

Outline of my beliefs

Here is a basic summary of my beliefs in my own words. My beliefs can be subdivided into three categories: the importance of good models, agency and morality, and living well.

The Importance of Good Models

1. I believe that the universe operates under certain principles that appear to be inviolable.
2. I believe that the more accurately our internal model of reality aligns with reality, the greater our ability to comprehend and either adeptly control or peacefully accept the world around us. I believe that those who care about being moral beings should also care about the accuracy of their models of reality.
3. I believe that scientific investigation is the most powerful method we have available to us for discerning what *is* (although it is not able to directly answer questions of what *should* be).
4. I believe that our feelings are culturally and biologically conditioned and are strongly biased to our own self-interest, hence our feelings sometimes misrepresent reality to us and should always be checked by rational thought (specifically, tests of generalizability).
5. I believe that nihilistic (nihilism: we will die so nothing matters), hedonistic (hedonism: the only thing that matters is pleasure and pain), and reductionistic (reductionism: we are mere bags of molecules hence morality does not really exist) philosophies ignore important data about our existence; hence, I am *not* a nihilist, I am *not* a hedonist, and I am *not* a reductionist.
6. I seek and welcome additional data and criticism of my beliefs so that they can be refined and serve me and those around me better. Good beliefs (i.e., models of reality) should be able to withstand scrutiny.

If my beliefs are incorrect or based on insufficient or faulty data, please do not hesitate to correct me or offer me your perspective.

Agency and Morality

1. I believe that we are largely free-agents—we control the contours of our destiny via the decisions we make.
2. I believe that moral agents (all beings with certain properties of self-reflection, awareness, and agency) are duty bound to act according to basic moral principles in their relationships with other conscious life.
3. I believe that any time beings with properties of a moral agent exist, then morality exists also (i.e., if a silicon based life-form had all the properties of humans but had evolved or was created independently of biological life, then moral principles would apply equally to them).

4. I believe that our ethical duty to other living entities is in some way proportional to the extent that they are conscious or have potential for consciousness (i.e., it is unethical to torture monkeys or dolphins, but it is not unethical to eat bacteria just for fun since they undoubtedly are not conscious and have no capacity for consciousness).
5. I believe the core moral principles include: caring, fairness, liberty, and loyalty.
6. I believe that acting morally tends to bring us and those around us happiness. However, even if acting morally did not generate feelings of content, I believe we would still have a rational obligation to act morally.

If my actions are immoral or fail to align with the highest standards of morality, please do not hesitate to offer me correction or your perspective.

Living Well

1. I believe that life is worth living for its own sake.
2. I believe that our minds are capable of integrating thoughts, ideas, and information in ways we don't fully comprehend consciously, and hence meditation, self-reflection, and intuition are all valuable tools available to us in acting wisely and living well.
3. I believe that expressions of love (in word and deed) bring us (those giving and receiving) happiness and joy. Even if these acts did not generate a biological reaction in us, I believe they would still be satisfying and worthwhile to beings capable of rational self-reflection.
4. I believe that individuals in positions of power have a duty to defend weaker individuals insofar as they are able and to wield that power in fair and responsible ways.
5. I believe that when we make mistakes that we ought to communicate our regret, make amends insofar as is possible, and alter our behavior in order to avoid inflicting harm on others (or avoid shirking our duty) in the future.

If I am living poorly or failing to live well, please do not hesitate to share your perspective with me of how to live a good life.

Beliefs in Resonance

I share many basic beliefs with the conscientious, moral citizens of our world.

The Universal Moral Code

I believe in the Universal Moral Code which is a list of morals found throughout the world, compiled by Dr. Kent M. Keith.

Do no harm (the proscriptive version of the code):

- Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you.
- Do not lie.
- Do not steal.
- Do not cheat.
- Do not falsely accuse others.
- Do not commit adultery.
- Do not commit incest.
- Do not physically or verbally abuse others.
- Do not murder.
- Do not destroy the natural environment upon which all life depends.

Do good (the prescriptive version of the code):

- Do to others what you would like them to do to you.
- Be honest and fair.
- Be generous.
- Be faithful to your family and friends.
- Take care of your children when they are young.
- Take care of your parents when they are old.
- Take care of those who cannot take care of themselves.
- Be kind to strangers.
- Respect all life.
- Protect the natural environment upon which all life depends.

The 6 Pillars of Self-Esteem

I believe in the [6 pillars of self-esteem](#):

1. Living consciously — “When we live consciously we do not imagine that our feelings are an infallible guide to truth.”
2. Self-acceptance — “Accepting, compassionate interest does not encourage undesired behavior, rather it reduces the likelihood of it recurring.”
3. Self-responsibility — “There is no one coming to our rescue, individually or collectively; no one is going to save us.”
4. Self-assertiveness — “unleashing our personality, intellectual abilities, talents, etc., whether other people, including family members and friends, like it or not”
5. Living purposefully — “we have the right to establish goals for ourselves based on what we think and feel is right and good”
6. Personal integrity — “It takes courage to act with integrity to the truth, particularly one’s inner truth that others may dislike, negatively judge, and even condemn.”

Ip Man’s Wing Chun Jo Fen

I believe in [Ip Man’s Wing Chun Jo Fen](#):

1. Remain disciplined — uphold yourself ethically as a martial artist
2. Practice courtesy and righteousness — serve the community and honor your family
3. Love Your classmates — enjoy working together as a group
4. Control your desire — stay healthy
5. Work hard and keep practicing — never let the skill leave your body
6. Learn to develop spiritual tranquility — abstain from arguments and fights
7. Always deal with world matters with a kind attitude that is calm and gentle.
8. Help the weak and the very young — use your martial skill for the good of humanity

The 5 Pillars of Islam (modified)

I believe in the 5 pillars of Islam (adapted to my belief system):

1. Believe in goodness
2. Spend time in quiet contemplation
3. Give to the poor and needy (those poor in spirit and body)
4. It is good to discipline your desires
5. Expand your horizons and respect your heritage

The Ten Commandments (modified)

I believe in the 10 commandments (adapted to my belief system):

1. Nothing comes before goodness
2. Do not worship that which is empty or vain
3. Respect goodness and avoid profanity.
4. Spend time in quiet contemplation. Rest from your labors.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. Do not murder.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. Do not covet.

The Great Commandments (modified)

I believe in a modified version of the great commandments (adapted to my belief system):

You should love goodness and treat and love your neighbour as you would like to be treated and loved.

Main tenets of Zoroastrianism

I believe in the [main tenets of Zoroastrianism](#), in slightly modified form:

1. If you wish to be happy, make others happy.
2. In proportion as we render others happy, are we entitled to similar bounty.
3. Each person should be good and beneficent in conduct towards all around them.
4. We should avoid injuring the interests of any man (or living being to the extent they share in personhood).
5. Our speech should generally be sweet and beneficial.
6. Goodness is Godliness, and we should be a ministering angel to all. We should radiate goodness throughout our life.
7. Avoid unnecessary dissension (try to see the underlying unity in conflicting view points)
8. Never force your own opinion on another.
9. Consider the welfare of others before your own.

Basic Moral Principles of Hinduism

I believe in [the basic moral principles of Hinduism](#), in slightly modified form:

- I believe generally in karma (that which we do, good or bad, generally comes back to us in some form)
- I believe in a light-weight form of dharma — we each have duties at various stages of life and in society, and we should perform our duties well.
- I believe in the majority of the yamas and niyamas:
 - asteya (nonstealing)
 - satya (truthfulness)
 - arjhaba (honesty)
 - daya (compassion)
 - ahimsa (nonviolence)
 - hri (showing modesty)
 - dana (giving to others)
 - isvarapujana (spending time in quiet contemplation)

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

I believe in cultivating the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People:

1. Be proactive
2. Begin with the end in mind
3. Put first things first
4. Think win-win
5. Seek first to understand, then to be understood
6. Synergize

7. Sharpen the saw

The Church of Reality

I believe in all 26 of the Sacred Principles of the Church of Reality (even though I think there are better ways to order and derive one's belief system):

1. [The Principle of Positive Evolution](#)
2. [The Principle of Existence and Survival](#)
3. [The Principle of Exploration](#)
4. [The Principle of Curiosity](#)
5. [The Principle of Honesty and Integrity](#)
6. [The Principle of Freedom](#)
7. [The Principle of Peace](#)
8. [The Principle of Courage](#)
9. [The Principle of Patience and Persistence](#)
10. [The Principle of Environmentalism](#)
11. [The Principle of Compassion](#)
12. [The Principle of Determination and Defiance](#)
13. [The Principle of Communication](#)
14. [The Principle of Justice](#)
15. [The Principle of Inclusiveness](#)
16. [The Principle of Respect](#)
17. [The Principle of Scrutiny and Doubt](#)
18. [The Principle of Humility](#)
19. [The Principle of Reason](#)
20. [The Principle of Wisdom](#)
21. [The Principle of Personal Responsibility](#)
22. [The Principle of Bullsh*t](#)
23. [The principle of Activism and Maintenance](#)
24. [The Principle of Personal Privacy](#)
25. [The Principle of Historical Preservation](#)
26. [The Principle of Humor and Fun](#)

Major sources of beliefs, light and knowledge

I find spiritual insight and inspiration in the following (even though I also tend to disagree with aspects of each):

- [The Bible and LDS scripture](#)
- Teachings of many LDS leaders (e.g., General Conference and BYU speeches)
- The works of C.S. Lewis
- Works by Stephen Covey and similar self-help and management books
- Ideas of [Brene Brown](#)

- Tao Te Ching
- The Triple Path
- The Socratic dialogues
- Kantian ethics
- Utilitarianism
- Some of Tolstoy's religious writings
- The Church of Reality
- The Church of Spiritual Humanism
- Humanism
- Some of the thoughts of secular humanists like Bart Campolo