on a low-cost vaccination clinic. She seemed like a friendly and kind person, and since a vaccination clinic was for pets it seemed worthy cause, and because of my love for animals, dogs in particular, I was happy to help serve the community in this way.

I must be a terrible judge of character, because during a lull, she quite unexpectedly approached me and started parroting a political talking point regarding some imaginary LGBTQ⁹ "agenda", and how they were doing this to cheat in high school sports, subvert "traditional marriage", and they were actively trying to indoctrinate "normal" kids into their perverse ungodly lifestyle.

I'm not going to lie - I struggled to let her finish, and my blood did start to boil. However, I kept my cool. Then I told her an abbreviated story of my relationship with Katie.

When I finished with the story I asked her, "What do you think Katie's agenda was? Do you think she attended secret meetings where she got her marching orders? And, do you think that Katie has a right to be herself and to be happy?"

You could tell by the look on her face that no one had ever asked her a question like these – she likely spent most of her time in a bubble filled with people who agreed with her and never questioned her or their own beliefs. I suspect that she initially expected that I'd agree with her, reinforcing her opinions. She looked confused initially, and then made some sort of references to the bible that I suppose she felt substantiated her position.

So, I turned my chair toward her, and looked her directly in the eyes and said, "Now that you shared your opinion with me, I'll share mine with you... I think that anyone who thinks the problem with our society is the gender identity or lack thereof, religion, or lack thereof, culture or country of origin, or the color of a person's skin, is looking for the problem in the wrong place. By judging, and hating, and not accepting others, they are filling themselves with misery, and spreading the misery everywhere they go - in other words *they are the problem*. And to them I say 'Why do you find it so difficult to mind your own f@cking business?!'."

⁹ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, (or questioning), and, often including: intersex, asexual, and (agender).

I'm quite sure this woman is convinced that I'm was an asshole, and maybe I am. But at least I spoke my mind, and not letting hatred go unchallenged¹⁰.

**We must always take sides.
Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim.
Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.**

• Elie Wiesel

Maybe thanks to Katie I actually wasn't quite as much cookie dough as I had thought previously, because my life experiences were teaching me that maybe I did have a meaning and purpose to my life - or at least the beginnings of it.

Since those years I've had some pretty incredible experiences that have further widened my perspective:

- I've travelled to most of individual states in the US, most of Canada, much of Mexico, and internationally, including South America, the Middle East, and Europe, and in doing so I've been exposed to many different cultures, economic models, health-care systems, diets, and lifestyles.
- I've had executive jobs with Fortune 500 companies, earned very generous salaries, and also been so poor that I've worn clothes from thrift stores, been on Food Stamps, and eaten food from Food Banks.
- Studied the bible with Christian, Jewish and secular scholars in Israel.
- I worked on aerospace components for commercial aircraft, the US Airforce, and NASA spacecraft.
- I've designed and programmed dozens of video games, pieces of educational software, and many Internet products and technologies.
- I contributed articles to several newspapers and even published my own small-town newspaper for nearly a decade.
- I've worked as a public servant, been a firefighter, fire chief, and served on an ambulance crew. I've saved many lives.
- I've started and run numerous non-profits to benefit my community.
- I've donated my time to bring Christmas gifts to lonely children in hospitals and been one of many volunteers feeding the homeless.

¹⁰ Just so you don't think that I take pleasure in challenging people's beliefs and imagine that I roam the land trying to set people straight, I want to be clear that I only challenge people who say things directly to me that are factually wrong, parroted propaganda, or bigotry/hatred. As part of my path toward Modern Honor I've come to realize that Elie Wiesel is 100% correct in her quote above.

- I've helped rescue and restore endangered animals.
- I've written novels, comic strips, and children's books.

I promise I'm not changing the subject here, but do you happen to know how particle colliders work, you know, like the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), located at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva, Switzerland? The way they work is by accelerating particles to nearly the speed of light, crashing them together, then studying the pieces that remained. This process has contributed to our understanding of the building blocks of the universe and has advanced science dramatically.

One of my most transformative pursuits was being a firefighter and a member of an ambulance crew for over a decade. Helping people when they are having the worst day of their life is both humbling, rewarding, and profoundly revealing. Like the Large Hadron Collider, I've seen when people's lives have experienced a catastrophic crash, like the scientists, I've studied the pieces that remained.

I've learned a lot about human nature out of sheer necessity – from seeing the joy on the face of someone who I've reunited their dog that we had rescued, to holding a baby in my arms while my crew cut open a car to extricate their grotesquely obese, deceased mother, to filling a body bag with what was left of man who had died days ago, to dealing with parents who refused to let us transport their son who was clearly going to die without immediate hospitalization.

So, in short, what I'm saying is that I come to you from a unique position forged from far-flung, and often painful experiences tempered by many years of life and having made many, many mistakes and having hurt a lot of people I cared about. Add to this experience an education and experience in science, engineering, artificial intelligence, philosophy, and religious and humanist disciplines. This, combined with a profound desire to find a solution to our problems has led me to this conclusion: Brace yourself – I've determined that humans, including myself, are largely an irrational, and willfully ignorant mob of hairless apes completely unequipped for dealing with the modern civilization they've created.

As I've said already in the Introduction, I feel certain that our civilization is at a breaking point. I fear that if something doesn't change, and change soon, our human civilization will certainly collapse¹¹. And I've come to the conclusion that no one is coming to save us – sorry, the aliens probably just lock their space-ship doors and jump to lightspeed when passing our planet – government is not much more than a fear mongering popularity contest controlled by wealthy corporate interests and the super-rich – and many religions are too busy trying legislate their

¹¹ Are you thinking that maybe it would actually be best if we let it collapse and start over? You should know that the people who often rise from the ashes and lead the rebuilding of civilization are the same ego-driven, power-hungry people -- narcissistic con-artists we don't want in power. Remember, it most often takes less energy to fix something than to destroy it and start over, not to mention saving the lives of the violence and death that often accompanies civilization collapse.

morality, line their pockets, or prepare for the end of the earth¹².

**“If you need the threat of hell to be a good person,
then you’re just a bad person on a leash.”**
-Anonymous

Either we will save ourselves, or we will perish. And how do we save ourselves? We tackle it from the bottom up. First, we fix ourselves by becoming honorable. Then these now honorable people will apply the principles of honor to create new, honorable organizations, business, and governments. Then, in time, the Earth will recover, and what's left of our civilization can finally prosper in a new world created by us, a world where:

- The happiness of people, and their ability to contribute to society in ways they naturally excel and enjoy -- ways that don't necessarily involve selling things, running a business or making a profit, are as important or more important than the country's GDP, stock market, or Jobless Numbers¹³.
- There is real Equality regardless of their gender, race, religion, or socioeconomic background.
- There is true Freedom and Individual Rights, guaranteeing freedom of speech, press, petition, religion¹⁴, assembly, right to property, and the right to a prompt and fair trial. I'm sure you've noticed that everyone has lost hope on that "prompt" part.
- There is a Rule of Law, where laws are justly enacted, applied consistently, and enforced impartially. It ensures that no one is above the law, including the governing authorities or the wealthy. Say goodbye to our two-tiered justice system where rich people never see the inside of a jail-cell and instead pay a fee they can easily afford or lawyer-up with an unstoppable legal team, and everyone else gets thrown in a cell and has to fight just to get a fair shake.
- There is an emphasis on high-quality, fact-based, impartial and unbiased intellectual and personal development of its citizens. In many countries this means a free university education – and despite what we've been told, we can have that in America too.

¹² Never leave the future in the hands of a death cult, ideology, or a religion that is more focused on an "after-life" than this life – the only one we know for sure actually exists.

¹³ The wealthy surely do care about the "Health of the Economy", which commonly includes the state of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product), Economic Growth, the Trade Deficit, Employment levels, Inflation, Stock Market performance, Consumer Confidence, the National Debt, and Interest rates. Did you notice happiness isn't even on that list? Or the state of our planet's health? Or how satisfying people find their lives? Or how much time people have to raise their children? Or if people can afford a quality education? How would you measure the health of our civilization?

¹⁴ Or lack thereof.

- The right to self-defense and to defend one's loved ones¹⁵ and family from anyone, any group, or any organization, company, or governmental agency who may threaten, injure or kill them.
- A right to bodily autonomy – that no person, organization or governmental agency or law can force someone to do with their body what they do not want, or deny them from doing with it as they wish.
- A right to be free from arbitrary, unreasonable and/or destructive searches and seizures.
- There is an awareness of the need for society to be sustainable assuring the long-term well-being of both the environment and future generations. This includes responsible resource management; environmental protection; clean, renewable energy adoption; restoring wild spaces; and reintroduction of keystone¹⁶ species needed for a healthy eco-system, such as wolves, beavers, sea otters, bison, and raptors.
- There is economic prosperity and the minimizing of poverty and inequality. It promotes a fair and inclusive economic system that provides opportunities for all citizens to prosper and contribute to society.
- There is active and productive sense of community, respect for different cultures, and inclusivity. It values and celebrates the contributions of diverse individuals and groups within society. Teamwork, volunteerism, and cooperation become normalized and common.
- There is people-centric governance where the happiness and health of the citizens are the highest priorities. The governments must have only accountable and transparent governance structures. It encourages citizen participation in decision-making processes and ensures that leaders act in the best interests of the people they serve.
- There must be a priority of peace and security within its borders and maintains diplomatic relations with other nations based on mutual respect and cooperation. It seeks peaceful resolutions to conflicts and promotes disarmament and non-violence.
- There is an embracing of scientific and technological progress to enhance the quality of life, promote innovation, and address societal challenges. It ensures that technological advancements are used ethically and responsibly.
- People adopt a profound hunger for tangible, objective evidence, facts, fact-checking, and an ability to change their beliefs when presented with evidence and to be obsessed with not only caring if what they believe is true, but to believe as many true things as possible.

Adopting Modern Honor, as described in this book,

¹⁵ This includes beloved companion animals (such as a dog who is part of the family), Service Animals (such as Guide Dogs, Alert Dogs, etc.), Utility Animals and Working Animals (dairy cows, egg-laying chickens, guard dogs, sheep dogs, etc.)

¹⁶ For some reason I like that word. Hmm.

is *The Last and Best Hope to Save Humanity*.

This is not a pipe dream. This is within the scope of real possibility. But it will only happen if we stop handing the reigns of control of our lives to sociopaths, corporate CEOs, religious leaders, celebrities, popular athletes, wealthy lawyers, career politicians, and lobbying groups – and instead we *must* take control by *becoming the change we want to see*.



The world is a bad place.
There are many wonderful
people, but on the whole,
humanity basically stinks.

-Dennis Prager

Chapter 1: We Live in a Troubled World

“Do you remember a time when you could say stuff like ‘the Earth is round’, ‘We’re getting our kids vaccinated’, or ‘Nazis are bad’ and be absolutely certain that everyone who heard you would agree?”

As I write this in the 2024, polling shows that most folks would believe that the world is in a terrible state. The problems most often mentioned are:

Endless War

War was at one time a state that we as a society dreaded. In fact, World War One was called “The War to End All Wars” as the thought of war was so abhorrent.

We dreaded the conditions that led to war, the loss of so many lives, the destruction of so much property, the poisoning of so much land, harsh austerity measures during the war itself, and then the slow and painful recovery.

Did You Know?

The United States has over 830 military bases both in the US and across the globe.

Now war has been normalized to the point that we often don't even think about the fact that we live in a constant state of war¹⁷. Of course, we don't call them wars - for public relations purposes we call wars "policing actions", or "special military operations", "reclaiming land that was once ours", "regime change", or "bringing democracy to the people".

Rest assured, despite what they're called, they are still wars – many combatants and civilians die needlessly, families are destroyed, housing is demolished, and the only ones who win are the military industrial complex (the companies that make the weapons) and the resource devouring mega-corporations that divvy up the conquered land for their own profit, and of course, the super wealthy who own major portions of these companies' stock, becoming even richer than they already are.

¹⁷ As I type this there is currently one large scale war ongoing, several invasions, and 36 smaller scale military conflicts around the globe. The Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights monitors over 110 armed conflicts globally.

They Always Win

War, a societal scourge, can bring a perverse prosperity to a select few. While the vast majority shoulder the burden of violence, displacement, and economic hardship, some groups find themselves in a position to exploit the wartime environment:

- **Politicians:** War can be a political boon. Leaders who leverage wartime patriotism can consolidate power, silence dissent, and justify actions that wouldn't fly in peacetime. Victories become rallying cries, and wartime spending strengthens their hold on power.
- **Weapons Manufacturers:** The most blatant beneficiaries are arms manufacturers. Wars create an insatiable demand for weaponry, propelling these companies to record profits. The urgency of war often bypasses normal procurement regulations, further inflating profits.
- **Financial Organizations:** War creates a boom for financial institutions. Governments, desperate for funds, rely heavily on borrowing, issuing bonds, and selling war debt. Banks profit from managing these transactions and collecting interest. Additionally, war zones often become havens for unregulated financial activity.
- **Governments (in the Short Term):** While war can be financially ruinous in the long run, some governments see a short-term benefit. War spending stimulates the economy, creating jobs in war-related industries. Additionally, wartime resources can be diverted to prop up ailing sectors or consolidate political control.
- **Food Producing Companies:** War disrupts agricultural production and distribution, leading to shortages and price hikes. Food producers in non-war zones can exploit this by ramping up production and exporting at inflated prices.

These benefits are temporary and overshadowed by the immense human cost. The prosperity of these groups is built on the backs of suffering and is ultimately unsustainable. War is a lose-lose proposition for most, with only a select few profiting from the misery of the many.

Thou shall not kill – except in war, when it's completely Okie Dokie!

The phrase “Thou shalt not kill” from the Decalogue in the Bible has been changed in some translations to the much more accurate, “You shouldn’t murder”. But, as a culture, we don’t even think about the fact that “war” actually means that not only is murder okay, but it’s the entire purpose of war.

I didn’t approve exemption to God’s Law – did you?

Economic Instability

In the United States the 1929 stock market crash devastated the lives of millions of Americans, and the ripple effects from it, spread throughout the world.

Many laws were passed to reign in the reckless and dangerous actions of the stock market, market traders and corporations, but, sadly, people have short memories and don't pay much attention to things that don't affect them directly, and politicians don't like doing things that are unpopular or complicated because they want to get reelected, so many of those rules were slowly and methodically removed, paving the way for yet another stock market crash where people will lose their life savings, have their investments earmarked for retirement disappear overnight, and yet again devastate the lives of millions of people.

And perhaps the saddest part of this is that certain people have figured out how to turn disaster into profit, so when the stock market crashes, many people lose everything, but a handful of people gain unimaginable profits. And so there are now forces at work that actually attempt to intentionally trigger stock market crashes for their own financial benefit regardless of the destruction that it does to others.

When you hear the phrase "too big to fail" the hairs should stand up on the back of your neck. This phrase actually means "**Privatize the Profits, Socialize the Losses**". Because companies and the wealthy have so much influence on laws and the government, in many industries the companies keep the benefits of success (the fruits of capitalism) but expect taxpayers to shoulder the burden when they fail (socialism).

In stock market trading, the act of betting *against* the success of a company is called "short selling". This is when investors borrow shares of a stock they believe will decrease in value, sell the borrowed shares and then buy the shares back at a lower price to return to the lender, making a profit on the difference. Short selling is essentially a bet that a company's stock price will fall in the future, rather than rise.

Corrupt Politicians

And as far back as the formation of governments, there have arisen abundant jokes about the corruption and dishonesty of politicians.

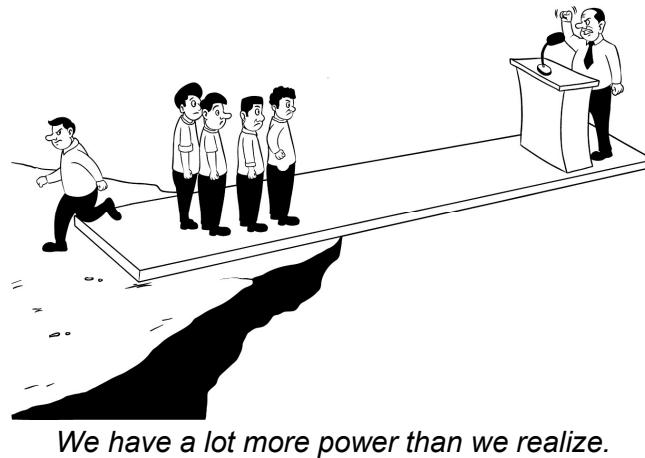
As I've hinted up before, there's a fundamental flaw in having elections for people who are basically trying to win elections which are effectively the same thing as a popularity contest, yet are still obligated to govern. And effective governance often means making difficult decisions regarding complex problems, raising taxes, instigating regulations, and other things that are inherently unpopular.

People want simple solutions to complex problems, black and white solutions in a world of grays, a magic pill to solve problems that can be taken once, rather than a well-designed long-term plan that is based on actual facts, and most of all to not have to pay for these solutions, never pay more in taxes, not have any changes to their lifestyle, and never to have to think about it again.

Also, winning an election requires money – lots of money to buy commercials, yard signs, billboards, and other promotional materials. It's a simple fact that the more that is spent on a campaign the more likely that the candidate will win. These campaigns cost far more than what small donors can provide, so wealthy corporations and individuals provide the funds – and they don't do this out of the goodness of their hearts – they are looking for a return on that "investment" and you probably guessed that the politicians they pay to put into office pay back that investment even if it contrary to the best interest of the voters.

How to Become a Successful Politician

1. Look the part – wealthy, white, Christian male lawyers wearing suits fit the historically most successful profile.
2. Tell the public what they want to hear - make lots of promises to give them what that want.
3. Establish a scape goat - preferably a disenfranchised group that can't afford defend themselves or doesn't actually exist.
4. Do what you bosses orders you to do. You bosses aren't the voters, they're the super-rich individuals, organizations and corporations who gave you the money to win the election. They'll likely order you to lower taxes for them, loosen regulations so they can pollute more and abuse workers, destroy the environment, use the country's military to secure the natural resources that want, and make their crimes legal so they can become even more wealthy.
5. Invent imaginary threats to keep the public in a state of constant fear to keep them making emotional decisions instead of rational ones.
6. When you fail to keep your promises, which will always happen, blame the scape goats.
7. If you please your bosses with your accomplishments, you'll be hired as an obscenely overpaid consultant, lobbyist, or public speaker as your reward.



There's also a politician "after office" reward system. "Good" politicians, which is to say those who obey their wealthy masters, are rewarded financially for long after they leave office. This includes paid memberships to exclusive executive clubs, lavish vacations, visits to cushy resorts, and other luxurious outings. Also, there are "speaker circuits" where these politicians are paid six-figure "speaking fees" for a single speech that are guaranteed, and don't forget guaranteed work as a well-paid lobbyist! There are over lobbyists 12,000 of them in the US alone.



The Genie's Rules

I'm sure you're familiar with the story of a person who finds an ancient oil lamp, and in an effort to read the inscription they begin to rub off the oxidation and accidentally release a magical genie who offers the new master three wishes to reward them for freeing him.

The fun aspect of this story are the Genie's Rules that are designed prevent granting more than three wishes. Typically, the Genie says "You may not wish for more wishes.", However, it isn't long before clever people found ways around what sounds like a simple and bullet-proof rule.

1. The master's first wish is to remove the "Only three wishes" rule. Then the second wish is for infinite wishes.
2. The genie might add a new rule: "No wishing away rules."
3. Then the master uses his first wish to remove the "No wishing away rules" rule, then wishes away the "Only three wishes" rule. Then they wish for infinite wishes.
4. If the genie states that the master cannot wish away rules, then the master merely needs to edit the rule by wishing for the word "not" be removed from the "Rules may not be wished away" rule.
5. If the genie refuses to grant wishes because of a complex series of rules, the master can simply wish for a new genie that has no wishing rules.
6. If no genies like that exist, then the master can wish for infinite three wish rule genies.
7. The master can simply use his third wish to wish to discover and free the genie again every day, thus getting three wishes daily forever.
8. The master can use only one wish to get a magic book with infinite pages, each page granting him a wish.
9. The master can use his third wish to wish the genie to travel back in time to the moment he was released from the lamp, and having lost his memories of the first two wishes.
10. The master can wish that the genie lose his ability to count, so the genie can't keep track of how many wishes he's granted.
11. Determined not to be outsmarted again, the genie writes down thousands of rules covering every possible loophole abuse into a thick leather-bound book. The master simply wishes that the genie had never had the idea in the first place for such a book.

What you're seeing here is called Loophole Abuse, and it's a real phenomenon in the real world. Laws, often written by lobbyists, are intentionally vague, complex and unspeakably long, allowing years of Loophole Abuse by corporate attorneys and clever attorneys. This is a fatal flaw in the idea that laws alone can control bad behavior – because as you've seen, even the tightest set of rules (laws) can be circumvented and/or abused.

Political Parties¹⁸

Two-party¹⁹ systems like ours, while offering a seemingly harmless organization allowing us to work with like-minded people, can introduce several negative aspects into a government. In fact, a limited number of parties can lead to gridlock, voter disillusionment, conflict rather than cooperation, and a dilution of political ideology.

One major drawback of two-party systems is their tendency towards gridlock. With only two major contenders, compromise becomes essential for passing legislation.

However, this pressure to compromise can lead to watered-down bills that fail to address core issues. Furthermore, strong partisan loyalties can make cooperation difficult, as each party prioritizes defeating the other over enacting meaningful policy. This can result in legislative paralysis, hindering the government's ability to address pressing issues.

Two-party systems can also lead to voter disillusionment. With only two dominant choices, voters may feel their political views are inadequately represented. This can lead to feelings of disenfranchisement and a decreased sense of civic participation. Voters may be forced to choose the "lesser of two evils" rather than a candidate who truly aligns with their beliefs.

Finally, a limited number of parties can result in a dilution of political ideology. To win broad support, parties may need to moderate their platforms, making them less distinct from each other. This can leave voters with a narrow range of choices, particularly for those with strong ideological stances. Nuances and variations of opinion get squeezed into the two broad categories, potentially stifling the development of new ideas and approaches.

Two-party systems may promise simplicity and stability, but more often than not they can also lead to gridlock, voter disenfranchisement, and a homogenization of political thought. Exploring

Political Parties and the Founding Fathers

Several Founding Fathers, including George Washington and James Madison, expressed concerns about the potential dangers of political parties. They worried that parties would lead to excessive factionalism, gridlock, and hinder national unity. Also, in his farewell address, Washington warned against the "baneful effects of the spirit of party" and cautioned against excessive partisanship and the dangers of foreign influence on political parties.

¹⁸ Do you know which political parties are mentioned in the US Constitution and how many times they are mentioned? Zero. There is absolutely no mention of political parties in the Constitution and that's for an important reason.

¹⁹ Did you know that there have been many parties in the US, including Federalist Party, Democratic-Republican Party, Whig Party, Anti-Masonic Party, Know Nothing Party, Free Soil Party, Bull Moose Party, American Liberty Party, The People's Party, not to mention the still active American Communist party that has been around since 1919.

alternative systems, such as multi-party democracies, could potentially lead to more representative government and a wider range of political voices.

A World Divided

“News”

Another major contributor to our current situation is the transition from news as being information, to news being entertainment. And more recently, news becoming hyper-partisan and transitioning into pure propaganda.

I grew up with news program teasers during primetime programming that said something to the effect of "Your child may be in danger if they attend school tomorrow. Make sure to tune in for the 11:00 News for the full story."

This is no different than a movie teaser, with the threat of real-life hazard mixed in for good measure. If the new was truly an information service, which is what news is supposed to be, it would read something like "Families with children in the San Gabriel valley region may be affected by possible floods due to expected heavy rains this evening. Be prepared and take appropriate precautions and check with your local school district, or tune in to the news at 11:00 for more details."

The news wasn't always thinly disguised partisan propaganda or fear-based entertainment. The Fairness Doctrine in the US was introduced 1949. It was a policy that required the holders of broadcast licenses both to present controversial issues of public importance and to do so in a manner that fairly reflected differing viewpoints. They are public airwaves, so they should benefit the public.

These were the days of news as purely informational, and largely lacking any kind of sensational content – a trusted face reading the news without video clips, presented in as unbiased a way as possible – just the facts.

And, if an editorial was presented advocating far left liberal views, the station would invite somebody from the conservative side of the political spectrum to dispute those beliefs, or expound their own beliefs and policies - truly Fair and Balanced News broadcasting actually did exist at one time.

However, the fairness doctrine was abolished in 1987²⁰, allowing broadcasters to present political opinions as facts -- without opposing viewpoints, vilify representatives and citizens in the opposing political party, and completely skip presenting news that reflected poorly on their particular political ideology which meant if a person watched only one particular network they would receive a favorable view of only that political ideology.

²⁰ Guess who!

There was a real-world example of this when a completely full jumbo jet crashed into a mountain killing the entire crew and all of the passengers. On two major television networks reported that the failure of the jet engines on the plane was the likely cause of the disaster. The third network, however, happened to be owned by the same mega-corporation that manufactured the engines on that plane. You probably won't be surprised that on *that* network the engine failure was never mentioned. They never lied, but they also withheld the truth to protect their bottom-line and their stock-holders.

These days, most "news" is presented not on public airwaves, but via cable, satellite, and Internet. It would be difficult or impossible for the federal government to regulate these largely private media channels, and since, as we said earlier, lies and sensationalism and conflict make more money than the truth, we have found ourselves in a divided world that intentionally spreads lies, conflict and sensationalism, and we feel helpless to fix it.

Culture Wars

Culture wars can be used as an effective partisan political tool by politicians and political parties to mobilize their base and create a sense of urgency and division among voters. This is often done by highlighting certain cultural issues and framing them as existential threats to society, thereby creating a sense of urgency and galvanizing voters to take action.

When a politician doesn't want to talk about their highly unpopular policies (or a complete lack of policies), often because they clearly benefit only their wealthy masters, what better thing to do than to invent a new imaginary threat – preferably something that invokes fear – fear of losing their majority status, their privilege, their religious dominance, or their "culture" (such that it is). It's best to choose an already disenfranchised group that doesn't have the power or money to defend itself. Scary looking foreigners with different cultures, religions and traditional attire are a good choice too. Popular choices include immigrants, homosexuals, LGBTQ+ people, cross-dressers, black and brown people, Muslims, people from Arab nations, communists, socialists, etc.



President McKinley (top left) believed in open immigration. Here's Uncle Sam, at his direction, looking on as Italian rats "directly from the slums of Europe" pour into the country. Sound familiar?

Historically popular "threats" have been Irish people, the Japanese, Jews, communists, and those scary Nazis (although Nazis seem to be making a big comeback!).

Modern Media

The first, and possibly the most dangerous, is the shift from previous communications and media types such as telephone calls, newspapers and television, to social media.

It has been revealed by whistleblowers that social media intentionally does not remove posts that are false, inflammatory, racist, or in another ways destructive because those posts generate a lot of comments and arguments which means increased ad sales.

Studies have demonstrated that false information spreads six times further and many times faster than factual information on social media. This translates to: if you want to be famous and influential, and more importantly, if you want a bigger share of that sweet, sweet ad revenue (monetization) you'll make six times more money if you're a liar. And multiply that by how much more traffic you'll get by being sensational and controversial.

In effect we have created a primary form of often anonymous communication for our society which is heavily biased toward misinformation, intolerance, hate, racism, bigotry, sensationalism, and conflict.

Anti-Science

“All opinions are not equal. Some are a very great deal more robust, sophisticated and well supported in logic and argument than others.”

- Douglas Adams²¹

And, to make matters worse, we are living in an era of growing anti-science sentiment. And, related to this is the notion that educated people, academics, scientists, and experts are somehow elitists, have some kind of secret agenda, and can't be trusted.

These days there exists a significant portion of the population that believe that because of a 15 minute long online video they watched, they are somehow



How Far Have We Fallen?

A 38-year-old female mortuary worker is being held on \$250,000 bond after becoming pregnant by one of her clients — a dead man. The alleged crime took place at the Mourning Glory Mortuary just outside of Lexington, Missouri. Police have charged Felicity Marmaduke with desecration of the dead and necrophilia.

According to a statement made to police by Marmaduke, the alleged victim experienced a post mortem erection while being bathed. Being alone, Marmaduke took advantage of the situation, and later she had a positive pregnancy test while receiving a routine medical exam. The police were notified and Marmaduke was arrested without incident at her dilapidated trailer home a few blocks from the mortuary. She's now seeing child support from the deceased family.

See page 122 for an important update on this story.

²¹This is a quote from Douglas Adams' book *The Salmon of Doubt*

better informed than a scientist with multiple doctorate degrees, who has spent 30 years studying in a particular discipline whilst using the scientific method of peer review, and publishing papers with their peers, and is backed by facts and evidence and scientific consensus.

Lie-Believers and Fact-Averse People

I'm sure you've seen people who are dead wrong about something they believe. When confronted with the actual facts and truth about their beliefs, have you noticed that they are most often not appreciative for being corrected, and instead will often become very angry, storm away, or even become hostile or violent.

We know the causes this most dangerous situation:

- Ego preservation: Feeling wrong can be perceived as a threat to self-esteem, triggering defensiveness and anger as a form of protection.
- Cognitive dissonance: Holding conflicting beliefs is mentally uncomfortable, and anger can be a way to avoid acknowledging the dissonance.
- Confirmation bias: We tend to seek and prioritize information that confirms our existing beliefs, dismissing anything that contradicts them. Being presented with counterarguments can feel like an attack.
- Emotional attachment: Beliefs can be closely intertwined with personal identity, values, or group affiliation.

When some people are being challenged, especially with facts or evidence, they may feel like they are being personally attacked, rather than just their beliefs, which can produce a self-defense reaction which most often includes ending any kind of reasonable conversation and considering the fact-giver to be an enemy.

Folks like this can become downright dangerous – not only to themselves, but their community, and in large enough groups they endanger democracy and civilization itself.

When large groups lack trust in factual information, they become fertile ground for the spread of false narratives and manipulated content. This can erode public trust in institutions, create unnecessary anxieties, and hinder informed decision-making. For example, widespread belief in “fake news”, any information that contradicts a person’s pre-existing beliefs, can influence voting choices or lead to harmful public health practices.

Healthy democracies require open and respectful dialogue based on shared facts. If large groups distrust factual information and prioritize their own narratives, it becomes difficult to find common ground and engage in constructive debate. This can lead to increased polarization, social unrest, and even violence.

If left unchecked, this distrust in facts extends to institutions like elections, courts, and media, it can weaken the foundations of democracy. Elections could become less meaningful if people believe results are fraudulent, and legal systems could falter if trust in courts erodes.

Addressing complex challenges like climate change or pandemics requires collective action based on scientific evidence. When large groups reject established facts, it becomes difficult to reach consensus and implement effective solutions, potentially hindering progress and societal well-being.

Groups distrustful of facts can be more easily manipulated by demagogues or special interests who exploit their anxieties and biases. This can lead to undemocratic tendencies and violations of individual rights.

Everything, Everywhere, All at Once

At one time most people only had to have one or two areas of expertise --- for example, a person could be a blacksmith and a good parent, or a person could be a farmer but might need the help of a banker or an accountant to help them with money issues, or a person was a good hunter, but relied on family members to be good at cooking, or growing vegetables.

Those simpler times are disappearing rapidly in our rear-view mirror. In our current civilization every person is expected to be experts or at least competent in many, many skills:

- Must be a good student in school – to the point of having excellent grades to get admission to a college or university or to earn a scholarship.
- Must keep their nose clean and avoid becoming a gang member, committing shop-lifting and other common crimes, and must avoid street drugs and prescription drug addiction not to mention legal drugs such as alcohol addiction and cigarette addiction.
- Must be good at predicting the future to pick a degree program that will provide a good job when they graduate
- Must excel at college or university to graduate with a degree
- Must be able to find an apartment, pay rent, manage a bank account, pay their utilities, and save some money for unexpected expenses
- Must be able to handle a credit card – which can be very difficult for some people²²
- Must be able to evaluate what kind of car to buy, and to figure out the best way to buy one and understand and choose a car loan, and must have the discipline to make regular car loan payments, and choose and make payments on car insurance

²² I had a friend who had over one-hundred-thousand dollar of credit card debt across multiple cards. It took her many years to pay them off.

- Must be able to maintain that vehicle, both the appearance and mechanically – or have the simoleons to pay someone else to do it for them.
- Must be good at saving money, and smart at investing so they can squirrel away enough to have a comfortable retirement²³.
- Must be able to write a CV/resume and be successful find potential employers and jobs that they feel comfortable doing.
- Must buy the appropriate clothes for the job interviews and know how to present themselves such that they'll impress during the interviews. Must be comfortable selling themselves to the interviewers
- Must know how to work well with others, to contribute on team projects, must deal with difficult co-workers and hostile clients, and must be able "climb the corporate ladder" to increase their pay
- Must be able to handle job related stress
- Must be able to find room mates that aren't psychopaths and/or find a life partner
- Must manage their business and personal-life relationships.
- Must manage their home or apartment repairs, maintenance, and insurance.
- Must maintain their physical health and fitness, including exercise and eating a healthy diet
- Must make decisions regarding having children.
- If they choose to have children, they must learn how to be a good parent, and deal with the additional stress of selecting children's schools, feeding the kids a healthy diet in a world of fast-food and hyper-processed "meals", kid's medical issues, and the challenges of raising a baby including diapers, vaccinations, sleepless nights, and still maintaining all of the other responsibilities.
- Dealing with the possibility of divorce and raising children as a single-parent.
- Dealing with being laid off work, finding a new job, and relocating the entire family in order to chase the best paying jobs.
- Must manage their aging bodies including many medical treatments such as joint replacements, cardiac surgeries, cataracts surgeries, dental implants and crowns and maybe dentures, and mobility issues.

²³ Fidelity Investments tells us to put into savings/investments your entire one-year's salaries by the time you're 30 years old, three years' salary saved by the time you're 40, six years by 50, eight years' salary by 60 and ten times your salary by 67 (that's \$640,000 for most folks) only then are you safe to retire.

- Finding a nursing home – being able to afford it²⁴.
- Making “end of life” plans such as finding and paying for a grave site, cremation, making a will and testament
- And hopefully not leaving a filthy hoarder’s nest of a home or apartment for your children to clean up after you pass.

This list doesn’t include having special needs children, sudden loss of a spouse, loss of life or limb due to catastrophes, or slow painful death due to wasting diseases – all of which people are expected to plan for and to be able to afford.

Once you see it laid out like this you should be able to realize that this is a lot to expect from every citizen. Most people just aren’t good at this many disparate skills. Now, of course, you could be wealthy and pay experts such as accountants, investment firms, tutors, home nurses, attorneys, and nannies to shore up your missing skills – but most people never make it rich, and not for lack of trying – if you count having a million dollars as wealthy, only 8.8% of Americans ever reach that level of wealth. Looking at ten million dollars? Only 1% of Americans get there. And becoming super rich? Only 0.0001% of Americans are billionaires. The odds are heavily stacked against you.

This means that our civilization requires most people to do it all – and that’s not a reasonable expectation. The world is screaming this fact out to us, and we don’t listen. Look to the number of people who are being treated for depression, are addicted to alcohol or other drugs, who fall into homelessness, turn to crime to pay their bills, or crack under the pressure and commit suicide, become violent or even go on killing sprees.

Modern Honor helps with these challenges as in Modern Honor we are encouraged to find and nurture a small group of trusted friends who can support you. But you may think that you could never trust someone to help you with some of these more personal issues – but how about a person who practices Modern Honor? Also, becoming more active in your community might help you find the skills and help you might need for little or no money.

²⁴ About \$10,000 a month on average. No, I’m not kidding.

Overpromised Happy Futures

"America is the land of opportunity, where anyone can achieve their dreams if they're willing to work hard and take risks."
- Ronald Reagan

Ah yes, the beautiful American Dream. "Son, someday you could be president!", "Daughter, someday, you can become rich if you work hard enough and apply yourself." Or "This is America – you can be anyone you want to be."

Maybe, if you are older, you've achieved some of this, however, in recent years however, the American dream has become increasingly out of reach for many young people.

There are a number of reasons for this. One reason is the rising cost of housing. The median home price in the United States has increased by more than 50% in the past decade. This means that it is now much more difficult for young people to save up for a down payment on a home.

Another reason why the American dream is dead for many young people is the rising cost of education. The cost of college has increased by more than 200% in the past three decades. This means that young people are graduating from college with much more debt than they used to²⁵.

The rising cost of living is also making it difficult for young people to achieve the American dream. The cost of food, transportation, and healthcare has all increased in recent years. This means that young people are spending a larger portion of their income on necessities, leaving less money for saving and investing.

As a result of these factors, many young people are finding it difficult to achieve the American dream. They are unable to afford a home, they are saddled with student loan debt, and they are struggling to make ends meet. The American dream is no longer a ladder that anyone can climb. It is now a ladder that is only accessible to those who are already wealthy or privileged.

In addition to the rising cost of housing, education, and living, there are a number of other factors that are making it difficult for young people to achieve the American dream. These factors include:

- The decline of unions: Unions have historically played a role in helping workers achieve higher wages and better working conditions. However, the decline of unions in recent years has made it more difficult for workers to negotiate for better pay and benefits.

²⁵ I put myself through college by working a single part-time job. Those days, my friends, are long gone.

- The rise of the gig economy: The gig economy is characterized by short-term contracts and freelance work. This type of work can be unstable and unpredictable, making it difficult for workers to plan for the future.
- The widening gap between the rich and the poor: The gap between the rich and the poor has been widening in recent years. This means that it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to move up the economic ladder.
- Too Big to Fail corporations – when there's a banking crisis, who does the government bail out? The banks that caused the crisis, or the innocent citizens who were hurt most by the crash? The banks get the cash, of course! Why? Because they're "too big to fail". What this amounts to, is that the citizens lose when the banks screw up, and the banks literally can't lose because their mistakes, risky investments, and any other failures get bankrolled by the government, and that government uses the citizen's tax money to bail them out. The little guy gets taken to the cleaners twice – once with the losses from the crash, and second by having their tax dollars used to effectively pay the banks for making economy destroying errors.

If you are wondering why this happens, it's because the banks (or at least their lobbyists) write the banking laws, and because our politicians are given generous donations by the banks, the banks own them. It's hard to imagine how a corporate run government that doesn't care the slightest about the citizenry might be discouraging to young Americans.

It is my opinion that it is an act of cruelty for adults to teach kids about an American Dream if it is going to be extremely difficult or nearly impossible for them to attain. Is there any wonder why young people have lost faith in our current civilization?

Conspiracy Theories

In this fertile ground of willful ignorance, propaganda, and fear has been born -- the era of the conspiracy theory.

The terms "conspiracy" and "conspiracy theory" are often used interchangeably, but they have different meanings. A conspiracy refers to a secret plan or agreement between individuals or groups to carry out an unlawful or harmful act. On the other hand, a *conspiracy theory* is an unproven and often speculative explanation that suggests that a particular event or situation is the result of a secret plot or collusion.

Actual conspiracies do exist. For example, it's been proven that tobacco companies conspired to suppress the facts about the dangers of smoking (see page 51 for a partial list). Conspiracies and conspiracy theories are definitely two separate things.

Conspiracy theories are dangerous because they can lead to a number of negative consequences, including:

- Distrust of authority: Conspiracy theories can erode trust in institutions, such as the government, the media, and the scientific community. This can make it difficult to address important issues, such as public health and safety.
- Violence: Conspiracy theories can sometimes lead to violence, as people who believe in them may feel justified in taking action against those they believe are part of the conspiracy. For example, the 2016 shooting in a Washington, D.C., pizzeria was motivated by the false belief that the pizzeria was involved in a child sex trafficking ring.
- Social isolation: People who believe in conspiracy theories may isolate themselves from others who do not share their beliefs. This can lead to loneliness, depression, and anxiety.
- Mental health problems: Some people who believe in conspiracy theories may develop mental health problems, such as paranoia, anxiety, and depression.

Some of today's most popular conspiracy theories include:

- The 9/11 attacks were an inside job.
- The Earth is flat.
- The Holocaust never happened.
- Vaccines cause autism.
- Moon Landing Conspiracy Theory: This theory suggests that the United States did not actually land on the moon and that the footage of the landing was staged.
- JFK Assassination Conspiracy Theories: There are many conspiracy theories surrounding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy which suggest that his death was the result of a larger plot.
- Chemtrails Theory: This theory suggests that the condensation trails left behind by airplanes are actually chemical agents being sprayed into the atmosphere for sinister purposes.

It is important to note that not all conspiracy theories are dangerous. Some conspiracy theories are harmless, and some may even be true. However, it is important to be critical of conspiracy theories and to evaluate them carefully before believing them.

No! Not at the Table!

I remember when I was a kid, even my little brain at the time realized that at Thanksgiving dinner there were two subjects you were wise to avoid, religion and politics.

Now, in today's world, it's wise to avoid religion, politics, conspiracy theories, and fundamental scientific knowledge.

I guess we can still talk about the weather, unless the weather is actually being controlled by the Deep State or Gray Aliens



Real Conspiracies

Here are some actual conspiracies:

Operation Northwoods - In 1962, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff proposed a false flag operation to create a pretext for a US invasion of Cuba. The plan included a series of false flag attacks, such as hijackings and bombings, that would be blamed on Cuba. The plan was rejected by President Kennedy, but the documents were declassified in 1997, confirming its existence.

COINTELPRO - From 1956 to 1971, the FBI conducted a secret counterintelligence program to disrupt and discredit political organizations. The program included illegal surveillance, infiltration, and harassment of civil rights and anti-war activists. The existence of the program was exposed in 1971, and the FBI was criticized for its violation of civil liberties.

MK-ULTRA - In the 1950s and 1960s, the CIA conducted a series of mind control experiments on unwitting subjects, including the use of LSD and other drugs. The program was exposed in the 1970s, and the CIA was criticized for its unethical and illegal methods.

Watergate - In 1972, President Nixon's reelection campaign was caught breaking into the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate complex. The ensuing scandal led to Nixon's resignation and several high-ranking officials being convicted of conspiracy and obstruction of justice.

Iran-Contra - In the 1980s, the Reagan administration secretly sold weapons to Iran, which was under an arms embargo, and used the proceeds to fund anti-communist rebels in Nicaragua. The scandal was exposed in 1986 and several officials were convicted of conspiracy and obstruction of justice.

Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment - From 1932 to 1972, the US Public Health Service conducted an experiment on African American men with syphilis, without their informed consent. The men were not treated for the disease, even after penicillin became available as a cure. The experiment was exposed in 1972, and the US government apologized and settled a class-action lawsuit.

Gulf of Tonkin Incident - In 1964, the US government claimed that North Vietnamese boats had attacked US Navy ships in the Gulf of Tonkin. This event was used as a justification for the US to escalate its involvement in the Vietnam War. However, it was later revealed that the attack did not happen as originally claimed, and that the US government had exaggerated and fabricated evidence to justify its actions.

The Manhattan Project - During World War II, the US government secretly developed the first atomic bomb. The project was highly classified, and only a small group of scientists and officials knew about it. The project was declassified after the war, and its success played a major role in shaping US foreign policy during the Cold War.

How Can I Tell the Difference?

To determine the difference between a conspiracy and a conspiracy theory, the following process can be used:

- Look for evidence: A conspiracy theory is typically based on rumors, hearsay, testimony of “experts” that aren’t, or unverified information. In contrast, a real conspiracy is based on concrete evidence of wrongdoing, such as leaked documents, recorded conversations, or other verifiable sources.
- Evaluate the plausibility: A conspiracy theory often involves far-fetched claims that are difficult to believe or prove. In contrast, a conspiracy is more likely to involve a plausible explanation for an event or situation based on available evidence.
- Check for verifiability: A conspiracy theory may be difficult or impossible to verify due to the lack of evidence or the secrecy surrounding the alleged conspiracy. A conspiracy, on the other hand, can be verified through the presentation of evidence and the testimony of witnesses.
- Consider the source: A conspiracy theory often comes from unreliable sources or those with a vested interest in promoting a particular narrative. In contrast, a conspiracy may be uncovered by credible sources, such as investigative journalists or government agencies.

Why Do People Believe in Conspiracy Theories?

The belief in Conspiracy Theories may make some people feel special, or important. It might give them a feeling of control and understanding in certain situations. Their belief might come from a distrust of the media, a lack of trust in the government, or a belief that there is more to the world than meets the eye.

Conspiracy Theories sometimes offer simple and exciting explanations for events that are complicated or difficult to understand or accept, and can provide a sense of community and belonging with like-minded people who share those beliefs.

They can also serve as coping mechanisms to deal with anxiety or stress.

**“It’s easy to make everything a conspiracy
when you don’t know how anything works.”**
-Brandon Bradford

Conspiracies Theories are a type of Mind Virus

Conspiracy theories are immune to evidence. Any evidence against a conspiracy theory is seen as simply false propaganda created by the enemy. Any missing evidence that could prove the conspiracy has obviously been covered up.

Conspiracy theories are always simple, with a black & white, good versus evil narrative. And the common people are always the victims, with the enemy being a shadowy group of elite powerful villains.

When someone buys into a conspiracy theory, they suddenly feel like they are a privileged insider to a great secret. They might feel smarter than others, and better prepared to deal with this imaginary threat.

Victims of Conspiracy Theories often feel the need to share their secret with loved ones, friends, and other people they care about because then they can feel like heroes and save them too from the evil plot.

Because of Willful Ignorance, these narratives are often shared without even doing the simplest research into the truth of it, so they spread like wild-fire.

The End of the World as We Know it

What Causes Societies to Collapse?

Let's get some perspective by travelling back in time for a bit – to the Bronze Age (about three thousand years ago) which was the first great human world civilization.

It was a significant period characterized by the advancement of metalworking techniques and the emergence of complex societies. It marked a critical juncture in human history when societies began to transition from relying on stone tools to using bronze tools and weapons, which had a profound impact on their way of life. The Bronze Age civilizations flourished in various regions around the world, including the Middle East, China, India, and Europe, with each civilization exhibiting its unique features and achievements.



One of the primary benefits of the Bronze Age civilization was the development of advanced metallurgy, particularly the smelting and casting of bronze, which is an alloy of copper and tin. This allowed for the production of durable and versatile tools and weapons, including swords, axes, and plows, which significantly improved agriculture, warfare, and trade. The use of bronze tools also facilitated the construction of monumental structures such as temples, palaces, and fortifications, showcasing the technological and artistic prowess of Bronze Age societies.

The advancement of metallurgy in the Bronze Age also led to the development of specialized labor and the rise of complex societies. As bronze production required specialized knowledge and skills, it led to the emergence of metalworkers as a distinct class of artisans, who played a crucial role in the economic and social organization of Bronze Age societies. The availability of surplus food resulting from improved agriculture, facilitated by bronze tools, also supported the growth of population and urban centers, leading to the rise of powerful city-states and kingdoms with centralized political authority.

The Bronze Age civilizations were also marked by significant cultural achievements. The development of writing systems, such as cuneiform in Mesopotamia and hieroglyphics in Egypt, facilitated record-keeping, administration, and communication, which were essential for the functioning of complex societies. The advancement of architecture, art, and religion also flourished during the Bronze Age, as evidenced by the monumental structures, intricate metalwork, and religious beliefs and rituals that have been discovered in archaeological excavations.

Additionally, archeologists continue to discover more and more evidence that Bronze Age societies were able to cross huge land masses and even oceans to facilitate trade of crops, foods, medicines, farming technologies, and tools. In this way all Bronze Age civilizations benefitted by being exposed to many different cultures, languages, religions, as well as being

able to pick the best tools and technologies to increase crop yields, and to acquire new plants and trees to bring diversity to their food supplies.

However, despite the numerous benefits of the Bronze Age civilization, it eventually faced a collapse, which had profound consequences. The cause of the Bronze Age collapse is still being studied and discussed among historians and archaeologists, but several factors are believed to have contributed to this decline. One significant cause was environmental changes, including prolonged droughts, crop failures, deforestation, and soil degradation, which resulted in food shortages, social unrest, and economic decline. Additionally, the overextension of empires, trade disruptions, and increased warfare among city-states and kingdoms led to political instability and social unrest.

The consequences of the Bronze Age collapse were widespread and long-lasting. Many once-thriving civilizations experienced a decline or even a complete collapse. Urban centers were abandoned, and trade routes were disrupted, leading to economic decline and population decline. The technological advancements of the Bronze Age, such as metalworking techniques, were lost or significantly diminished, leading to a regression in technological and cultural achievements. The collapse of centralized political authority resulted in the fragmentation of societies into smaller, more localized communities, and the loss of written records led to a decline in literacy and knowledge.

The rise and fall of the Bronze Age civilizations provide valuable lessons about the fragility of human civilization and the interplay between environmental, economic, social, and political factors in shaping the course of history.

Contemporary human civilization might also collapse, and many people think that with Global Climate Change collapse is very near indeed. Based on historical patterns and current global challenges, here are some possible causes for the collapse of our current civilization:

- Environmental Catastrophes: Climate change, deforestation, overexploitation of resources, and pollution could lead to severe environmental degradation, causing widespread disruption to ecosystems, agriculture, and water resources. This could result in food and water shortages, displacement of populations, increased conflicts over resources, and loss of biodiversity, leading to societal collapse.
- Global Pandemics: The emergence and spread of new infectious diseases with pandemic potential could have devastating effects on human populations and economies. Urgency is brought to this issue with more diseases being exposed by destruction of animal habitats bringing humans and wild animals closer together, and with new viruses and bacteria being exposed as the ice caps melt away as a result of global climate change. A highly contagious and lethal disease, combined with global interconnectedness and lack of preparedness, could overwhelm healthcare systems, disrupt supply chains, and lead to social and economic collapse.

- Societal Instability: Growing social inequality, political polarization, and social unrest could erode the social fabric of societies. Divisions based on ethnicity, religion, ideology, or economic disparities could lead to conflicts, civil wars, and breakdown of governance structures, resulting in societal collapse and loss of social cohesion.
- Technological Risks: The rapid development of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, military robots, and nuclear weapons could pose significant risks if not properly regulated and managed. Accidents, misuse, or unintended consequences of these technologies could lead to catastrophic events such as cyber warfare, biohazards, or nuclear accidents, resulting in widespread disruption and societal collapse.
- Economic Meltdown: Economic instability, such as a global financial crisis, widespread economic inequality, or unsustainable debt burdens, could trigger economic collapse, leading to unemployment, poverty, social unrest, and breakdown of economic systems. Our global financial system is a fragile “house of cards” and could topple rendering money worthless, and bring about rioting, starvation, destruction of infrastructure, and this could result in widespread economic disruption and social instability.
- Environmental Migration and Refugee Crisis: Climate change and environmental degradation could lead to mass migration and displacement of populations, creating humanitarian crises and social conflicts. The strain on resources, infrastructure, and social cohesion could lead to societal collapse and breakdown of governance structures.
- Geopolitical Conflicts: Escalating tensions between nations, geopolitical rivalries, and conflicts over resources could lead to large-scale wars, resulting in widespread destruction, displacement of populations, and societal collapse.

Of course, these scenarios are speculative, and that the future of human civilization is uncertain. To avoid the real possibility of social collapse and the resultant starvation, disease, death and war, we must address current challenges such as environmental degradation, social inequality, and geopolitical tensions in order to mitigate the risks of collapse and work towards a sustainable and resilient future.

Let it Burn? Why Civilization is Worth Saving

There are people who just want to watch the world burn. There are those who don't feel that they've had a fair shake at being successful, or that they have been victims of an unfair system. So why even save civilization since it sucks?

When people have always lived in a civilized world with a high quality of life, they might have become accustomed to a way of life that is actually quite advanced. Before you give up on civilization, or decide to let it collapse, consider some of the advantages you currently enjoy:

- **Improved lifespan and health:** Advancements in medicine, sanitation, and hygiene vastly increase lifespans and reduce deaths from diseases that were once common. Access to clean water and secure food supplies also contributes significantly to health.
- **Modern Medicine/Dentistry:** Medical imaging, surgical equipment, surgical techniques, drugs, and vaccines continue to advance every year.
- **Enhanced safety:** Law enforcement, emergency services, and infrastructure development all contribute to greater personal safety compared to situations with constant threats from violence, accidents, and natural disasters.
- **Reliable food production:** Advanced agricultural techniques and food distribution systems ensure consistent access to safe, nutritious food, unlike the dependence on unreliable hunting and gathering in more primitive societies.
- **Education and literacy:** Educational opportunities allow individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, and qualifications, leading to personal growth and improved job prospects and higher incomes. This stands in stark contrast to societies where knowledge is limited and passed down orally.
- **Cultural expression and exchange:** Developed societies enable diverse artistic expression, literature, and cultural exchange, enriching lives and fostering understanding between different groups.
- **Communication and information access:** Technology connects people across vast distances and provides instant access to information, which wasn't possible in isolated, primitive societies. With the Internet we literally have access to the all the world's knowledge (in addition to sending cat pictures to each other).
- **Technological advancements:** Modern technology improves countless aspects of daily life, including transportation, communication, entertainment, and access to essential services. These conveniences would be unimaginable in a primitive setting.
- **Specialized jobs and services:** Complex societies offer a wider range of specialized jobs and services that cater to various needs and preferences, leading to a higher standard of living.
- **Infrastructure and amenities:** Developed societies invest in infrastructure like roads, electricity, and waste management, improving comfort, reducing disease, and efficiency compared to basic living conditions in primitive settings.

Reginald: **What have the Romans ever done for us?**
The Crowd: **Transportation... the Aqueduct... Sanitation... Roads...**
Medicine... Education... Wine... Public order... Crop
irrigation... Fresh water... Public health... Peace...
Reginald: **Well, other than those things, what have the Romans**
ever done for us?
The Crowd: **NOTHING!**²⁶

²⁶ Dialog loosely taken from the Monty Python film "Life of Brian", which takes place in 1st Century Judea, during the time of the Roman Empire. Reginald is trying to foment rebellion against the occupying Romans.

How Long Have Human Civilizations Lasted?

- Ancient Egypt: Lasted for approximately 3,000 years.
- Mesopotamian Civilizations (Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians): 2,500 years.
- Indus Valley Civilization: 700 years.
- Ancient Chinese Civilization: over 5,000 years
- Ancient Greek Civilization: 500 years.
- Roman Empire: 1,244 years.
- Mayan Civilization: 1,100 years
- Inca Empire: 460 years
- Aztec Empire: about 200 years

Social scientist Luke Kemp, Research Affiliate at the Notre Dame Institute of Advanced Study, has analyzed dozens of more advanced civilizations from 3000 BC to 600 AD and calculated that the average life span of a civilization is close to 340 years.

And our current civilization, the era characterized by industrialization, technological advancements, global interconnectedness and modern systems can be traced back to the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century, which has, so far, lasted about 260 years.

We're on the Precipice

So here we find ourselves, in a world where it's nearly impossible to have a conversation with somebody without it turning into blame-game, quoting partisan talking points, and ending with a fierce argument filled with anger, insults and all of that time and effort gone to waste because nobody will change their mind or learned anything even when presented with actual facts and rational arguments.

We live with people completely obsessed with culture war issues or lofty idealist notions whilst ignoring the actual issues that threaten our very civilization. It appears the decline of our civilization is locked onto a road to disaster, and there's seems to be no alternate road, and even if there was another road, it seems we'd be unwilling to take it.

Mark your Calendar

In the 1970's scientists at MIT, using the LtG model predicted that civilization would end around the year **2040**. Gaya Herrington, updated the 1970's model and published her results in the Yale Journal of Ecology in November 2020. She confirms that the prediction from the MIT study is right on track.

She tried to remain optimistic and stated that society has about another decade to change course, otherwise the 2040 prediction looks to be dead on.



“We are rare and precious because we are alive, because we can think. We are privileged to influence and perhaps control our future. We have an obligation to fight for life on Earth — not just for ourselves but for all those, humans and others, who came before us and to whom we are beholden, and for all those who, if we are wise enough, will come after. There is no cause more urgent than to survive to eliminate on a global basis the growing threats of nuclear war, environmental catastrophe, economic collapse and mass starvation. These problems were created by humans and can only be solved by humans. No social convention, no political system, no economic hypothesis, no religious dogma is more important.”

• Carl Sagan

Chapter 2: Imagine an Honorable Society

or, "We are the only ones who can fix this, and we can rebuild it anyway we want."

The following description is based on hundreds of interviews and polls I've conducted with regular people just like you, of various ages, backgrounds, from many different countries. I've also taken into account what many respected leaders, experts and thinkers have studied their speeches and writings.

If you strip away religious, political and cultural ideologies, this description best captures what people really want in their society.

An ideal human society, or utopia, would be a place where people are truly happy and fulfilled. It is a place where everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources, and where everyone contributes towards the betterment of society as a whole.

In this utopian society, people would live in harmony with nature, and the environment would be prioritized above everything else. The society would be organized in a way that ensures a sustainable and equitable distribution of resources. Agriculture would be an important part of the economy, with sustainable and environmentally friendly practices. There would also be a focus on technology that is sustainable and benefits society as a whole.

Simple Wisdom

If it's not yours, don't take it
If it's not right, don't do it
If it's not true, don't say it

In this society, work would be fulfilling, and everyone would have equal opportunities to pursue their passions and interests. There would be a variety of jobs and careers, but they would all be designed to benefit workers and community, rather than corporate profits or solely for personal gain. Money would exist, but it would not be the primary focus of society, and it would be used in a way that benefits everyone.

Companies and corporations would still exist, but they would be regulated in such a way that providing quality jobs, paying a living wage, supporting their employees, contributing to the community, and respecting the environment would be just as important, if not more important than massive profits, obscene executive salaries, and lining the pockets of greedy stock-holders.

People would live in a variety of housing options, including apartments, houses, and also cooperative communities designed around shared living spaces. Education would be accessible to everyone, and there would be a strong emphasis on lifelong learning and personal growth. Universities would exist, but they would be more focused on creating knowledge and advancing society rather than just serving as a means to get a job.

The freedom to practice any religion, or none at all, would be guaranteed – but churches and religious organizations would pay their fair share of taxes, and would be strictly prohibited from meddling in government issues, including passing laws that attempt to legislate onto others their particular religious beliefs.

The form of governance in this society would be democratic, with decision-making power distributed among everyone – not just the wealthy and powerful. Justice would be restorative rather than punitive, and law enforcement would focus on preventing crime and addressing the root causes of crime rather than just punishing offenders.

Life in this utopian society would be significantly different from life today. People would prioritize relationships, personal growth, raising healthy well-educated children, and societal benefit over personal gain and material possessions. Work would be fulfilling and purposeful, and education would be focused on creating knowledge and advancing society rather than just obtaining a job.

There would be a stronger sense of community and interdependence, and keeping the land, water and sky clean and healthy would be a top priority for everyone.

“We have it in our power
to begin the world over
again.”

-Thomas Paine



How People Treat Each Other in an Honorable World

In an ideal, honorable world, people would treat each other with respect and dignity. Mutual trust and honesty would be the norm, and people would not try to deceive, take advantage of, or harm others. When making commitments, people would follow through with them without having to be threatened with legal action or law enforcement. They would do everything in their power to make things right if something went wrong.

Honorable people would be truthful and transparent in their dealings, and everything they said would be based on fact. They would be open to hearing different perspectives and opinions, without being threatened or closed-minded. People would be able to engage in conversations and debates where ideas could be shared, and everyone would listen to each other's arguments with an open mind. If someone is wrong, they'd happily admit it, thank the person who pointed it out, and the person who was wrong would, without being asked, go forth and not only learn the truth, they'd figure out how they made the mistake of believing something that was false and correct their own methodology of truth finding so they wouldn't make that mistake again.

A rational thought process would be the norm in this honorable world. People would make decisions based on logic and reason, rather than emotional responses or bias. False beliefs and ideologies would be discarded in favor of truth and evidence-based decision making.

Also, in an honorable world, people would recognize their collective responsibility to work together to solve pressing global issues such as hunger, homelessness, income inequality, and climate disasters. Honorable individuals would dedicate their time, energy, and resources to these problems, and they would collaborate with other people and organizations to make progress.

With mutual trust, honesty, and respect as the foundation, people would be more willing to work together towards a common goal, leveraging their unique skills and talents to achieve a greater good. They would use science and evidence-based decision-making to come up with innovative solutions and approaches, and they would seek out and value diverse opinions and perspectives.

Moreover, in this society, people would recognize the importance of personal accountability and taking responsibility for their actions. They would recognize that they have a moral obligation to help each other and take care of those less fortunate. They would use their resources wisely, and they would actively seek to minimize their impact on the environment to ensure a sustainable future for all.

In an honorable world, people would treat each other with honesty, respect, dignity, and fairness. Trust would be the norm, and people would have open and thoughtful conversations based on truth and rationality. Overall, people in this world would share a collective sense of purpose, and they would be committed to working together towards a better future for everyone.

How Government Would Work in an Honorable World

An ideal government in a society of honest and honorable residents would work towards ensuring justice, equality, and welfare for all its citizens. The following are some ways an ideal government would work:

1. Transparency: The government would be transparent in all its activities, policies, and decision-making processes. It would encourage public participation through public consultations and town hall meetings.
2. Accountability: The government officials would hold themselves accountable for their actions. They would be responsible for delivering services effectively and efficiently.
3. Rule of Law: The government would adhere to the rule of law and ensure that everyone is equal in the eyes of the law. The judicial system would be independent, fair, and just.
4. Fair and Balanced Elections: Elections would be free and fair, with all citizens having equal opportunities to participate. The government would ensure there is no discrimination, prejudice, or corruption in elections.
5. Social Welfare: The government would work towards ensuring that all citizens have access to basic necessities such as healthcare, education, food, and shelter. The needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in society would be prioritized.
6. Economic Stability: The government would work towards ensuring a stable economy to ensure everyone has equal opportunities to thrive. It would encourage private sector growth while regulating monopolies.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Many great thinkers, as well as many world leaders and governments have pondered the issue of what kind of human civilization should be our goal. The United Nations has tackled this question with The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which is a landmark international document that enshrines the fundamental rights and freedoms of all individuals. Drafted by a United Nations committee led by Eleanor Roosevelt, the UDHR was adopted by the General Assembly in 1948. It has since inspired the development of international human rights law and serves as a cornerstone of human rights protections worldwide.

Comprising 30 articles, the UDHR outlines the inherent, inalienable, and universal nature of these basic rights and freedoms. It affirms that all individuals are born free and equal in dignity and rights, regardless of their nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status.

The UDHR's universalist language, devoid of references to specific cultures, political systems, or religions, has been hailed as a milestone in human rights history. It directly spurred the development of international human rights law and paved the way for the formulation of the International Bill of Human Rights, completed in 1966 and coming into force in 1976.

While not legally binding, the UDHR's principles have been elaborated and incorporated into subsequent international treaties, regional human rights instruments, and national constitutions and legal codes, solidifying its profound impact on global human rights protections.

The entire document has been included in the Appendix of this book, which can be found on page 525.

7. Environmental Sustainability: The government would prioritize environmental sustainability as it is the foundation for the well-being of citizens. It would ensure policies that promote ecological conservation and protection.

An ideal government in an honest and honorable society would prioritize the interests of the citizens above all else. It would work towards ensuring a stable economy, justice, equality, social welfare, and environmental conservation.

The American Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence is a founding document of the United States. It was signed on July 1, 1776 and ratified on July 4, 1776. The Declaration of Independence announced the separation of 13 North American British colonies from Great Britain. It set forth the ideas and principles behind a just and fair government:

1. All men (people) are created equal.
2. All people have basic rights that cannot be taken away including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
3. Governments are created in order to protect the rights of the people they govern.
4. Governments get their power from the people - this is called the consent of the governed.
5. When the government does not protect the rights of the people, the people have the right to alter or abolish the government.

The 56 delegates who signed the Declaration of Independence became known as the nation's Founding Fathers.

The Answer Isn't in the Past

I don't want to go back to the way it used to be – I want to go forward to how it should be

Most people have “sweet recall memoires” – this is to say that we tend to forget the struggles and pain of the past and remember the good times. And, those good memories tend to get romanticized with re-telling the stories and reminiscing.

The allure of a simpler time, a rose-tinted past where problems seemed less complex, is a powerful nostalgia. However, clinging to this idealized vision proves a fallacy when confronting the challenges of the present. Today's issues – climate change, pandemics, information overload – require innovative solutions born from modern science and technology, not a retreat to bygone eras.

Firstly, the "good times" of the past were often good for a select few. Issues of social justice, environmental degradation, and limited resources simmered beneath the surface, impacting marginalized groups most keenly. Modern solutions strive for inclusivity and sustainability, addressing the root causes of these issues, not simply replicating a past prosperity built on an unequal foundation.

Secondly, the problems we face today are fundamentally different. Technological advancements have revolutionized communication, transportation, and the very fabric of society. The solutions of the past, designed for a simpler world, are inadequate to address the complexities of the present. Clinging to them is akin to using a horse-drawn carriage on a modern highway – inefficient and ultimately impractical.

Modern science and technology offer the tools necessary to navigate the uncharted territory of the 21st century. Renewable energy sources can combat climate change. Advanced communication allows for global collaboration on crucial issues. Embracing these advancements allows us to not just cope, but to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

Of course, the past holds valuable lessons. Historical knowledge informs our present actions, helping us avoid repeating past mistakes. However, nostalgia for a bygone era can create a dangerous sense of complacency. We must learn from the past, but not become prisoners of it.

The road ahead will undoubtedly be challenging. However, by harnessing the power of modern scientific discovery and technological innovation, we can forge a future that is not just a replica of the past, but something entirely new and, hopefully, better. The solutions to today's problems lie not in a romanticized past, but in the boundless potential of the present and the ingenuity of the human spirit.

The Good Old Days

The 1950s wasn't all poodle skirts and milkshakes. While there was economic prosperity for many, it wasn't without its problems, and social and political issues simmered beneath the surface.

Here are some of the troubles of the era:

- Racial Segregation: African Americans faced discrimination and violence, particularly in the South under Jim Crow laws. The Civil Rights Movement gained momentum in the 1950s, but it was a long, hard fight.
- Gender Roles: Expectations for women were rigid. They were expected to be homemakers and mothers, with limited opportunities in the workforce.
- The Cold War: The constant fear of nuclear war with the Soviet Union loomed large. McCarthyism, the hunt for communists, led to a wave of accusations, investigations, and blacklisting. Additionally, As the Cold War intensified, the threat of nuclear weapons became a constant worry, raising anxieties about potential war and destruction



- **Unequal Prosperity:** The economic boom did not benefit everyone. Minorities, women, and people in rural areas often faced poverty and limited opportunities.
- **Labor Unrest:** While the economy was booming for many, labor unions fought for better wages and working conditions, which sometimes led to strikes and tensions with management.
- **Juvenile Delinquency:** A rise in juvenile delinquency was a major concern for some Americans. This was likely due to a number of factors, including returning soldiers struggling to reintegrate into society, changing family dynamics, and a growing youth culture.
- **Conformity and Social Pressures:** The emphasis on a perfect suburban life could be stifling for some, leading to feelings of isolation and a pressure to conform to societal expectations.
- **The Korean War:** The Korean War (1950-1953) cast a long shadow, with American soldiers fighting and dying in a seemingly inconclusive conflict.

Make America Great Again

Sound familiar? This political slogan isn't even slightly original. It was used in Ronald Regan's 1980 presidential campaign, in speeches by former president Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign, and outside the U.S. it was used by the Spanish far-right party VOX used as slogan "Hacer a España grande otra vez", or "Make Spain Great Again", and by the Israeli far-right party used the similar expression "Make Israel Great Again" along with the acronym MIGA.

The interesting thing about this slogan, is when people are asked, "when in the past was America great?" there is no agreement on when that was. Many people think the 1970's was when America was at its best. Some think the 1960's or 1950's. Some people even think that the 1880's or 1840's were the best. Some people think that America was best before Europe occupied the land and the Native Indian people lived here undisturbed.

So, if there is no consensus on when exactly "America was Great", why does this slogan work so well? It works exactly because everyone gets to form their own image of a "better past" in their mind, and they hope that going back will avoid having to learn new things including technologies, immigrant cultures, non-English languages, will make their life easier.

The fact is that the past can't be recreated and change is inevitable as is progress.

“Life every man holds dear;
but the dear man holds
honor far more precious
dear than life.”



• William Shakespeare

Chapter 3: Examples of Honorable and Dishonorable Behavior

Side-by-Side

Even though honor hasn't been a major part of our civilization for a very long time, and most people would struggle to even define it, fortunately most folks can tell what is honorable and what isn't when presented with examples. Here are some for you to consider:

Dishonorable	Honorable
Cheating on a test	Admitting that you are struggling with a subject and studying harder and/or getting help before a test
Ghosting ²⁷ someone	Breaking up with someone in person, explaining why, and accepting your role in the breakup
When someone else suffers, you don't care much, and actually feel pretty lucky that it was them who's suffering and not you	When someone else suffers, you take no pleasure in it, and instead offer them if you are in a position to do so help
Having sex outside a monogamous relationship or without permission from your partner	Telling your partner that you no-longer want the relationship to be monogamous, or asking your partner if it's okay for you to have sex with someone else and accepting whatever they say
Abandoning a partner, a child, or a family pet such as a dog or cat	Telling your partner that you are unhappy with your relationship and working together to see if it can be fixed or if it can't, parting amicably, or finding a new home for your companion animal
Elevating yourself by diminishing others because they are different than you in race, economic status, education or culture	Accepting all others regardless of race, economic status, education or culture as perhaps different from you but not inferior to you
Not having the courage to tell your roommate you are planning on moving out and springing it on them at the last minute	Even though it will be difficult, working up the courage to tell your roommate that you are

²⁷ the act of abruptly ending a personal relationship, typically in the context of dating or friendships, by ceasing all communication and cutting off contact with the other person without any explanation or closure, leaving them confused, hurt, and without the opportunity for resolution. Ghosting has become more prevalent with the rise of digital communication and social media platforms, making it easier to disconnect and avoid confrontation.

	going to be moving out well in advance so they make the necessary changes
Not hiring a minority candidate because of the color of their skin	Hire people based only on their skills, education and character
Ignoring what people say	Listening to what people say, letting them finish speaking, and doing your best to understand them
Interrupt people when they are talking	Listen to what people are saying, and politely let them finish their thoughts
Schadenfreude -- taking pleasure in other people's misfortune	Being empathetic to the misfortunes of others
Being cruel to animals or neglecting them	Being kind to animals and take good care of them
Using humor to insult or mock people	Using unhatredful humor to amuse your friends
Lying or exaggerating	Being honest even when it's difficult
Manipulating people	Letting people make their own choices without your interference
Mocking people's weaknesses	Accepting people's weaknesses while acknowledging their strengths
Not feeling guilt or remorse	Feeling guilt or remorse and using that feeling to drive you to take action to make things right or make amends
Not having empathy for others	Do your best to put yourself in the shoes of others, and, even if just for a moment imagine their trials through their eyes
Being sexist or bigoted	Accepting people's choices of partner, family choices, gender, style of dress, and sexual orientation – even if you don't understand them or if they seem strange to you
Being selfish	Sharing what you have with others when they are in need
Intentionally betraying someone, or intentionally deceiving them	Always acting with integrity and honesty
Blaming others for your shortcomings or failures	Taking personal responsibility for your mistakes, and figuring out how not to repeat them
Being close minded to new ideas or unfamiliar languages, customs, or technologies	Being open minded to accept new and different things in your life
Hoarding material things, resources, and money	Sharing what you have with others

Giving up when things get tough or uncomfortable	Persevering even when the going gets tough
Betraying your partner, your employer, your family, and your country – if you've vowed loyalty to them	Being loyal to your partner, your employer, your family, and your country. It is honorable to feel that your loyalty needs to be earned.
Being arrogant, bragging and exaggerating your skills and accomplishments	Being humble – letting your actions and history speak for you
Harboring resentments – holding grudges – taking revenge	Forgiving when appropriate, but remember what was done to you and warn others so they won't also be hurt
Not having the nerve to attempt difficult tasks for say challenging things due to cowardice	Having the courage to do what's right no matter how difficult it is or how long it takes
Discriminating against others because they are different from you or unfamiliar – in race, gender, religion, political identity, economic class, or any other factors	Treating people fairly no matter how different they are from you, or how uncomfortable their life choices have made you. Your discomfort isn't their problem, it's yours.
Refuse or forget to thank others for their kindness or generosity	Show gratitude for any kind act or act of generosity anyone bestows on you
Losing your patience, flying into a rage, storming out, insulting others, or in any other way demonstrate that you have the emotional intelligence of a toddler	Being patient and understanding even when it's challenging. Shouting, insulting, and threatening never solves any problems.
Complain about people behind their backs	If you have a problem with someone, confront them in a friendly way and attempt to resolve the issue in a civilized, adult manner
Spread malicious rumors about people	Don't start rumors and refuse to spread them. Mind your own business and scold those who don't.
Be convinced that you are 100% correct about everything, and anyone who disagrees with you is wrong	Be open to politely listening to the opinions of others and be willing to learn new things and grow as a person. Become comfortable with the fact that there are lots of people who are smarter and more knowledgeable than you, especially experts in their fields such as doctors and scientists.
Dodge questions with vague weasel-words like "maybe" or "I'll get back to you" or "we'll see".	Clearly say Yes or No when asked a question. If you really can't decide, discuss it with the other person and resolve your issues right then and there. Postponing answers like this often just a way to avoid the awkwardness of saying "no".
Pretending you understand something you don't in order to seem smart or avoid conflict	Be willing to say "I don't know", or "Could you explain that to me?"

Criticize someone in order to take the heat off yourself or to avoid learning that you might be wrong about something	Accept that you might have made a mistake
Get so angry that you resort to shouting, using foul language and even violence	If you get too angry, remove yourself from the situation until you calm down and can handle it rationally, then make amends to those you effected
Keep secrets from the people closest to you to avoid conflict	Share your true self, including awkward or shameful past events, with those who are trustworthy and close to you.
See the world as black and white – good or bad.	Understand that we live in a continuum with most people and things being somewhere between good and bad and between right or wrong. We live in a world of complexity and shades of gray
See yourself as a finished product – closed to learning new things and confident that everything you do is correct	Being self-aware and eager to learn new things, to be in a continuous state of self-improvement and learning, and realizing that even with your best efforts you can make mistakes or be wrong about your beliefs
Keeping a dog outside in inclement weather or tethered with a chain	All animals must be treated humanely. Household pets must be cared for with kindness, making sure to keep them warm in the winter and cool in the summer, well fed and watered and given plenty of socialization and affection and medical care when needed.
Dumping unwanted dogs or cats in a wilderness area or in a dumpster	These animals almost always die of dehydration, starvations or exposure. No domestic dog or cat can “fend for themselves” in the wilderness. Rescuing and adopting these animals is honorable.
Instantly defending your “facts” and/or beliefs and refusing fact check or reevaluate or even consider that you might be wrong	Wanting to know if you are wrong about something, or if a belief of yours is unwarranted
Immediately sharing or posting memes or other online material without bothering to fact-check it simply because it agrees with your pre-existing opinions or beliefs	Sharing information or memes online only once you have checked to see if they are true.
Only watching “news” programs that are biased highly biased but happen to agree with your pre-existing opinions or beliefs.	Watching various new programs that are unbiased and rated as being more factual than other sources regardless if the news material agrees with your pre-existing opinions or beliefs
Being rude, terse, shouting, destructive or violent when dealing with public-facing	Politely remove yourself from the situation that has you riled up, cool the fuck down,

employees such as servers, clerks, or cashiers. Yes, I'm describing "Karens".	then go back and finish your business like a polite, civilized person.
Participating in "road rage".	Swallow your pride, cool your anger and drive safely.
"Cheating" on your romantic partner	Tell your partner that you have needs that aren't being met in the relationship and offer to work with them to resolve them, if possible.
Bullying, cyberbullying, and online harassment	Remember that kindness always produces better results. If you dislike or abhor someone so much that you feel like harassing them, then the problem is with you, not them. Seek the help of a psychotherapist – bullying is never okay.
Taking credit for someone else's work	Practice humility and be honest. You'll find that telling someone that you admire the work of someone else, and you aspire to be that good, will produce more goodwill than stealing credit.
Gossiping	If you find yourself gossiping it might help to realize that you're consciously or unconsciously trying to elevate yourself by painting someone else in a poor light. Instead, elevate yourself with honorable behavior.
Breaking promises	You can head this one off in advance by simply thinking carefully before making promises, and only make them when you are sure you can and will keep them. If you can't keep a promise due to a change in circumstances, let the other party know right away and change your promise with that person through mutual agreement.
Manipulating someone	Become conscious of your motivations, and manipulation tactics you might be using. Ask trusted friends if they have noticed that you manipulate others. Learn to be willing to accept what people are willing to do and not ask for more than they are comfortable giving.
Cutting corners	Consider the long-term costs of cutting corners before you do it: How will this affect other people? What will happen to me and my reputation when I'm discovered? Know that doing the job right is its own reward and your integrity should never had a price-tag.

Spreading misinformation	Learn to care deeply that what you believe is true, and double that caring that what you spread is true. Fact check.
When someone becomes successful, you become jealous and resentful.	When someone becomes successful, you are delighted for them, and might even congratulate them on their accomplishments.

I Just Saw a Karen in the Wild!

A "Karen" is a pejorative term used to describe a stereotypical entitled, demanding, and often aggressive middle-aged white woman. The term has become widely used in internet culture and popular media.

Typically, a Karen is portrayed as someone who:

- Demands to speak to a manager: Often over trivial matters.
- Exhibits a sense of entitlement: Believing she is always right and deserves special treatment.
- Is overly critical and judgmental: Of others, especially those perceived as different.
- May display racist or discriminatory behavior: This is a particularly problematic aspect of the Karen stereotype.

**“When someone tries to trigger you by insulting you or by doing
or saying something that irritates you,
take a deep breath and switch off your ego.
Remember that if you are easily offended,
you can easily be manipulated.”**

-Anonymous

The Bottom Ten – Most Dishonorable Traits

Dishonorable traits are characteristics or behaviors that are generally considered morally wrong, unethical, or reprehensible. Here are ten commonly recognized dishonorable traits:

1. Dishonesty: Lying, cheating, conning, misleading, or deceiving others for personal gain, to avoid your responsibility or to avoid your discomfort.
2. Betrayal: Breaking trust or loyalty, often by not doing what you agreed to do, revealing secrets or acting against someone's best interests.
3. Cowardice: Lack of courage or bravery in the face of conflict, danger or adversity. It sincerely takes bravery and courage to do what's right even when it's hard.
4. Greed: Excessive desire for wealth, possessions, or power at the expense of other people, animals, or the environment.
5. Cruelty: Inflicting unnecessary pain, suffering, or harm on other people or animals, whether via neglect, or active physical or emotional actions on your part.
6. Disloyalty: Failing to remain faithful or committed to someone or something, especially during difficult times.
7. Manipulation: Using deceptive tactics or strategies to control or influence others for personal advantage.
8. Arrogance: Exhibiting excessive pride or self-importance, often accompanied by a disregard for the feelings or needs of others.
9. Prejudice: Holding biased or discriminatory views based on factors such as race, religion, gender, or nationality.
10. Selfishness: Placing one's own needs, desires, or interests above those of others without consideration for their well-being or their state of need.

**"Our prejudices are so deeply rooted
that we never think of them as prejudices,
but call them common sense."**
- George Bernard Shaw

"When at some future date
the high court of history sits
in judgment on each of
us...our success or
failure...will be measured by
the answers to four
questions: First, were we
truly men of courage...?
Secondly, were we truly men of judgment...?
Third, were we truly men of integrity...? Finally,
were we truly men of dedication...?"



• John F. Kennedy

Chapter 4: A Brief History of Honor

or “Most people think honor and integrity are synonyms – they’re not.”

When “honor” is mentioned, many people immediately think about the WWII Japanese soldier who’s failed their mission therefore commits ritual suicide with a sword.

Often called “hara-kiri” in the West, “seppuku” originated with Japan’s ancient samurai warriors. It was seen as an honorable way to atone for a failure or wrongdoing, or to avoid capture or dishonor. The act typically involved stabbing oneself in the belly with a short sword, slicing open the stomach and then turning the blade upwards to ensure a death. Seppuku first developed in the 12th century as a means for samurai to achieve an honorable death. Although mostly an ancient practice, the last reported seppuku occurred in 1970.



The concept of honor goes back much further than the 12th century, even though it might not have been called honor. Even when humans had no cities or roads there were villages, clans, “gangs²⁸”, and other extended family groups that had mechanisms to rid communities of individuals that did not behave acceptably, or did not participate properly or sufficiently in the community.

In early human history, as today, it was normal to have outliers in any group of people. We've all met them, and we've all had to deal with them - rude people, selfish people, argumentative people, abusive people, substance addicted people, criminal people, murderers, etc.

But even primitive humans realized that they were stronger when they worked together, so they cooperated to meet their goals. The old adage “Many hands make for light work” is true. So, it became an issue of some urgency to maintain a reliable sense of cohesion and teamwork and cooperation.

One of the early ways of dealing with disruptive people was to beat them or murder them. But given that in the small groups of humans, many tribal members were related to each other, and would take exception with their family members being beaten or murdered, and would likely leave that tribe, or get together with other disgruntled tribal members and murder the tribal leader.

So as civilization evolved, humanity invented the concept of banishment, or expulsion if you prefer. The idea was that difficult tribe members who could not correct their behavior and cooperate with the remainder of the tribe would eventually be banished from the tribe - no bludgeoning or murdering required.

²⁸ Not the kind that sell street drugs.

So, they were thrown out – ejected – sent out of the safety of the village and off into the woods they went to fend with wild animals. It was easy to use that miraculous human imagination, that the banished member was getting along just fine on their own, and maybe even hooked up with some other obnoxious people and form their own tribe perhaps called The Awful People Village. It might have been easier to swallow this pill, even though somewhere deep inside the group probably knew that banished died of starvation, dehydration, taken as slaves by neighboring villages, or were eaten by predators or something else equally horrible.

As recently as in the days of the Old West, banishment was common practice. People would be "run out of town on a rail" and the local sheriff, and shopkeepers would do no business with them, and chase them out of town if they tried to come back.

But civilization has evolved, and the process of banishment has morphed into our current system – prisons were established where bad actors were isolated, supposedly where they can do less harm.

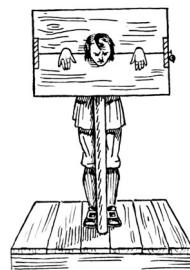
At this point in the evolution of society, we ended up with a three-legged stool that attempted to control bad human behavior. Three legs being Religion, Laws, and Honor.

Many times in human history, religion has either been intertwined with governance, or was the only governance for certain populations. People in that particular population where pressured into belonging to that religion, and if they did not join, they would be shunned by the population, merchants would refuse to do business with them, or they would be outright killed.

And within the adherents of that religion in that population, strict rules were in place about behavior - such as the Ten Commandments for example supplemented with local customs, bigotry, or racism – for example: "you have to marry in your own race" or "abortion is wrong" (despite the fact that the Bible makes no such demands).

At one time churches would openly humiliate and torture people. In Colonial America for example, common forms of public humiliation were the stocks and pillory²⁹, imported from Europe. Nearly every sizable town had such instruments of public humiliation, usually at the town square.

And, of course, there was the religious version of banishment, with his own special name, "excommunication" from the church.



Regardless of your personal religious beliefs, or lack of them, it's worth acknowledging that this system of controlling human behavior was effective. I didn't say fair, inclusive, based on facts, or humane - but it was effective.

²⁹ Thanks to Pearson Scott Foresman, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

As society has continued to evolve, the grip on human behavior from religion has loosened considerably. At the time of this writing the percentage of people who self-identify as religious is on a steady downturn. In less than one lifetime, the non-religious will outnumber the religious - for the first time in human history.

What this means is that one of those three legs on the three-legged stool of controlling human behavior is wobbly at best, and almost certainly going to break soon.



During the medieval period in Europe, honor was closely tied to the concept of chivalry, which emphasized bravery, loyalty, and generosity. Knights were expected to uphold these ideals and to defend their honor through combat if necessary. The Crusades, a series of religious wars fought between Christian and Muslim forces in the Middle East during the 11th to 13th centuries, were often seen as an opportunity for knights to demonstrate their honor and valor in battle.

In the Renaissance era, honor became more closely associated with social status and reputation. Nobles and aristocrats were expected to behave in a manner befitting their station, and to defend their honor through duels or other forms of personal combat. During this time the French created the notion of "noblesse oblige" which translates to "nobility obligates," meaning that with great wealth comes the responsibility to give back to those who are less fortunate than oneself.

This period also saw the emergence of the code duello, a set of rules governing the conduct of duels between gentlemen. During the 17th and all the way into the early 20th century, upper-class men in Europe and the United States regularly engaged in duels on "fields of honor" to defend their manhood or the honor of their family. Honor also, during this period, applied to a person's actions. When signing the Declaration of Independence, the American Founding Fathers "mutually pledged to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." This small group of rebels against the English Crown literally signed a document making them traitors in the eyes of the current government, painting a bright target on their backs and endangering many civilians – so a "sacred honor" indicated their dedication of claiming independence from England and accepting the consequences thereof.

Since that time honor has largely vanished as a trait that all people are expected to possess. Instead, most modern countries have a justice system, law enforcement officers, a penal system, and at its base, laws.

A country that is based on "the rule of law" is ideally a place where justice is not doled out based on the personal whims of a governor, personal relationships, family relationships, "oaths of fealty³⁰", or a person's educational, financial or societal status - instead rules that apply to everyone are codified, written down, and all citizens are expected to obey these laws or be

³⁰ Swearing an oath of loyalty to a religion, religious leader or country's ruler.

arrested by law enforcement, and have to deal with the justice system, and if found guilty they would have to deal with the penal system which in some cases still involve being murdered by the government itself.

In theory, this system could be prompt, fair, and evidence-based - a far better option for controlling people's behavior than other systems.

And, as I'm sure you've noticed, largely because of the people actually running the system are severely flawed and biased human beings, in practice, these systems are not fair, and are often corrupt and biased. And don't forget the power of Loophole Abuse (see Genie Rules on page 38)

And the laws themselves are often extend far beyond the simple concept of making society safe and fair. Powerful special interest groups often influence lawmakers to introduce laws that increase their profits, increase their control over people's behavior, discriminate against minorities, legalize their previously illegal behavior, or give them unfair economic preferential treatment.

As you can see, honor has meant many different things to different people over the years. It's safe to say that mostly honor has had three basic aspects:

1. A person must display integrity, discipline and honesty.
2. They must cooperate with their community in a positive and helpful manner.
3. If they don't do these things, there will be a penalty, such a shaming, banishment, or worse.

So, because of the failures of the current mechanisms of civilization aren't working adequately, that a new system of Honor must be created – and that's what this book is about.

Next, let's review the few and scattered remaining elements of honor in today's society. We can use this as a contemporary basis for our new definition of what I'll call "Modern Honor".

"All governments suffer from an recurring problem: Power attracts pathological personalities. It is not that power corrupts, but that it is magnetic to the corruptible.

**Such people have a tendency to become drunk on violence,
a condition which they are quickly addicted."**

- Frank Herbert



"It's not the honors and the prizes and the fancy outsides of life that ultimately nourish our souls. It's the knowing that we can be trusted, that we never have to fear the truth, that the bedrock of our very being is firm."

• Fred Rogers

Chapter 5: The Remaining Tatters of Honor

or, "Honor still exists – barely."

Even though the principle of honor doesn't really exist for the general population, there remain "Honor Groups" that do maintain a standard of Honor. Go ahead and read all of these and see if you can find the commonalities. You also might find them inspirational!

The Military

US Army

Honor is a matter of carrying out, acting, and living the values of respect, duty, loyalty, selfless service, integrity and personal courage in everything you do.

US Air Force Academy

We will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate among us anyone who does. Furthermore, I resolve to do my duty and to live honorably, (so help me God).

US Airforce

Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do.

US Navy

"I will bear true faith and allegiance ..." Accordingly, we will: Conduct ourselves in the highest ethical manner in all relationships with peers, superiors and subordinates; Be honest and truthful in our dealings with each other, and with those outside the Navy; Be willing to make honest recommendations and accept those of junior personnel; Encourage new ideas and deliver the bad news, even when it is unpopular; Abide by an uncompromising code of integrity, taking responsibility for our actions and keeping our word; Fulfill or exceed our legal and ethical responsibilities in our public and personal lives twenty-four hours a day. Illegal or improper behavior or even the appearance of such behavior will not be tolerated. We are accountable for our professional and personal behavior. We will be mindful of the privilege to serve our fellow Americans.

US Marine Corps

Never lie, never cheat or steal; abide by an uncompromising code of integrity; respect human dignity and respect others. Honor compels Marines to act responsibly, to fulfill our obligations and to hold ourselves and others accountable for every action.

US Coast Guard

We demonstrate uncompromising ethical conduct and moral behavior in all of our personal and organizational actions. We are loyal and accountable to the public trust. We value our diverse workforce. We treat each other and those we serve with fairness, dignity, respect, and compassion.

Public Safety Organizations

Law Enforcement

On my honor, I will never betray my integrity, my character or the public trust. I will always have the courage to hold myself and others accountable for our actions. I will always maintain the highest ethical standards and uphold the values of my community, and the agency I serve.

Fire Fighters

Be respectful and conscious of each member's safety and welfare. Recognize that I serve in a position of public trust that requires stewardship in the honest and efficient use of publicly owned resources, including uniforms, facilities, vehicles and equipment and that these are protected from misuse and theft.

Youth Organizations

Boy Scouts

On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

Girl Scouts

On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God³¹ and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

³¹ A belief in any god or deity is not necessary for a person to be Honorable.

Commonalities

These are the common themes of all of these Honor statements and pledges.

Pledge to:

- Be respectful
- Do your duty
- Be loyal
- Be selflessness
- Exhibit integrity
- Have courage
- Execute duties with excellence
- Be ethical
- Be honest
- Do encourage new ideas
- Deliver bad news even when unpopular or difficult
- Fulfil legal and ethical requirements
- Exhibit professional behavior
- Serve our fellow Americans
- Value diversity
- Be fair
- Act with dignity
- Show respect
- Exhibit compassion
- Be accountable for your actions
- Be respectful
- Do not tolerate those who are dishonorable

Pledge not to:

- lie
- steal

- cheat

There are many concepts above that are well suited to public servants and protectors such as the Military and Public Safety professionals, but they aren't as necessary for the general population. So, I've distilled this list into a list suited to most people:

1. Do your duty – to your job, family, and community
2. Be loyal to your family, friends and community
3. Be generous and respectful to your family, friends and community
4. Be selfless
5. Exhibit Integrity
6. Be honest, even when it is difficult
7. Be respectful and fair to others cultures, beliefs and lifestyles
8. Be compassionate and generous to those who have less than you
9. Be accountable for your actions
10. Act to correct those who act dishonorably
11. Be okay with change

"Humility forms the basis of honor, just as the low ground forms the foundation of a high elevation."

Bruce Lee



Chapter 6: What is Modern Honor?

or, "Honor has changed throughout history, and it's about to change again"

From Existing Honor Groups

In a previous chapter we distilled down what we've learned from some highly-respected existing Honor Groups such as the US Military and Public Safety Professionals and adjusted it to be applicable to the general population. The list:

1. Do your duty – to your job, family, and community
2. Be loyal to your family, friends and community
3. Be generous and respectful to your family, friends and community
4. Be selfless
5. Exhibit Integrity
6. Be honest, even when it is difficult
7. Be respectful and fair to others cultures, beliefs and lifestyles
8. Be compassionate and generous to those who have less than you
9. Be accountable for your actions
10. Act to correct those who act dishonorably
11. Be okay with change

And now we'll consider some of the needs of our current society, with an emphasis on behaviors that could help prevent a collapse of our civilization, and add them to a further distilled list. We further augment the list in order to deal with the modern issues of propaganda, misinformation, conspiracy theories, lack of respect for authorities and people's general lack of rational thinking skills, we'll add:

1. Rational/Critical thought
2. Clear and Concise Communication
3. Seeking Truth and Wanting to Know as many True things as Possible
4. Recognizing that we can get more done if we resolve or at least tolerate our differences and work together
5. That helping those in need ends up helping everyone

As you'll see in Chapter 22: There is the Possibility of Happiness After All

on page 443 there are some pathways to happiness that we'll also add to the definition of Modern Honor:

1. Having a purpose in life
2. Self-care including self-compassion and good health
3. Believing true things
4. Social support from positive people in your life
5. Having compassion for others and volunteering
6. Knowing you are good enough and have unique strengths and talents
7. Develop your own goals and passions regardless of what society expects of you

So, now we've discovered the seeds of Modern Honor!

Making Honor Objective

"Honor" has meant many different things to different groups of people in different lands at different times in history. But one thing has been consistent about honor – it's been "subjective" – which is to say it's based on personal opinions, feelings, or interpretations rather than facts or objective reality. It's essentially influenced by the individual's perspective and experiences. Everyone has different opinions, feelings, etc., so there is no fairness and true justice. Subjective things can't be good or bad, right or wrong – because they are personal and can't be measured or compared fairly.

Modern societies have come the conclusion that the old systems of honor didn't meet the challenges of modern problems and larger human populations. So, they have transitioned to society that use law to maintain order and some semblance of fairness. The saying "No man is above the law" is ringing in my ears right now because it doesn't take a rocket scientist to notice that the law is NOT fairly dished out to everyone in practice. The simple example of how a guilty person can afford a team of top-notch lawyers and poor people don't get that shows that laws aren't as fair as they could be so justice seems anything but fair.

This book takes on the mighty task of creating a new definition of honor – Modern Honor that is as "objective" as possible. Objective refers to something that is based on facts and evidence, rather than personal opinions, feelings, or interpretations. It's unbiased, impartial, and independent of any individual's perspective.

Once honor can be measured, then, via the wisdom of crowds (a large enough sampling of the judgement of your peers) a good and fairly unbiased value to a person's honor can be determined.

If we choose to do this, we can have a society based on Modern Honor, with its objective measure of each person's actual honor based of facts and collective knowledge, AND law, with the benefit of honorable people working aggressively to assure that the laws are fair and, in and of themselves, honorable. What a paradise we can create for ourselves!

The Wisdom of Crowds

This is a fascinating phenomenon that suggests that sometimes, the collective knowledge and opinion of a group of people can be more accurate than the judgments of even the most informed experts. It's based on the idea that individual biases and blind spots can cancel each other out when aggregated, leading to a clearer and more accurate picture of reality.

Here are some key points about the wisdom of crowds:

The basic idea is that if you get a large enough group of diverse individuals to independently estimate something (like the weight of an horse or the number of jellybeans in a jar), the average of their guesses will often be closer to the true value than any single guess, even one from an expert.

There are numerous historical and real-world examples that support this idea. Francis Galton's ox experiment is a classic case, here a crowd at a fair tried to guess the weight of a particular ox. It turned out that the average guess of the entire crowd was remarkably close to the actual weight. Other examples include crowds predicting financial market trends, movie box office success, and even solving complex scientific problems collaboratively.

Modern Honor Definition

This is a new definition of honor – honor suited to our current human civilization -- **Modern Honor**. This definition includes the best of traditional honor and is also tailored to our current modern civilization and current problems:

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Wealth, power, intelligence, popularity, being physically attractive, or famous don't make a person honorable, even though an honorable person might be any or all of those things.

Honor Levels

Adopting a life of Modern Honor is no simple task. It takes dedication, study, and practice to be honorable. Like any program of mastery, there are different levels that you can attain. Here are the different levels of Modern Honor that you might be able to reach:

Novice

Controlling and owning your own beliefs and behaviors – doing no harm.

Basic

Controlling and owning your own beliefs and behavior – doing no harm, practicing self-care (see page 91), participating in community, fact-checking, and spreading no misinformation.

Advanced

Controlling and owning your beliefs and behavior – doing no harm, practicing self-care, participating in community, fact-checking, spreading no misinformation, correcting misinformation (spreading the truth and fighting against lies), being concerned about how other people are influenced by you, teaching Modern Honor to others, volunteering regularly to direct charities³².

Master

Controlling and owning your beliefs and behavior – doing no harm, practicing self-care, participating in community, fact-checking, spreading no misinformation, correcting misinformation (spreading the truth and quashing the lies), being concerned about how other people are influenced by you, teaching Honor to others, volunteering to direct charities, learn to love (see page 92) your neighbors, community, and all of nature and humanity, and becoming an agent of change and practicing Spiritual Honor.

³² Direct Charities are charities that help people and pets in your community through personal interaction, such as homeless shelters, food banks, elder care, animal shelters, etc.

**“Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world.
Today I’m wise, so I’m changing myself.”**
-Anonymous

Will Modern Honor Make Me Happy?

The blunt truth is, no, not by itself. Modern Honor is about taking responsibility for your actions, beliefs and thought processes. It will take time to learn. You’ll probably make mistakes and feel awkward. People who’ve been manipulating you may be suddenly “disappointed” in you, or grow angry with you as they realize their ability to control you is diminishing.

When you become honorable people will understand you and you’ll understand them better, causing life to run more smoothly without so much drama and confusion. You will feel good about who you are, you’ll be proud of yourself for thinking clearly. You’ll walk away from every situation filled with self-confidence because you’ll know you did the right thing.

So being happier will be a delightful side-effect of living an honorable life.

Your path to a mastery of Modern Honor is 100% in your hands. You don’t need anyone’s permission, you don’t need to be wealthy, you don’t need to earn a college degree or be a member of an influential family. You can do it anywhere, from a penthouse apartment’s balcony in Manhattan to solitary confinement at Rikers Island in New York City’s East River. – it’s all up to you.

Honor is not a magic happy pill – it’s a way of life that will make you confident, proud, solid, unflappable, reliable, trusted, and completely sure that you always do what’s right.

**“The purpose of life is not to be happy,
It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate,
to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.”**
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

But don’t despair. There are some honorable traits that will bring you joy. Plus, I’ve provided you an entire chapter about how, according to scientific research, you can pursue happiness. You’ll find that information in Chapter 22: There is the Possibility of Happiness After All starting on page 443.

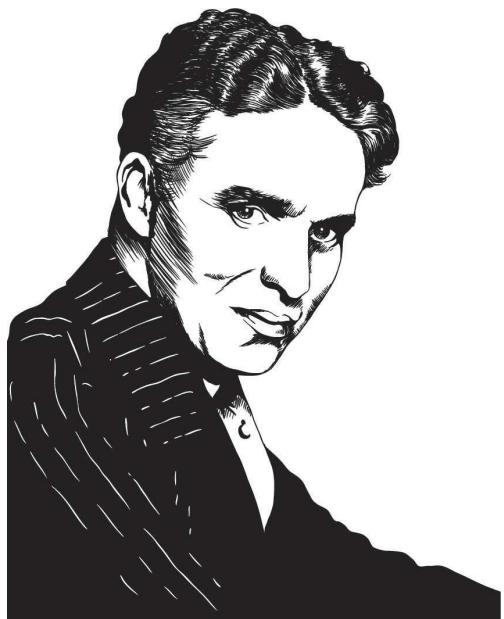
What is meant by Spiritual Love in Honor?

The Master level of Modern Honor calls for practicing Spiritual Love. But what is that? To find the answer, let's examine the Greek language, which provides four different words for different types of love:

- Eros (pronounced EH-ros): This is the word for romantic or passionate love. It is often associated with sexual desire and attraction.
- Philia (pronounced FEE-lee-ah): This is the word for deep, abiding friendship. It is a type of love that is based on mutual respect, admiration, and trust.
- Storge (pronounced STOHR-gay): This is the word for familial love. It is the type of love that parents feel for their children, and children feel for their parents. It is a type of love that is based on unconditional acceptance and support.
- Agape (pronounced ah-GAH-pay): This is the word for selfless love. It is a type of love that is given without expecting anything in return. It is often associated with religious or spiritual love. **This is the kind of love that is involved in the Master Honor Level.**

“Love is fighting for someone you don’t know.”

-Anonymous



"You need power, only when you want to do something that is harmful; otherwise, love is enough to get everything done."

- Charlie Chaplin

The Primary Commitments of Honor

Becoming honorable is a path of striving, rather than attainment. These are meant as ideals and while we all may fall short at times; they offer a guideline for a path to being honorable and creating happiness for you and others.

1. Acknowledge that you alone are ultimately responsible for how you think, what you believe, how you behave, and for all your actions including the consequences for your actions.
2. Conduct all dealings with rigorous honesty, integrity and dependability.
3. Keep all of your pledges, promises, oaths and agreements, and if circumstances beyond your control force you to default, inform all affected parties immediately, and adjust the commitment with mutual consent.
4. Work to communicate clearly, concisely and politely, including honoring others by listening to them and doing your best to understand what they mean while avoiding preaching, judging, bragging, bloviating, complaining, or gossiping.
5. Eliminate negative, toxic, dramatic and stress-creating people from your life and replace them with positive, supportive, and honorable people. Foster constructive, supportive healthy relationships based on mutual consent, respect and trust.
6. Treat others fairly and kindly, without regard to race, gender, religion, country of origin, disability, or any other personal beliefs or characteristics.
7. Cultivate a healthy mind, body and spirit.
8. Care deeply that everything you believe is true, know how to tell the difference, and strive to believe as many true things as possible and regularly rid yourself of false beliefs.
9. Develop an ability to think with the principles of “Clear Thinking” (Rationally and Critically). Value tangible and objective evidence highly. Make decisions based on these skills. Develop compassion and empathy for those who are in need, especially those who you interact with, and generously contribute to them and your community with your time and financial support as best you can.
10. Although relying on Clear Thinking, acknowledge that having emotions is part of being human. Learn to understand and accept your emotions, but no to let them overwhelm Clear Thinking when important decisions need to be made.
11. Find something in life to be passionate about – a vocation, lifework, passion project, mission, cause or legacy that makes you happy, focusses you, and can be shared to make the world a better place.
12. Strive to participate in your community, and work to improve human society by participating to the best of your abilities. Abide by laws, and work with your community to

remove or change unfair laws making them as honorable as possible. As part of this effort, make it a habit to teach others about Modern Honor.

13. Care about, care for, protect, and enjoy your loved ones, family pets, livestock, and the natural spaces and wild creatures. Vow to leave the wild spaces in a better state than how you found them.
14. Work to undo the damage that dishonorable people have done, such as: adopt an abandoned or lost animal, pick up litter, return your shopping cart to the cart corral, plant wildflowers in a ugly vacant lot, help start and run a community garden, volunteer with non-profit groups to help cleanup and replant forests and other wild areas, vote for government representatives that will legislate regulations to prevent corporations from polluting the air and water, and destroying natural lands, volunteer to feed the homeless, donate to direct charities, etc.

“The dangers of not thinking clearly are much greater now than ever before. It’s not that there’s something new in our way of thinking – it’s that credulous and confused thinking can me much more lethal in ways that it never was before.”

-Carl Sagan

Most Important Characteristics of an Honorable Person

You might notice that there is quite a bit of overlap in these definitions. That's the nature of Modern Honor – it's greater than the sum of its parts – two plus two equals five.

Purposeful:

**"If you don't have a plan,
you become part of somebody else's plan."**
- Terrence McKenna

The term "purposeful" refers to someone who has a clear understanding of their goals and values, and acts with intention and determination to achieve them. A purposeful person is focused on what they want to accomplish, and takes deliberate actions to make progress towards their desired outcomes.

Here are some examples of how a purposeful person might behave:

- Setting clear goals: A purposeful person has a clear sense of what they want to achieve and sets specific, measurable goals to help them get there. For example, if they want to become a successful entrepreneur, they might set a goal to launch a new product within the next six months.
- Prioritizing their time: A purposeful person is mindful of how they spend their time and energy, and prioritizes tasks that will help them achieve their goals. They are careful not to waste time on activities that don't align with their values or move them closer to their objectives.
- Taking action: A purposeful person doesn't just talk about their goals – they take action to make them happen. They are willing to put in the effort and make sacrifices to achieve their desired outcomes.
- Being adaptable: A purposeful person understands that setbacks and obstacles are inevitable on the path to success. They are resilient and adaptable, and are willing to pivot and adjust their approach when necessary to stay on track.
- Focusing on the present moment: A purposeful person understands that the present moment is the only time they have to take action towards their goals. They stay focused on the task at hand and avoid getting distracted by worries about the future or regrets about the past.

Overall, a purposeful person is someone who is driven by a sense of purpose and direction in life. They are focused, intentional, and committed to achieving their goals.

Integrity:

People with integrity have strong moral and ethical principles and live by them consistently. For example, an honorable person would be truthful and keep their promises, even when it is difficult.

Their traits include honesty, keeping commitments, act ethically, take responsibility for their actions and words, be authentic, are humble, and are respectful to others.

Honesty:

Honesty is an essential trait that is valued in all cultures and societies. It is the foundation of trust, integrity, and credibility. Being honest means speaking the truth, honoring your commitments, and not deceiving others. While being honest may not always be the easiest or most convenient path, it is essential for building strong relationships, earning respect, and achieving personal growth. In this essay, I will explore the reasons why people should be honest and the benefits that come with honesty.

Firstly, honesty builds trust. Trust is the foundation of all healthy relationships, whether they are personal or professional. When people are honest, they are transparent, and they communicate openly with others. This allows them to build a sense of trust that creates a safe space for others to share their thoughts and feelings. When people are dishonest, they break that trust and create a sense of doubt that can be difficult to repair. This can lead to damaged relationships and lost opportunities.

Secondly, honesty is an integral part of integrity. Integrity means doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. When people are honest, they act with integrity and earn the respect of others. This is because honesty shows that a person has a strong moral compass and values doing what is right above personal gain. In contrast, dishonesty shows a lack of integrity and can damage a person's reputation and credibility.

Thirdly, honesty fosters personal growth. When people are honest, they take responsibility for their actions and own up to their mistakes. This allows them to learn from their experiences and make better decisions in the future. When people are dishonest, they are not able to learn from their mistakes and may continue to make the same errors repeatedly. Being honest requires vulnerability and humility, which can be challenging, but it ultimately leads to personal growth and development.

In addition, honesty is a critical component of effective communication. When people communicate honestly, they can express themselves clearly and openly, without fear of judgment or backlash. This allows for more productive and meaningful conversations that can lead to greater understanding and cooperation. When people are dishonest, they may hide their true feelings or intentions, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts.

Return to Honor

Finally, being honest is simply the right thing to do. Honesty is a universal value that is upheld by all cultures and religions. It is a fundamental aspect of human decency and respect. When people are honest, they demonstrate that they are trustworthy, responsible, and respectful of others. This sets a positive example for others to follow and contributes to a more positive and harmonious society.

Honesty is a fundamental aspect of being a good person. It builds trust, fosters personal growth, promotes integrity, and contributes to effective communication. Ultimately, being honest is simply the right thing to do. While honesty may not always be the easiest or most convenient path, the benefits that come with it are invaluable. By being honest, people can build stronger relationships, earn respect, and contribute to a more positive and harmonious society.

Clear Thinking: Rational Thinking plus Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the process of actively and objectively analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information to form a judgment or conclusion. It involves questioning assumptions, evaluating evidence, identifying biases and assumptions, and considering alternative perspectives.

Rational thinking, on the other hand, refers to the process of making decisions based on reason and evidence rather than emotion or intuition. It involves using logical reasoning to evaluate arguments, weigh evidence, and draw conclusions.

There is a full chapter dedicated to this subject on page 219.

Clear & Concise Communication

Honorable people exhibit a type of communication that is easy to understand and conveys information in a precise and succinct manner. It involves expressing ideas, thoughts, or instructions using simple language, avoiding technical jargon or complex terms that may confuse the listener or reader. Clear and concise communication requires organizing information in a logical and coherent way and using relevant examples or analogies to clarify the message. It also involves being mindful of the audience's needs and expectations, and adapting the communication style and tone accordingly. The goal of clear and concise communication is to convey the intended message effectively and efficiently, without any ambiguity or misunderstanding.

There is a full chapter dedicated to this subject on page 314.

Dependable:

Able to be relied on or trusted to do what is expected or promised. It involves being responsible, consistent, and reliable in fulfilling one's commitments and obligations.

Fairness:

**“If you want to see the true measure of a man,
watch how he treats his inferiors, not his equals.”**
- Morgan Freeman

Fairness can be defined as the quality of being just, impartial, and unbiased. It is the principle of treating people equally and without discrimination based on their personal characteristics, such as race, gender, religion, age, and socioeconomic status. Fairness involves treating all individuals with the same level of respect, providing them with equal opportunities, and making decisions that are not influenced by personal biases or prejudices. It is a fundamental principle in various aspects of human life, including legal, social, economic, and political systems.



If you, for example, encounter another person who is different than you, such as practicing a different religion than yours, or is from a country other than yours, or had a different culture, skin color, is of a gender identity that might make you uncomfortable, or they have a different sexual orientation than what you consider “normal”, or if they dress differently or decorate their body differently, you may find it to challenging – especially if you haven’t travelled very much or adventured beyond your insular social circles.

There are many ways to react to such an encounter. The continuum above illustrates how your different reactions rate on the scale of dishonorable to honorable:

- Hurt or Kill – a desire to hurt or kill someone who is different from your or makes you uncomfortable is the most dishonorable possible response. Remember, no gender identity, race, or culture is right or wrong, better or worse than any other – they are just different. And besides, it’s really none of your business. There’s a saying in 12-Step programs “What bothers you is wrong with you” – this means that your inability to accept other ways of being is truly not their fault, it’s yours.

- Spread Hate – spreading messages³³ or memes online or calling talk shows online, radio or television and saying hateful things, or treating people badly or in a prejudiced manner is a highly dishonorable thing to do. See the Overcoming Hate Box on page 102 for tips on how to overcome your hatred for others.
- Legislate Against – it is dishonorable to attempt to impose your culture, religion, beliefs, political ideals, or intolerance onto others via laws, ordinances, regulations, codes, statutes, policies or bylaws. Remember, it's honorable to "Live and Let Live".
- Discriminate Against – when you deny persons or groups opportunities, treat them unequally, segregate them, harass them, stereotype them, deny them equal representation or diminish their beliefs as inferior you are discriminating against them. This is dishonorable behavior on your part.
- Avoiding – this is a neutral response which is not actively dishonorable or honorable. It's a bit unkind to avoid people who are different from you who wish to befriend you or be part of your community, but at least is better than you treating them dishonorably.
- Live and Let Live – you don't need to learn about someone's religion, culture, or sexual orientation in order to be minimally honorable – just leave them the f@ck alone and mind your own business. Let them go about their lives without your interference, commentary, or approval.
- Welcome (or become welcoming) – be friendly and polite – civil and welcoming. This doesn't mean you have to approve of them, join their weird religion, learn about their culture or invite them to marry your daughter – just be nice. You can do it!
- Understand – when you meet people who are different from you, with the right perspective, you can this as an opportunity to learn about new foods, traditions, religions, music, dances, and other possibly fun things. Exposing yourself to, and taking the time to learn and understand those who are different than you can be an enriching and joyful thing to do.
- Respect – remember, as difficult as it is to accept, no one's ways of looking or being or worshiping are better or worse than yours. Of course, your ways are those that you are most comfortable with, and you probably are pretty happy being as you are, but that doesn't mean that anyone else is worse or inferior to you. If you can accept other as simply being different and not better or worse, you have learned the most honorable way of treating others.

³³ I was walking my dog the other day in an amazingly large public park that I had never visited before. I noticed a peregrine falcon up above an electronic baseball score board. They are apex predators, so the raptor wasn't particularly afraid of me, which pleased me and allowed me to watch it from pretty close.

On the pole holding up the score board someone had written the words "Fuck Niggers". I was amazed that someone hated another racial group enough to write those words. And this was a very racially diverse community. I can't even imagine being so consumed by irrational hatred to do something like that.

Overcoming Hate

Self-reflection:

- Acknowledge that you are hateful and intolerant: The first step is to admit that the hate exists and recognize its negative impact. Ignoring, denying, or suppressing it won't make it disappear.
- Examine the roots: Reflect on the origins of the hate. Where did these negative feelings come from? Were they learned from family, friends, church or media? Understanding the source can help dismantle it.
- Challenge assumptions: Question stereotypes and biases held about different groups. Are they based on personal experiences or second-hand information? Ask yourself "How did I come to believe this?" Seek out factual information and diverse perspectives.

Education and exposure:

- Learn about different cultures and religions: Read books, watch documentaries, and engage in respectful conversations with people from different backgrounds. Understanding their experiences and perspectives can foster empathy.
- Seek out diverse experiences: Travel to new places, attend cultural events, and try different foods. Immersing yourself in diverse environments can challenge preconceived notions and broaden your worldview.
- Connect with individuals: Build genuine relationships with people from different backgrounds. Get to know them as individuals, not representatives of a group. Shared experiences and personal connections can break down barriers.

Develop empathy and compassion:

- Imagine their experiences: Try to put yourself in the shoes of someone different from you. What challenges might they face? How might they feel?
- Focus on shared humanity: Remember that everyone, regardless of background, shares basic human needs and desires. Recognize the commonalities that connect us all.
- Practice active listening: Engage in open and respectful conversations with people from different backgrounds. Listen to their stories and experiences without judgment.

Morality

There are those who believe that morality comes from religion or faith. While some religions do contain moral teachings, many religions also contain teachings that are not moral at all, such as in the Bible's Old Testament, there are regulations provided for the treatment of slaves. These regulations can be found in passages such as Exodus 21:2-11, Leviticus 25:39-46, and Deuteronomy 15:12-18. These passages outline guidelines for the treatment of slaves, including rules regarding how much they can be beaten, how they can be sold, and when they may be released from servitude³⁴.

Religions vary dramatically, as do their particular moral and immoral teachings, so it's certainly not within the scope of Modern Honor to recommend or endorse any religion for their moral values.

However, there is such a thing as secular morality – morality without religion. Lawrence Kohlberg was a psychologist known for his theory of moral development. According to Kohlberg, individuals progress through six distinct stages of moral reasoning, which are organized into three main levels. These levels reflect increasing complexity and abstract thinking in an individual's moral judgments. Let's explore each level and its corresponding stages:

Level 1: Pre-conventional Morality

At this level, moral judgments are primarily based on self-interest and the avoidance of punishment. E.g.: "I won't kill these babies because I'll go to Hell if I do."

Stage 1: Obedience and Punishment Orientation

In this stage, individuals focus on avoiding punishment. They follow rules to prevent themselves from getting into trouble.

Stage 2: Individualism and Exchange

At this stage, individuals recognize that there are different perspectives and that everyone has their own self-interests. Moral decisions are driven by the idea of reciprocity, where individuals seek to satisfy their own needs while recognizing the interests of others.

Level 2: Conventional Morality

At this level, individuals start to internalize societal norms and rules, valuing conformity and maintaining social order.

³⁴ Let's be clear that these are real slaves – people who were the property of another human. They weren't indentured servants, people in debt bondage, criminals serving their sentences, serfs, parts of a caste system, or "giants" or any other type of non-human. And, if you try to justify this by saying it was in the Old Testament so it is supplanted by the New Testament, in the New Testament, Matthew 5:17, Jesus says: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets (the Old Testament); I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." and in Ephesians 6:5 Jesus says "Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ."

Stage 3: Interpersonal Relationships

In this stage, individuals seek approval and acceptance from others. They make moral decisions based on how they can gain the approval of significant people in their lives.

Stage 4: Maintaining Social Order

At this stage, individuals are concerned with upholding social rules, laws, and duties. They believe that maintaining order and functioning institutions are essential for a stable society.

Level 3: Post-conventional Morality

This level represents the highest level of moral development, characterized by abstract reasoning and an individual's own ethical principles.

Stage 5: Social Contract and Individual Rights

At this stage, individuals recognize the importance of individual rights and social contracts. They understand that rules and laws are social agreements that should promote the greater good and protect basic rights.

Stage 6: Universal Principles – the Ultimate Stage of Modern Honor

In this final stage, individuals develop their own moral principles based on abstract reasoning and universal ethical values. These principles are self-chosen and guided by a sense of justice, dignity, and equality.

Not everyone reaches the highest stages of moral development, and individuals may vary in their progression through the stages. Kohlberg's theory provides a framework for understanding how moral reasoning develops and evolves over time.

Other Traits of an Honest Person

Kindness:

Honorable people are often polite, friendly, generous, and considerate

Empathy:

They are able to put themselves in someone else's shoes and understand their point of view. For example, a kind person would offer support to a friend who is going through a difficult time, and would try to see the situation from their friend's perspective.

Compassion:

They have a genuine concern for others and their well-being. For instance, a kind person would be patient and understanding with someone who is struggling, and would offer help in any way they can.

Generosity:

They are willing to give of themselves, whether it be time, resources, or emotional support. A kind person may volunteer their time to help others in need, or donate money to a charity.

Courage:

**“Courage doesn’t mean you don’t get afraid.
Courage means you don’t let the fear stop you.”**
- Bethany Hamilton

Courageous people have the strength to do what is right, even when it is difficult, unpopular or risky. An honorable person would stand up for what they believe in, even in the face of adversity.

Responsibility:

They take ownership of their actions and are accountable for their mistakes. An honorable person would admit their faults, apologize when necessary, and work to make amends.

Truthfulness:

They are truthful and straightforward in their words and actions. For instance, an honest person would not deceive others, and would always tell the truth, even if it is uncomfortable.

Authenticity:

They are genuine and true to themselves. An honest person would not pretend to be someone they are not, or present a false image to others.

Transparency:

They are open and forthcoming, and do not hide information or intentions. An honest person would be transparent in their dealings with others, and would not withhold important details.

Consideration:

They take others' feelings and needs into account. For example, a thoughtful person would take the time to listen to someone who is upset, and would offer comfort or assistance.

Creativity:

They are able to come up with unique solutions and ideas. A thoughtful person would think outside the box to find ways to help others, or to address a problem.

Loyalty

The quality of being loyal, faithful, and committed to someone³⁵ or something, especially in times of difficulty or challenge. It involves a strong sense of devotion and dedication towards a person, group, or cause.

Graciousness:

The quality of being kind, courteous, and polite towards others, even in difficult or challenging situations. It involves showing generosity, warmth, and a welcoming attitude towards others.

Rational:

based on reason and logic rather than emotions or personal beliefs. It involves being able to think logically, critically, and objectively, and making decisions based on evidence and facts.

Ethical:

conforming to accepted moral principles and standards of conduct. It involves acting in a way that is honest, fair, and just, and upholding values such as integrity, respect, and responsibility.

Respectful:

showing consideration, esteem, and deference towards others. It involves treating others with politeness, dignity, and kindness, and acknowledging their worth and value as individuals.

Overall, these honorable traits are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Someone who exhibits these characteristics is likely to be respected, admired, and trusted by others.

Emotionally Intelligence

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and express emotions effectively, both in oneself and in others. It involves a set of skills that allow individuals to navigate and handle emotions in a way that promotes positive relationships, personal well-being, and effective decision-making. Several traits are attributed to emotional intelligence:

- Self-awareness: This trait involves recognizing and understanding one's own emotions, strengths, weaknesses, values, and motivations. It also entails having an accurate perception of how others perceive you.
- Self-regulation: Emotional intelligence includes the ability to manage and regulate one's emotions, impulses, and behaviors. It involves being able to control negative emotions such as anger, frustration, or anxiety, and to adapt to changing circumstances with flexibility.

³⁵ Loyalty can be a two-edged sword. Beware of being loyal to bad people, or remaining loyal to people who were good at one time, but have changed. It's honorable to be loyal only someone or some organization has earned that loyalty, and it's honorable to cease loyalty when the loyalty is abused or no longer deserved.

- Empathy: Empathy is the capacity to understand and share the feelings, perspectives, and experiences of others. It involves being attentive to others' emotions, demonstrating compassion, and showing genuine concern for their well-being.
- Social skills: Emotional intelligence encompasses effective interpersonal skills, such as communication, conflict resolution, and building and maintaining relationships. It involves being able to influence and inspire others, work collaboratively, and navigate social dynamics with tact and diplomacy.
- Motivation: Emotional intelligence includes having a strong intrinsic drive, passion, and persistence toward achieving personal and professional goals. It involves being able to delay gratification, set realistic and meaningful objectives, and bounce back from setbacks.
- Emotional awareness and expression: Emotional intelligence involves recognizing and appropriately expressing emotions in oneself and others. It includes the ability to label emotions accurately, understand their causes and consequences, and communicate them effectively.
- Emotional resilience: Emotional intelligence encompasses the ability to cope with adversity, stress, and challenges. It involves maintaining a positive attitude, managing emotions in difficult situations, and recovering from setbacks or failures.

Developing and cultivating emotional intelligence can lead to improved relationships, enhanced communication, better decision-making, and increased well-being both personally and professionally. It is a valuable skillset that contributes to overall emotional and social competence and a goal of all people who practice Modern Honor.

Here are some examples of things an emotionally intelligent person might say:

1. "I understand how you feel, and I'm here to support you."
2. "I apologize for my mistake. I take responsibility for my actions."
3. "Let's take a moment to calm down and discuss this issue like civilized adults."
4. "I appreciate your perspective, even if we disagree. Let's find a solution that works for both of us."
5. "I value your feedback and will consider it in my decision-making process."
6. "I'm feeling overwhelmed right now, so I need to take a break and recharge."
7. "I'm excited about this opportunity, and I'm willing to put in the effort to achieve success."
8. "I've learned from my past mistakes and will use those experiences to improve in the future."
9. "I've noticed that you seem upset. Can you share what's bothering you?"
10. "I'm proud of your accomplishments. Your hard work and dedication paid off."

On the other hand, here are examples of things a person who lacks emotional intelligence might say:

1. "Why are you so sensitive? It's not a big deal."
2. "It's not my fault. They made me do it."
3. "Calm down, you're overreacting."
4. "I'm always right. Your opinion doesn't matter."
5. "Man-up and just get over it."
6. "It's not my problem."
7. "I can't believe you made that mistake. You're so incompetent."
8. "I don't need anyone's help. I can do it all on my own."
9. "Stop being so emotional. It's annoying."
10. "You should be grateful for what you have. Other people have it worse."

These examples illustrate how emotionally intelligent individuals tend to exhibit empathy, self-awareness, accountability, and effective communication, while those lacking emotional intelligence may dismiss others' feelings, exhibit defensiveness, lack self-awareness, and engage in dismissive or insensitive behavior.

Emotional Reframing³⁶

Here's an Emotional Intelligence tip you can use to help you feel better and be more productive at the same time. It can very helpful if you feel uncomfortable or anxious to take the time and make the effort to look at a situation from a different perspective. When you're frustrated, take a step back and ask yourself a few basic questions:

- How serious is this problem? Am I just feeling temporarily inconvenienced or is this a real issue? Am I just resisting change because it makes me feel uncomfortable?
- Can I change something about how I view the problem that would completely change how I feel about it? What does this situation look like from the perspective of the person who is annoying me? How do my coworkers/family see this situation?
- How can I handle this problem differently so I can direct my emotional energy to bigger, more important issues?

³⁶ A 2012 study published in Journal of Clinical Psychology found that reframing can significantly reduce feelings of stress and anxiety.

- Instead of dwelling on what you want, focus on what you need.
- Can I make an effort to contribute to the greater good rather than my own needs just for this one instance.
- Can I put this in perspective by considering the bigger picture?
- Have I considered how others feel about this by putting myself in their shoes?

An example:

Sarah has been working on a project for several weeks, putting in long hours and giving her best effort. However, during the final presentation, her supervisor points out several flaws in her work and expresses disappointment. Sarah feels devastated and starts to doubt her abilities. In this situation, emotional reframing can be beneficial. Emotional reframing involves shifting one's perspective on a situation or emotions to promote a more positive or productive mindset.

Here's how Sarah could use emotional reframing:

1. Recognize and acknowledge the initial emotional response: Sarah acknowledges that she feels hurt, disappointed, and doubtful about her abilities. She allows herself to experience and validate these emotions.
2. Identify the negative thought patterns: Sarah identifies the negative thoughts that are contributing to her distress, such as "I'm a failure" or "I'm not good enough." She acknowledges that these thoughts are making her feel worse.
3. Challenge and reframe negative thoughts: Sarah questions the validity of her negative thoughts and looks for alternative, more empowering perspectives. She reframes her thoughts by reminding herself that receiving constructive feedback is an opportunity for growth and improvement. She tells herself, "This feedback will help me learn and do better in the future."
4. Find the silver lining: Sarah looks for positive aspects in the situation. She acknowledges the effort and hard work she put into the project, regardless of the flaws. She also reminds herself that mistakes are a natural part of the learning process and that she has the ability to learn from them.
5. Focus on lessons learned and growth: Sarah shifts her attention to the lessons she can take away from the feedback. She reflects on specific areas she can improve and sets goals for future projects. She views this experience as a stepping stone toward becoming a better professional.
6. Practice self-compassion: Sarah shows kindness and understanding toward herself. She reminds herself that everyone makes mistakes and that her worth as a person is not defined by one project. She engages in self-care activities that help her recharge and regain confidence.

By engaging in emotional reframing, Sarah is able to transform her initial negative emotions and thoughts into more positive and constructive ones. This shift in perspective allows her to learn from the feedback, maintain her confidence, and continue growing both personally and professionally.

**“A person’s maturity isn’t measured by their age –
it’s measured by their ability to accept their responsibilities.”**
-Anonymous

Joy in Other’s Success

When an honorable person sees that someone else is successful, they are happy for them – not jealous. Success shouldn’t be seen as a pie with only a limited number of slices. When someone else is successful it doesn’t mean that they’ve snatched away your slice of pie. The Success Pie is of infinite size and has unlimited slices.

Kind to Animals

Animals are sentient beings and they can feel pain and suffer just like humans. When we are cruel to animals, we are causing them pain and suffering that is unnecessary and avoidable. Honorable people believe that, just like humans, animals have the right to live their lives free from pain and suffering. When we are cruel to animals, we are violating their right to live free from harm.

Animal abuse is a predictor of violence against humans. Studies have shown that people who abuse animals are more likely to also abuse humans. This is because animal abuse is a form of aggression and violence, and it can be a sign of a deeper problem. And remember, in most , animal abuse is a crime. Animal abuse is morally wrong and highly dishonorable behavior. It is simply wrong to hurt or kill animals for any reason³⁷. We should treat all animals with respect and compassion.

**“Compassion for animals is intimately connected with goodness of character;
and it may be confidently asserted that he who is cruel to animals cannot be a good
man.”**
- Arthur Schopenhauer

Self-Care

Self-care refers to the practice of taking deliberate actions to maintain and enhance one's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It involves engaging in activities and behaviors that

³⁷ Plant based meats as well as Cultured meats are in their infancy as I write this. Hopefully they will become the norm so raising and killing animals for food will become a distant and shameful memory of our past. Until that time it's sufficient to say that “food animals” should be treated as well as possible, and,

Return to Honor

promote self-nurturing, relaxation, stress reduction, and overall health. Self-care is essential for maintaining a balanced and fulfilling lifestyle and is often considered an integral part of maintaining good mental health.

Self-care can encompass a wide range of activities, and it varies from person to person depending on their individual needs and preferences. Some common examples of self-care activities include:

1. Physical self-care: Engaging in regular exercise, eating a balanced diet, getting enough sleep, practicing good hygiene, and attending to any medical needs.
2. Emotional self-care: Recognizing and validating one's emotions, seeking support from friends or loved ones, engaging in activities that bring joy and happiness, and practicing stress management techniques such as meditation or deep breathing exercises.
3. Mental self-care: Engaging in activities that stimulate the mind, such as reading, learning new skills or hobbies, engaging in creative pursuits, or practicing mindfulness.
4. Social self-care: Nurturing positive relationships, spending time with loved ones, seeking social support when needed, and setting healthy boundaries in relationships.
5. Spiritual self-care: Engaging in activities that provide a sense of purpose and connection to something greater than oneself, such as meditation, prayer, spending time in nature, or practicing gratitude.

It is important to note that self-care is not selfish or indulgent; rather, it is a vital aspect of maintaining overall well-being and preventing burnout. By prioritizing self-care, individuals can better manage stress, improve their physical and mental health, and enhance their overall quality of life.

It might not have occurred to you that when a person allows themselves to become miserable or incapacitated with disease due to self-neglect, they often become a burden to others. People with mental illnesses that don't "take their meds" can raise havoc and even hurt or kill others. In other words, Self-Care is actually a kindness not only to yourself, but for other around you.

Spiritual Honor

For Honorable people, being spiritual means having a sense of interconnectedness with other people, animals, and nature; a focus on mindfulness and meditation practices; an exploration of personal growth and self-awareness and even the recognition and investigation of their higher-selves.

In a personal way, feeling experiences of awe, wonder, or transcendence, or through a sense of connection with a purpose or meaning beyond themselves. Some may find Spiritual Honor

of course, there are people who still do subsistence hunting, and most hunters I've met are very humane in their hunting and harvesting processes.

through creative expression or art, meditation, contemplation, while others may seek it through acts of service or community involvement.

Overall, being Spiritually Honorable involves a search for meaning and purpose, a connection with something larger than oneself, and a desire for personal growth and development.



“A great man does not seek applause or praise; he seeks for truth; he seeks the road to happiness, and what he ascertains, he gives to others.”

-Robert Ingersoll