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This is the day for *integrity:* Don't Be a Hypocrite Don't Be a Hypocrite

Empathize with Others
Uncover Your Ignorance
Notice Contradictions
Be Fair, Not Selfish
Stick to Your Purpose
Be Clear
Be Relevant
Question, Question, Question
Think Through Implications
Control Your Emotions
Control Your Desires
Be Reasonable
Show Mercy
Think for Yourself
Don't Be a Top Dog
Don't Be an Underdog
Don't Be a Worry Wart
Stop Blaming Your Parents
Critique the News Media
See Through Politicians
Be a Citizen of the World
Notice Media Garbage
Make Your Mark
Educate Yourself
Figure Out Where to Go

Be on the lookout for contradictions or hypocrisy in your behavior and the behavior of others. Catch yourself using double standards. Notice when others do. Because hypocrisy is a natural human tendency, theoretically this should be easy. Look closely at what people say they believe. Compare this with what their behavior implies. Dig out inconsistencies in your thinking and behavior. Notice when you profess a belief, and then act in contradiction to that belief. Notice how you justify or rationalize inconsistencies in your behavior. Figure out the consequence of your hypocrisy. Does it enable you to get what you want without having to face the truth about yourself? Figure out the consequences of others' hypocrisy. However, if you don't see hypocrisy in yourself, look again and again and again.

Day Three:

Beware of Hypocrisy;

Notice Contradictions in Your Life

People are hypocritical in at least three ways. First, they tend to have higher standards for those with whom they disagree than they have for themselves or their friends. Second, they often fail to live in accordance with their professed beliefs. Third, they often fail to see contradictions in the behavior of people with high status.

Hypocrisy, then, is a state of mind unconcerned with honesty. It is often marked by unconscious contradictions and inconsistencies. Because the mind is naturally egocentric, it is naturally hypocritical. Yet at the same time, it can skillfully rationalize whatever it thinks and does. In other words, the human mind naturally wants to see itself in a positive light. The *appearance* of integrity is important to the egocentric mind. This is why, as humans, we actively hide our hypocrisy from ourselves and others. And although we expect others to adhere to much more rigid standards than the standards we impose on ourselves, we see ourselves as fair. Though we profess certain beliefs, we often fail to behave in accordance with those beliefs.

Only to the extent that our beliefs and actions are consistent, only when we say what we mean and mean what we say, do we have intellectual integrity.

When you resolve to live a life of integrity, you routinely examine your own inconsistencies and face them truthfully, without excuses. You want to know the truth about yourself. You want to know the truth in others. By facing your own hypocrisy, you begin to grow beyond it (while recognizing that you can never get full command of your hypocrisy because you can never get full command of your egocentricity). When you recognize it in others (especially those of status), they are less able to manipulate you.

Strategies for reducing hypocrisy in yourself:

1. Begin to notice situations in which you expect more from others than you do from yourself. Pin down the areas of your greatest hypocrisy (these are usually areas in which you are emotionally involved). Do you expect more from your spouse than you do from yourself? From your coworkers? From your subordinates? From your children?

2. Make a list of beliefs that seem most important to you. Then identify situations in which your behavior is inconsistent with those beliefs (where you say one thing and do another). Realize that what you really believe is embedded in that which you do, not that which you say. What does your behavior tell you about yourself? (For example, you might say that you love someone while often failing to behave in accordance with his or her interests.)

Strategies for noticing hypocrisy in others:

1. Observe the people around you. Begin to analyze the extent to which they say one thing and do another. Compare their words to their deeds. For example, notice how often people claim to love someone they criticize behind the person's back. This is a common form of bad faith.
2. Think about the people you are closest to—your partner, spouse, children, or friends. To what extent can you identify hypocrisy or integrity in those relationships? To what extent do they say what they mean and mean what they say? What problems are caused by their hypocrisy?

**“WE ARE COMPANIONS IN HYPOCRISY.”
—WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS**

**This is the
day to
catch
yourself
being selfish:
Catch Yourself
Being Selfish
Catch Yourself
Being Selfish**

Empathize with Others
Uncover Your Ignorance
Notice Contradictions
Be Fair, Not Selfish
Stick to Your Purpose
Be Clear
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Think Through Implications
Control Your Emotions
Control Your Desires
Be Reasonable
Show Mercy
Think for Yourself
Don't Be a Top Dog
Don't Be an Underdog
Don't Be a Worry Wart
Stop Blaming Your Parents
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Be on the lookout for selfishness—in yourself and others. Notice how often people justify their selfishness. Notice how often they object to the selfishness of others. Look closely at the role of selfishness in your life. Note how hard it is to be fair to those you have been taught to consider “evil.” Note how difficult it is to identify your own unfair behavior (because the mind naturally hides what it doesn’t want to face).

Day Four:

Be Fair, Not Selfish

Human thinking is naturally self-serving or selfish. Selfishness is a *native*, not learned, human tendency (though it can be encouraged or discouraged by one's culture). Humans naturally tend to look out for "number one." Unfortunately, that often means we are unfair to persons "two" and "three."

You don't have to be selfish. It is possible to develop as a fair person and thinker. You can learn to give significant attention to the desires, needs, and rights of others. You need not "cheat yourself" to be fair.

When you think fair-mindedly, you consider the rights and needs of others as equivalent to your own. You forego the pursuit of your desires when fair play requires it. You learn how to overcome your selfishness. You learn how to step outside your point of view and into others' points of view. You value fair-mindedness as a personal characteristic worth pursuing.

Strategies for developing as a fair-minded thinker:

1. Recognize anew, every day, that you, like every other human, are *naturally* self-centered—that you, like every other human, are primarily interested in how the world and everything in it can serve you. Only by bringing this idea to the forefront of your thinking can you begin to get command of your selfishness and self-centered tendencies.
2. Be on the alert to catch yourself in the mental act of self-deception—for example, ignoring others' viewpoints. Remember that all humans engage in some self-deception. The exceptional persons are those who recognize this tendency in themselves and consistently work to take command of it.
3. Log each time you do something selfish. Try to see past the rationalizations your mind uses to justify its self-serving behavior. Write down in detail how and when you are selfish. Then write down the point of view of those who are affected by your selfishness. Consider how you can avoid such behavior in future similar situations. You might use the following format to log your selfish episodes:
 - a. Today I was selfish in the following way...

- How does my agenda differ from my spouse's, employee's, or supervisor's?
- Does my stated agenda differ from my actual one?
- Would I be willing to admit to my true purpose in this situation?
If not, why not?

**“THERE IS NO ROAD TO SUCCESS BUT THROUGH A CLEAR
STRONG PURPOSE. NOTHING CAN TAKE ITS PLACE. A
PURPOSE UNDERLIES CHARACTER, CULTURE, POSITION,
ATTAINMENT OF EVERY SORT.”**

—T.T. MUNGER

the problem at hand. Then figure out what issues, problems, or ideas you need to think through to answer the question. Figure out what information you need to consider. Do you need to look at the question from multiple viewpoints? If so, detail those viewpoints as clearly and accurately as possible before proceeding to answer the question.

3. Whenever you plan to discuss an important issue or problem, write down in advance the most significant questions you need to address in the discussion. Be ready to change the main question if necessary. As soon as the question is clear, help those in the discussion stick to the question, making sure that the dialogue builds toward an answer that makes sense.

Questions you can ask to discipline your thinking:

- What precise question am I trying to answer?
- Is that the best question to ask in this situation?
- Is there a more important question I should be addressing?
- Does this question capture the real issue I am facing?
- Is there a question I should answer before I attempt to answer this question?
- What information do I need to gather to answer the question?
- What conclusions seem justified in light of the facts?
- What is my point of view? Do I need to consider another?
- Is there another way to look at the question?
- What are some related questions I need to consider?
- What type of question is this: an economic question, a political question, a legal question, an ethical question, a complex question with multiple domains?

**“HOW DO YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT EVERYTHING?
WAS ASKED OF A VERY WISE AND INTELLIGENT MAN;
AND THE ANSWER WAS, ‘BY NEVER BEING AFRAID OR
ASHAMED TO ASK QUESTIONS AS TO ANYTHING
OF WHICH I WAS IGNORANT.’”**

—J. ABBOTT

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This is the day to *think through implications:*

Implications

Implications

Implications

Empathize with Others
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Be Relevant
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Be on the lookout for implications of decisions or potential decisions—your decisions, others' decisions.

Look on the surface for obvious implications. Look beneath the surface for less-obvious implications. Notice the implications of what you say. Look closely at the consequences of your actions. Make a list of all the significant implications of a potential decision before acting. Notice when others fail to think through implications. Look for examples in the newspaper. Notice that some decisions have insignificant results. Notice that others (such as a decision to go to war) lead to deadly results and ruined lives. Look for opportunities to help others think through implications (your children or your significant other, for example).

Day Nine:

Think Through Implications

Implications are the things that *might* happen if you decide to do this or that. Consequences are the things that *actually* happen once you act. When you consider the implications of what you might do before you do it, you explicitly choose (insofar as you can) the consequences that happen when you act. Some people simply don't imagine what will or might follow when they act on a decision they have made. They smoke but are unprepared for lung problems. They don't exercise but are unprepared for muscle deterioration. They don't actively develop their minds but are unprepared for the increasing inflexibility and close-mindedness that come with aging when one does not actively "work" the mind. They don't realize that everything they do has implications. They don't realize that it is possible to make a habit of thinking through the implications of decisions *before* acting, and thus learn to act more wisely, to live more rationally. Critical, reflective thinkers actively consider the implications of their actions before acting and modify their behavior accordingly (before they experience negative consequences).

Not only are there implications for our decisions, but implications are embedded in what we say, in the words we decide to use. Put another way, the way we use language implies certain specific things. For example, if you say to your wife, in a loud and angry tone, "Why the hell didn't you do the dishes?", you imply, at a minimum:

- She should have done the dishes.
- She knows that she should have done the dishes.
- She knew you would be upset if she didn't do them.
- In the future, under similar circumstances, she had better do the dishes unless she wants you to be angry with her.

Because implications are connected with or follow from everything you say, choose your words carefully. Before you say anything, be sure you have thought through the implications of your words. Resolve to use language with care and precision.

Strategies for thinking through implications:

1. Look at your life as a set of moment-to-moment options. At any moment, you can do X or Y or Z. Each and every act, and every pattern of actions, has outcomes. What outcomes do you want?

What must you do to anticipate likely outcomes? (The answer is, become a student of your own behavior, reflect on the likely outcomes of possible decisions, and make your decisions more mindfully.)

2. When faced with a difficult problem, make a list of the likely implications of dealing with the problem in various ways. Then act in the way that is likely to lead to the outcome you want.
3. Think about the implications (for future health and happiness) of the way you are now living your life. Make a list of the implications you probably will face for continuing to live as you are. Will you be satisfied with those implications? Think especially hard about the likely negative implications of your habits.
4. Carefully observe the language you choose to use when framing your thoughts. Note what is implied by what you say. (Note also what is implied by what others say.) Notice how others react to what you say to them. Make a commitment to carefully choose your words before speaking to others (so as to be aware of what you may imply).

Questions you should ask to target implications:

- If I decide to do X, what is likely to happen?
- If I decide not to do X, what is likely to happen?
- If we make this decision in this relationship, what are the implications? What were the consequences when we made similar decisions before?
- What are the implications of ignoring this or that problem (for example, in an important relationship or in parenting)?
- If I keep living in the present as I have in the past, what consequences will I likely face?

**“FOOLS MEASURE ACTIONS AFTER THEY ARE DONE,
BY THE EVENT; WISE MEN BEFOREHAND,
BY THE RULES OF REASON.”**

—RICHARD HILL

**This is the
day to
take control
of your
desires:
Check Your
Desires
Check Your
Desires**

Empathize with Others
Uncover Your Ignorance
Notice Contradictions
Be Fair, Not Selfish
Stick to Your Purpose
Be Clear
Be Relevant
Question, Question, Question
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Be on the lookout for desires. Your desires. The desires of others. Notice how often people pursue irrational desires. Seek to identify which of your desires you can admit and which you try to hide. Notice how often people try to justify self-serving desires. Notice how they object to the self-serving desires of others. Look closely at the implications of desires in your life. Every pursuit has its price. Notice how the pursuit of wealth, power, status, and celebrity impacts the quality of life—for you and others. Much suffering and injustice result from them. You can never be a reasonable or just person if you are subservient to selfish or irrational desires.

Day Eleven:

Take Control of Your Desires

If you want to be in command of your life, you have to get command of the desires that direct your behavior. Otherwise, it is all too easy to pursue irrational desires—desires that are self-destructive or harmful to others, such as the desire to dominate. When you don't actively assess and critique what you want, you often end up pursuing senseless desires without knowing why.

But when you develop as a self-reflective thinker, you can differentiate between desires that make sense and those that don't, between those that can be justified and those that cannot. You work to reject desires that lead to suffering. You break down habits that feed self-destructive desires. You establish habits conducive to a fulfilling life. Recognizing that much suffering results from the unbridled pursuits of greed, power, or approval, you carefully monitor these natural, but harmful, human desires in yourself. You simplify your life. Realizing that most irrational desires function at the unconscious level of thought, you work to bring unconscious desires to the conscious level. You formulate your purposes, goals, and motives explicitly so that you can assess them.

It is important to realize that desires function in relation to thoughts and feelings. Wherever you have desires, you have thinking leading to those desires. And you experience feelings when you act on those desires. For example, if you desire, or *want*, to move to a different job, you *think* that the job will be better than your current job in one or more ways. When you begin working at the new job, you then *feel* some emotions as a result (satisfaction, dissatisfaction, fulfillment, or frustration, for example). If you *feel* dissatisfied, you may be *driven* to *rethink* your decision. You may try to go back to your old job. And so it goes.

Thus, each of the mind's three functions—thoughts, feelings, and emotions—continually interact and influence one another. Critical thinkers understand the relationship between thoughts, feelings, and desires. They routinely assess the desires guiding their behavior. They analyze the thinking that gives rise to those desires.

Strategies for controlling your desires:

1. Recognize that every action you take is driven by some purpose or desire you have. Make a list of every behavior you engage in that leads to humiliation, pain, or suffering, or that is dysfunctional in some other way (to yourself or others). For every behavior on your list, write a detailed explanation of why you engage in this behavior. Question each. What motivates you?
2. Think through the implications of each behavior you just listed. Detail in writing what happens, or might happen, as a result of each behavior. Be as specific as possible. Don't hide from the truth.
3. List some things you can do immediately to alter your dysfunctional behavior (remember that your behavior comes from your desires). Your behavior is probably influenced by your situation. Reflect. Do you need to change some things in your situation? Do you need to move? Do you need to get out of a bad relationship? Do you need to get help from a professional? Do you need to learn better coping strategies?
4. Write down a detailed plan for changing your dysfunctional behavior. The more details, the more useful your plan will be.

**“NO MAN IS FREE WHO CANNOT CONTROL HIMSELF.”
—PYTHAGORAS**

**This is the
day to
be
reasonable:
Be Reasonable
Be Reasonable
Be Reasonable**

Empathize with Others
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Be on the lookout for reasonable and unreasonable behaviors—yours and others'. Notice when you are unwilling to listen to the reasoned views of others, when you are unwilling to modify your views even when others present evidence or good reasoning supporting a better view. Carefully observe yourself. Can you be moved by reason? Are you open to the voice of reason in others? When you catch yourself being defensive, see if you can break through your defensiveness to hear good reasons being presented. Identify times when you use language that makes you appear reasonable, even though your behavior proves otherwise. Try to figure out why you, or others, are being unreasonable. Might you have a selfish interest in not being open-minded? Might they?