

THE WAYS OF THE WARRIOR

IN LIFE AND WORK

Zen practitioners of martial arts observe following seven cardinal principles* of ethics and morality even in the middle of a deadly war. These principles are testament to courage, honor and righteousness in practice. The way of warrior or Samurai is equally appropriate for normal human beings to conduct the business of life efficiently, ethically and harmlessly. If we can observe these principles in our daily life, our mind will be rested and tranquil and we shall not be regretful of having done something wrong. It is an active meditation which we should carry on even in the middle of a market place, in business-dealings, and trying to iron out relationship problems at home or work. They are:

1. **Justice**
2. **Courage**
3. **Benevolence**
4. **Politeness**
5. **Veracity**
6. **Loyalty**
7. **Honor**

1. Justice: It precludes any dishonesty or deceit. This attribute is the mainstay of all the spiritual traditions and reminds us of the power of transparency and fairness toward other people. More than that, it demands that we become honest toward our own self and make a sincere effort to know our own self.

2. Courage: Based on serenity, experience and vigilance, it encompasses both moral and physical aspect of the courage. The spiritual courage is little different than being outright brash or reckless. This demands a careful yet generous approach toward life and fellow human beings. Being and acting courageous point towards recognizing the necessity of doing the needful irrespective of its consequences.

3. Benevolence: It includes magnanimity, love, and sympathy. Once we embark upon a spiritual journey, it is the persistent training of the heart which leads us toward freedom and big-heartedness. A warrior's way is to be generous and fair at the same time as he is shrewd and smart on the battlefield. This attribute can be developed only with consistent spiritual training and development of solid ethical foundation.

4. Politeness: It is essential for the refinement of body and soul. Though politeness may sound contradictory to the life of a warrior, yet it is an essential part of the training through which he develops the need to be humble and polite even in the face of a real enemy. More so, when we

are polite yet firm, negative forces of anger or abrasion do not eat away the vitals of our spirit. This ability provides a forceful character to the person.

5. **Veracity:** A warrior does not give written promises. His utterances are promises. A true warrior speaks less but what ever is spoken is tantamount to a written promise. Such state of being comes with the deepening of spiritual training, cementing of resolve and knowledge of one's own self.

6. **Loyalty:** Being faithful is an important quality even in our general life. It shows an essential quality of the person and to what extent one is committed to the values and cause he/she professes. Its importance can not be overstated whether it is in a war or at home, while building relationships with our family members or peers.

7. **Honor:** The warrior's way is such that nothing is done or practiced which would have the potentiality of bringing dishonor to the practitioner but also to the whole tradition. The same tenet is applicable even in general life. Any dishonorable act can besmirch our soul and spiritual life and push us into emotional and spiritual limbo.

All these above-mentioned tenets are equally important to ordinary people as they are to the warriors. In fact, life is battle in which we have to be very careful as to what sort of strategies we choose to play it. If our strategies are flawed and smacks of injustices, lack of fairness, disloyalty, dishonor and indifference, sooner or later we have to bear the fruit of our choice.

We must bear the responsibility for our actions and deeds.

* Murphy, M . (1992). The future of the body. Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher.

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