

DE VITA PRINCIPIA

BY

AARON HOLLMAN

*For all those trying to find answers; for the Stoics in
all of us.*

Forward

I began this list of life principles in December of 2018. At the time, I felt lost. I was struggling with alcohol addiction, depression and anxiety. It was the perfect trifecta ticket that led to one of three destinations; death, institution or jail. I finally punched my ticket to the institution which, in this case was a two whistle stop; first to the hospital then second to Valley Hope in Norton, Kansas to get help for my addiction.

I wish I could say that it has been smooth sailing since then, but there are still issues being worked out though I am sure that everything will be just as it is supposed to be.

Even though I do not know what life holds for me, I am confident that I will weather whatever life throws towards me with grace and dignity and will ultimately come out ahead.

This book is for all who are struggling with anything. The principles are not strict but rather met to be a guide to help others see their own, moral principles and even add some of their own.

Aaron Hollman 9.21.2019

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- #1: Never order food that is delivered through a window.
- #2: Telling the truth is easier than telling a lie.
- #3: A leader makes room for others.
- #4: Don't feed the trolls.
- #5: Always follow the silver rule: Do not do unto others what you would not want them to do unto you.
- #6: Take pride in all you are. (Appearance, health, actions, etc.)
- #7: Always try new things.
- #8: Leadership is earned, not granted.
- #9: Memories of slight last many times longer than memories of something good
- #10: Fashion is fleeting, style is eternal.
- #11: Stress levels rise the more you personally care; that is, the more you care about something, the more it can cause you stress.
- #12: Always find breaks and hobbies that have nothing to do with your occupation.
- #13: Recognize that all of us are flawed. Never use one's flaws against them. Instead, help them as best you can.
- #14: Every day is a voyage in uncharted waters. Go forth and discover new things.

- #15: Always visit the barber at least once a month.
- #16: Buy quality over quantity.
- #17: Everyone should know sewing basics.
- #18: Everyone should know how to cook.
- #19: Everyone should know how to speak in front of an audience
- #20: Everyone should know basic home maintenance
- #21: Pickup, clean, fix or improve at least one thing every day.
- #22: Your presentation matters. Always look respectable.
- #23: Never criticize people, criticize actions and then only after praise, even in private.
- #24: Always make time for personal hygiene and grooming.
- #25: Wear a suit occasionally to keep it fresh and to keep people guessing.
- #26: Don't burn bridges you may need to cross later.
- #27: Always admit when you made a mistake or when you are or were wrong.
- #28: Always backup your data.
- #29: When in doubt, defer a decision to those with more experience than you in that field.
- #30: As the seasons go, so does a man's life. Stay for

as long as you can in the early seasons.

#31: Everything cannot possibly be good all the time. Take time to appreciate the good times and time to learn from the bad. For when you accomplish these, you will live a full and happy life with wisdom to share with others.

#32: Never ask anyone to do anything that you are not willing to do yourself.

#33: Always take care of things. How you take care of things ultimately shows how you take care of yourself and of others. Someone who cannot take care of themselves cannot take care of others.

#34: When someone is struggling, hurting or otherwise needs help, step up and take care of them.

#35: Everyone is fighting a battle that no one else knows about. Be kind, always.

#36: Never make assumptions about other people.

#37: Spend roughly 20% of your time on personal development. (See also: The Pareto Principle)

#38: Wear a simple watch over a smartwatch.

Smartwatches distract us from the rest of the world.

#39: Keep your "smart" devices in "DND" mode

where people can still call you if there is an emergency. Nothing is so urgent that it needs your immediate attention when you are focused on others.

#40: Always know about the cultures of people you interact with.

#41: There is nothing wrong with learning a trade.

#42: Always have something to fall back on.

#43: Never judge people in a “lower class”. Many times, they are doing better than you are.

#44: Never be a luddite. The only constant is change.

#45: Try to be a “Renaissance man”. Always learn new things.

#46: Be the kind of person that your younger relatives will look up to you with pride.

#47: Don't abide hypocrisy.

#48: Try to learn the basics of a person's occupation when interacting with them.

#49: Never wear a hat indoors or while sitting down to eat.

#50: Always be present during meetings. Never use your electronic device unless it's necessary.

#51: Don't underestimate the power of pen and paper.

#52: Never make the mistake of thinking you are irreplaceable.

#53: Always try to end relationships on a good note.

#54: Do things that make you uncomfortable, that's where you grow as a person.

#55: Don't try to be someone you're not. Being yourself is so much easier and rewarding.

#56: Absence of proof is not proof. No one can disprove anything, they can only prove.

#57: Everyone has a role, never make the mistake of treating the janitor with less respect than the CEO of a company.

#58: You can't make everyone happy all the time, but you sure as hell can piss off everyone at once (Aaron's Maxim - Quam quisque ab defricatus urina).

#59: Life, by default, is a tragedy. Do what you can to turn it into a comedy.

#60: It is hard to do the right thing. By contrast, it is easy to do the wrong thing. Always do the right thing.

#61: Be cautious not to confuse the way you think things should be with the way that things are. Don't impose your will on others.

#62: Never pretend to be someone you are not.

- #63: When you know to do the right thing, never delay. Delaying a right action makes it harder to do.
- #64: Never wait for something to happen. Make something happen.
- #65: Never assume that something will happen. Act, in all manners, that you are worthy of that something.
- #66: In all things, act as though someone important is watching.
- #67: Never hate anyone, no matter what.
- #68: Never confuse a person's beliefs and opinions with that person as a whole.
- #69: Always have a backup plan but never dwell on it.
- #70: Never make anyone wait on you.
- #71: Never act like someone you aren't.
- #72: Never act pretentious.
- #73: Never ask how much food or drinks costs. If you must ask, it costs too much.
- #74: Never review a ticket while your server is waiting on you. Their time is just as valuable as yours.
- #75: Never brag about or discuss your dietary issues in public.

- #76: If you need to resort to name calling, you've already lost the argument.
- #77: Know your flaws and faults so that others cannot use them against you.
- #78: Live in the little moments. Every instance that you do good is a glorious victory.
- #79: Never try to change others to the way you think they should be, change yourself so that you can understand them.
- #80: Don't stay in a bubble. Travel often so you can get a perspective about life and others
- #81: When a city is big enough to have ethnic communities, go explore those communities.
- #82: Never compare yourself to others. No one is you and you are no one else.
- #83: Never be afraid to take a chance. When you take a chance, you will either succeed or fail, but, if you never try, you will always fail.
- #84: Never overthink things. If you overthink, nothing will ever happen.
- #85: Never hate.
- #86: Never dislike something so much that you move so far in the other direction that you lose sight of who you really are.
- #87: Never disagree with who a person is, only

disagree with their actions, but do it politely.

#88: Always be polite.

#89: Never listen to respond, listen to remember. If you need to respond, you will remember.

#90: Doing the right thing is seldom easy.

#91: When you feel alienated from your friends, family, or colleagues for doing what you believe is right, never worry. If you are truly doing what you believe is right in your heart of hearts, the right people will be there for you.

#92: Always make your life principles available for others who may find them useful.

#93: Never impose your life principles on others. Let them discover their own moral compass.

#94: Never use a talent to belittle or hurt others.

#95: Fear of failure is hundreds of times worse than failing at all. If you never fail, you never learn.

#96: Take care of the people who look up to you and they, in return, will take care of you.

#97: Build up your energy before important events such as speeches, interviews or meeting someone new.

#98: When in doubt and no time to validate, always go with your first instinct. All things being equal, your first instinct is usually correct.

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#99: Always look for a reason to do something, not a reason not to.

#100: Think of each day as a new beginning.

#101: Never mistake a disagreement of opinion for hate.

#102: The world is cruel enough without you having to make it even more cruel. Be nice always.

#103: Never get a tattoo that you wouldn't be embarrassed by at your funeral.

#104: Associate with people younger than you so you don't forget the optimism of youth.

#105: A truth told to deceive is still a lie.

#106: Never rely on Plan B. Dwelling on a Plan B distracts us from our true goals.

#107: Don't try to make others like you. Try to make others like your actions instead.

#108: Never put anything online that you want to remain confidential or secret. There is no expectation of privacy regardless of what the EULA says.

#109: Never remain loyal to any political party. Remain loyal to your life principles. Political parties sway and shift but your principles should remain constant.

#110: Your first loyalty should always be to the

truth.

#111: Time is a commodity which all of us have yet none can control. Don't squander it on things that will not benefit you or others.

#112: See with the right eyes; hear with the right ears; love with the right heart.

#113: If you don't do something bad once, you will never do it twice.

#114: Don't lose focus on what is important.

#115: Forgiveness is a gift, trust is earned.

#116: Consider your choices. What may be fun today may be considered insanity tomorrow.

#117: We are what we repeatably do. Always do good.

#118: Always make time to read good literature.

#119: When you make a choice, prepare for the consequences.

#120: If there is no way, then make a way.

#121: Don't let anyone live rent free in your head.

#122: Do not do good for some eternal reward, do good for the betterment of your fellow man.

#123: Never mistake an excuse for an apology.

#124: Never do something to prove someone else wrong. Do something to prove yourself right.

#125: Remember not to become a prisoner in a jail

of your own making.

#126: Do not squander natural gifts.

#127: There is no rule that says that the world must make sense.

#128: When you are not sure what to do, do the next right thing.

#129: You can't get to know someone until you spend time with them.

#130: It is never too late to start something new.

#131: If you're going to fail, at least fail forward.

#132: Never forget the bad times. They are like exercise for the soul.

#133: Finish what you start.

#134: If you think you know everything, you cannot possibly learn anything.

#135: It is alright to be selfish occasionally. Take time for yourself but don't steal time from others.

#136: You've got to suck at something before becoming good at it. The only natural talent is hard work and persistence.

#137: Being skeptical is healthy; it shows a willingness to learn the truth for oneself.

#138: Let others out of confined spaces, such as elevators, subway cars, buses, etc.) before you get in.

- #139: Crappy things happen to everyone. It's how you handle them that matters.
- #140: You don't have to be right all the time. In fact, it is better if you are not so you can learn from others.
- #141: Take alternative routes on your commute every so often to gain new perspectives.
- #142: Depression is living in the past. Anxiety is living in the future. Serenity is living in the present.
- #143: Don't neglect the present at the expense of the past or the future. Live in the moment.
- #144: Once spoken, words cannot be taken back. Think before you speak.
- #145: An apology without action is manipulation.
- #146: Life is not a fairy tale. Don't expect it to be one.
- #147: If someone says or writes something that is grammatically incorrect and you still understand what they are communicating, don't correct them unless it is absolutely necessary.
- #148: It's OK to stumble as long as you pick yourself back up one more time than the number of times you fall.
- #149: Invest in people who return interest, not

those who sap your life away.

#150: Don't confuse politeness with agreement.

#151: Remember where you come from and learn from it.

#152: All we are guaranteed in life is right now. Don't squander it.

#153: The only person you can control is yourself. Don't try to control others.

#154: As hard as it is, sometimes you need to let people in your life go so that you can grow as a person.

#155: Don't parrot what others say to support your views and beliefs. Take the time to formulate your own arguments.

#156: I've been through enough "In theory, this should work"s to know that there are enough times it doesn't. Always test your work.

#157: When you're going through hell, keep going.

#158: Bad things happen so that worse things don't.

#159: The only thing we can have mastery over is ourselves; we can only be a master of one.

#160: All our problems exist in one place which is located between our ears and behind our eyes. Be careful what you put in each one.

#161: Sometimes you've got to dig through the

mud to get to the root of the things.

#162: If you look for problems, that is all you will ever find. If you look for solutions, they will present themselves.

#163: If you carry the weight of the world on your shoulders, it is difficult to look up and see the sun.

#164: Use the vocabulary level of those with whom you are communicating. Don't use a large vocabulary for the sake of making yourself sound smart. It makes you sound pretentious.

#165: Never underestimate the power of nostalgia.

#166: If you use up your sympathy on yourself, you won't have any left for others.

#167: Don't expect to be thanked for doing what you are supposed to be doing.

#168: Sometimes it is OK to not be OK. Just be OK enough.

#169: Worry is a bully and a thief. It never gives and only takes.

#170: Those who are angry and loud are usually harmless; its the ones who are angry and quiet that are usually dangerous.

#171: Everyone is a miracle.

#172: Never give your employer an excuse not to

promote you.

#173: Don't spend money on physical literature for rapidly changing technology.

#174: Sometimes the best thing you can do is to do nothing at all.

#175: Always assume your are near a hot mike when in meetings, on calls or giving a speech. Be careful what you say even when you think no one can hear you.

#176: When in public, always assume you can be overheard. Watch what you say.

#177: In some cases, the family we chose is more important than the one we are born into.

#178: Always drive as if a cop were following you but don't drive paranoid.

#179: You can chose your path in life or you can let life chose for you. Which will you chose?

#180: Never dig up the spirits of the past to use against anyone. The past is finished.

#181: There is no expiration date on realistic dreams. They only expire when we do.

#182: Be the kind of man who will be remembered for who he is; his honor, integrity, honesty, etc. and not for what he has done.

#183: When someone gives you something you did

not ask for, there is no obligation to reciprocate, especially if you don't know them or you believe that they may have ulterior motives. Reciprocate if you feel like you want to.

#184: Everything that has ever happened is history. Its just that some of it is more interesting than others.

#185: There is a difference between religion and morality. Be wary of what religions ask their flock or what they truly believe.

#186: Gratitude is something you need to give away in order to keep.

#187: Each person has a limited amount of good decision making ability per sleep cycle. If you know you need to make important decisions in the morning, get a good nights sleep. If you need to make an important decision in the afternoon, try to sneak in a good nap.

#188: Never regret the past or wish it was different. Everything has happened for a reason and you are where you exactly need to be in this moment.

#189: Psychics are charlatans who prey on people's fears, weaknesses and doubts. They are worse than the average con artist who only takes your

money. They psychic takes your stability and in return, gives you more fear, weakness and doubt.

#190: Never share your major, deep issues with others who are not qualified to listen to them. You will almost always get bad advice in return.

#191: The best way to know your enemies is to make peace with them. Adversity breeds secrecy. Once goodwill is established, the fog of secrecy lifts.

#192: Don't be busy for busy sake. Be busy to be productive.

#193: Set aside time to just think in solitude.

#194: No matter the situations life has thrown at you, you still have a choice to be happy. Choose happiness

#195: Lead by influence, not by authority.

#196: Don't let your head get so big that you can't wrap different ideas around it.

#197: Your words and actions are bricks. They can be used to build walls or bridges. Chose to build bridges.

#198: Real leaders take ownership of everything that happens under them. Weak leaders blame those under them for failures and steal credit

for successes.

- #199: No one has the right to tell you what you should believe. That is called 'indoctrination'.
- #200: Leading by authority is called 'enforcement'. Leading by influence is called 'leadership'.
- #201: Leaders should not accept nor expect any special privileges outside of what is necessary for them to efficiently perform their jobs.
- #202: You don't really know a person unless you've lived their life. Don't make assumptions about what they are or are not. Let them tell you and show you who they are.
- #203: Don't let anyone force an apology from you. Apologizing before you are ready is tantamount to a lie. It is empty and meaningless. When the time is right, you will know.
- #204: Faith can only be shaken if it does not sit on a firm foundation.
- #205: Sometimes things fall apart so they can be built back better.
- #206: You don't have to agree with a person's lifestyle in order to treat them with dignity and respect.
- #207: When communicating with others, avoid using personal pronouns as much as possible.

Notable exceptions for apologies (“I’m sorry.” “I was wrong.”) Use these at the beginning of dialogues.

#208: The only person you should try to outdo is your past self.

#209: During negotiations, ‘no’ is very often a gateway to agreement. ‘No’ makes your counterpart do all the hard work for you if used correctly.

#210: If its not yours, don’t take it.

#211: If you didn’t hear it, don’t repeat it.

#212: Don’t repeat disparagingly focused information.

#213: If its wet and warm and not yours, don’t touch it.

#214: Everything is connected. Every action we take, everything we do has an impact beyond what can be imagined. Chose wisely.

#215: Asking people what they do for a job does not provide a seed for good conversation. Consider asking what drives them; what their passion is instead. You will have a more fruitful conversation.

#216: As a leader, the most important question you can answer before it is asked is “Why?”

#217: As you think, so shall you be.

#218: Never look for a reason to be offended.

#219: What once was is better than what could have been.

#220: We all have a purpose in life. The task is to find it and fulfill it.

#221: Avoid using the word 'have' in most cases. Use the word 'need' instead. It sounds less adversarial and more professional. Example: 'Do I have to...' versus 'Do I need to...'

#222: Don't let the negativity of others affect your own perceptions.

#223: Don't compete with others, compete with what you are capable of.

#224: Every being has a divine purpose. Our role is to identify it and live it out to the best of our abilities.

#225: You need to love and respect yourself before you can love and respect others. If you can't love and respect yourself, you cannot possibly love and respect anyone else.

#226: Never abandon anyone because they fell short of your expectations. Keep them close and help them because of their potential.

#227: Never do anything that can destroy your

credibility in a single blow.

#228: Never ask anyone a question that you may not want to know the answer to, especially if they have a reputation for honesty.

#229: Life is too short to waste time being angry.

#230: No matter the interaction, always leave people feeling good.

#231: Sometimes you can do everything right and things still go wrong. Guard your reaction at those times.

#232: If family abandons you when you've fallen short, they weren't really family to begin with. Everyone errs and its forgiveness, acceptance and understanding that makes them family. That is not to say that amends should not be made, but total abandonment is wrong.