

Introduction to the Principles of High Performance



Values aligned with ethical and sustainable performance and results.

Robert Griffiths

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF HIGH PERFORMANCE

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	3
1. RESPONSIBILITY	5
2. CHOICE	6
3. SERVICE	7
4. EXCELLENCE	8
5. INTEGRITY.....	9
6. HONESTY & COURAGE	10
7. RESPECT.....	11
8. SOWING.....	12
9. DOUBLE CREATION	13
10. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	14

INTRODUCTION

There are several variations and definitions of what High-Performance Principles are.

They can be approached from various perspectives: as models, principles or values, with the behaviours and attitudes these imply, for teams, organizations, and organisational cultures.

In this case, we have used our own interpretation of them, and have focused essentially on the underlying values, behaviours and attitudes which can form and develop an organisational culture which focuses on a values-based, ethical and sustainable model of leadership, team and organisational performance. This is especially relevant in the context of the fast-changing, complex, inter-dependent and uncertain world we currently live in.

These Principles of High Performance are partly based on Humanistic principles (self-actualisation, self-direction, and choice) and Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (Psychological – Security – Social – Esteem – Self-Actualisation).

Although many organisations espouse these and similar values, whether they live them, and practice what they preach, is a very different question. What can be observed is that teams and organisations who have focussed on these values, and practice them daily, have been shown to produce extraordinary and sustainable results.

An example of this comes from the sporting world, where the explicit values of the All Blacks (New Zealand's national rugby team), are Humility, Honesty, Integrity, Respect, Excellence: all with similar definitions to the ones explored here. For example, Excellence is defined as an Attitude (i.e., doing your best / giving your 100%) as opposed to a result. Over the last 100 years or so, the All Blacks have a win-rate of approximately 86%. On that basis alone, they are arguably the most successful sporting team in history.

These principles are essentially values, behaviours and attitudes which can help us in our relationships, not only with others but with ourselves. They can guide us in our choices and decisions, and in our development as individuals, leaders, teams and organisations. The idea being that the behaviours & attitudes behind these values will help us to perform in a way that will make the most of our potential.

An underlying premise of these values is that the means are as important, if not more, than the end in itself. It is not so much the result that matters, since the result is so often a concept based and measured against what we believed or hoped the future would bring, but rather the journey itself. It is the attitude we choose and thus how we do the things we do. The result, by definition, is the consequence of what we do, and therefore, how we do it, is critical to success.

The experience we call happiness, fulfilment or well-being is a present moment, not an ungraspable wish or intangible concept that is always around the corner, or in some distant future.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF HIGH PERFORMANCE

The same may be true of pain and suffering. However, much of our pain and suffering is the present result of fears, worries and pre-occupations about what the future may or may not bring. The pain is now and real, but these fears and pre-occupations are not: they are based on a belief, perception or interpretation of what we think reality is or will be.

The question is, can you choose to believe and perceive differently?
Can you change your attitude to whatever happens?
The answer is: If you believe you can't, you won't. If you believe you can, you will.
Of-course, you won't know unless you try...again and again.
These values may help in the process.

Another underlying premise of these values, behaviours and attitudes is that human beings are conscious beings, and that to put these values into practice requires a conscious choice and a willingness to act.
Indeed, this willingness is the very foundation and meaning of responsibility, which along with choice are the foundational principles.
Both of these are based on self-awareness.

Responsibility is a much-misunderstood term, often used to mean accountability, obligation, or blame. *“Responsibility simply means your “ability to respond”. If you decide “I am responsible” you will have the ability to respond. If you decide “I am not responsible” you will not have the ability to respond.”*
The moment you become fully conscious of your existence and life, and therefore an ability to respond to it, you have choice. The freedom to choose how to respond.

In terms of action, there are two types: action and reaction. *“The first is born in awareness, the second in unawareness. The first is freedom, the second is enslavement.”*

Responsibility is neither action nor reaction. *“Responsibility and Action belong to different dimensions. The ability to respond gives you the freedom to act. It also gives you the freedom not to act. It puts you in the driver's seat of your life. It empowers you to decide the nature and volume of action you want to undertake. Responsibility is not compulsive action; it offers you the choice of action.*

When it comes to action, capability may play a role. But when it comes to response, it is just a question of willingness.”

The High-Performance Principles are also based on an understanding of basic human behavioural psychology, notably how we learn and create habits or addictions (the “Learning Curve” or conscious/unconscious – competent / incompetent model) and the comfort & learning zones.
They also include the circles of influence and pre-occupation (linked to the value of excellence), the power of beliefs and perceptions and the Believe-Feel-Act behavioural model (based on the Albert Ellis ABC model of human behaviour).
These are explored in a separate document.

Text in italics are excerpts from a book by Sadhguru, « Inner Engineering »

1. Responsibility



- As Human Beings we are conscious beings. The moment we become fully conscious of your existence and life, and therefore an ability to respond to it, we have choice. The freedom to choose how to respond. It is therefore evident that we are responsible for our own lives.
- This principle therefore considers that our behaviour is ultimately determined by our decisions and willingness to act, not by our conditions or circumstances.
- The extent to which we are capable of controlling the course of our lives, and not allow circumstances to determine our decisions, will also make us feel more or less capable of reaching our objectives.
- By doing so, we will act as responsible individuals who choose our behaviours and attitudes.
- To assume responsibility is, therefore, the opposite of seeking excuses or falling into the typical reaction of blaming others.
- In other words, when faced with a given situation, a responsible person will not be concerned with who is to blame for what has happened, but rather with his or her own capacity to respond to that situation. He or she will look to be part of the solution, rather than part of the problem.
- In any given situation, the key question to ask oneself is not what others can do about it, but what can I do about it!

Responsibility = Ability & willingness to respond

2. Choice



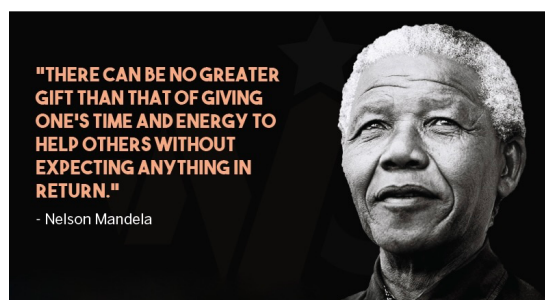
- Closely related to the principle of responsibility, the principle of choice determines that at any given moment, we choose what we do, how we do it, and the attitude with which we do it.
- Consequently, although we may not always choose what happens to us, we do indeed choose the attitude with which we experience what happens to us.
- When we get up in the morning, the face we put on (our attitude) is a choice we make, even if it is unconsciously made out of habit.
- Thanks to this principle, we can motivate ourselves to search with clarity what it is we want, without having to accept with resignation what we have, nor accept that "that's the way it is".
- If we become aware of the fact that we have what we choose to have, we will stop complaining about what it is we do or don't have and start to look for what it is we really want.

*"There are two ways to live your life.
One is to believe that nothing is a miracle.
The other is to believe that everything is a miracle."
Albert Einstein (1879-1955)*

3. Service



- Leadership based on this principle seeks to set the conditions for individuals, teams and organisations to learn, grow and develop.
- Based on the creation and contribution of value, and on a clear desire to be an active member of society in which we wish to grow and develop ourselves, this principle helps us to focus on defending the interests of the greater good.
- Not only for our customers, our company, our colleagues, friends and family, but also for ourselves.
- The principle of service helps people to behave in ways, even if at times not economically profitable, that will increase the trust and quality of the people involved.
- For example, servant leaders see leadership as an opportunity to serve others, rather than a rank to obtain or power to control others. Rather they empower others in order to drive engagement and motivation. They measure success through growth & development, not just by output. They listen before speaking, and understand that leadership is not about them, but about something bigger than themselves.



4. Excellence



- This principle starts with the premise that to be excellent does not mean to be perfect.
- To be excellent means giving the best of what we are capable of giving at any given moment. Here and now.
- This allows us to do the best we can, irrespective of the result.
- If we work in an excellent way, the result will always be the best possible result.
- Excellence defined in this way, is more flexible and realistic than perfection.
- In other words, to be excellent is not a result, but rather the attitude with which we do things.
- When we give our 100%, we light up with energy. We often call this state enthusiasm.

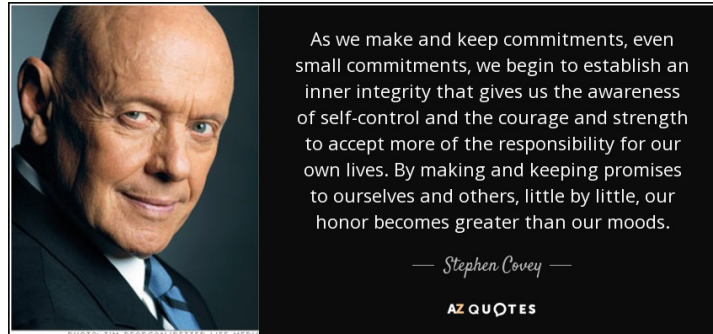
Enthusiasm comes from the Greek word enthousiasmos / entheos which means having God within.

Excellence =

- Giving your 100%
- Doing your best
- Enthusiasm

Excellence is NOT a result

5. Integrity



- The word integrity comes from the Latin root (integer): of being one, whole or complete.
- To have Integrity is the same as being consistent or professionally congruent in our interactions with others.
- It implies that what we say and think are not different from what we do.
- It involves commitment, understood as respect for the given word; an implicit commitment to ourselves, which generates trust in those around us, whether in the workplace or at home.
- In other words, “my word is my bond”. It is a promise and commitment to myself and others.
- If I repeatedly break my promises or commitments, I effectively break trust, not only the trust others have in me, but the trust I have in myself. (I am no longer “whole”)
- Integrity makes agreements easier, and results in business being more efficient in time and money. It also enables societies and communities of interest to prosper between people who trust in the value of Integrity.

Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.

Mahatma Gandhi

You are what you do, not what you say you'll do.

Carl Gustav Jung

People ask me: “Why is it so hard to trust people?”

I ask: Why is it so hard to keep a promise?

(Anon)

6. Honesty & Courage



- The origin of the word Courage comes from the old French word “Coeurage”, meaning to speak your heart.
- In other words, courage is the courage to be honest, and say what you truly think, believe or feel.
- This is not always easy to do, especially when there are so many pressures to conform to social norms, beliefs or ideologies. This is particularly relevant in today’s world, where often individual ideas or opinions are either considered to be inadmissible or intolerable, and are therefore suppressed, platformed or punished. This creates a climate of fear and suspicion where responsibility, choice, honesty and trust are severely diminished.
- Honesty is about being transparent, not only about one’s thoughts, feelings or beliefs, but also about one’s intentions. This is particularly relevant for leadership, as the contrary results in a breakdown of trust, and in a feeling of being manipulated.
- Honesty is also about speaking up and giving positive and constructive feedback. In teams, organisations, and relationships in general, honesty so defined, is one of the foundations upon which trust is built, and upon which new ideas and ways of doing things are generated.
- Positive and constructive feedback is also a critical requirement for learning and development. Without it, there can be no continuous improvement.

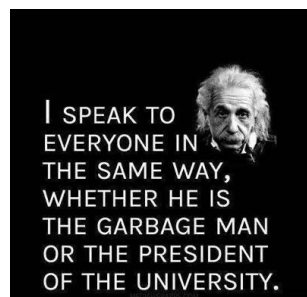
Dictionary Definition:

- the quality or fact of being honest.
 - uprightness and fairness.
- truthfulness, sincerity, or frankness.
 - freedom from deceit or fraud.

7. Respect



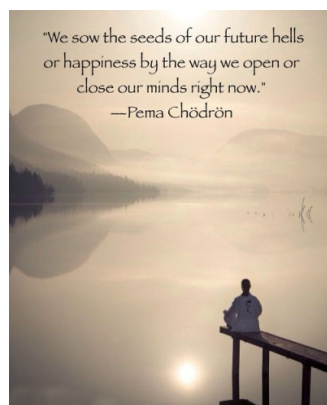
- Respect is not so much about listening without interrupting, as it is about listening to another person as if what they were saying is right.
- Whether or not the other person is right, is not the point. The point is that by temporarily assuming that the other person is right, we are assuming an attitude which helps us to see the world through the other person's eyes.
- In other words, it is about empathising and active listening. To listen without making judgements.
- The intention is not to agree or disagree, but to understand the other person.
- By showing the other person that we are trying to understand them, they are more likely to feel respected. Consequently, the relationship and communication is more likely to be based on trust.
- From a purely empirical perspective, by respecting and actively listening to others, we are able to gather more and useful information about our reality. Our "map of the world" can be contrasted to those of others, and hence enriched.



8. Sowing



- The principle of sowing can be seen from two perspectives:
 1. In order to reap, you first need to sow
 2. You reap what you sow
- Put another way, if you want to lead an economically independent life, you need to invest time and effort before you start to see the fruits of your labour.
- This obviously goes against the hedonistic culture of immediate gratification.
- As José Antonio Marina, the contemporary Spanish philosopher points out, the hedonistic approach results in people who are useless and irresponsible from an economic perspective. In other words, they do not contribute to the creation of wealth.
- To reap what we sow also teaches us that what we believe, think and do now will have a consequence in the future: so self-awareness and an open mind will help us act in a way that is more likely to create a better future.
- From a leadership perspective, this principle is also about investing in the future and in others. In other words, leaders create leaders, leaders are teachers, and plant trees they may never see.



9. Double Creation



- This principle is based on the premise that anything we, as human beings, create, is created on two levels:
 1. the first, at a mental level, is the planning or envisioning of the idea;
 2. the second, at a physical level, is the realization or materialization of the plan.
- As a result, we find that when a project fails, the errors or mistakes often tend to occur in the first “creation” or planning phase, not in the second execution phase.
- We habitually invest little time & effort in the planning phase and tend to throw ourselves directly into the execution of tasks. This reluctance to plan and envision, severely impacts our ability to innovate and to respond more effectively to the challenges we face.
- Linked to the principles of Sowing and Continuous Improvement, this principle also teaches us that we often go into action or speak without thinking first...out of habit, as a default mechanism. More often than not, this results in negative consequences that could have been avoided with minimal reflection or planning.
- This principle is also designed to stimulate more independent and autonomous behaviour in the workplace, and to remind us that experimentation and failure are a necessary and desirable facet of learning, creativity and innovation.

*Before you Talk, Listen.
Before you Act, Think.
Before you Criticise, Wait.
Before you Pray, Forgive.
Before you Quit, Try.*

10. Continuous Improvement



- Once we understand that our professional life is a continuous learning process, and that everything serves our development, we will stop considering mistakes as something always negative, and we will detach ourselves from the results.
- As a result we will start to take more risks, make decisions and at the same time accept that we might make mistakes along the way, and that these same mistakes are the seeds of learning, improvement and success.
- This principle helps us to create behaviours that are more flexible and more able to adapt to change.
- It helps us to learn from everything we do.
- It also reminds us that we cannot know everything, and to understand that every moment is always an opportunity to learn something new, to recognise our mistakes, to correct them and to continue to progress.
- This principle is based on responsibility and excellence. Since we are always able to respond, we can respond within our zone of influence. The result of focusing on our area of influence leads to excellence.
- Continuous progress, whether professional or personal, and in which both action and permission to fail are inherent, leads to initiative, learning, growth and innovation.
- This in turn, tends to lead to higher levels of motivation and satisfaction.
- It is a positive and virtuous spiral.

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?
Robert Browning (Poet)

*Living with fear stops us taking risks, and if you don't go out on the branch,
you're never going to get the best fruit. ...*
Sarah Parish