

BUSHIDO CODE

武士道

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The Bushido Blueprint

The Path to Enlightenment.....	1
Righteousness	5
Heroic Courage	11
Benevolence	17
Respect	23
Integrity	29
Honor	37
Loyalty	46
Self-Control	53
A Simple Choice.....	63

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The Path to Enlightenment



“Bushido as an independent code of ethics may vanish, but its power will not perish from the earth; its schools of martial prowess or civic honor may be demolished, but its light and its glory will long survive their ruins. Like its symbolic flower, after it is blown to the four winds, it will still bless mankind with the perfume with which it will enrich life.”

- Inazo Nitobe, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*.

A Classic Essay on Samurai Ethics.

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Bushido (武士道) is a Japanese term (direct translation : bu - Military; shi - Knight; Do - Ways), which loosely translated, means The Way of the Warrior. Historically, this was known as the Japanese warrior - Samurai code of conduct. Now, to most people, Samurai means Japanese warrior. This is not entirely wrong, but it obscures the true nature of the Samurai. In Japanese, Samurai (侍) actually means “To Serve”. **It is not a Way of Violence, but of Service.**

However, it is not the only code of conduct to ever exist in history. There is the Chivalry Code Of Conduct that was once practiced by the knights of Europe, and also the Spartan Code of Honor - created by the famed indomitable warriors of ancient times whose codes included an actual law that made it illegal to retreat in battle. All of these codes have their own appeal, but are not the subject of this book today.

The Way of The Samurai is quite well known compared to the many warrior codes out there, due to its practice of self-disembowelment (Seppuku)(切腹) and the belief that honor was more important than life. It has also received much attention in recent times due to its portrayal in Hollywood movies such as **The Last Samurai** or **47 Ronin**, with Bushido being the central theme of both movies.

So, what does this have to do with our lives?

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Let us start by considering the term Warrior. Are you a warrior? The definition of a warrior is “*a person engaged in some struggle or conflict*”, i.e. someone who **FIGHTS**. By this definition, we are all warriors. Whether against poverty, hunger, disease... or against less physical issues like racism, sexism, insignificance, we spend our lives fighting. As warriors. Yes, if you hadn't realized before this, you are indeed, a warrior ; life spares none of us, whether you are man or woman, child or adult, from struggles. And therefore, you need a warrior's code, a guide on how to live and fight... that is, if you wish to be a **SUCCESSFUL** warrior. If you wish to win. Who doesn't like winning, after all? Why not make use of the wisdom and experience of the warriors who have walked the path before us?

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What about the term Way? What Way would this be? The way to the success? The way to make money? No, the usage of the term Way in this context means life principles, ethics, a guide to living according to a code. So, the Bushido can be simply explained as the life principles of a warrior - the guide to living as one. Since we are all warriors in our own right, the Bushido could be our Way and our guide in our individual battles. This brings us to the purpose of this book, which is to introduce you to the ancient code that is Bushido, and to bring to your attention to the benefits of applying the tenets and wisdom of Bushido to your life and your battles.

Throughout this book, you will see quotes from the Samurai who have walked the Way before us, as well as from **Dr. Inazo Nitobe**, who deserves a special mention for his authoritative treatise on the Bushido code - Bushido: The Soul of Japan, which has led many (including the author himself) to a deeper understanding of Bushido.

Inspired by Dr. Inazo's work that dates back 100 years, the author had a deep desire to share with others a more modern application of Bushido. This led to the writing of this book - Bushido : Where Honor Is Stronger Than Steel.

Are you ready? Let us set out then, to seek the Way together.

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義

(gi)

Righteousness

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“Rectitude is one’s power to decide upon a course of conduct in accordance with reason, without wavering; to die when to die is right, to strike when to strike is right.”

- Anonymous Japanese Samurai

There are 8 main principles of Bushido, known as the **Bushido's Eight Virtues**. It may surprise some readers, particularly those whose impression of the Samurai is the militaristic and martial kind, that the first principle of Bushido is righteousness. Not courage, although the Samurai had a fearlessness bordering on recklessness. Not loyalty, although the Samurai believed in loyalty unto death.

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No, the first principle that a warrior needs to learn in the Bushido Code, is righteousness. Justice. The rightness of his/her cause. I do not refer to self-righteousness, where someone thinks themselves better than another. Righteousness is the belief in justice and the effort to do the right thing in all circumstances.

Think about this for a second. The Samurai considered righteousness to be the basis of Bushido, the foundation, the first step on the Way. Why choose righteousness as the first step?

Consider the alternatives: if the foundation of the Way of a warrior was strength, wouldn't the Way be just grounded in the belief that "Might is Right" ? Or if the foundation of the Way was loyalty... wouldn't the Way result in a Loyalty to an Evil Ruler situation?

Indeed, history is full of examples of warriors who swore their loyalty to evil rulers, and thus, in doing that, supported and propagated evil, because the basis of their Way was loyalty, not righteousness.

Having righteousness as the basis of Bushido means that a Samurai has to think and decide whether it is **RIGHT** to swing his sword, before he swings it. He does not fight because he wants to be the strongest warrior, nor does he fight because he is told to fight - he fights because it is **RIGHT** for him to do so.

This shows that the Samurai were well aware of the weight of their actions, and the possible consequences. If you were about to get into a fight which might result in the loss of life, is it not essential to

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consider whether such loss of life is necessary, or whether it could be avoided? Before strength, before ability, righteousness must be considered first, the first thought in a Samurai's mind.

A Samurai deals openly and honestly with others and cleaves to the idea of justice. Moral decisions do not come in shades of grey, but only right and wrong.



“All men’s souls are immortal, but the souls of the righteous are immortal and divine.”

- Bertrand Russell

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Righteousness is fortunately not yet an *"old-fashioned"* idea; in fact, it is still relevant and very much needed in today's society. Injustice is still a common occurrence everywhere, be it schools, workplaces, on the streets.

There are 2 aspects of righteousness that are most definitely needed in our lives. One is the **determination to do what is Right**, to make the Right decisions. The other is the **courage to stand up against what is Wrong**, to stop injustice from happening.

In any of your personal battles, make sure you're fighting on the right side. I am not referring to the stronger side, but rather more correctly, on the Right side. Knowing that you are doing the right thing will give you a sense of certainty and a lack of hesitation.

How can you tell? Well, that's easy. If you're not sure which side is the Right side, then why are you fighting? You should only *"draw your sword"* once you have observed and concluded that it is right to do so.

Conflict in the workplace is inevitable ; conflicts are bound to happen when there are two or more people working together. As an employee, do not pick fights or get drawn into fights if you're not sure which side is the right or wrong side. In fact, you shouldn't pick fights at all in the first place. So, again, do not get involved if you cannot ascertain which side is in the right.

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This is less about minding your own business and more about doing the Right Thing. To do the Right Thing, you need to identify what it is first. Never get into a fight with your boss unless you are certain that your position is solid and you are in the right.

How about in a business setting? The application is exactly the same: be absolutely certain that your decision is based on righteousness, **and not on greed or fear**. Do not prioritize making a quick buck; it is rarely the right (*or most profitable*) choice. Also, avoid entering into business dealings with dishonest and unreliable partners, no matter how good the deal appears to be. Chances are that the deal that looks too good to be true **IS**, in fact, too good to be true.

A wrong decision can potentially result in massive losses on your part. To avoid (or significantly reduce) the chances of that happening to you, why not sit down and carefully think it through?

Basically, just make sure that you're making the right choices, for the right reasons... and that's all you need!

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勇

(yu)

Heroic Courage

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“Perceiving what is right and doing it not reveals a lack of Courage”

- Confucius

The type of courage spoken about in the Bushido code is not very different from the type of courage written about in more western teachings. However, it is different in the sense that it is more closely linked to righteousness. If righteousness is about making the right decision, then courage is what is needed to act on that decision.

A brave man might stand his ground against ten men or have the fortitude to explore jungles and mountains on his own. However, true courage is displayed when a weak man stands up to a strong bully and

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tells him to stop. True courage is shown when a man, who fears water, jumps into the sea to rescue another.

To a Samurai, the degree of courage in a warrior is not measured by one's readiness to draw one's sword, or fearlessness and bravery. **Rather, the Samurai considered courage to be a quality inseparable from strength of mind, or the fortitude of spirit.**

Courage, for a warrior, may seem like a simple enough concept - see the enemy, draw your sword and face the enemy. However, as mentioned above again, courage in Bushido is closely related to righteousness. With that in mind, a Samurai would have to consider all aspects of the situation at hand, then decide on the right course, and **ONLY THEN** he would need to summon his courage.

There was once a samurai called Musashibo Benkei (武蔵坊弁慶). He was a warrior monk from the 12th century, famous for his great strength. He was said to have defeated more than a thousand men, both in duels and in battle. However, this was not the reason he is remembered; Benkei was famed for the "*holding the bridge*" incident in Koromogawa no Tate castle. In order to allow his master, Minamoto no Yoshitsune (源義経) time to commit seppuku, Benkei held the main bridge in front of the main gate all by himself against the enemy army, where he killed more than 300 enemy soldiers. It is said that the enemy soldiers were so afraid to face Benkei in close combat that they chose to shoot and kill Benkei with arrows. Thus, it was not Benkei's

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strength or skill that is honored to this day; rather it is his determination to stand his ground in defense of his master to the death, as well as his courage in facing a whole enemy army all by himself.

A Samurai never fears to act when it comes to upholding righteousness and justice.



“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”

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- Nelson Mandela

As with righteousness, courage has not gone out of fashion yet in the modern world. Superhero movies like Superman or Batman, where the hero possesses courage to fight against what is wrong is still very much sought after. We also face situations in our daily lives that may not be as dramatic if compared to superhero movies, but still require courage all the same.

Do not confuse courage with conventional bravery. A brave employee might dare to stand up in a meeting and propose a revolutionary idea to the management. An employee with courage however, is not afraid to tell the management truthfully that the current million-dollar project ongoing has no chance of success, despite knowing that the project was personally suggested by the general manager, who is known to be intolerant of any criticism and holds grudges.

In business decisions, it is not enough to say *“I will bravely take the risk in order to make money”*. Sometimes the right business decision may lead to temporary losses or hardship; it may be tempting to take the easy profitable path that will require you to sacrifice your principles or use unethical methods. The deciding factor here, is courage. The courage to take the loss, rather than cheat. The courage to honor the contract, even if it means that the company’s cashflow will suffer.

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For anything worth having one must pay the price; and the price is the courage to do what is right. If all right choices led to riches and ease then why would we need courage? Self-interest would suffice. So, as a courageous warrior in this modern time, make the right decisions and move bravely forward in the battles of your life.

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(jin)

Benevolence

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“The feeling of distress is the root of benevolence, therefore a benevolent man is ever mindful of those who are suffering and in distress.”

- Mencius

The third most important virtue that is spoken of in the Bushido code of conduct is benevolence, or mercy. It acts to balance the violent nature of the Samurai's duties. **As the Samurai has power to end life, he was required to balance that heavy duty with compassion, benevolence and mercy.** This principle has its roots in Buddhism, which teaches tolerance and compassion in life.

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A Samurai should not have a heart of anger or of hatred, but rather, a heart of compassion for those who are suffering and the weak. Hence, a Samurai draws his sword to protect the weak, as they are unable to protect themselves.

Benevolence is also extended to their enemies and their rivals - a Samurai will not hold grudges or bitterness against another Samurai on the battlefield. In battle, every Samurai would fight in accordance with the Bushido code, with each believing in their own cause and laying down their lives. However, such fighting was limited to the battlefield only ; they would show courtesy to enemy warriors outside of the battlefield. They were able to acknowledge that they were fighting for different causes, and yet still recognize that the enemy warriors were also followers of Bushido who fought under the code.

Here is an example of benevolence in the story of UesugiKenshin(上杉謙信), Lord of the Uesugi, in how he treated his enemy Takeda Shingen(武田信玄), Lord of the Takeda. The provinces of the Takeda Clan lay in a mountainous region quite away from the sea, and depended upon the Hōjō provinces of the Tokaido for salt. The Hōjō wished to weaken Shingen, while not openly waging war with him, so they cut off all supplies of salt from the Takeda clan. Kenshin, upon hearing of his enemy's dilemma, wrote to Shingen of his opinion the Hōjō had committed a mean act, and that although he (Kenshin) was

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at war with him (Shingen) he had ordered his subjects to provide him with salt, adding also, *"I do not fight with salt, but with the sword"*.

A Samurai takes every opportunity to help others and creates opportunities when they do not arise.



"Kindness is a language the deaf can hear and the blind can see."

- Mark Twain

The world is still full of the weak and needy. Many are still in need of compassion and mercy. If you're seeing a trend here, it is because all the virtues found in the Bushido code are still relevant, still **NEEDED** in today's society.

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We may not wield swords any more, nor do we face troubles caused by raiding Mongols, but we still fight the hard battles, although perhaps in a more different context. The weak still fall under the iron boots of the oppressors and the exploiters.

Hence benevolence, mercy and compassion are needed. If you are strong, then seek to aid the weak. A wise man once said *“Those who have two coats, give one to those who have none”*. In Bushido, the saying would be *“With great power, show benevolence”*. This is a pretty simple one, isn't it? Just lend a helping hand. Or in the Samurai's context, lend a sword, if applicable. Have compassion for those who are less fortunate.

In business, consider the situation of your employees and business partners. Everyone goes through hard times - **DO NOT** take advantage of them during those times but offer to lend a helping hand. If your business partner or vendor is having trouble delivering on their deadlines, do not withdraw from the contract and get your full measure of flesh from them in penalties. Have some compassion. People will remember acts of kindness, no matter how small. In a way, you could say that all the compassion that you extend to others will be repaid to you in some way in the future.

There are many modern role models who can be said to be paragons of benevolence - it is not hard to find a suitable role model to learn from. There are also many organizations devoted to compassion and benevolence as well; volunteer organizations, charities, etc. All it

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takes is one little step, one decision, one minute of your time. One choice to make a difference in the life of someone less fortunate, and you are one step closer to living the Bushido life.

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礼

(rei)

Respect

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“When you are polite, the others think they are wearing flowers.”

- Japanese proverb

The Bushido foundation of respect is sincerity. Respect, in accordance of the Bushido code is not merely saying “*please*” and “*thank you*” ; for them, it’s the sincere respect for others in one’s heart, which then shows in their bearing and their words.

For a Samurai (*and also the Japanese, even up to this day*), respect does not just lie in the words one says; it is shown in the way they stand and the depth of their bow, among other customs to show

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respect to others. They even have a “*polite*” form of the language, which is much more formal than “*conversational*” Japanese.

I’m sure that you’ve seen comedy skits that feature two Japanese bowing to each other repeatedly, with neither able to leave because they each believe that they must be the last to bow. That is an exaggeration for comedic purposes, but the real situation is not that far from the truth.

From a “*common sense*” point of view, being respectful and courteous to another warrior makes **A LOT** of sense - after all, there is no benefit from getting slashed or stabbed just because you offended someone by accident. So, the Samurai bow when they meet each other and greet each other courteously. They do not use vulgar language, and they do not seek to offend or start fights.

The Samurai believed in courtesy so much that they had schools of etiquette and proper behavior. A follower of the best-known school of etiquette, the Ogasawara-ryu (小笠原流), was once recorded as saying, “*The end of all etiquette is to so cultivate your mind that even when you are quietly seated, not the roughest ruffian can dare make onset on your person.*” Imagine a level of courtesy that can be shown merely through sitting quietly, without any words. Also, how does one sit politely? Does politeness apply to sitting or standing? The Samurai believed that it did.

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A Samurai has no reason to be cruel, and no need to prove his strength. Courtesy and respect distinguishes a Samurai from an animal and reveals one's true strength.



“Respect other people’s feelings. It might mean nothing to you, but it could mean everything to them”

- Roy T. Bennett

Our present society seems to lack a clear perception of respect, particularly the younger generation of today. In fact, I’m sure all of us have encountered rude people at least once in our lives somewhere.

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We see it in the streets, in your workplace and even at the restaurants we dine at - we're no stranger to such things.

People nowadays have become increasingly careless and impolite with their words and actions, and have no regard for others' feelings. This prevalent lack of respect for the people and authority figures has become so common that we've become accustomed to it, or numb even. We seem to have over- emphasized respect for self, so much so that we have neglected respect for others, particularly towards those that deserve it the most.

There's no harm in showing kindness, politeness and affording a basic level of respect for your fellow man. Of course, your level of respect may differ from person to person ; there's no harm affording a higher level of respect for someone whose values you admire and look up to.

Pay attention to others around you. Listen to the other person's ideas and opinions and encourage them to express them, regardless of whether you agree with the person or not. Respect the efforts of others, and show your appreciation and gratitude where its due.

In business, respect plays an important role ; your actions and words could potentially make or break a million dollar business deal. Why take the risk of losing money just because you were careless with your words? The Japanese understand respect very well - in a business meeting, a Japanese businessman will choose his words with the greatest care and will not choose topics of conversation that could possibly lead to offense. We may not be able to control the other

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factors affecting the business deal, like the economy, or the exchange rate; however we can definitely control our manners and words.

How about in the workplace? Respect is also equally as important. Not just to your superiors and bosses, but to your peers and juniors as well. Every one of your colleagues has skills and knowledge that could help or contribute to your work. At the same time, they have the ability to delay or create obstacles for you and your work, if you offend them. What benefit do you gain from being rude? Satisfaction? It is worth the trouble you will get?

Being respectful to others will not only help you to build closer relationships with your colleagues, but also help you in the long run - your colleagues may have ways to help you when you face issues in the future.

Respect should be the outward manifestation of a sympathetic regard for the feelings of others. It would not be a principle or moral value if it were practiced **ONLY** for profit or gain. Not only should we practice courtesy because it is sensible and practical, we should also practice it because it is good - period.

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誠

(makoto)

Integrity

“It takes three years to learn to be a man of integrity; it only takes three days to degrade.”

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- Chinese Proverb



Integrity. Honesty. Sincerity. These words give an impression of solidity, of a person who can be relied on to stand his ground, which is an important attribute for any warrior to have. Someone with integrity can be relied on to tell the truth, to not betray your trust, to not compromise their principles, someone whose word is as strong steel.

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Integrity has always been important to the Samurai. It was considered cowardly to lie or dissemble, thus the Samurai considered integrity and courage to go hand in hand. Lying was considered a weakness in heart and character.

Similar to the French concept of *Noblesse Oblige*, the Samurai also believed that their higher social position required of them a higher standard of integrity than the common folk. This concept exists in government and rulers all over the world to this day, although sadly most honor it only in their convenience.

Where lives are at stake, a warrior is expected to be both; a warrior who can be relied upon to say what he means as well as a warrior who can be relied on to do what he says.

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That warrior can be entrusted with missions of importance, upon which the fate of battles and wars depend. If a bridge needs to be held for two days against the enemy, or if you need the troops to force-march for 2 days to reach the battle in time... That is where you would seek a warrior who can be relied upon to do what he says he will do.

Now ask yourself this, is this integrity or reliability? They aren't the same thing, are they? I would argue that those two principles are different but to the Samurai they were inseparable. To a Samurai, the fact that his word can be relied on is a testament to his integrity - **his word is his bond.**

It is a matter of pride that his integrity makes him reliable unto death. If you had to tell a lie to save your own life would you? Or would you say in the face of death, *"My word is my bond. What would it be worth if I broke it to save my life?"*

A Samurai's conscience is the judge of his honor. The decisions he makes and how he carries them out are a reflection of his true nature. Do what is right without hesitation.

"With integrity you will do the right thing, so you will have no guilt."

- ZigZiglar

Honesty is the best policy - a phrase that many of us have grown up hearing often from our parents and teachers, normally after an

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incident or two where we have possibly not been as honest as we should have been.

And having experienced many occasions and incidents in your life requiring honesty from you or involving honesty or lack of it on the part of others, what conclusion have you come to? Is honesty indeed the best policy?



Integrity is one of the most sought-after traits that employers look for in employees today. Only the bravest and most reliable employees can write on their resumes, “*Character traits - Integrity, reliability, honesty*”. I guarantee that such an employee would definitely be

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shortlisted for an interview, and hired for sure if they lived up to the values listed on their resume.

I tell you that an employee with integrity is priceless - whatever you're paying them at isn't enough. How do you put a price to reliability? Is it priceless precisely because it is something that cannot be bought with money? I have heard employers say *"That is what I pay them for, it is only normal"*; these employers are living in denial, or extremely naïve. If you think that paying someone a few hundred dollars a month can guarantee reliability; if you think that your employee won't steal from you, lie to you, and will do whatever he/she is supposed to do, for that small salary that you pay them... then I foresee some hard times ahead for you. So, I say again, integrity as a character trait in an employee is priceless. An employee who can be handed a million dollars in a bag and be relied upon to take that bag straight to the bank, without even looking inside, that employee has the integrity of a Samurai.

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It is much the same in the business world. A businessman with integrity will be known throughout the market - nobody will hesitate to do business with him, none will doubt his word. If that businessman promises that the project will generate a return of 500%, none will suspect him of exaggerating or fixing the numbers.

That businessman will never lack for investors or partners, never have problems getting a loan. What would most businessmen pay for such trust, such ease in business? I may be repeating myself but I cannot emphasize this enough, **integrity is priceless**. It cannot be bought. It can only be earned, and proven, through living with integrity and

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honesty. And the reward is trust and respect from others that translates into the most solid business reputation possible.

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名誉

(meiyo)

Honor

“You can abandon your own body, but never let go of your honor.”

- Miyamoto Musashi

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There was this prominent teacher who gave a Maths test. Just a small one. In the school system, there were two major tests a year, as well as the nationwide ones, which came every few years. So this was just a small test, you could even call it a quiz. Suddenly, this Maths teacher, raised his voice and said, *“Do not cheat! If you fail, fail with honor!”* Well. The students were all most impressed. For a moment he could have been wearing armor and leading a cavalry charge in ancient Japan. So what is honor, that you may even possess it even though you fail?

Honor is pride. Honor is self-respect. **Honor is all 8 of the virtues of the Samurai combined.** There is honor in integrity, in compassion, in loyalty. Honor was the essence of being of a Samurai. Honor is immeasurable - consider the example of cheating in a Maths quiz. Someone might say *“But it was just a small quiz, no big deal”* to which the answer would be, *“There is no big or small in honor. There is just honor”*.

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Have you heard of the Spartan saying, which was spoken by Spartan wives and mothers to husbands and sons before they went to war, “*Come back with your shield or on it*”? The meaning of the saying was that Spartan warriors should come back victorious, or not at all. Imagine for a moment your mother saying to you that you should come back with success (*in whatever you were aiming to do on that day*) or not at all.

The Japanese have a similar saying, “*Do not return home unless you are caparisoned in brocade*”, the idea being that the Samurai would have to achieve great honor and be rewarded with a higher position, which would allow them to dress richly in brocade and silks etc. This should show you how important honor was to both cultures; a life

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without honor was not life at all. Victory or Death, as the popular saying goes.

The most extreme aspect of Samurai honor is known as “*Seppuku*” - a form of ritualized suicide, which involves disemboweling yourself to regain your honor. Putting aside how horrendous the concept of cutting your own stomach open is; what’s it got to do with honor?

That is how highly the Samurai regarded honor, and how valuable it was, that it could only be regained by the most extreme methods and that only by paying the highest price possible; your life. Only then you could regain your honor and die an honorable death.

When a Samurai has said that he shall perform an action, it is as good as done. He needs not make promises, speaking and doing are as if the same.

“Reputation is what other people know about you. Honor is what you know about yourself.”

- Lois McMaster Bujold

Here’s a question: how many men and women in your workplace would you feel comfortable calling honorable? Are there any? Sure, you may know some good workers, decent workers, competent workers, but let’s say your workplace of maybe around 100 people; Not many that you know are worthy to be called honorable.

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This is not to say that there aren't any, as maybe there hasn't been any opportunity for them to do any conspicuously honorable acts, no burning building for them to rescue people from, or villain to stand up to. Nevertheless, not even one? Well, that is not entirely unexpected; after all, if honor was common, or easy, it would not be worth as much, so, this highlights the value of honor. That being said, how would you like to be the **ONE** honorable person in your workplace? Whenever the management would need to promote someone or select someone to head a project, your name would definitely come up!



So, how would you display honor in the workplace? After all I did mention above that there aren't many opportunities to show honor in a peaceful, corporate workplace. I'm sure that any corporate employee reading this book knows well how difficult it is to be noticed for your

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contributions in a corporate firm, let alone be noticed for your character traits.

Like any worthwhile undertaking, it takes time, effort and consistency. You need to stay true to your good core values, to uphold justice, and to always make the honorable choice instead of the right choice. Honor is similar to reputation in that it needs to be built, step by step and brick by brick. No one just walks into a room and says “*I’m honorable!*” To put it in one sentence, if you would be honorable, choose honor over life. Of course, I’m not saying that you should actually give up your life, like the Samurai but set that as your goal. In any difficult decision, imagine that it is a choice between life or honor, and then choose honor.

Now let us consider the business world. Remember what I said about integrity and reliability earlier? Well honor is even more valuable than integrity to a businessman. Think of it like having a noble title.

There’s Sir, Baron, Earl, Marquis, Count and Duke, right? And people would naturally assume that a higher rank like Duke would naturally have more power, more authority and more wealth than an Earl or Baron.

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So then Integrity, Reliability, Successful, Honorable are also like titles in the business world. And an Honorable Businessman is pretty much at the top of the peerage. That reputation and title is gained little by little over each business dealing, paid invoice, and honored contract until the businessman has reached the highest position of respect in the country.

In some ways it's even better than a noble title since it is neither bought nor inherited; it is earned and achieved, and all the more respected for that. As mentioned earlier, something that cannot be bought with money is **PRICELESS**.

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You may see some rich people driving on the road in expensive cars or living in luxurious homes, however you can feel assured that you have something that they cannot buy, despite all their wealth. However, in some cases, you may be far richer than them in **HONOR**.

Now it boils down to the question, what should you do if you lose your honor?

To err is human - one mistake can tarnish 20 years of honorable dealings. Fortunately for us, we do not have to commit seppuku to regain our honor. If you make a mistake, and all that you have achieved is laid to waste, do not despair. You just have to go start all

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over again. Start building honor and respect from scratch, no matter how long it takes and you will get there!

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忠義

(chugi)

Loyalty

“Duty is heavy as a mountain but Death is lighter than a feather.”

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A Samurai's duty was to his Lord. His loyalty was to his Lord. This may sound ordinary, after all everyone owes a duty or loyalty to some other person; only the Emperor is exempt from this rule, obviously, but add in the words "*unto death*" to that statement and it takes on a whole new meaning. A Samurai's duty and loyalty was to his Lord unto death. A Samurai would sacrifice his life for his Lord, even if he was asked to take his own life.

Yes, that practice existed. Sometimes a Lord would ask a Samurai to commit seppuku. And the Samurai would obey obediently, and promptly disembowel himself. What kind of loyalty does it take to do that? How dutiful must someone be that he would give up his life because he was asked to? The answer is: as loyal as a Samurai.

As dutiful as a Samurai. **THAT** is the true meaning of loyal unto death - the ultimate loyalty and duty requires that you give up everything that you own, up to and including your life. What more is there to give? You have given **ALL** to your Lord.

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Take the story of the 47 Ronin (*Masterless Samurai*) (浪人). Their Lord had been betrayed and forced to commit seppuku by a high-ranking court official. Now, the code of the Samurai requires any Samurai to take revenge on his Lord's killer.

However, the Shogun (*the most powerful Lord in Japan*) (将軍) had ordered that no revenge be carried out by the Samurai of the betrayed Lord. Furthermore, not trusting the Samurai to obey the order, he had the head Samurai of the Lord watched for a full 1.5 years to see if he would try anything. What did that Samurai do? He pretended to be a drunkard for 1.5 years.

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He acted drunk and irresponsible for the 1.5 years that he was being watched until the spies were pulled back, then he and the 46 other Samurais went to the house of the court official and beheaded him.

The tale does not end there, however. These 47 Ronin had disobeyed the order of the Shogun - by law they were criminals (*although by the Samurai code they were loyal Samurai*) and should be hanged to death. However due to popular support from the people, the Shogun praised them for their devotion to duty and allowed them to commit seppuku “*honorably*” (*to the Samurai, it was a disgrace to be hanged as a criminal and an honorable death if by the sword, or seppuku*). As weird as this might sound, it is considered a happy ending, as they successfully avenged their Lord and were not hanged but received honorable deaths.

My focus, however, is on the fact that the 47 Ronin fully knew the consequences of disobeying the Shogun; they did not expect honorable deaths. Even if they succeeded, they knew that they would be executed in disgrace, a terrible fate for a Samurai and yet they did not hesitate to carry out the act. The tale of the 47 Ronin is synonymous in Japan for duty and loyalty, no matter the cost.

A Samurai feels responsible for his actions and their consequences, and loyal to the people in his care. A Samurai’s loyalty to his Daimyo is unquestionable.

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“Respect is earned. Honesty is appreciated. Trust is gained. Loyalty is returned”

- Anonymous

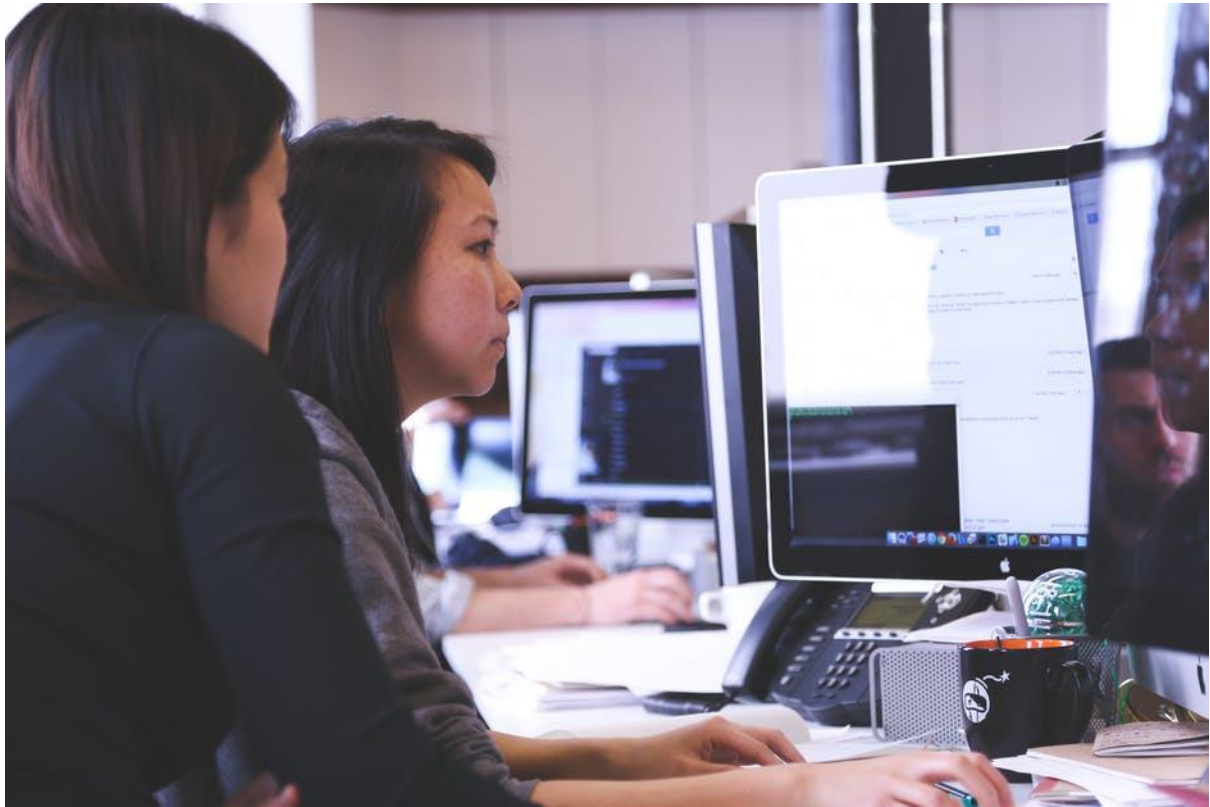


Duty to the family. Duty to your friends. Duty to your country. These concepts have not disappeared, not yet. Despite the family being less and less valued as society develops, or friendship giving way to the concept of *“every man for himself”*, or even patriotism losing its charm as corruption and betrayals by the government make the citizens lose faith; duty has not disappeared from our society.

Of course it manifests differently from the way it did in the past, as our values and perceptions have changed - it is no longer considered a

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child's duty to their parents to marry whomever is selected for them, nor is it commonly accepted that you should support your country in everything that it does.



Duty unto death... isn't really needed in this era. At least not for office workers and businessmen. Maybe for soldiers. However duty and loyalty are still very much needed, and sought for in employees or business partners. A certain amount of loyalty is expected by employers in exchange for the salary they pay... but naturally this is a lesser loyalty, because it can be bought... and not at a very high price either.

Nevertheless we do owe our employers loyalty and duty, such as it is, and we should carry out our obligations faithfully. An eye for an eye,

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loyalty for a dollar. We have received the payment and should be loyal to the extent that we are paid.

It is slightly more relevant for businessmen than employees. For businessmen, they owe loyalty to their business partners, and their vendors and suppliers. This is a loyalty that is based on mutual profit, and past contributions and favors. This is also for the continuance of such profit and favors, i.e. it is loyalty based on enlightened self-interest, and therefore a strong bond of loyalty.

What else needs to be said? Be loyal, because it is good for business. Is that not enough? Although I should add a caveat on that statement... be loyal to **THOSE WHO ARE WORTH LOYALTY**, because it is good for business. There. I don't think I need to explain what will happen to you or your business if you place your trust and loyalty in an unworthy business partner, right?

It is not all bad that the concept of loyalty has changed; as mentioned earlier, there were many loyal men in the past who believed that loyalty was **ALL**, to the extent that they sacrificed their conscience in the name of loyalty. This is a more enlightened age, where we realize that righteousness **MUST** take precedence over loyalty; the price we paid for that enlightenment is unfortunately the weakened concept of loyalty that exists today.

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自制

(jisei)

Self-Control

“Fast like the wind,

Silent like a forest,

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*Intrusive like the fire,
Immobile like a mountain.”*

- Takeda Shingen

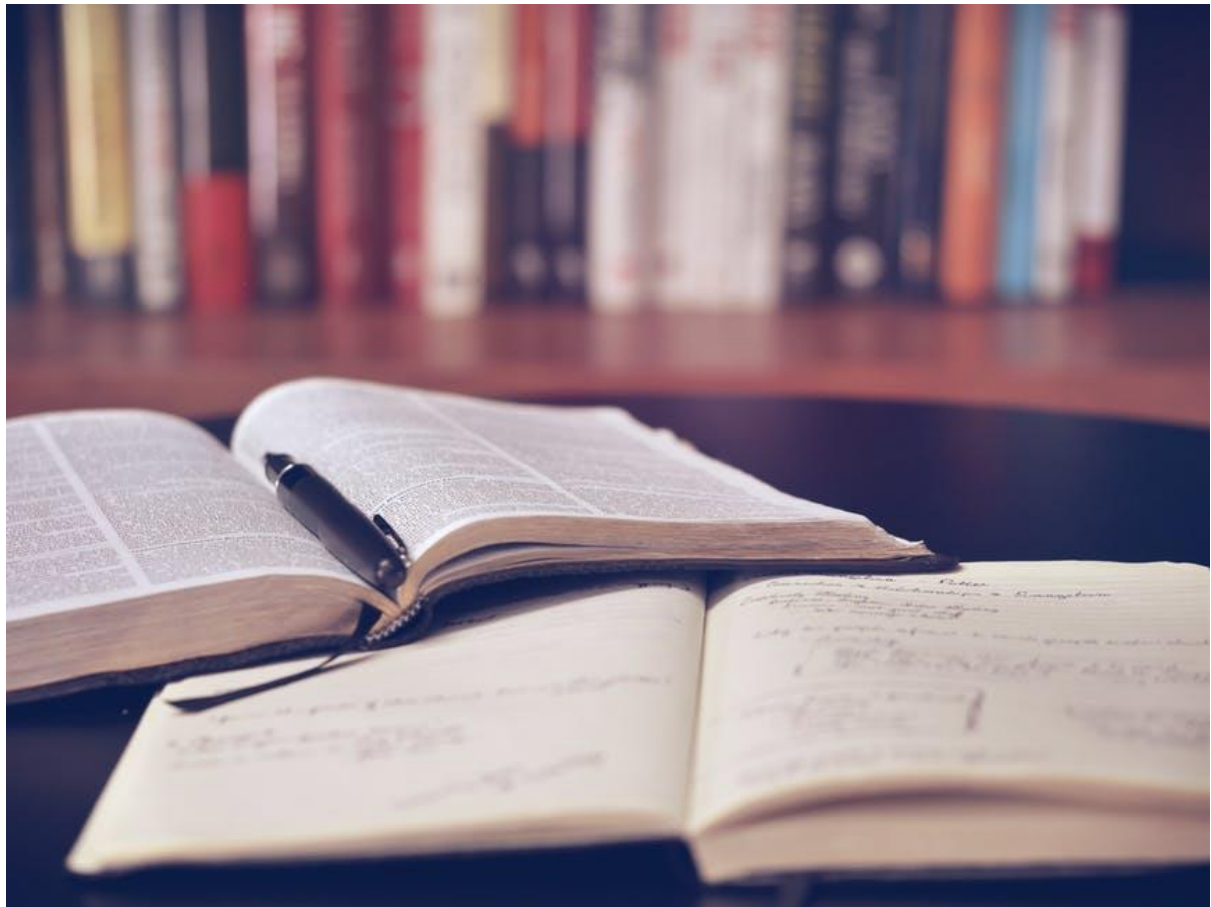


If you were to imagine a warrior, what kind of personality would come to mind? A passionate and emotional warrior? Or a cold, heartless killing machine? There have been many warrior cultures throughout our history, with many beliefs on the “*appropriate*” personality for a warrior.

The Samurai is a warrior with iron self-control - neither joyous nor angry, neither cold nor heartless, it would be a warrior who doesn’t

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reveal **ANY** emotions to the enemy, because he keeps himself under control.



It is said that “*Knowledge is Power*”, and this was especially true for the Samurai. If your enemy has knowledge of your thoughts, your emotions, your desires, he has power over you, and the ability to weaken or defeat you.

Self-control was therefore an essential trait for a Samurai to have, so as not to reveal or create weaknesses for enemies to exploit. It was also considered unmanly for a Samurai to show emotions on his face. The Samurai did not show affection for family members in public,

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which seems to be taking things to the extreme, but such was their belief in the need for self-control and stoicism.

Self-control by the Samurai was not restricted only over the mind and emotions; the Samurai were, first and foremost, warriors. Control over the body was imperative for a Samurai. Greed, lust, sloth; all these “*sins of the flesh*” were forbidden to the Samurai.

A more physical control, control over limbs and muscles, was needed so as to fight well in battle - the ideal of the Samurai sword-fighting techniques was to become “*One with the sword*” - absolute self-control over one’s body was necessary to achieve this ideal.



I think that the display of extreme self-control, and what you can achieve with it, can best be illustrated by this anecdote from the warring era of Japan, although the person displaying said self-control

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was not an honorable Samurai and should not otherwise be emulated. This person's name was Ukifune Jinnai, and he was a ninja, a Japanese assassin. He had the job of assassinating Uesugi Kenshin (*mentioned earlier in this book*), who was protected by Samurai and his **OWN** team of ninjas, **AND** a team of ninjas had previously tried to assassinate Kenshin and failed, so Kenshin was on full alert.



To cut a long story short, Jinnai infiltrated Kenshin's castle, avoided all the guards, and climbed up the **INSIDE** of his toilet (*old style Japanese toilets were basically holes with chutes leading down*) and waited until Kenshin came to use the toilet, upon which he stabbed him with a spear.

Now, try and imagine what Jinnai must have felt, and had to overcome, to achieve this act. Jinnai would not have known when

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Kenshin would use the toilet (*the castle had many toilets, obviously*) and would have to prop himself in mid-air against the walls of the chute and hold on until Kenshin came, the fear that someone might discover him and he would not be able to escape, being wedged in a toilet chute... self-control over his mind, his body, his emotions, Jinnai had them all. And as a result, he succeeded in the assassination.

What lesson should we take away from this story? Yes, Jinnai was a villain. An assassin. So why are we studying his story? Not to glorify his actions or his success, no. The lesson here is that the same principles, the same practices and values can benefit **ANYONE** who practices them; self-control does not benefit **ONLY** good people, but even villains acknowledge its benefits.

The only way to defeat the villains in **OUR** reality is to master these practices and values, and be **BETTER** at it than they are. Will it be easy? No, it won't. But no one said that being a Samurai was easy - it is simply worthwhile.

“Respect is earned. Honesty is appreciated. Trust is gained. Loyalty is returned”

- Anonymous

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Self-control and self-discipline have largely fallen from the radar in today's society. I will not name names, but it is evident from statistics that there are countries where a large section of the population is overweight or obese. That is a direct result of the virtue of self-control not being practiced or believed in those countries anymore. I'm sure that I don't need to touch on the subject of drug abuse; that is a total absence of self-control, to the point where the user engages in self-destruction.

There are countries where so little self-control is expected of the citizens that they pass laws to escape acts done in anger, or extreme emotion. Unfortunately, self-control as a virtue is not valued in many cultures any more but this has nothing to do with **YOU** practicing it.

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You do not need support from others or encouragement to practice self-control; after all it is your **SELF** that you seek to control, not others. Self-control is about looking inwards.

Knowing its value and practicing it in your life is enough; if the rest of society doesn't believe in self-control (*maybe the term self-restraint is more descriptive*), then you cannot help them. Anger, lust, is there any situation where giving in to these desires results in a good ending?



As an employee, subordinate to others, self-control is imperative to keeping your job, which is not so different from the Samurai, really. They were subordinate to their superiors and Lords, having to follow orders that they may not have agreed with. The only difference

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between them and an employee in our modern age is that the employee can resign and seek employment with a new employer.

Having said that, I'm sure that any readers who have worked as employees before know how stressful it is to change jobs, or to attend job interviews. It is never a good idea to quit in anger and walk out only to face difficulty finding a new job afterwards and run out of living funds in the meantime. Hence self-control is imperative!

If your employer is offensive, or ungrateful, or in the habit of making bad decisions and then blaming you for it, do not lash out in anger or respond to his/her provocations. Just nod, control your emotions and then apply for a new job as soon as possible. Do not let your life and your plans be unduly affected by those who would cause you trouble.

As a businessman, there will be many occasions when self-control will be needed, for gain or to avoid loss. If you have plans that could be upset by interference from your rivals, you need to refrain from providing any information on plans to anyone who might cause a leak of the information. If you have been cheated or betrayed by business partners or friends, you would need to hold back your anger and "*admit defeat*" - or simply, exert self-control.

No one has a perfect victory record in business; there will be times when you lose or get cheated or outmaneuvered and showing your emotions to your enemies at that point will only serve as extra points for their victory over you. So, use your self-control, hide your emotions

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• MEIYO • CHUGI • JISEI

deep in your heart, and show your enemy no weakness; wait for your opportunity to even the score.

No matter how badly you have been wronged, there is no benefit to revealing your plans or emotions to your enemy - let none know or even suspect your plans and your chances of success will increase substantially.

There is a Japanese saying that goes “*Even a lone mutter in a well is known after three years*”. The meaning is clear - any secret that you do not keep deep in your heart will be exposed eventually. Control your desire to share your plans and thoughts with others; keep them deep inside your heart.

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A Simple Choice



Now we have come to the end of the book, and a simple choice. A simple question. Shakespeare once wrote, *“To be or not to be, that is the question.”* That is the only question.

Do you want to follow Bushido in your life? Do you want to follow the steps of the ancient Samurai? The simplest question of all, and all you need to answer is **YES** or **NO**?

You do not answer to the author, nor to the ancient Samurai. The answer is within you... **YES**... or... **NO**. To Bushido. To a life of virtue. Make your choice and live with it.

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Bonus - 10 Samurai Principles for Guidance

Here are some basic principles to help guide you on your Way:

The Samurai: Become a Master to Yourself

Commit yourself to a higher purpose in life.

Open to Suggestions, Accept Challenges & Remain Resourceful

Embrace, adapt and provide value via solutions.

Strike Swiftly with Accurate Precision

Identify weak areas & handle the matter decisively.

Be Firm & Resolute

Take a stance and stand steadfastly under any pressures.

Anticipate & Access the Complications & Risks

Take a holistic view, strategize and think of the repercussions involved.

Confront Your Battle Courageously

Don't give up fighting a cause that you strongly believe in.

Don't Engage in Attrition Battles

Focus onto yourself as squabbles are distraction to your goals.

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Managing the Expectations of Yourself & Others

True peace and reward can only be earned by staying faithful to the course.

Be Respectful and Practice Professional Integrity

Stay true to yourself as honor knows no boundaries.

Be Selective of Your Companions and Work as a Team to Accomplish Greatness

Inspire your surroundings and be generous in sharing your wisdom.

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