

CHRIS'LL DEAL WITH IT

episode notes




EP 39 - Principle #7 - Own your words and actions

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This is part 7 of our summer PRINCIPLES series. It can be listened to by itself, but for greater context refer back to the intro Episode #32.

Note that the principles in this series are what work for me. They allow me to thrive and live my values as best as I can. I'm not advocating the adoption of my specific set of principles. Rather I'm attempting to showcase the power of principles by providing more context on how they can be defined, codified, and embedded into the thoughts & actions of our lives.

Principle #7 - Own your words and actions

Where does the principle come from?

- Taking ownership over what we say and do is a key to being responsible & accountable.

- While there are times & places for anonymity - I feel there's too much of it in our culture right now.
 - A large part of that feeling is the internet: People posting & responding in ways that they would never do face-to-face
- I know that what I say and do matters to myself and to others. It's a reflection of who I am, what I believe, and what I hope to accomplish.
- So by explicitly setting this as a principle, I'm reminding myself of the commitment to ownership over everything I say and do, regardless of the intention or the results.

Why is it important?

- Owning the entirety of our words and actions is being honest. With yourself and with others.
- At times our words & actions may lead to amazing things: We truly have the power to change lives!
- But not everything we say & do is right. In other times we can be downright harmful.
 - There's a risk of exposing our negative traits through rash, poorly considered speech or action.
 - Personally I know I have the tendency for snap reactions: I try to keep this principle top of mind as a reminder to be as considerate as I can in the heat of the moment.
 - That doesn't always work: But I always own that too, apologizing & making amends where & when I can.
- Be honest of your thoughts, feelings, triumphs, biases, failings, and uncertainty.
- With that kind of ownership, our ownership bias can take us to extraordinary lengths to hold onto our vision of ourselves.
 - It also requires a certain humility.
 - And having the grace to forgive yourself & others for transgressions.

How does living it impact myself & others?

- What is said or done in a moment can be done in haste, in error, in reaction to extraordinary circumstances, without sensitivity to others, etc... Often it's some combination of things.
 - Attempt to understand the causes, the impacts of the words and/or actions, apologize, make amends (or accept the apologies & amends of others) and move on.
- This principle applies not only to things spoken & done to others. It applies to ourselves too. Take responsibility for your self-talk & what we do to ourselves.
- There's another benefit of taking ownership for our failings & being vulnerable with our faults:
 - You can help create a culture of psychological safety
 - You're allowed to screw up!
 - You don't have to walk on egg shells here.

What does living the principle look like in action?

- I don't write, post, broadcast under pseudonyms.
 - I take pride in my work, both old and new.
 - I accept the failings of past versions of myself: Fully owning the memories and products of those versions to empower current me to use actions and words in the present to move closer to the desired future me.
- It's possible to completely absorb ourselves, our energy, in the words & actions of others.
 - This is the allure of displaying & consuming our lives on social media.
 - We should have the courage to focus our energy on what we're saying and doing out in the world.
 - Beat our own drum, and march/skip/dance to it however we like.
- We'll never be able to please everyone. There will always be people who will like us and those that don't.
 - These people will change over time, and that's mostly out of our control.

- This allows us to move forward, focusing on an improvement mindset: Always getting better and trying to make the world a better place.

Episode 39 Quote:

Today's quote is from Ryan Holiday:

I write because I have things that I want to say, not because people have things that they want to hear.