
Go Amour
Principles Approved By El Pato
While Smelling The Roses

Go Amour

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About the Author

For My Mother, Pari

She was always helping someone. It was in her nature as a mother, as a woman of deep faith in God and love, and as a nurse.[1]

Introduction: How These Principles Came to Be

My Story

I was born in Tehran in 1975. When I was five, Iraq attacked Iran, and I grew up in a country at war. At eleven, I came to America as an Iranian boy in ESL classes. At thirteen, I lost my father.

I grew up and built a career in Silicon Valley. Later, I started my own company, called BizCloud. Then a much larger company sued us over our trademark, the name of our business. In 2014, I was forced to settle. I had to shut BizCloud down.[2]

That same year, I fell into a darkness so deep that I tried to end my life.[2]

I survived. I went on to work at Amazon Web Services, to write books and to start the websites you will read about in these pages. When I needed care again, people stood by me. You will read about that in Chapter 4.

I tell you this because I am not ashamed of it, and because someone reading this book may be in that darkness right now. If that is you, please reach out. You are not alone. The help page at the back of this book lists people you can call or text, day or night.

What I Work For Now

The BizCloud website is still online, but only as a record of what once was. I am not looking to make money. I would rather focus on other matters in my life that are more urgent than business.[3]

I pay for my work out of my own pocket. As I wrote in my book No Ethics in Big Tech: “I gain nothing financially from any of it.”[4]

That book also describes the work I care about most. ParentsPlea.com is a free memorial to people killed by war and injustice. You will read about it in Chapter 6. ConflictTour is a plan, still in its early stages, for a six-month program of humanitarian service. It would give young people another way to serve, instead of joining the military.[4]

Where GoAmour Came From

GoAmour began as a short list of principles on my website, GoAmour.com. The name joins two words: go, and amour, the French word for love. I explained the principles in a video and at events, and I asked people to add their own.[5][6]

My pastor, the Rev. Dr. Dorsey Blake, discussed these principles with me for years. Before he died in March 2025, he gave them his blessing.[7] You will meet him in Chapter 4.

This book takes each principle and asks two questions. Why does it matter? And what do the world’s great traditions say about it?

The Ten Principles

Here they are, in the words used on GoAmour.com.[5]

1. The Golden Rule, with emphasis on “others”: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”
2. Choose freely, without prejudice and judgment, your own craving of knowledge, “isms”, affiliations, organizations, ideologies, religions, Artificial Intelligence, etc.
3. The ability to terminate or to continue a subscription to medicine, knowledge, institutions and AI. The ability to reaffirm or cancel memberships as a being sees fit. The ability to pay for services

and ideologies as needed, without long-term contractual obligations.

4. To love with knowledge, respect, caring and responsibility towards all others — as defined by the writer Erich Fromm in his book The Art of Loving.
5. Preservation and sanctity of the principles of human rights and digital rights, for ourselves and for others.
6. The willingness and commitment to support organizations, institutions and ideologies that promote life in its many forms.
7. Demanding a cure to hate and violence by those who inflict it — if they can be cured and changed. And if not, having these criminals face judgment in this world, and not just in the next.
8. A commitment to oneness: Oneness with fellow beings, with nature, with God, and with all forms of sentient beings and life.
9. Focus on the quality of existence, and not just the mere quantity of prolonging existence.
10. Add your own! Open to suggestions! Who knows — figure it out and add to the list. Make this list as lengthy as you like, as long as the items on your list are in line with the nine principles above.

How to Use This Book

You do not have to read this book from start to finish. Pick a principle that speaks to you and start there.

Each chapter follows the same path. It begins with the principle and what it means in plain words. My Story tells how I learned it. Why It Matters explains why it is important today.

Then comes Find Your Lens. Each lens shows what one tradition teaches about the principle. The lenses always come in the same order: Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Persian and Zoroastrian, Hindu, Jain and Sikh, Buddhist, Chinese, Native American, and Humanist and Scientific.

Read the lens that fits what you believe, or read them all. If no strong, trustworthy text could be found for a tradition, that lens sits out the chapter. I would rather leave a space than fill it with something weak or false.

When you see the words “in plain English,” an old text has been put into simple modern words. The full standard translation is always in the notes at the end of the chapter, with a link so you can check it yourself.

Each chapter ends with Lived It, the true story of someone who lived the principle, then What You Can Do and a short list called Remember. Chapter 10 leaves blank lines for your own principles.

A Word About Hard Things

Some chapters talk about war, death and suffering. Take breaks when you need to. Talk with someone you trust. And remember the help page at the back.

You do not have to agree with everything here. Principle 2 says you are free to choose. All I ask is that you read with an open heart.

As I like to say: live in peace, not just rest in peace.

Notes and Links

Every link shown below was confirmed on November 1, 2026.

1. The author’s own words about his mother, given for this book.
2. “About Me,” GoAmour.com: BizCloud’s legal battle with Computer Sciences Corporation (now DXC Technology) over its registered trademark; “In 2014 he attempted to take his own life after he was forced to settle with CSC and subsequently shutdown BizCloud Operations.” https://goamour.com/about-me/
3. The author’s account to the editor, November 1, 2026: the BizCloud site is kept only as a placeholder, for history’s sake; he is not looking to make money and is focused on matters more urgent than business.
4. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), “Author’s Note on Mission and Financial Independence,” page iii: “I gain nothing financially from any of it”; ConflictTour “is currently at the idea and planning stage” and “will never be a cash cow”;

ParentsPlea.com “is a free website. It carries no advertising.” Chapter 17, “ConflictTour,” from page 121: “ConflictTour is planned to be a six-month structured humanitarian service program — an alternative to military enlistment.” Free at https://noethicsinbigtech.com/book/

5. GoAmour.com, “Principles of GoAmour.” https://goamour.com/principles/
6. Vahid Razavi, “GoAmour Principles!” video. https://youtu.be/WHhn_J21PSk
7. Vahid Razavi, “The Spiritual Seeker, Go Love and the Singularity,” NoEthicsInBigTech.com, September 19, 2026. https://noethicsinbigtech.com/the-spiritual-seeker-go-love-and-the-singularity/

Chapter 1. The Golden Rule: Make the First Move

The Principle

The Golden Rule, with emphasis on “others.” “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”[1]

In plain words: Treat other people the way you want to be treated. And do not wait for them to go first. Make the first move.

My Story

I was five years old when Iraq attacked Iran. I grew up in Tehran during that war. My mother was a nurse. She worked in hospitals with the people the war had hurt.[2]

On Fridays, my day off from school, I went with her. I saw refugees. I saw families who had taken shelter in the hospital hallways. I saw children my age with injuries I was too young to name.[2]

In 1986, when I was eleven, my mother and I came to the United States on a visa. We left to escape the war.[2] I was ahead in math and science, so the school skipped me past sixth grade and put me straight into seventh. But I spoke almost no English, so I also sat in ESL classes, the classes for students who are learning English.

I was the new kid. I was, as I have written, the neighbor nobody had asked for.[3] Kids picked on us. Some called me a terrorist. I did not understand why. I was not a terrorist. My family were not terrorists. We had run away from a war.[2]

Then, in ESL, I met Trần, a Vietnamese boy, and his friends. Their English was no better than mine. But they

were great basketball players for their size. They could slip in and steal the ball right out of a bigger kid's dribble. They also knew martial arts. They took me in as one of their own and looked out for me. Just being seen with them, I felt safer in the schoolyard, at recess and at lunch.

Nobody asked them to do that. They were newcomers too, and they made the first move.

Those years taught me something I have never forgotten. The Golden Rule is easy to say. It is hard to live. And most of the time, it starts with one person who decides not to wait.

Why It Matters

Most of us learned the Golden Rule as children. Many people say it as a warning: do not do to others what you would not want done to you. That version tells us what to stop doing. It is a good rule. But it lets us sit still.[4]

The GoAmour version puts the weight on two words. The first word is "do." The Golden Rule is a rule of action. It is not a rule for standing on the side and watching.[5] You take the first step toward another person's dignity and well-being. You do it before they have earned it. You do it before they ask. You do it before you know if they will do the same for you.[4]

The second word is "others." The Golden Rule is not only for our family and friends. It is not only for people who look like us or pray like us. It is for the stranger, the newcomer and the refugee. It is for the person on the other side of the street, and on the other side of the border.

Jesus told a story about this. A man asked him, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered with the story of a stranger who stopped on the road to help a wounded man. You will

find that story in the Christian lens below. In that story, the neighbor was not the one who shared the man's tribe. The neighbor was the one who stopped.[3]

I learned what a broken Golden Rule looks like from my own family. My father was an engineer at the National Iranian Oil Company. For years he worked at the Abadan and Tehran refineries, around asbestos.[6] When I was twelve, he was diagnosed with mesothelioma, a cancer caused by asbestos. The friends of his I knew from work all died within a few years of each other, from cancers caused by asbestos.

An American company helped design and build Iran's oil refineries.[7] At home, in the 1970s, the United States banned some kinds of asbestos insulation.[8] In Iran, my father and his friends kept working around it.

That is the Golden Rule turned upside down: protect your own people, and not others.

Why does this matter so much today? Because many people are pulling away from each other. Some of the richest people on earth are building bunkers and rockets to escape the problems they helped create.[3] Many of us hide behind screens. It has never been easier to stop seeing the person next to us.

The Golden Rule pulls the other way. It says the person next to you matters as much as you do. In my book No Ethics in Big Tech, I wrote that the real struggle of our time is between two ideas: "I am one" and "We are one."[9] The Golden Rule is where "we are one" begins. It begins with one act toward one person.

There is another reason this principle comes first. Almost every faith and wisdom tradition on earth teaches some form of it. In 1993, people from many religions met in

Chicago at the Parliament of the World's Religions. They looked for the rules that all of their traditions share. The Golden Rule was at the heart of what they found.[10]

You will see it in every lens that follows: in the Torah, the Gospels, the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, the Zoroastrian writings, the Mahabharata, the Sikh scripture, the words of the Buddha, the teachings of Confucius and the wisdom of the Dakota people. People who never met each other found the same truth.

That is why it is the first principle. If you live this one, the others become easier.

Find Your Lens

Each lens shows how one tradition teaches the Golden Rule. Read the one that speaks to you, or read them all. Each lens stands on its own. When you see the words "in plain English," the old text has been put into simple modern words. The full standard translation is in the notes at the end of the chapter.

Lenses in this chapter: Jewish · Christian · Muslim · Persian and Zoroastrian · Hindu, Jain and Sikh · Buddhist · Chinese · Native American · Humanist and Scientific

Jewish Wisdom

About two thousand years ago, a man who was not Jewish came to two great teachers with a challenge. He said he would join the Jewish faith if a teacher could teach him the whole Torah while he stood on one foot. The first teacher, Shammai, chased him away. The second teacher, Hillel, said yes.

In plain English, Hillel said: "What you hate, do not do to your neighbor. That is the whole Torah. The rest is explanation. Now go and learn it."[11]

The Torah itself says, in plain English: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” A few verses later it says: “Treat the stranger who lives with you like someone born among you. Love the stranger as yourself, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”[12]

How it supports the principle: Hillel put the whole Torah into one sentence about how we treat others. And the Torah asks us to remember our own days as strangers when we meet a stranger today.

Christian Wisdom

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, in plain English: “Whatever you want people to do for you, do the same for them. This is what the Law and the Prophets teach.”[13] Notice the words “do the same.” Jesus did not only say, “Do no harm.” He said, “Do.”

Jesus also told the story of the Good Samaritan. Robbers beat a man on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho and left him half dead. A priest saw him and walked past on the other side. A temple worker saw him and walked past too. Then a Samaritan came by. He was from a people the listeners looked down on. He stopped. He cleaned and bandaged the man’s wounds. He put him on his own animal and took him to an inn. He paid the innkeeper to care for him and promised to pay more if needed.

Jesus asked which of the three had been a neighbor to the man. The answer came back: “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said, “Go and do the same.”[14]

The Armenian Apostolic Church, one of the oldest churches in the world, keeps the Book of Tobit in its Bible. In it, a father named Tobit gives advice to his son before a long journey. In plain English: “Do not do to anyone what you hate.”[15]

How it supports the principle: Jesus turned the Golden Rule into a call to act. And he showed that our neighbor is anyone who needs us, even a stranger.

Muslim Wisdom

The Prophet Muhammad said, in plain English: “None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother” — or he said, “for his neighbor” — “what he loves for himself.”[16]

He also said that the angel Gabriel kept urging him to treat neighbors well. Gabriel urged him so often that the Prophet thought the neighbor would be made an heir. An heir is someone who inherits from your family.[17]

His companions took this to heart. One of them, Abdullah ibn Amr, once had a sheep slaughtered for a meal. He asked his household: “Have you sent a gift from it to our neighbor, the Jew?” Then he repeated the Prophet’s words about Gabriel and the neighbor.[18]

How it supports the principle: In Islam, wanting for others what you want for yourself is part of faith itself. And the neighbor’s right to your kindness does not depend on sharing your religion.

Persian and Zoroastrian Wisdom

Zoroastrianism is one of the oldest living faiths in the world. It was born on the Iranian plateau, the land where I was born. Its whole teaching fits in three phrases: good thoughts, good words, good deeds.[19]

More than a thousand years ago, a Zoroastrian high priest named Manushchihr answered his community’s questions about how to live. His book is called Religious Decisions. Near its end, he wrote, in plain English: “A person’s nature is good only when it does not do to another anything that is not good for itself.”[20]

How it supports the principle: For Zoroastrians, a good life shows in deeds. Treating others the way you want to be treated is the test of a good nature.

Hindu, Jain and Sikh Wisdom

The Mahabharata is one of the great epic poems of India. In one of its books, a wise teacher explains the rule of right living to a king. In plain English: “Never do to another what you would see as harmful to yourself. This, in short, is the rule of right living.”[21]

Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, wrote in the Sikh scripture, in plain English: “No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger. I get along with everyone.”[22] Sikh tradition tells a story about this. When the Harmandir Sahib, the Golden Temple, was built, Guru Arjan gave the honor of laying its foundation stone to a Muslim holy man named Mian Mir.[23]

How it supports the principle: The Mahabharata asks us to judge our actions by how they would feel to us. Guru Arjan goes one step further: he refuses to see anyone as a stranger at all.

Buddhist Wisdom

One day the Buddha came to a village called Bamboo Gate. The families there told him what they wanted from life: homes full of children, comfort, and a good life after death. They asked him how to live.

The Buddha taught them to begin with their own hearts. In plain English: “I want to live, and I do not want to die. I want happiness, and I do not want pain. If someone took my life, I would not like it. Others feel the same way. What I do not like, others do not like either. So how could I do to someone else what I would not want done to me?” He used the same test for stealing, for lying and for harsh words.[24]

How it supports the principle: The Buddha did not just give a rule. He showed how to find it inside yourself, by putting yourself in the other person's place.

Chinese Wisdom

A student named Zigong once asked Confucius: "Is there one word you can live by your whole life?" Confucius answered, in plain English: "Isn't it putting yourself in the other person's place? What you do not want, do not do to others."[25]

Confucius also taught the rule in its active form. In plain English: "A truly good person, wanting to stand firm, helps others stand firm. Wanting to get ahead, he helps others get ahead. Start from what is close to you. That is the way to be truly good."[26]

How it supports the principle: Confucius gave both forms of the rule. His active form matches GoAmour: help others in the way you want to be helped.

Native American Wisdom

Ohiyesa, also known as Charles Eastman, was a Dakota doctor and writer. In 1911 he wrote down the faith he had learned as a child. He said Dakota children were taught to give away the things they valued most.[27]

He described people who gave away all they had, to relatives and to guests from other tribes, "but above all to the poor and the aged, from whom he can hope for no return."[27]

He also wrote that the welcome of a Dakota home was so strong that even an enemy who came as a guest was safe there. The host's honor kept him safe.[27]

How it supports the principle: Giving with no hope of anything in return is the Golden Rule at its purest. It is the first move, made for its own sake.

Humanist and Scientific Wisdom

You do not need a religion to live by the Golden Rule. In 1993, the Parliament of the World's Religions wrote its declaration for all people, religious and non-religious. It said the Golden Rule should never be broken. It should guide families and communities. It should guide races, nations and religions.[10]

It also said that we must treat others as we wish others to treat us. We must serve others, "never forgetting the children, the aged, the poor, the suffering, the disabled, the refugees and the lonely."[10]

How it supports the principle: People of every faith, and people of no faith, agree on this rule. It belongs to all of us.

Lived It: Pari

My mother, Pari, was a nurse in Tehran during the war between Iran and Iraq. She worked with the wounded and the traumatized, the people whose lives the war had broken.[2]

She did not wait for these people to earn her care. They needed help, so she helped. That is the Golden Rule in its active form.

When I was in third or fourth grade, she left one day without saying goodbye. I learned she had gone with a group of women nurses on a train to serve on the front lines. When she came home, she brought me spent bullet casings. I arranged them on a display board for a school art project. My teacher loved it so much he never gave it

back. Looking back, I was lucky. Spent casings can carry lead.

On Fridays she took me with her to the hospital. I have written that she showed me, with her own hands, what one human being owes another.[3]

In 1986 she made the hardest choice of her life. She decided that protecting her child mattered more than staying in the country where she had built her life.[4] She carried me out of a war.[3]

When my father fell ill, she cared for him at home after his doctor visits. She spent whole nights at his bedside in the hospital. Helping people was simply who she was: a mother, a woman of deep faith in God and love, and a nurse.

She used to tell me that God had sent more than five thousand prophets to humanity.[28] I think of that often when I read the lenses in this book. Many messengers, in many languages, teaching the same lesson.

Years later, when I was building a career in technology, part of my dream was to change lives the way she had changed lives, and to support groups like Doctors Without Borders.[29] When she passed away, her service was held at the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples in San Francisco, the church of my pastor, Rev. Dr. Dorsey Blake.[29]

This book is dedicated to her.

What You Can Do

1. Make the first move this week. Greet a new coworker, neighbor or classmate by name. Ask them one question about their life.
2. Learn your neighbors' names.[3]
3. Do one kind thing for someone who cannot pay you back.

4. Before you post or share something online about a group of people, ask yourself: Would I want this said about my family or my people?
5. Share a meal with someone you were taught to fear.[3]

Remember

- The Golden Rule asks you to act, not only to avoid harm.
- "Others" means everyone: the stranger, the newcomer, and the person from another faith or country.
- Almost every faith and wisdom tradition teaches this rule. People who never met each other found the same truth.

Notes and Links

Every link shown below was confirmed on November 1, 2026.

1. GoAmour.com, "Principles of GoAmour," Principle 1. https://goamour.com/principles/
2. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Foreword: "The Person Who Wrote This Book," page iv. Free at https://noethicsinbigtech.com/book/
3. Vahid Razavi, "Humanity Is Not a Rough Draft," NoEthicsInBigTech.com, October 31, 2026, section "Love Thy Neighbor, Not Thy Bunker" and the list "What Peace Practiced Looks Like." https://noethicsinbigtech.com/humanity-is-not-a-rough-draft/
4. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 18, "Live in Peace, Not Just Rest in Peace," page 128 (the active Golden Rule) and page 133 (his mother's decision to leave Iran).
5. Vahid Razavi, "GoAmour Principles!" video, 0:44 to 1:05. https://youtu.be/WHhn_J21PSk
6. Vahid Razavi, "The Spiritual Seeker, Go Love and the Singularity," NoEthicsInBigTech.com, September 19, 2026, on his father's years working with asbestos at the National Iranian Oil Company; the refineries and diagnosis are from the author's account to the

editor, November 1, 2026. https://noethicsinbigtech.com/the-spiritual-seeker-go-love-and-the-singularity/

7. “Fluor Corporation,” company history, Encyclopedia.com, which records that in the 1960s the company built refineries in Korea and Iran. https://www.encyclopedia.com/books/politics-and-business-magazines/fluor-corporation
8. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, regulatory history of asbestos bans: in 1973 EPA banned spray-applied asbestos for fireproofing and insulating; in 1975 it banned installing asbestos pipe insulation and block insulation on equipment such as boilers and hot water tanks. https://19january2021snapshot.epa.gov/asbestos/epa-actions-protect-public-exposure-asbestos_.html
9. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), “Author’s Note on Mission and Financial Independence,” page iii.
10. Parliament of the World’s Religions, “Towards a Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration,” Chicago, September 4, 1993. The declaration states: “What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others! Or in positive terms: What you wish done to yourself, do to others!” https://parliamentofreligions.org/ Full text: Global Ethic Foundation, https://www.weltethos.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Global-Ethic-Declaration_EN.pdf
11. Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 31a. A common translation: “What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor: that is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary; go and learn it.” Sefaria: https://www.sefaria.org/Shabbat.31a
12. Leviticus 19:18 and 19:34. King James Version (1611, public domain): “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD”; “But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.” Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A18&version=KJV; https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A34&version=KJV
13. Matthew 7:12. King James Version: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+7%3A12&version=KJV
14. Luke 10:25 to 37. King James Version, verses 36 and 37: “Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.” Bible

Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A25-37&version=KJV

15. Tobit 4:15. King James Version Apocrypha (1611, public domain): “Do that to no man which thou hatest.” The Armenian Apostolic Church recognizes Tobit and the other deuterocanonical books as Holy Scripture: https://www.armenianchurchlibrary.com/westernarmenianbiblefromenglish.html
16. Sahih Muslim 45a: “None amongst you believes (truly) until he loves for his brother” — or he said “for his neighbour” — “that which he loves for himself.” https://hadithunlocked.com/muslim:45a. See also Sahih al-Bukhari 13: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:13
17. Sahih al-Bukhari 6014 (narrated by Aisha) and 6015 (narrated by Ibn Umar). https://sunnah.com/bukhari/78/45
18. Sunan Abi Dawud 5152; also al-Adab al-Mufrad 105. A common translation: “Have you presented a gift from it to my neighbour, the Jew, for I heard the Messenger of Allah say: Gabriel kept on commending the neighbour to me so that I thought he would make him an heir.” Sunnah.com: https://sunnah.com/abudawud:5152; https://sunnah.com/adab:105
19. Good thoughts, good words, good deeds (humata, hukhta, hvarshta): the best-known summary of Zoroastrian ethics. The Yasna liturgy: “I praise good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.” Avesta.org, https://avesta.org/yasna/
20. Dadistan-i Dinik (Religious Decisions) 94:5, translated by E. W. West, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 18 (1882, public domain): “that nature only is good when it shall not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self.” https://sacred-texts.com/zor/sbe18/sbe18101.htm
21. Mahabharata, Book 13 (Anusasana Parva), Section 113, translated by Kisari Mohan Ganguli (1883 to 1896, public domain): “One should never do that to another which one regards as injurious to one’s own self. This, in brief, is the rule of Righteousness.” https://sacred-texts.com/hin/m13/m13b078.htm
22. Guru Granth Sahib, Ang (page) 1299, Guru Arjan, Raag Kaanraa: “No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger. I get along with everyone.” https://searchgurbani.com/guru-granth-sahib/ang/1299
23. On Guru Arjan and Mian Mir: Sikh tradition, as told by the Sikh Institute. https://sikhinstitute.org/importance_of_sggs/surjansingh.html
24. Samyutta Nikaya 55.7, Veludvareyya Sutta, “The People of Bamboo Gate,” translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu: “What is displeasing & disagreeable to me is displeasing & disagreeable to others.” https://dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN55_7.html

25. Analects 15.24 (numbered 15.23 in Legge). James Legge (1861, public domain): “Is not RECIPROCITY such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.” Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/analects/wei-ling-gong
26. Analects 6.30 (numbered 6.28 in Legge). James Legge: “Now the man of perfect virtue, wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others.” Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/analects/yong-ye
27. Ohiyesa (Charles A. Eastman), *The Soul of the Indian* (1911, public domain), Chapter IV, “Barbarism and the Moral Code,” and Chapter II, “The Family Altar.” https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/340
28. Vahid Razavi, “My questions for the court clerk on judgment day!” GoAmour.com, August 5, 2024. https://goamour.com/my-questions-for-the-court-clerk-on-judgment-day/
29. Vahid Razavi, “The Spiritual Seeker, Go Love and the Singularity,” NoEthicsInBigTech.com, September 19, 2026. https://noethicsinbigtech.com/the-spiritual-seeker-go-love-and-the-singularity/

Chapter 2. Choose Freely: Choose, and Choose Again

The Principle

Choose freely, without prejudice and judgment, your own craving of knowledge, “isms”, affiliations, organizations, ideologies, religions, Artificial Intelligence, etc.[1]

In plain words: You are free to choose what you believe, what you learn, which groups you join and which tools you use. No one should look down on you for your choice. And if a choice turns out wrong, you are free to choose again.

My Story

I was raised in a family of deep faith. My mother and father were devout Shia Muslims. As a small child in Tehran, I learned how to pray. During the war, prayer was my shelter. I believed God would protect the innocent from the bombs.[2]

When my father fell ill, I prayed for him to heal. I lost him when I was thirteen. In my late teens and twenties, I gave up on prayer. God did not seem to hear me. So I set out to become the best capitalist I could be.[2]

In 2011, I joined the Occupy movement in San Francisco. There I met Janet, a dear Jewish friend. She brought me to the Unitarian Universalist Church of San Francisco, where our group held its meetings. I found activists and friends of every faith. It was the start of a new search.[2]

I started a program I called the Spiritual Seeker. Once a month, I arranged for a few friends, from inside and outside the Unitarian church, to visit a different house of worship. We went to Quaker meetings, churches, spiritual

centers and more. We always called ahead. We said who we were and asked if we could come.[2]

Everywhere, people welcomed us warmly. And everywhere, they asked the same surprised question: “What is your religion, and are you looking to convert?” We were not. We came to listen. Afterward we would sit in a café or a pub, eat lunch and talk about what we had seen.[2]

One Sunday, a guest minister spoke at the Unitarian church. He was the Rev. Dr. Dorsey Blake of the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples. His sermon moved me so deeply that I followed him in the weeks after. In time, I became a member of his church.[2]

That church was founded in 1944 by the Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman and the Rev. Dr. Alfred Fisk. It was the first church in the nation built on purpose to welcome every race and every faith.[2] Each Sunday its members promise to keep growing in their understanding of all people as children of God.[3]

Today, people sometimes ask me what my religion is. I do not practice just one faith. I like to say I am a switch hitter, like a baseball player who can bat from either side of the plate.

My faith is in what I carry and what I practice. I carry a Qur’an and a Bible, along with a book of Rumi’s poetry. I visit churches, temples and other places of worship.

Some mornings, depending on the day of the week, I begin with Fajr, the dawn prayer, as Shia Muslims pray it. Then I pray for my parents and for the dead. Then I hear the Lord’s Prayer in Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke. I do not speak Aramaic, so I listen to it on YouTube with the English words on the screen. I add a few other Christian

prayers, and I end with Buddhist chanting. I try to do this as often as I can.

I do not say a full morning prayer every day. But not a day goes by that I do not pray for my parents and the loved ones I have lost, including my dear Rev. Blake. I pray for friends I have lost. I pray for the people around the world who lost their lives to injustice at the hands of tyrants. And every day, I give thanks in words.

The other part of my faith is living by my own principles, the ones I see in all religions. If you want a neat answer, with one name for my faith, I do not have one. I fill in the gaps as I go through my day.

No one told me where to go. No one forced me to stay. I chose, and when the time came, I chose again.

Why It Matters

The second principle covers almost everything you can choose. It names your hunger for knowledge, the “isms” you follow, the groups you join, your ideas, your religion and even the artificial intelligence you use.[1] In my video about the principles, I said you should choose based on your own needs and the needs of your community and society. You should not let others dictate what you choose.[4]

Here is the part people miss. In my book No Ethics in Big Tech, I wrote that “the freedom to choose is not the freedom to choose correctly — it is the freedom to choose, period, and to be respected for the choice you have made.”[5]

That means you will sometimes choose wrong. Everyone does. Freedom is the right to make your own choices. It is also the right to see a mistake and choose again. I gave up

on prayer for years. Later, I chose a church. Each time, the choice was mine. A free choice is never your last choice.

Your hunger for knowledge belongs to you, too. You may want to study a faith you were not born into, or an idea your friends dislike. Learning about something is not the same as joining it. My friends and I visited many houses of worship without joining them. We came to listen.

The list even includes artificial intelligence. You choose which AI tools you use, what you ask them and whether you trust their answers. No company should make that choice for you.

What does “without prejudice and judgment” mean? Prejudice means deciding about a person before you know them. This principle asks you not to look down on people for what they believe or which group they join. It does not mean that anything goes. When a choice hurts other people, it must still answer for that harm. That is the subject of Principle 7.

Why does this matter so much today? Because more and more of our choices are being made for us. An app decides what news you see. A feed decides which voices you hear. A machine learns what you like, then shows you more of the same.

In No Ethics in Big Tech, I wrote that this system “catalogs your choices in order to predict and ultimately shape them.” Think of a person whose choices are tracked by a program built to keep them choosing the same things. That person, I wrote, “is not free in any meaningful sense of the word.”[5] Pope Leo XIV has warned about this danger too, as you will see in the Christian lens.

So choosing freely takes practice. GoAmour asks you to choose “consciously, repeatedly, in small moments and

large ones."[6] It happens when you pick the local shop over the app's suggestion. It happens when you read a view you do not share. It happens when you visit a house of worship that is not your own, just to listen.

This principle comes right after the Golden Rule for a reason. The Golden Rule asks you to treat others the way you want to be treated. You want your choices respected. So respect theirs.

Find Your Lens

Each lens shows how one tradition teaches the freedom to choose. Read the one that speaks to you, or read them all. Each lens stands on its own. When you see the words "in plain English," the old text has been put into simple modern words. The full standard translation is in the notes at the end of the chapter.

Lenses in this chapter: Jewish · Christian · Muslim · Persian and Zoroastrian · Hindu, Jain and Sikh · Buddhist · Chinese · Native American · Humanist and Scientific

Jewish Wisdom

Near the end of the Torah, Moses gives the people a final choice. In plain English: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. So choose life."[7] God sets out the paths. The choosing is left to us.

Rabbi Akiva, a great teacher who lived nearly two thousand years ago, put it in a few words. In plain English: "God sees everything, and yet the freedom to choose is given."[8]

About eight hundred and fifty years ago, the great teacher Maimonides wrote that free will is given to every human being. Anyone who wants to take the good path has the power to do so. He called this a pillar of the whole Torah.[9]

Notice where Maimonides put this teaching. He placed it in his laws of teshuvah. Teshuvah is the Hebrew word for repentance. It means “returning.” We are free to choose, and we are free to turn around and choose again.

How it supports the principle: In Judaism, the choice is truly ours. And a wrong turn is never the end of the road.

Christian Wisdom

The apostle Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia about freedom. In plain English: “Christ has set us free. So stand firm, and do not let yourselves be made slaves again.” He added: “You were called to be free. Use your freedom to serve one another in love.”[10]

In 1965, the leaders of the Catholic Church met at the Second Vatican Council. They declared that every human person has a right to religious freedom. In plain English: no one should be forced to act against their own beliefs.[11]

In 2026, Pope Leo XIV wrote his first great letter to the world. It is called Magnifica Humanitas, and it is about protecting people in the age of artificial intelligence. He warned how easy it has become to steer people’s choices with ever more clever computer programs. And he wrote, in plain English: “A person’s future cannot be calculated. It depends on that person’s freedom, lifted up by God’s grace, and on the relationships they build.”[12]

How it supports the principle: Christian teaching says faith must be free to be real. And the Pope warns that machines must not take our choices away.

Muslim Wisdom

The Qur’an says, in plain English: “There is no force in religion. The right way has been made clear from the wrong.”[13]

It also says: “The truth is from your Lord. So whoever wants to, let them believe. And whoever wants to, let them not believe.”[13]

And it asks the Prophet a question. In plain English: “If your Lord had willed it, everyone on earth would believe. So would you force people to believe?”[13]

One short chapter of the Qur’an ends with these words. In plain English: “You have your religion, and I have mine.”[14]

How it supports the principle: In the Qur’an, belief that is forced is not belief. God gave people the choice, and the Qur’an tells believers not to force it.

Persian and Zoroastrian Wisdom

Zarathustra, the prophet of the Zoroastrian faith, taught on the Iranian plateau long ago. His own hymns are called the Gathas. In what is often called his first sermon, he did not tell people what to believe. He told them to listen and to think.

In plain English: “Hear the best things with your ears. Look at them with a clear mind. Then choose between the two paths, each person for himself.”[15] Some translators write it as each man and each woman.

In the city of Yazd, in Iran, a fire temple displays a translation of this verse on a plaque.[15] For many centuries, this faith has asked its people to choose for themselves.

How it supports the principle: Zarathustra treated people as able to think for themselves. In his faith, a good life starts with a free choice.

Hindu, Jain and Sikh Wisdom

The Rig Veda is one of the oldest holy books in the world. One of its verses says, in plain English: “Truth is one. The

wise call it by many names."[16] These words are often quoted as a call to respect paths other than your own.

The Sikh tradition tells one of history's great stories about the freedom to choose. In 1675, a group of Kashmiri Pandits, Hindus from Kashmir, came to Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru. The ruler of the time was forcing people to give up their faith. They asked the Guru for help.[17]

The Guru told them to send a message: if Guru Tegh Bahadur would change his faith, they would too. Then he went to Delhi himself. He refused to give up his faith, and he was put to death there in 1675. A Sikh temple, Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib, stands on the spot today.[17]

Sikhs remember him as the Shield of India. He gave his life so that people of another faith could keep theirs.[17]

How it supports the principle: The Rig Veda honors many paths to one truth. Guru Tegh Bahadur showed that defending another person's right to choose can be worth everything.

Buddhist Wisdom

One day the Buddha came to the town of the Kalama people. They told him they were confused. Teacher after teacher had come to town. Each one praised his own teaching and attacked the others. How could they know who was telling the truth?

The Buddha did not say, "Believe me instead." He said, in plain English: "Of course you are unsure. Do not go only by reports, by tradition or by scripture. Do not go by the thought, 'This is our teacher.' When you know for yourselves that something leads to harm and suffering, give it up. When you know for yourselves that it leads to well-being and happiness, take it up."[18]

He also told them to weigh what wise people praise and what they blame.[18] For the Buddha, free choice was not careless choice. It was careful testing.

How it supports the principle: The Buddha gave people the tools to choose for themselves. He asked them to test each teaching by what it does in a life.

Chinese Wisdom

Confucius said, in plain English: “You can capture the general of a great army. But you cannot take away the will of even the most ordinary person.”[19]

Mencius, who came after Confucius, once read a chapter in an old history book. It said that when a good king won a war, blood flowed in streams. Mencius did not believe it. A truly kind king, he said, would never cause such a slaughter. Then he said, in plain English: “If you believe everything in the book, you are better off with no book at all.”[20]

Mencius was not telling people to throw away their books. He was telling them to use their conscience, even when they read the classics.

How it supports the principle: Confucius taught that a person’s will belongs to that person. Mencius showed that even a great book must answer to a good heart.

Native American Wisdom

Ohiyesa, the Dakota doctor and writer, described the faith of his people in 1911. He wrote that no one might “in any way meddle with the religious experience of another.” No one stood between a person and their Maker.[21]

He explained that his people’s faith was never forced on anyone who did not want it. In his words, “hence there was no preaching, proselyting, nor persecution.” Proselyting

means trying to convert others. Persecution means hurting people for what they believe.[21]

How it supports the principle: For Ohiyesa's people, faith was a free gift between a person and the Creator. No one else had the right to force it.

Humanist and Scientific Wisdom

You do not need a religion to defend the freedom to choose. In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 18 says, in plain English: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This includes the freedom to change your religion or belief." Article 19 adds the right to hold your own opinions. It also protects your right to look for ideas and to share them, in any kind of media.[22]

The UN Human Rights Committee has explained what this means. The freedom to have a religion includes the right to replace it with another, or to hold no religion at all.[23]

Long before that, in 1859, an English thinker named John Stuart Mill wrote a book called On Liberty. He wrote: "Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign." Sovereign means having the final say.[24]

How it supports the principle: Human rights law protects your right to choose, to change your mind and to choose again.

Lived It: Red Jacket

In 1805, chiefs of the Six Nations met at Buffalo Creek, in what is now western New York. A missionary had come from Boston. He asked for permission to preach to their people and teach them his religion.[25]

The Seneca chief Sagoyewatha, known in English as Red Jacket, gave the answer. He was famous as a speaker. Years earlier, he had led a delegation to meet George Washington.[25]

Red Jacket began with thanks. The missionary had asked them to speak their minds freely, he said, and that gave them great joy. Then he spoke freely.[25]

He reminded the missionary how his people had once welcomed the newcomers who crossed the ocean. Those newcomers had said they fled their own land so they could enjoy their religion. Now, he said, the newcomers wanted to force their religion on his people.[25]

He asked a simple question: “If there is but one religion, why do you white people differ so much about it?”[25]

Then he described his own people’s faith, handed down from their forefathers. “It teacheth us to be thankful for all the favors we receive,” he said, “to love each other, and to be united. We never quarrel about religion.”[25]

He did not attack the missionary’s faith. “We do not wish to destroy your religion, or take it from you,” he said. “We only want to enjoy our own.”[25]

He even left the door open. The missionary had been preaching to white settlers nearby. Red Jacket said his people would watch. If the preaching made those neighbors more honest, they would think again about what the missionary had said.[25]

Red Jacket was not against learning. He was against being forced.

When he finished, the chiefs came forward to shake the missionary’s hand and wish him a safe journey. The missionary refused to take their hands. He said there could

be no fellowship between the religion of God and the works of the devil.[25]

Think about that moment. One man offered his hand while he defended his right to choose. The other man refused it. Red Jacket lived this principle. He chose his own faith. He left others free to choose theirs. And he stayed open to learning more.

Red Jacket spoke more than one hundred and forty years before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But he said what it says: every person has the right to their own faith.

What You Can Do

1. Visit a house of worship that is not your own. Call ahead and ask permission. Go to listen, not to judge.[2]
2. Look at your news feed and ask: Did I choose this, or was it chosen for me? Follow one trusted source outside your usual bubble.
3. When a friend chooses differently from you, ask them why. Then listen to the answer.
4. Choose where you work and where you spend your money. If a company does not reflect your values, pick a different one.[26]
5. If you made a choice you regret, remember: you are free to choose again.

Remember

- You have the right to choose your beliefs, your groups and your tools, and to be respected for your choice.
- A free choice is never your last choice. You can always choose again.
- Freedom to choose means respecting other people’s choices too. Choices that harm others still face judgment.

Notes and Links

Every link shown below was confirmed on November 1, 2026.

1. GoAmour.com, “Principles of GoAmour,” Principle 2. https://goamour.com/principles/
2. Vahid Razavi, “The Spiritual Seeker, Go Love and the Singularity,” NoEthicsInBigTech.com, September 19, 2026, sections “A child who prayed under the bombs,” “Occupy, and a tour of the houses of God” and “The Rev. Dr. Dorsey Blake.” The Spiritual Seeker program and the author’s prayer practice today are from his account to the editor, November 1, 2026. https://noethicsinbigtech.com/the-spiritual-seeker-go-love-and-the-singularity/
3. Vahid Razavi, *Ethics in Tech and Lack Thereof* (2018), section “Turning the Tables On Amazon,” quoting the Sunday commitment of the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples: “I affirm my need for a growing understanding of all people as children of God, and I seek after a vital experience of God as revealed in Jesus of Nazareth and other great religious spirits.” Free online edition (no fixed page numbers): https://myawsstory.com
4. Vahid Razavi, “GoAmour Principles!” video, 1:35 to 2:06. https://youtu.be/WHhn_J21PSk
5. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 18, “Live in Peace, Not Just Rest in Peace,” page 128. Free at https://noethicsinbigtech.com/book/
6. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 18, section “GoAmour Is Not a Platform. It Is a Practice,” pages 132 to 133.
7. Deuteronomy 30:19. King James Version (1611, public domain): “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.” Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+30%3A19&version=KJV
8. Mishnah, Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) 3:15, Rabbi Akiva. A common translation: “All is foreseen, and freedom of choice is granted.” Sefaria: https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_Avot.3.15
9. Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Repentance (Hilchot Teshuvah) 5:1 to 3. As translated in the Jerusalem Post: “Free will is granted to every human being. If a man wants to follow the good path and be good, he has the power to do so.” As translated by Chabad.org, Maimonides calls this “a fundamental principle

and a pillar of the Torah and its commandments" and cites Deuteronomy 30:15. Sefaria: https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah,_Repentance.5.1

10. Galatians 5:1 and 5:13. King James Version: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"; "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A1&version=KJV; https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A13&version=KJV
11. Second Vatican Council, *Dignitatis Humanae* (Declaration on Religious Freedom), promulgated by Pope Paul VI, December 7, 1965, paragraph 2: "This Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion … in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs." https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html
12. Pope Leo XIV, *Magnifica Humanitas* (May 15, 2026), paragraph 128: "A person's future is not calculable, but depends on one's freedom — elevated by the inexhaustible grace of God — and on the relationships cultivated." The encyclical also says: "Living amid incessant flows of information, opinions and images, we know how easy it can be to influence decisions and preferences through increasingly sophisticated algorithms." As quoted in "Start Here: 15 Quotes from Pope Leo XIV's First Encyclical," ACI Africa (EWTN News), May 2026. https://www.aciafrica.org/amp/news/21971/start-here-15-quotes-from-pope-leo-xivs-first-encyclical-magnifica-humanitas Paragraph number also confirmed by the National Catholic Register (CNA). Full text: https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/encyclicals/documents/20260515-magnifica-humanitas.html
13. Qur'an 2:256, 18:29 and 10:99, Sahih International translation. 2:256: "There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong." 18:29: "And say, 'The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills – let him believe; and whoever wills – let him disbelieve.'" 10:99: "And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed – all of them entirely. Then, [O Muhammad], would you compel the people in order that they become believers?" Quran.com: https://quran.com/2:256; https://quran.com/18:29; https://quran.com/10:99

14. Qur'an 109:6, Sahih International: "For you is your religion, and for me is my religion." Quran.com: https://quran.com/109:6
15. Yasna 30.2, from the Gathas of Zarathustra. Translation by Irach Taraporewala, as given by FEZANA: "Hear with your ears the Highest Truths I preach, and with illuminated minds weigh them with care, before you choose which of two Paths to tread, deciding man by man, each one for each." https://fezana.org/wp-content/uploads/FEZANA-Zoroastrian-Religion-and-Tradition.pdf The translation on the plaque at the Atash Behram (fire temple) in Yazd, as given by avesta.org: "Listen with your ears the highest truth, consider them with illumined minds carefully, and decide each man and women personally." https://AVESTA.ORG/wzse/wzse30.pdf
16. Rig Veda 1.164.46, translated by Ralph T. H. Griffith (1896, public domain): "To what is One, sages give many a title." https://sacred-texts.com/hin/rigveda/rv01164.htm
17. On Guru Tegh Bahadur: The Tribune (India), "Guru Tegh Bahadur: Guardian of religious freedom." The ruler was the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Sources give the date of the Guru's execution as November 11 or November 24, 1675. https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/punjab/guru-teg-bahadur-guardian-of-religious-freedom/amp
18. Anguttara Nikaya 3.65, Kalama Sutta, translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu: "Don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, 'This contemplative is our teacher.' When you know for yourselves …" https://accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an03/an03.065.than. The popular line "Believe nothing, no matter who said it, not even if I said it" is not in the sutta; see Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "Lost in Quotation." https://accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/lostinquotation
19. Analects 9.26 (numbered 9.25 in Legge). James Legge (public domain): "The commander of the forces of a large state may be carried off, but the will of even a common man cannot be taken from him." Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/analects/zi-han
20. Mencius 7B3: 盡信書，則不如無書。 Translated for this book: "If you believed everything in the *Documents*, it would be better to have no *Documents*." Mencius doubted the chapter "Completion of the War," which says blood flowed in streams at King Wu's victory. Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/mengzi/jin-xin-ii
21. Ohiyesa (Charles A. Eastman), *The Soul of the Indian* (1911, public domain), Chapter I, "The Great Mystery": "there were no

priests authorized to come between a man and his Maker. None might exhort or confess or in any way meddle with the religious experience of another. … Our faith might not be formulated in creeds, nor forced upon any who were unwilling to receive it; hence there was no preaching, proselyting, nor persecution.” https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/340

22. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 18: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief.” Article 19: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights
23. UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 22 (1993), paragraph 5: the freedom to “have or to adopt” a religion or belief “necessarily entails the freedom to choose a religion or belief, including the right to replace one’s current religion or belief with another or to adopt atheistic views, as well as the right to retain one’s religion or belief.” UN Digital Library: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/182777; Refworld: https://www.refworld.org/docid/453883fb22.html
24. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1859, public domain), Chapter I, “Introductory.” Project Gutenberg eBook #34901: https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/34901
25. Red Jacket (Sagoyewatha), speech at Buffalo Creek, 1805, as printed in *Lives of Celebrated American Indians* (Boston, 1843), pages 283 to 287, and reproduced by History Matters, George Mason University, with an introduction describing the missionary’s refusal to shake hands. https://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5790. A handwritten copy dated 1805 is held at Swarthmore College: https://pennstreaty.haverford.edu/manuscripts/SW_1805_00_00.pdf/
26. *Forever Peace Now* (documentary), 00:58:40 to 00:59:09: “Choose the companies you want to work for. … And if it doesn’t go, pick a different firm.” https://foreverpeacenow.com/

Chapter 3. End or Continue: Outgrow the Pond

The Principle

The ability to terminate or to continue a subscription to medicine, knowledge, institutions and AI. The ability to reaffirm or cancel memberships as a being sees fit. The ability to pay for services and ideologies as needed, without long-term contractual obligations.[1]

In plain words: You can join, stay in or leave anything when your needs change. That includes a service, a group, a friendship or a faith. Pay for what you need, when you need it. No one should lock you in for life.

My Story

My pastor, the Rev. Dr. Dorsey Blake, once taught me a lesson about ducks. You can follow the mother duck for only so long, he said. Then you outgrow the pond you are in. You must follow your own instincts and fly to new lakes.[2]

Rev. Blake passed away in March 2025. Before he died, he blessed the GoAmour principles. As I have written, the third principle is about free will.[2]

I have used that freedom more than once. I have outgrown more than one pond.[2]

In 2018, my time at Amazon Web Services came to an end.[3] The company let me go while I was on disability leave. I did not ask for my job back. I was happy to leave. The ending was not my choice, but not going back was.[4] I wrote about my years there in my book Ethics in Tech and Lack Thereof, which is free to read at MyAWSStory.com.[5]

Then I made a bigger move. I gave away my furniture, sold my car and gave up my apartment. I left behind the city I love, my family and my friends, for a life on the road.[2] For more than a year and a half now, I have carried my film, Forever Peace Now, and my books from city to city.[6]

I do not travel alone. I walk with a cane, a walking stick with a carved duck's head for a handle. My friends call it El Pato, which is Spanish for "the duck."[6]

Some airports have no ramp up to the airplane door. There, I ride a lift up to the door, and El Pato rides with me.[4]



Leaving is not always easy. Sometimes you need a lift to get where you are going. But the duck still flies to new lakes.

Not every choice is a goodbye, though. Some things I keep, because I keep choosing them. That is the other half of this principle. Staying can be a free choice too.

Why It Matters

Think about how many things you pay for every month. Music. News. Apps. A gym. A phone plan. Signing up often takes one click. Leaving can take a long phone call, a maze of menus or a fight.

In my video about the principles, I gave some examples. A new weight-loss drug you are told to take for the rest of your life. Knowledge you can only get by signing up for a year or two. A magazine you must renew every year just to read one or two articles.[7]

My answer is simple. Pay for what you need, when you need it. If you want to read a good article, pay the journalist for it. Use an AI tool for what you need it for, then be free to stop and move on.[7]

Why? Because people change. As I said in that video, I am not the same person I was at eighteen, or in my twenties or thirties. My needs have changed, and so has my hunger for knowledge. I have grown, and I am sure you have too.[7] So let us not stay hooked to one set of tools for the rest of our lives just because we once signed up.

In my book No Ethics in Big Tech, I called the third principle “the right to terminate.” It is the right to cancel and to leave a platform. It is the right to walk away from an institution, an idea or an AI system that no longer serves

your values. It means leaving “without being followed,” and without your data being kept after you are done.[8]

Today, the rules for many services run to forty pages that no one reads. In that world, I wrote, “the right to terminate is a radical act.”[8]

The same goes for groups and beliefs. You can leave a club, a company, a party or a faith. Human rights law protects that choice, as you will see in the humanist lens.

Friendships work this way too. As I see it, we come into this world alone, and we leave alone. A friend may walk with us for an hour a day, or for a lifetime. Friendships can end.[4]

But this principle is not only about leaving. It is about ending or continuing. When you stay, it should be because you choose to stay, not because you are trapped.

And there is a good way to leave. First, try to fix what is broken. Then, if you must go, go gently. Many of the lenses in this chapter teach the same thing. One more thing: if you take a prescribed medicine, talk to your doctor before you stop.

There is a bigger reason this matters. Some of the most powerful people on earth are planning a future for all of us, built around their machines. As I wrote recently, the third principle protects our freedom to end any subscription, including to institutions and to AI. “Nobody gets to enroll humanity in a future it never signed up for.”[6]

Find Your Lens

Each lens shows how one tradition teaches the freedom to end or continue. Read the one that speaks to you, or read them all. Each lens stands on its own. When you see the words “in plain English,” the old text has been put into

simple modern words. The full standard translation is in the notes at the end of the chapter.

Lenses in this chapter: Jewish · Christian · Muslim · Persian and Zoroastrian · Hindu, Jain and Sikh · Buddhist · Chinese · Humanist and Scientific. The Native American lens sits out this chapter.

Jewish Wisdom

The Book of Ruth begins with loss. Naomi, a widow, has lost both of her sons. She tells her two daughters-in-law, who are widows too, that they are free to go home to their own families. In plain English: “Go back, each of you, to your mother’s house.”[9]

One of them, Orpah, kisses Naomi goodbye and goes home. The other, Ruth, stays. In plain English, Ruth says: “Where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.”[9]

The book does not blame Orpah for leaving. It honors Ruth for staying. Both women chose freely.

Another book of the Bible, Ecclesiastes, says, in plain English: “There is a time for everything. A time to keep, and a time to throw away.”[10]

How it supports the principle: Naomi set both women free to choose. One ended a bond and one continued it, and both choices were respected.

Christian Wisdom

Not everyone who followed Jesus stayed. The Gospel of John says that after one hard teaching, many of his followers turned back and stopped walking with him.[11]

Jesus did not chase them or threaten them. He turned to his twelve closest followers and asked, in plain English:

“Do you want to leave too?” Peter answered: “Lord, who would we go to?” Peter chose to stay.[11]

The apostle Paul wrote about growing up. In plain English: “When I was a child, I talked, thought and reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.”[12]

How it supports the principle: Jesus left people free to go and free to stay. And growing in faith can mean leaving old ways behind.

Muslim Wisdom

The Qur’an speaks of people who leave home for the sake of God. In plain English: “Whoever leaves home for the cause of God will find many places of refuge on the earth, and plenty.”[13]

The Islamic calendar begins with a journey. It counts its years from the Hijra, the Prophet Muhammad’s move from Mecca to Medina in the year 622.[14]

How it supports the principle: In Islam, leaving a place where you cannot live your faith can be an act of faith itself. Later in this chapter, you will meet Malcolm X, a Muslim who ended one membership and kept his faith.

Persian and Zoroastrian Wisdom

After the fall of the Persian Empire, some Zoroastrians chose to leave Iran so they could keep their faith. They sailed to India. There they asked a Hindu ruler named Jadi Rana for a place to live.[15]

According to the Story of Sanjan, a poem written down in 1599, he said yes, on a few conditions. They would explain their religion to him, learn the local language, wear the local dress and lay down their weapons. They agreed. They built a new town and named it Sanjan, after a town they

had left behind. Their descendants, the Parsis of India, still speak Gujarati, the local language, today.[15]

A later legend adds a sweet detail. The ruler sent them a bowl of milk filled to the brim, to show that his land was full. Their leader stirred in some sugar, to show they would not overflow the land. They would sweeten it.[15]

Centuries later, my own family left Iran too. I know what it means to leave a home and choose to belong somewhere new.

How it supports the principle: Leaving can be the hardest choice and the bravest one. And choosing to belong somewhere new is a free choice too.

Hindu, Jain and Sikh Wisdom

Around the year 1500, a young man named Nanak worked as a storekeeper for the local governor in the town of Sultanpur, in Punjab. He had a steady job, and he was known for his honesty.[16]

One morning he went into the River Bein to bathe and did not come back. For three days, people feared he was gone. When he came out, he said: “There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim.”[16]

Soon after, he left his job. He set out on long journeys to share his message, with a Muslim musician named Bhai Mardana as his companion. He became Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith.[16]

How it supports the principle: Guru Nanak ended a safe job when it no longer fit his calling. Leaving the storehouse was how his real work began.

Buddhist Wisdom

Before he became the Buddha, he studied with a teacher named Alara Kalama. He learned everything his teacher

knew. The teacher was so impressed that he treated his student as his equal.[17]

Then he studied with a second teacher, Uddaka Ramaputta, who offered to make him the leader of the whole community. Each time, he felt the teaching did not go far enough. Each time, he said, in plain English: “I was not satisfied with that teaching, so I left.”[17]

Later, the Buddha compared his own teaching to a raft. You build a raft to cross a river. You hold on to it while you cross. But once you reach the far shore, you do not carry it on your head. In his words, it is “for crossing over, not for holding on.”[18]

How it supports the principle: The Buddha left two honored teachers when their teaching no longer served him. And he taught that even good tools are for using, not for clinging to forever.

Chinese Wisdom

A student once asked Confucius about friendship. Confucius said, in plain English: “Be honest with your friend, and guide him kindly. If he will not listen, stop. Do not shame yourself.”[19]

Mencius, who came after Confucius, once asked a king a question. What would he do about a friend who was trusted with someone’s wife and children, and let them freeze and starve? “Break with him,” the king said. And an official who could not keep order? “Dismiss him.” Then Mencius asked: and if the whole kingdom is badly run? The king looked left and right and changed the subject.[20]

Confucius also saw life as a series of stages. At fifteen, he said, he set his heart on learning. At seventy, he could follow his heart without crossing the line.[21] And the Daoist

teacher Laozi put it in a few words: know when to stop, and you will not be in danger.[22]

How it supports the principle: Confucius and Mencius both taught that some bonds must end. First try to help. If nothing changes, let go, even when the one who failed is powerful.

Humanist and Scientific Wisdom

You do not need a religion to defend the right to leave. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says, in plain English: “No one may be forced to belong to a group.” It also says that everyone has the right to leave any country, including their own, and to return.[23]

More than two thousand years ago, the Roman thinker Cicero wrote a book about friendship. He said that when a friendship must end, it should be “unravelled rather than rent apart,” like a seam taken out gently instead of cloth torn in two.[24]

In Europe today, the data protection law known as the GDPR lets people take back their consent at any time. In its own words, “It shall be as easy to withdraw as to give consent.” It also gives people the right to have their data erased.[25]

Medicine follows the same rule. The American Medical Association’s code of ethics says patients have a right to the facts they need to decide about their care. That includes the choice to go without a treatment.[26] But do not stop a prescribed medicine on your own. Talk to your doctor first.

How it supports the principle: Human rights law, privacy law and medical ethics all agree. You must be free to say yes, and free to say no.

Lived It: Malcolm X

Malcolm X was born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1925. As a teenager, he moved from foster home to foster home. By the age of twenty, he was in prison.[27]

In prison, he joined the Nation of Islam. After his release, he became one of its best-known ministers.[27]

Over time, he came to disagree with the group and its leader. In late 1963, the group suspended him for ninety days after a remark he made about the death of President John F. Kennedy.[28]

On March 8, 1964, he announced that he was leaving the Nation of Islam. He made it clear that he was still a Muslim.[28]

Four days later, at a press conference in New York, he said he would start a new mosque. It would “remain wide-open for ideas,” he said.[29]

A month after that, he traveled to Mecca for the Hajj, the great pilgrimage. There he prayed beside tens of thousands of pilgrims from all over the world, of every color. He wrote home that he had never seen such true brotherhood among people of all colors.[30] His thinking kept changing as he traveled through Africa and the Middle East.[31]

The journey changed him. He signed his letters with a new name, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. And he said: “I no longer subscribe to sweeping indictments of any one race.”[30]

Notice his words: “I no longer subscribe.” Malcolm X ended a membership, kept his faith and kept growing. He even let go of his own old ideas when he learned better.

He did not leave his faith. He left a group whose path no longer matched his own. That is exactly the freedom this principle protects.

Back home, he started a second group, the Organization of Afro-American Unity. Unlike his mosque, it was open to people of every faith, or none.[32]

Leaving cost him dearly. He received death threats. In February 1965, he was shot and killed in New York. He was thirty-nine years old.[33]

That is why this principle says you must be free to leave "without being followed."[8] No one should risk their life to end a membership. Malcolm X showed that a person can close one chapter, keep their faith and keep growing. It is up to the rest of us to make sure that leaving is always safe.

What You Can Do

1. List every subscription you pay for. Cancel one you no longer use.
2. Before you sign up for anything, find out how to cancel. If leaving looks hard, think twice about joining.
3. If a friendship keeps hurting you, speak honestly first. If nothing changes, let it go gently.
4. Ask yourself about each group you belong to: Am I staying because I choose to, or because I feel stuck?
5. If you take a prescribed medicine, talk to your doctor before you stop.

Remember

- You can end or continue any subscription, membership, friendship or belief when your needs change.
- Staying is a choice too. Keep what you keep because you choose it.

- Leave well: try first, go gently, and never make leaving dangerous for anyone.

Notes and Links

Every link shown below was confirmed on November 1, 2026.

1. GoAmour.com, “Principles of GoAmour,” Principle 3. https://goamour.com/principles/
2. Vahid Razavi, “The Spiritual Seeker, Go Love and the Singularity,” NoEthicsInBigTech.com, September 19, 2026, on Rev. Blake’s mother duck teaching and the section “Nineteen months on the road.” https://noethicsinbigtech.com/the-spiritual-seeker-go-love-and-the-singularity/
3. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 6, “The Golden Opportunity,” page 40: “I was at Amazon Web Services. I sold the infrastructure. … I left in 2018.” Free at https://noethicsinbigtech.com/book/
4. Author’s account to the editor, November 1, 2026: AWS ended his job in 2018 while he was on disability leave, and he did not ask for his job back; riding a lift to the airplane door where there is no ramp; and friendship as a subscription (“we come in to this world alone and we leave alone, a friend walks with us for an hour a day or a life time, friendships can be cancelled”).
5. Vahid Razavi, *Ethics in Tech and Lack Thereof* (2018), which describes his years at AWS and his medical leave, free to read at MyAWSStory.com. https://myawsstory.com
6. Vahid Razavi, “Humanity Is Not a Rough Draft,” NoEthicsInBigTech.com, October 31, 2026, sections “A Guest’s Vow” (“For more than a year and a half I have lived on the road with my walking stick, El Pato, and a documentary”) and “Love Thy Neighbor, Not Thy Bunker” (on the third principle). https://noethicsinbigtech.com/humanity-is-not-a-rough-draft/
7. Vahid Razavi, “GoAmour Principles!” video, 2:06 to about 4:00. https://youtu.be/WHhn_J21PSk
8. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 18, “Live in Peace, Not Just Rest in Peace,” page 129: “The third principle is the right to terminate. To cancel the subscription. To leave the platform. To walk away from the institution, the ideology, the AI system that no longer serves your values. Without long-term contractual obligations. Without being followed. Without your data being retained after you have decided you are done.”

9. Ruth 1:8 to 16. King James Version (1611, public domain): “Go, return each to her mother’s house” (1:8); “and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her” (1:14); “whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God” (1:16). Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+1%3A8-16&version=KJV
10. Ecclesiastes 3:1 and 3:6. King James Version: “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven”; “A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away.” Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+3%3A1&version=KJV; https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+3%3A6&version=KJV
11. John 6:66 to 68. King James Version: “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+6%3A66-68&version=KJV
12. 1 Corinthians 13:11. King James Version: “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+13%3A11&version=KJV
13. Qur’an 4:100, Sahih International: “And whoever emigrates for the cause of Allah will find on the earth many [alternative] locations and abundance.” https://legacy.quran.com/4/94-100
14. The Hijra, the Prophet Muhammad’s migration from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE, marks year one of the Islamic (Hijri) calendar. Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Hijrah”: https://www.britannica.com/event/Hijrah-Islam
15. The Story of Sanjan (Qissa-i Sanjan), a Persian poem completed in 1599 by the Parsi priest Bahman Kaikobad; English translation by S. H. Hodivala (1920), on avesta.org https://avesta.org/other/qsanjan.htm. On the conditions set by Jadi Rana and the milk-and-sugar legend, whose origin and age are unknown: FEZANA, “Migration to India and the Sacred Fire” lesson; “Jadi Rana” and “Qissa-i Sanjan,” Wikipedia. https://fezana.org/wp-content/uploads/FEZANA-Lesson-1-Migration-to-India-and-the-Sacred-Fire-G6-8.pdf
16. On Guru Nanak at Sultanpur Lodhi, the River Bein and his leaving the modikhana (storehouse): SikhNet, https://www.sikhnet.com/node/96403; Sikh Dharma International, https:/

/www.sikhdharma.org/?p=34703. Sources date these events between 1497 and 1507.

17. Majjhima Nikaya 26, Ariyapariyesana Sutta (The Noble Search), translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu: “In this way did Alara Kalama, my teacher, place me, his pupil, on the same level with himself and pay me great honor. … So, dissatisfied with that Dhamma, I left.” The same passage is repeated for Uddaka Ramaputta, who “place[d] me in the position of teacher.” https://accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.026.than

18. Majjhima Nikaya 22, Alagaddupama Sutta, the simile of the raft, translated by Bhikkhu Sujato (public domain): “the teaching is similar to a raft: it’s for crossing over, not for holding on.” https://discourse.suttacentral.net/t/on-the-simile-of-the-raft-and-letting-go-of-what-is-not-the-teachings/3873. Thanissaro Bhikkhu notes that one must hold the raft properly while crossing and let it go only on the far shore: https://accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.022.than

19. Analects 12.23, translated by James Legge (public domain): “Tsze-kung asked about friendship. The Master said, ‘Faithfully admonish your friend, and skillfully lead him on. If you find him impracticable, stop. Do not disgrace yourself.’” https://monadnock.net/confucius/analects-12.html

20. Mencius 1B6, translated for this book: “Break with him.” “Dismiss him.” “The king looked left and right and spoke of other things” (王顧左右而言他). Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/mengzi/liang-hui-wang-ii

21. Analects 2.4, translated for this book: “At fifteen I set my heart on learning; … at seventy I could follow my heart’s desire without overstepping the line.” Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/analects/wei-zheng

22. Laozi, Daodejing, chapter 44, translated for this book: “know when to stop and you will not be endangered.” Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/dao-de-jing

23. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 20(2): “No one may be compelled to belong to an association.” Article 13(2): “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.” https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

24. Cicero, *De Amicitia* (On Friendship), 76, translated by W. A. Falconer (1923): “Therefore the ties of such friendships should be sundered by a gradual relaxation of intimacy, and, as I have heard that Cato used to say, They should be unravelled rather than rent apart.” https://cts.perseids.org/read/latinLit/phi0474/phi052/perseus-eng2/73-76

25. EU General Data Protection Regulation, Article 7(3): “The data subject shall have the right to withdraw his or her consent at any time. … It shall be as easy to withdraw as to give consent.” Article 17: right to erasure (‘right to be forgotten’). EUR-Lex: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/art_7/oj
26. American Medical Association, Code of Medical Ethics, Opinion 2.1.1, “Informed Consent”: “Informed consent to medical treatment is fundamental in both ethics and law. Patients have the right to receive information and ask questions about recommended treatments so that they can make well-considered decisions about care.” The opinion covers the risks and benefits of all options, “including forgoing treatment.” https://code-medical-ethics.ama-assn.org:443/sites/amacoedb/files/2022-08/2.1.1.pdf
27. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, as told to Alex Haley (1965), on his early life as Malcolm Little, his years in foster homes and prison, his joining the Nation of Islam in prison and his years as a minister. See also The Ideal Muslim Man, “Malcolm X’s Letter from Mecca”: “Born in Omaha, Nebraska as Malcolm Little, he bounced from foster home to foster home until he eventually found himself in prison at the age of 20. In prison, he became a member of” the Nation of Islam. https://theidealmuslimman.com/2017/01/19/malcolmx-letter-mecca/
28. Center for Research on Social Policy (CRSP), University of Pittsburgh, “Malcolm X”: “Malcolm used the suspension to announce on March 8, 1964, his break with the NOI and his creation of the Muslim Mosque, Inc.” https://crsp.pitt.edu/malcom-x. Jim Crow Museum, Ferris State University: “On March 8, 1964, Malcolm X announced his break from the Nation of Islam. He was still a Muslim.” https://jimcrowmuseum.ferris.edu/witnesses/malcolm.htm. On the 90-day suspension after his remark about President Kennedy’s death: https://face2faceafrica.com/?p=108409
29. Malcolm X, statement at his press conference in New York, March 12, 1964, as printed by Pathfinder Press (1965): “I am going to organize and head a new Mosque in New York City, known as the Muslim Mosque, Inc. … The Muslim Mosque, Inc., will remain wide-open for ideas …” https://www.thesparrowsnest.org.uk/collections/public_archive/674.pdf
30. Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz), letter from Mecca, April 1964, and later statement, as quoted from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by IslamReligion.com: “There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors”; “I no longer subscribe to sweeping indictments of any one race.” https://islamreligion.com/articles/471

31. “Muslim Mosque, Inc.,” Wikipedia, citing Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (2011): “Between March 1964, when he left the Nation of Islam, and February 1965, when he was assassinated, Malcolm X’s philosophy evolved as he traveled through Africa and the Middle East.” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Mosque,_Inc.
32. Islam101, “Malcolm X (1925 to 1965)”: “While the Muslim Mosque, Inc. was exclusively for Muslims, the OAAU was open to people of all faiths or no faith.” https://islam101.com/index.php/history/124-islam-in-america/128-section3/1363-3-5-malcolm-x-1925-1965-martyred-bringing-sunni-islam-to-black-america
33. Jim Crow Museum, Ferris State University, on the death threats after his break with the Nation of Islam. Malcolm X was born May 19, 1925, and was killed in New York on February 21, 1965. https://jimcrowmuseum.ferris.edu/witnesses/malcolm.htm

Chapter 4. Love as a Skill: Knowledge, Respect, Care and Responsibility

The Principle

To love with knowledge, respect, caring and responsibility towards all others — as defined by the writer Erich Fromm in his book The Art of Loving.[1]

In plain words: Love is a skill you practice, not just a feeling. Know the person, respect who they are, care for them, and show up when they need you.

My Story

I first read Erich Fromm's book The Art of Loving in my early college years.[2] One idea stayed with me for life. Love is not something you simply fall into. It is an art, like painting or music. You learn it, and you practice it.[3]

But I had seen that art long before I read about it. I saw it in my mother, whom you met in Chapter 1. As I wrote recently, my mother did not train me. She raised me.[4] She knew what I needed. She showed me, with her own hands, what one human being owes another.[4]

Years later, while I was working on GoAmour, I did something a technology person might do. I opened an AI chatbot and asked it to make the best argument for love.[5]

It did. It argued for love between people, between people and the planet, and even between people and machines. Then it said, in the plainest words, that love is worth saving.[5]

What stayed with me was not that a machine could describe love. It was what I saw next. The same kind of AI that argued so well for love was also being offered for military use. As I wrote in my book No Ethics in Big Tech: “The AI reflects the question. The question reflects the asker. The asker reveals their values.”[5]

The problem, I wrote, is not that AI cannot understand love. It can. The problem is that the people who control the most powerful AI systems have not asked it to. “That is a choice. And choices can be changed.”[5]

So I built GoAmour on Fromm’s four parts of love: knowledge, respect, care and responsibility.[3] The name means “Go Love.”[6] It is my answer to a world that has learned to measure people but has forgotten how to love them.

Why It Matters

Most of us think of love as a feeling. It happens to us. We fall into it, and sometimes we fall out of it. Erich Fromm saw it another way. In his 1956 book, he argued that love is a practice. Like any art, it takes knowledge and effort.[3]

Fromm said real love has four parts, and they must work together.[3] In my video about the principles, I explained them with pictures from everyday life.[2]

Knowledge is how a farmer knows his olive trees: what it takes to grow them, feed them and keep them healthy. It is how a mother knows what her child needs.[2]

Respect is taking the olive tree, or the child, for what it is. You want it to grow to its best, but not into what you want or expect it to become.[2]

Care is a father who gets up in the middle of the night for his son or daughter, and tries to keep them safe.[2]

Responsibility is answering another person's needs, and being there when they need you most. That goes for your loved ones, your community and anyone in your society who needs help.[2]

Each part protects the others. Care without respect can turn into control. Care without knowledge is blind: you give people what you think they need, not what they really need. That is why the four must work together, never one alone.[3]

In that video, I also said there are two ways to really know someone. One is through love and care. The other is through torture, pain and suffering.[2] Today there is a third way, and it is everywhere: data.

In No Ethics in Big Tech, I wrote that the attention economy swaps each part of love for a cheap copy. Care becomes engagement: not what is good for you, but what keeps you scrolling. Responsibility becomes avoiding blame. Respect becomes targeting. And knowledge becomes data collection, which I called "the opposite of knowledge." It mistakes measuring a person for understanding them.[3]

That is why love needs practice now more than ever. Rumi told a story about a city that forgot how to love. It was called Saba. Its people had so much that they needed nothing, and so they thanked no one. As I wrote, the city of Saba "cannot understand love because love requires the recognition of lack."[3] You will find Rumi's own words about Saba in the Persian lens.

Notice, too, the last words of the principle: "towards all others." This love is not only for a partner or a family. It reaches neighbors, strangers and every living being. It is the Golden Rule, practiced with skill.

Some people call love the soft part of any plan to fix the world. I disagree. As I wrote recently, “Love is not the soft part of this argument. It is the only part that has ever worked.”[4]

Find Your Lens

Each lens shows how one tradition teaches love with knowledge, respect, care and responsibility. Read the one that speaks to you, or read them all. Each lens stands on its own. When you see the words “in plain English,” the old text has been put into simple modern words. The full standard translation is in the notes at the end of the chapter.

Lenses in this chapter: Jewish · Christian · Muslim · Persian and Zoroastrian · Hindu, Jain and Sikh · Buddhist · Chinese · Native American · Humanist and Scientific

Jewish Wisdom

The prophet Hosea brought a message that surprised the people of his day. In plain English, God says: “I want loving-kindness, not sacrifice. I want you to know God, more than I want burnt offerings.”[7]

The Hebrew word for this loving-kindness is hesed. It means a love that is faithful, steady and active. Notice that Hosea puts love and knowledge side by side.

The Song of Songs, a book of love poems in the Bible, says, in plain English: “Many waters cannot put out love. Rivers cannot drown it.”[8]

How it supports the principle: In the Hebrew Bible, love is something you do faithfully, and it walks hand in hand with knowing.

Christian Wisdom

The apostle Paul wrote the most famous words about love in the Bible. In plain English: “Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not boast, and it is not proud. It does not insist on its own way. It bears all things and endures all things.”[9]

The First Letter of John adds a challenge. In plain English: “Let us not love only with words or talk, but with actions and in truth.”[10]

How it supports the principle: Christian love is patient care that shows itself in deeds. That is what Fromm called responsibility: answering another person’s needs.

Muslim Wisdom

The Qur’an calls the bond between husband and wife a sign from God. In plain English: “He placed between you love and mercy.”[11] And one of the names of God in Islam is al-Wadud, which means “the Loving.”[12]

The Qur’an also tells of the people of Saba. They were given gardens on their right and on their left. They were told, in plain English: “Eat from what your Lord provides, and be grateful to Him.” But they turned away.[13]

Centuries later, Rumi, a Muslim scholar and poet, made that story into one of his most famous tales. You will find it in the next lens.

How it supports the principle: In Islam, love and mercy are gifts from the Loving One. Gratitude keeps them alive.

Persian and Zoroastrian Wisdom

Rumi was a Persian poet and Muslim teacher who lived about eight hundred years ago. His great poem, the Masnavi, tells a story about a servant named Luqman.[14]

One day Luqman's master cut a melon and gave him slice after slice. Luqman ate each one as if it were sugar and honey. When the master tasted the last slice, it was so bitter it burned his mouth. Why did you say nothing? he asked. Luqman answered that he had eaten so many good things from his master's hand that he was ashamed to complain about one bitter one.[14]

Then Rumi wrote, in plain English: "Love makes bitter things sweet. Love turns copper into gold. Love turns pain into healing. And this love comes from knowledge."[14]

Rumi also told the story of Saba. It was a city so rich that fruit fell into the road until no one could pass. Heavy clusters of fruit brushed the faces of people walking by. Thirteen prophets came to the city. In plain English, they asked: "Your blessings have grown. Where is your thanks?" The people answered that they were tired of giving thanks, and tired of blessings too.[15]

The prophets told them they had a sickness of the heart. In plain English: "Every sweet thing that comes to you turns sour. Anyone who becomes your friend becomes cheap in your eyes."[15]

That is love turned upside down. In Saba, people treated love like something to catch and own. Once they had it, they stopped caring for it.

But the prophets also gave the cure. In plain English: "When two good minds become friends with a pure heart, their love grows deeper every moment. Heal the sickness, and every old story will feel new again."[15]

How it supports the principle: Rumi teaches that true love comes from knowing someone, and that gratitude keeps love alive. Without them, even a city of gold cannot love.

Hindu, Jain and Sikh Wisdom

Kabir was a weaver and poet in India about six hundred years ago. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs all honor his songs, and some of them appear in the Sikh scripture. He also spoke out against caste: do not ask a holy person's caste, he said, ask about their wisdom.[16]

One of his best-known couplets says, in plain English: "The whole world read book after book and died, and no one became wise. Whoever reads the two and a half letters of love becomes wise." In Hindi, the word for love, prem, is written with two and a half letters.[16]

How it supports the principle: Kabir did not say learning is useless. He said the deepest learning is the knowledge of love.

Buddhist Wisdom

The Buddha taught a practice called metta, which means loving-kindness or goodwill. In a teaching called the Metta Sutta, he gave a picture. In plain English: "A mother would risk her life to protect her only child. In the same way, guard a heart of goodwill with no limits, toward all beings."[17]

He also taught his followers never to look down on anyone, anywhere, and never to wish suffering on anyone, even in anger.[17]

How it supports the principle: The Buddha asked for goodwill as fierce as a mother's love, offered to all beings. That is care without limits.

Chinese Wisdom

A student named Fan Chi asked Confucius what goodness is. Confucius answered in two words: "Love people." Then

Fan Chi asked what knowledge is. Confucius answered: "Know people."[18]

Mencius, who came after Confucius, said that anyone who suddenly saw a small child about to fall into a well would feel alarm and pity. Not to win favor with the child's parents. Not to win praise from friends. Simply because the human heart cares.[19]

How it supports the principle: For Confucius, loving people and knowing people go together. For Mencius, the seed of care is already planted in every human heart. It only needs to grow.

Native American Wisdom

Ohiyesa, the Dakota doctor and writer, described how a Dakota mother raised her child. She learned from her own mother and grandmother. But she also learned from nature. Ohiyesa wrote that she "humbly" studied ants, bees, spiders, beavers and badgers. She watched the family life of the birds "until she seems to feel the universal mother-heart beating in her own breast."[20]

Her first lessons for her child were three: "Silence, love, reverence." Others, such as generosity and courage, came later. And the old people of the village served the young as their teachers, while the young looked up to them "with love and reverence."[20]

How it supports the principle: The Dakota mother loved with knowledge, learned with humility and taught love and reverence first.

Humanist and Scientific Wisdom

Erich Fromm was a German-born psychologist and philosopher. In 1956, he wrote The Art of Loving.[21]

Fromm wrote that “love is an activity, not a passive affect.” He gave a simple test. If someone says she loves flowers but forgets to water them, we do not believe her love. Love, he wrote, “is the active concern for the life and the growth of that which we love.”[21]

He warned that responsibility without respect can turn into control. Respect, he wrote, “means the concern that the other person should grow and unfold as he is.” And care and responsibility “would be blind if they were not guided by knowledge.”[21]

How it supports the principle: The GoAmour principle comes straight from Fromm. Love is a skill with four parts, and all four are needed.

Lived It: Rev. Dr. Dorsey Blake

Dorsey Blake was born in Liberty, Missouri, in 1946. He studied at Brown University. In 1968, inspired by meeting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders of the civil rights movement, he came to the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. He served there and at other schools for more than five decades.[2223]

In 1994, he became the Presiding Minister of the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples, the church Howard Thurman had helped found. At his installation, Thurman’s widow, Sue Bailey Thurman, gave him her husband’s robe. No one had worn it since Thurman died. Rev. Blake led that church for thirty-one years.[622]

I knew him as my pastor, and he knew me. He knew my story well enough to write the foreword to my book Ethics in Tech and Lack Thereof. That is knowledge, the first part of Fromm’s love.[24]

In that foreword, he wrote that the vision of his church was “in total alignment with Vahid’s head and heart.” He also wrote that almost every faith teaches some form of the Golden Rule: the idea that we have “a sacred responsibility” to treat others as we would want to be treated.[24]

He respected my path. I came to his church as a seeker of many faiths, and his church was built to welcome every faith.[6]

He showed care. When I was in the hospital, he came to see me, more than once.[6] As I wrote years ago: “When you’re in the hospital, most people might send you a get-well card or some flowers. Not Rev. Blake. He went out of his way to come see me, and I’ll never forget his graciousness in my greatest hour of need.”[24]

Years ago, I worked at Amazon Web Services as a senior alliances manager for big data and analytics. The stress of that job put me in the hospital. I received psychiatric care at Stanford Hospital. I have written about it before, and I am not ashamed of it.[2425]

Rev. Blake traveled more than ninety minutes each way to see me there, when I was at my worst. He brought a couple of Howard Thurman’s books to keep me company. I still treasure the time and effort he gave me.[25]

If you are struggling, you are not alone. See “If You Need Help” at the back of this book.

And he took responsibility. Each semester, he invited me to speak to his students. He came to the service for my uncle. When my mother died, her service was held in his church.[6]

Rev. Blake passed away on March 2, 2025, at the age of seventy-eight. Before he died, he blessed the GoAmour principles.[226]

Knowledge, respect, care and responsibility. Fromm wrote about them. Rev. Blake lived them, one visit at a time.

What You Can Do

1. Knowledge: Ask someone you love a question you have never asked before. Then listen to the whole answer.
2. Respect: Let someone you love grow in their own direction, even if it is not the one you would choose.
3. Care: Give your time, not just your money. Visit someone who is sick or alone.
4. Responsibility: Notice a need someone has not said out loud, and answer it.
5. Gratitude: Each night this week, write down three small things you are thankful for. It is the cure for Saba.

Remember

- Love is a skill you practice, not just a feeling you fall into.
- It has four parts: knowledge, respect, care and responsibility. All four are needed.
- Gratitude keeps love alive. Without it, even a city of gold forgets how to love.

Notes and Links

Every link shown below was confirmed on November 1, 2026.

1. GoAmour.com, “Principles of GoAmour,” Principle 4. https://goamour.com/principles/
2. Vahid Razavi, “GoAmour Principles!” video, about 4:06 to 5:50: the olive farmer, the mother, respect “not based on what you want and what you expect it to turned into,” the father who “gets up in the middle of the night,” responsibility as “responding to the other person’s needs,” and two ways of knowing someone, “through love and caring” or “through torture and pain and suffering.” https://youtu.be/WHhn_J21PSk

3. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 18, section "What Erich Fromm Understood That Silicon Valley Never Has," pages 127 to 128: Fromm's four elements; "Care is replaced by engagement … Responsibility is replaced by liability management … Respect is replaced by targeting … knowledge … is replaced by data extraction, which is the opposite of knowledge: it mistakes the measurement of a person's behavior for an understanding of their soul"; "The city of Saba cannot understand love because love requires the recognition of lack"; and GoAmour built on "Fromm's four elements." Free at https://noethicsinbigtech.com/book/
4. Vahid Razavi, "Humanity Is Not a Rough Draft," NoEthicsInBigTech.com, October 31, 2026, sections "A human being is not a training run" ("My mother did not train me. She raised me. … showed me, with her own hands, what one human being owes another") and "On love, unapologetically." https://noethicsinbigtech.com/humanity-is-not-a-rough-draft/
5. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 18, section "The Question I Asked Artificial Intelligence," pages 126 to 127, drawing on "Saving Love! A Conversation with Artificial Intelligence," GoAmour.com, August 4, 2024. https://goamour.com/saving-love-a-conversation-with-artificial-intelligence/
6. Vahid Razavi, "The Spiritual Seeker, Go Love and the Singularity," NoEthicsInBigTech.com, September 19, 2026, section "The Rev. Dr. Dorsey Blake": the Thurman robe; hospital visits "on several occasions"; lectures each semester; the services for the author's uncle and mother; and Rev. Blake's blessing of the GoAmour principles. https://noethicsinbigtech.com/the-spiritual-seeker-go-love-and-the-singularity/
7. Hosea 6:6. King James Version (1611, public domain): "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." The Hebrew word translated "mercy" is hesed. Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+6%3A6&version=KJV
8. Song of Solomon (Song of Songs) 8:7. King James Version: "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song+of+Solomon+8%3A7&version=KJV
9. 1 Corinthians 13:4 to 7. King James Version: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, … seeketh not her own … Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Modern translations render "charity" as "love." Bible Gateway

(KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+13%3A4-7&version=KJV

10. 1 John 3:18. King James Version: “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+3%3A18&version=KJV
11. Qur’an 30:21, Sahih International: “And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy.” Quran.com: https://quran.com/30:21
12. Qur’an 85:14, Sahih International: “And He is the Forgiving, the Affectionate” (al-Wadud). Quran.com: https://quran.com/85:14
13. Qur’an 34:15 to 16, Sahih International: “There was for [the tribe of] Saba’ in their dwelling place a sign: two [fields of] gardens on the right and on the left. [They were told], ‘Eat from the provisions of your Lord and be grateful to Him. A good land [have you], and a forgiving Lord.’ But they turned away [refusing].” Verse 34:19 ends: “Indeed in that are signs for everyone patient and grateful.” https://legacy.quran.com/34/15-33
14. Rumi, Masnavi, Book II, lines 1510 to 1535, the story of Luqman and the bitter melon, translated by Reynold A. Nicholson (1926, public domain): “By love bitter things become sweet; by love pieces of copper become golden; By love dregs become clear; by love pains become healing; By love the dead is made living; by love the king is made a slave. This love, moreover, is the result of knowledge.” https://masnavi.net/2/10/eng/2/1527
15. Rumi, *Masnavi*, Book III, “How the prophets came from God to admonish the people of Sabá,” translated by Reynold A. Nicholson (1930, public domain). The earlier lines describe the city: “Inasmuch as the fruit was falling (to the ground) from abundance, there was no room for any one to pass on the road” (line 2659); “Huge clusters, having come low down, would strike against the head and face of the wayfarer” (line 2663). The lines quoted in this lens, in Persian and in Nicholson’s English, with his line numbers:

سیزده پیغامبر آنجا آمدند

گم‌رهان را جمله رهبر می‌شدند

Thirteen prophets came thither: all (of them) were ready to guide those who had lost the way, (2669)

که هله نعمت فزون شد شکر کو

مرکب شکر ار بخسپد حرکوا

Saying, “Come, the benefit has increased: where is the thanksgiving? If the steed of thanksgiving lie down, set (it) in motion.” (2670)

قوم گفته شکر ما را برد غول

ما شدیم از شکر و از نعمت ملول

The people said, “The ghoul has carried off our thanksgiving: we have become weary of giving thanks and receiving benefits.” (2674)

هر که اوشد آشنا و یار تو

شد حقیر و خوار در دیدار تو

Whosoever became (in reality) thy familiar and friend became despicable and vile in thy sight; (2681)

هر خوشی کاید به تو ناخوش شود

آب حیوان گر رسد آتش شود

Every sweet thing that comes to thee grows unsweet: if the Water of Life arrive, it turns into fire. (2685)

بس عزیزی که بناز اشکار شد

چون شکارت شد بر تو خوار شد

There is many a dear one that was hunted (by thee) with blandishments: when he became thy prey, he became cheap in thine eyes. (2688)

آشنایی عقل با عقل از صفا

چون شود هر دم فزون باشد ولا

When from sincerity the friendship of intellect with intellect arises, every moment the devotion is increased; (2689)

دفع علت کن چو علت خو شود

هرحدیثی کهنه پیشت نو شود

Remove the disease: when the disease is eradicated, every old tale will become new to thee. (2698)

Persian text: Ganjoor, Masnavi, Book III, section 121, https://ganjoor.net/moulavi/masnavi/daftar3/sh121. Persian and Nicholson's English side by side: masnavi.net, https://masnavi.net/1/25/eng/3/2666/

16. Kabir (15th century), doha: "Pothi padh padh jag mua, pandit bhaya na koi / Dhai akhar prem ka, padhe so pandit hoi." Also: "Jaati na poocho sadhu ki, pooch leejiye gyan" (Don't ask the saint his caste, ask his wisdom). Scholars caution that not every couplet credited to Kabir can be traced to him. Translation and discussion: Anantam IAS, "Kabir Das," https://anantamias.com/?p=25990; Kanwal Bharti, Forward Press, https://www.forwardpress.in/?p=86122
17. Karaniya Metta Sutta, Sutta Nipata 1.8, translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu: "As a mother would risk her life to protect her child, her only child, even so should one cultivate a limitless heart with regard to all beings." Also: "Let no one deceive another or despise anyone anywhere, or through anger or irritation wish for another to suffer." The translator notes that the comparison is between the child and one's goodwill. https://accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.08.than
18. Analects 12.22, translated for this book: to Fan Chi, humaneness is "Love people"; knowing is "knowing people." Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/analects/yan-yuan
19. Mencius 2A6, translated for this book: "If anyone now suddenly saw a child about to fall into a well, he would feel alarm and compassion. This would not be to get in good with the child's parents, not to win praise from neighbors and friends, and not because he disliked the sound of its cries." Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/mengzi/gong-sun-chou-i
20. Ohiyesa (Charles A. Eastman), *The Soul of the Indian* (1911, public domain), Chapter II, "The Family Altar": the mother "humbly seeks to learn a lesson from ants, bees, spiders, beavers, and badgers. She studies the family life of the birds … until she seems to feel the universal mother-heart beating in her own breast"; "Silence, love, reverence,--this is the trinity of first lessons; and to these she later adds generosity, courage, and chastity"; "The old are dedicated to the service of the young … and the young in turn regard them with love and reverence." https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/340
21. Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (1956): "Love is an activity, not a passive affect"; "Love is the active concern for the life and the growth of that which we love"; responsibility "could easily deteriorate into domination and possessiveness, were it not for a third component of love, respect"; "Respect means the concern that the other person should grow and unfold as he is"; "care and

responsibility would be blind if they were not guided by knowledge." Quoted from extended excerpts at https://www.danielmathews.info/2016/01/28/love-the-answer-to-the-problem-of-human-existence/. Chapter II, "The Theory of Love," section 1, "Love, the Answer to the Problem of Human Existence."

22. Official obituary of the Rev. Dr. Dorsey Odell Blake, Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples: born July 26, 1946, in Liberty, Missouri; BA, Brown University; MA and MDiv, Pacific School of Religion; Presiding Minister for 31 years; died March 2, 2025, at 78. https://fellowshipsf.org/_files/ugd/45f314_a6b2bf0802ac49c0b63b8c14fe3bf2f9.pdf
23. Pacific School of Religion, "Mourning the Passing of Dr. Dorsey Blake": "Blake first arrived at Pacific School of Religion in 1968, inspired by encounters with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other Civil Rights leaders. With more than five decades that included service in various schools." https://www.psr.edu/?p=49661
24. Vahid Razavi, *Ethics in Tech and Lack Thereof* (2018), Foreword by Rev. Dr. Dorsey O. Blake, and the author's section on the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples. Free at MyAWSStory.com. Cited by section (Foreword); the free online edition has no fixed page numbers. https://myawsstory.com
25. Author's account to the editor, November 1, 2026: his psychiatric care at Stanford Hospital while employed at AWS as a Senior Alliances Manager for Big Data and Analytics, and Rev. Blake's visit there, traveling more than ninety minutes each way and bringing books by Howard Thurman. Ethics in Tech and Lack Thereof (2018) also describes this period.

Chapter 5. For Ourselves and for Others: Human Rights and Digital Rights

The Principle

Preservation and sanctity of the principles of human rights and digital rights, for ourselves and for others.[1]

In plain words: Your rights matter, online and offline. So do everyone else’s. Protect both, even when it costs you something.

My Story

At my first NSA Comedy night, more than thirteen years ago, I asked everyone in the room to take their phones out of their pockets and hold them up high.[2][3]

Then I asked them to unlock their phones and pass them to the person sitting on their left. Let them read your emails, I said. Let them look at your contacts, and see who you texted last night.[2]

“How does that make you feel?” I asked. Then I told them the truth: “That’s what the NSA is doing right now, folks.”[2]

We laughed, but it was not a joke. Your phone holds your whole life. Your privacy is a human right. Today, it is a digital right too.

I have learned how fragile those rights are in my own life. In August 2026, I launched my book No Ethics in Big Tech on Hiroshima Day. Within hours, Facebook suspended my personal account. Three days later, on Nagasaki Day, it suspended my author page and hid it from its roughly 7,000 followers.[4]

On LinkedIn, I have about 8,000 contacts. A post of mine that criticizes the tech industry is lucky to reach 100 views. No one arrested me. No one burned my books. As I wrote, “What was removed was distribution.”[4]

Rights are not only for ourselves. For five years, I was a member of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. It works for a world without weapons that can choose and attack targets on their own.[5]

After the war in Gaza began in October 2023, I and other members asked the Campaign to speak out against the AI-powered weapons being used there. Instead, the Campaign let go of a human rights lawyer, Ousman Noor, after he spoke out. More than 2,000 human rights defenders signed a letter supporting him.[5]

As for me, I wrote, “I have been warned, threatened with expulsion, and told to be silent.” I called my post “Human Rights for Some—Indifference for Others.” That is the danger this principle warns against.[5]

Sometimes the cost is far higher. My documentary, Forever Peace Now, is dedicated to Roozbeh Vadi, the son of my cousin. He was a nuclear engineer in Iran, about forty years old.[46]

In August 2025, the Iranian government executed him for spying, after a process that human rights groups say did not meet fair trial standards. He was denied a last visit with his family. A relative later said he confessed only after torture and threats against his mother.[6][7][8][9]

Human rights are not just words on paper. They are what stands between a person and that kind of cruelty, wherever it happens.

Why It Matters

Human rights are the freedoms and protections every person has, simply because they are human. After the Second World War, the nations of the world wrote them down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in 1948.[10]

Digital rights are those same rights in the online world: your privacy, your voice, and your freedom to find and share information.

In my video about the principles, I said that both kinds of rights are hard to find today. “We all need VPNs,” I said. Those are tools that help hide what you do online from people who watch. In the West, we have the illusion that we are being heard. In other parts of the world, many people cannot connect at all.[11]

In an essay on free speech, I asked an old question. If a tree falls in a forest and no one hears it, does it make a sound? Today, I wrote, the right to speak “has never been more secure on paper, or more meaningless in practice.”[4]

Nobody has to ban your words. Search engines, news sites and social media just stop showing them. “Every one of those institutions can say, honestly, that it censored nothing,” I wrote. “Together they produce censorship.”[4]

Sometimes the silence is very direct. Once, I paid thirty dollars to promote a video asking Elon Musk to provide Starlink internet to hospitals in Gaza. TikTok said this broke its advertising rules and suspended my ad account. The suspension is called temporary. It runs until October 2033.[4]

And it is not only me. In 2023, Human Rights Watch documented more than 1,050 cases of Meta removing or hiding posts about Palestine in just two months.[12]

The worst damage is done to the people who watch. They see what happens to those who speak up, and they go quiet. As I put it, “Silence people impose on themselves costs nothing to enforce and cannot be photographed.”[4]

That is why this principle says “for ourselves and for others.” It is not enough to protect your own rights. Human rights for some, with indifference for others, are not human rights at all.[5]

And defending them costs something. In No Ethics in Big Tech, I wrote that real human rights and digital rights are “things that actually cost something to defend: that cost your job, sometimes, and your safety, sometimes.” Then I added: “They are worth those costs.”[13]

Find Your Lens

Each lens shows how one tradition protects the rights and dignity of every person. Read the one that speaks to you, or read them all. Each lens stands on its own. When you see the words “in plain English,” the old text has been put into simple modern words. The full standard translation is in the notes at the end of the chapter.

Lenses in this chapter: Jewish · Christian · Muslim · Persian and Zoroastrian · Hindu, Jain and Sikh · Buddhist · Chinese · Native American · Humanist and Scientific

Jewish Wisdom

The Bible begins with a statement of human dignity. In plain English: “God created human beings in God’s own image.”[14]

The Torah also commands care for outsiders. In plain English: “Do not oppress a stranger. You know how a stranger feels, because you were strangers in Egypt.”[15]

And the Book of Proverbs asks us to speak up for others. In plain English: “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. Defend the rights of the poor and needy.”[16]

How it supports the principle: Every person carries God’s image. Remember your own story, and stand up for those who have no voice.

Christian Wisdom

Jesus taught that the way we treat the weakest is the way we treat him. In plain English: “Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me.”[17]

In 2026, Pope Leo XIV wrote a letter to the world about AI and human dignity. He warned of a new kind of colonialism. In his words, it “no longer dominates only bodies, but appropriates data, transforming personal lives into exploitable information.”[18]

In plain words: empires once took people’s land and labor. Now some take the details of people’s lives and use them for their own gain.

How it supports the principle: Christian love protects the least powerful. Today, that includes protecting people’s data and dignity online.

Muslim Wisdom

The Qur’an says that every human being has dignity. In plain English: “We have honored the children of Adam.”[19]

It also protects privacy. In plain English: “Do not enter homes other than your own until you have asked permission and greeted the people inside.”[20] And: “Do not spy on one another.”[21]

Think about what that means today. Your phone is a kind of home. It holds your words, your photos and your friends. No one should walk in without permission.

How it supports the principle: In Islam, dignity belongs to every child of Adam, and privacy is sacred.

Persian and Zoroastrian Wisdom

In 539 BCE, the Persian king Cyrus the Great took the city of Babylon. He had his words written on a clay cylinder. In the British Museum's translation, Cyrus says: "I collected together all of their people and returned them to their settlements." And: "I have enabled all the lands to live in peace."[22]

The Bible also remembers Cyrus. It says he let the Jewish exiles in Babylon go home and rebuild their temple.[23]

As I said in my video, a copy of the Cyrus Cylinder is on display at the United Nations.[11] But be careful. A fake translation online calls it "the first charter of human rights." The real text is a king praising himself and his god. Still, it shows a ruler who let people go home and worship in their own way. In his time, that was rare.[22]

How it supports the principle: Even 2,500 years ago, a great empire saw that letting people live and worship freely brought peace.

Hindu, Jain and Sikh Wisdom

In 1675, a group of Hindus from Kashmir came to Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru. They were being forced to give up their faith. They asked for his help.[24]

The Guru told them to give the emperor a message: if Guru Tegh Bahadur changes his religion, we will change ours too. He was arrested, taken to Delhi and executed in public. A Sikh temple, the Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib, now stands on the spot.[24]

Sikhs call him “Hind di Chadar,” the Shield of India. He gave his life to protect the freedom of people whose religious practices his own faith did not share.[24]

How it supports the principle: Guru Tegh Bahadur defended other people’s right to their own faith, even at the cost of his life.

Buddhist Wisdom

Ashoka was an emperor in India more than 2,200 years ago. After a terrible war, he turned to the Buddha’s teachings. He had his laws carved into rocks and pillars across his empire.[25]

One of them says, in plain English: “Contact between religions is good. Listen to and respect the beliefs of others.” Another says that people of all religions should be free to live everywhere.[25]

How it supports the principle: A Buddhist emperor carved freedom of religion into stone, for every faith, not just his own.

Chinese Wisdom

Mencius taught that rulers exist to serve the people. In plain English: “The people are most important. The ruler matters least.”[26]

More than two thousand years later, that idea helped shape the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. One of its writers, the Chinese diplomat P. C. Chang, often quoted Mencius. He helped bring the Confucian idea of ren, or humaneness, into the declaration. In its first article, ren became the word “conscience.”[27]

How it supports the principle: Chinese wisdom helped write the world’s charter of human rights.

Native American Wisdom

In 1877, the U.S. government ordered Chief Joseph's band of Nez Perce onto a reservation. They fled toward Canada, but the army caught them, and they were forced to surrender. Two years later, Chief Joseph spoke in Washington, D.C.[28]

He said: "Treat all men alike. Give them all the same law. Give them all an even chance to live and grow."[28]

And he asked for freedom in words that read like a charter of human rights: "Let me be a free man — free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to trade where I choose, free to choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to talk, think and act for myself."[28]

How it supports the principle: Chief Joseph asked for nothing more than the same rights for all. That is the heart of this principle.

Humanist and Scientific Wisdom

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights begins: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." It protects your privacy, your home and your letters. And it protects your freedom to share ideas "through any media and regardless of frontiers."[10]

Eleanor Roosevelt led the group that wrote it. Ten years later, she asked where human rights begin. Her answer: "In small places, close to home — so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world."[29]

Today, one of those small places fits in your pocket.

How it supports the principle: Human rights belong to everyone, and they start close to home. Today, that includes the screen in your hand.

Lived It: Nelson Mandela

In 1964, Nelson Mandela stood trial in South Africa for fighting apartheid, a system that kept Black South Africans from having equal rights. He faced the death penalty.[30]

From the dock, he said: “I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities.” Then he added: “It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”[30]

He was sentenced to life in prison. In all, he spent twenty-seven years behind bars, many of them on Robben Island.[3031]

In 1985, the government offered to free him, if he would give up the armed struggle. He said no. “I cherish my own freedom dearly,” he wrote, “but I care even more for your freedom.”[32]

“Only free men can negotiate,” he said. He would not trade his people’s freedom for his own.[32]

He was released in 1990. Four years later, he became South Africa’s first democratically elected president.[31]

In his life story, he wrote: “I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else’s freedom.” And: “For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”[33]

As president, he did not forget others still waiting for their freedom. In 1997 he said: “But we know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians; without the resolution of conflicts in East Timor, the Sudan and other parts of the world.”[34]

In the same speech, he warned against “washing our hands of difficulties that others face.”[34]

Mandela fought for his own freedom. Then he spent the rest of his life fighting for everyone else’s. That is this principle, lived.

What You Can Do

1. Check the privacy settings and app permissions on your phone. Turn off anything you do not need.
2. Ask before you post a photo or a story about someone else. Their privacy matters too.
3. Read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It has thirty short articles.
4. Write a letter for someone wrongly imprisoned, through Amnesty International’s yearly Write for Rights campaign.
5. Share a voice that is being buried. If someone is speaking the truth and no one can hear them, help them be heard.
6. When someone else’s rights are under attack, speak up, even if your own are safe.

Remember

- Human rights belong to every person. Digital rights are those same rights, online.
- It is not enough to protect your own rights. Protect other people’s too.
- Defending rights can cost something. They are worth those costs.

Notes and Links

Every link shown below was confirmed on November 1, 2026.

1. GoAmour.com, “Principles of GoAmour,” Principle 5. https://goamour.com/principles/

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trial standards.” https://iranwire.com/en/news/143799-iran-executes-two-men-on-espionage-terrorism-charges/

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11. Vahid Razavi, “GoAmour Principles!” video, about 6:22 to 7:13: human rights since “the great cylinder of Cyrus the Great that’s displayed at the UN”; “we all need vpns”; “a illusion that our content gets heard”; digital rights and human rights “are fundamental and they need to be honored and protected at all levels.” https://youtu.be/WHhn_J21PSk
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the-Text-on-the-Cyrus-Cylinder.pdf. On the replica given to the UN in 1971 with an English "translation" that is "largely truncated and manipulated," and on calling it a human rights charter as "an anachronism": Antoine Simonin, "The Cyrus Cylinder," World History Encyclopedia, https://www.worldhistory.org/article/166

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34. Nelson Mandela, Address at the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Pretoria, December 4, 1997: “But we know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians; without the resolution of conflicts in East Timor, the Sudan and other parts of the world.” Also: “the temptation … to speak in muffled tones about an issue such as the right of the people of Palestine to a state of their own,” and falling “into the trap of washing our hands of difficulties that

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Chapter 6. A Garden of Life: Support What Promotes Life, in Its Many Forms

The Principle

The willingness and commitment to support organizations, institutions and ideologies that promote life in its many forms.[1]

In plain words: Put your time, money and voice behind the people and groups that protect life: human life, animal life and the living earth. Choose them with care.

My Story

I want to tell you about the most important work I have ever done that almost nobody has heard of.[2]

It is a website called ParentsPlea.com. It holds the stories of people who were killed in war and armed conflict, and by police brutality, corporate negligence and social injustice. As of November 1, 2026, it holds 142,733 profiles.[2][3]

It grows the way grief grows: one family at a time, one name at a time.[2] Not every profile has a photo yet, but we do our best to give each person a face. That is the point.[4]

ParentsPlea is free. It carries no ads, and it never sells the data of the families who trust it with the stories of their dead.[5] Researchers use it too. Airwars, a group that tracks harm to civilians in war, has used ParentsPlea profiles as a source.[6]

You may wonder why a chapter about life begins with the dead. It is because every name stands for a life that mattered. Remembering them is one way of honoring life.

And now ParentsPlea is turning toward the living too. We recently added a new feature, still in early testing, for the stories of people who are injured, missing or imprisoned. We do not collect money or endorse anyone. We give people a place to share their pain, along with links to their own fundraising pages or documents.[4]

I also support many groups that protect life. Among them are Doctors Without Borders, HEAL Palestine, Amnesty International, World BEYOND War, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, Veterans For Peace and RootsAction.org.[4] These are only a few. Naming some always leaves out others, and there are many more I admire.

HEAL Palestine, for example, brings injured children from Gaza to hospitals in the United States for care.[7]

But no single group can do it all. There are many good local, regional, national and international organizations worth our support. A garden needs many kinds of trees and flowers to look balanced and full of life.[4]

It also needs bees to carry pollen from flower to flower, and birds to carry seeds to new ground. In the garden of good work, we can be the bees and the birds. We carry our time, our money and our voices from one good group to the next, and we help new ones grow.

Think about what we are up against. As my film shows, thousands of companies build the machines of war: drones, AI and the algorithms behind them.[84] So we cannot put our faith in one or two organizations to solve our global problems, including the harm to our planet. We need many,

from groups that defend a free press to groups that protect the environment. And we need to walk alongside them.[4]

Why It Matters

To promote life means to protect it, feed it and help it grow. And life in its many forms means more than human life. It means animals and plants, rivers and forests, and the earth itself.

In my video about the principles, I said there are many great organizations protecting life in its many forms. They need to be protected, supported and cherished. Then I added a warning: “Please be picky on who you support.”[9]

Being picky means asking questions before you give. Where does the money go? Does the group tell the truth? Does it respect the people it serves? Does it help life, or only its own name?

In No Ethics in Big Tech, I wrote that this principle is “not just human life.” It is “the child in Gaza, the fisherman in Colombia, the content moderator in Nairobi, the whale, the forest, the aquifer.” An aquifer is water stored deep under the ground. “All of it is worth defending,” I wrote, “because all of it is connected.”[10]

When one part of that web is cut, the whole web is weaker. As I put it, “the severing of any part of the web diminishes the whole.”[10]

That is also why the names of the dead matter. If there is ever to be justice, or a memorial worthy of the name, I wrote, “we need more than a wall of names. We need biographies. We need family testimony.”[5]

This principle also asks us to look at what we support without meaning to. Every time we buy, click or invest, we

support someone. Ask whether that someone protects life or profits from harming it.

Supporting life is not only about giving money. It is about where you spend your time, your money and your voice. Every choice feeds one kind of world or another.

Find Your Lens

Each lens shows how one tradition teaches us to protect and support life in its many forms. Read the one that speaks to you, or read them all. Each lens stands on its own. When you see the words “in plain English,” the old text has been put into simple modern words. The full standard translation is in the notes at the end of the chapter.

Lenses in this chapter: Jewish · Christian · Muslim · Persian and Zoroastrian · Hindu, Jain and Sikh · Buddhist · Chinese · Native American · Humanist and Scientific

Jewish Wisdom

In the Torah, Moses gives the people a choice. In plain English: “I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. So choose life, so that you and your children may live.”[11]

A later Jewish teaching, the Mishnah, explains why one life matters so much. In plain English: “Whoever destroys one life, it is as if they destroyed a whole world. And whoever saves one life, it is as if they saved a whole world.”[12]

You will find the same teaching in the Qur’an, in the Muslim lens.

How it supports the principle: Judaism asks us to choose life, and teaches that every single life is a whole world.

Christian Wisdom

Jesus described his purpose this way. In plain English: “I came so that they may have life, and have it to the full.”[13]

In 2015, Pope Francis wrote a letter to the world about caring for the earth, our common home. “Everything is connected,” he wrote. Caring for nature, he said, must go together with “a sincere love for our fellow human beings.”[14]

He also wrote that “even the fleeting life of the least of beings is the object of his love.”[14]

How it supports the principle: Christian faith sees every creature as loved by God, and all of life as connected.

Muslim Wisdom

The Qur’an says, in plain English: “Whoever saves one life, it is as if they had saved all of humanity.” The Qur’an presents this as a law first given to the Children of Israel, the same teaching found in the Mishnah.[15]

It also says that animals have their own communities. In plain English: “Every creature on earth, and every bird that flies with its wings, lives in communities like yours.”[16]

The Prophet Muhammad told a story about a man who was very thirsty. He climbed down into a well and drank. When he came out, he saw a dog so thirsty it was licking the mud. He went back down and brought up water for the dog. God thanked him for it and forgave him. When people asked if there is a reward for serving animals, the Prophet said yes: there is a reward for serving any living being.[17]

How it supports the principle: In Islam, saving one life is like saving all of humanity, and every living creature deserves kindness.

Persian and Zoroastrian Wisdom

The Persian poet Saadi, in his book The Orchard, quotes a famous line that he credits to the poet Ferdowsi. In plain English: “Do not hurt the ant that carries a grain. It has a life, and sweet life is dear.”[18]

The line asks us to see the life in even the smallest creature.

How it supports the principle: If even an ant’s life is sweet to it, then every life deserves our care.

Hindu, Jain and Sikh Wisdom

The Jain faith teaches ahimsa, which means doing no harm to any living being. One of its oldest holy books goes further than most people ever imagine. It counts tiny lives in earth and water. In its words: “There are beings living in water, many lives.”[19]

For this reason, Jain monks and nuns take great care. They strain their water and watch their steps, so they do not harm the small lives around them.[19]

How it supports the principle: Jainism teaches that life is everywhere, even where we cannot see it, and all of it deserves protection.

Buddhist Wisdom

The Buddha taught that every creature wants to live. In plain English: “All tremble at violence. Life is dear to all. Put yourself in their place, and do not kill or cause others to kill.”[20]

How it supports the principle: When you see that every creature holds its life dear, just as you do, you will want to protect it.

Chinese Wisdom

Mencius gave a king simple advice for caring for the living world. Do not let nets with tiny holes into the ponds, and there will be more fish than people can eat. Cut trees in the hill forests only in the right season, and there will be more wood than people can use.[21]

More than two thousand years ago, he understood that if we take too much, there will be nothing left for those who come after us.

How it supports the principle: Caring for life means leaving enough for the future.

Native American Wisdom

Ohiyesa was a Dakota writer. He described how Dakota children learned to see all of nature as family. A Dakota child, he wrote, “thinks that he is a blood brother to all living creatures.” To that child, even the storm wind was “a messenger of the ‘Great Mystery.’”[22]

In such a world, harming an animal or a river means harming a relative.

How it supports the principle: When all living things are family, protecting life is simply caring for your own.

Humanist and Scientific Wisdom

Albert Schweitzer was a doctor who ran a hospital in the African country now called Gabon. In 1915, he was traveling up a river by boat. At sunset, the boat passed through a herd of hippopotamuses. In that moment, a phrase came to him: “Reverence for Life.”[23]

He summed up his idea in one sentence: “I am life which wills to live, in the midst of life which wills to live.” Good, he taught, means protecting and helping life grow. Evil

means destroying or harming it. In 1952, he won the Nobel Peace Prize.[23]

How it supports the principle: You do not need a religion to see that life is precious. You only need to see that every living thing, like you, wants to live.

Lived It: Doctors Without Borders

In 1971, a war and a famine in Biafra, in Nigeria, shocked the world. A group of French doctors and journalists decided the world needed a new kind of aid group. They founded Médecins Sans Frontières, which means Doctors Without Borders.[24]

Their idea was simple. Give medical care to anyone who needs it, whatever their race, religion or nationality. And when you see people suffering, tell the world. They call this témoignage, French for "bearing witness."[24]

Today it helps people hit by war, epidemics and natural disasters.[24]

In 1999, Doctors Without Borders won the Nobel Peace Prize for its "pioneering humanitarian work on several continents."[25]

The Nobel committee also praised the group as a "frequent critic of violence and violations of human rights." Doctors Without Borders used the prize money to reach patients who are too often overlooked.[25]

Dr. James Orbinski accepted the prize. Instead of only giving thanks, he used his speech to speak out against the bombing of civilians in Chechnya. Then he explained why: "We are not sure that words can always save lives, but we know that silence can certainly kill."[26]

He also said something that fits this chapter's garden. "No doctor can stop a genocide," he said. Stopping it is a job

for leaders and governments, not only for doctors.[26] That is why we need many kinds of groups, working side by side.

Doctors Without Borders does both halves of this principle. It saves lives, one patient at a time. And it speaks up when silence would cost more lives. I still support them today.[4]

What You Can Do

1. Pick one group that protects life, of people, animals or the earth. Give it an hour, a little money or your voice this month.
2. Be picky. Before you give, find out how the group spends its money and whether it tells the truth.
3. Be a bee or a bird. Tell a friend about a good group you support, and help it grow.
4. Learn the name and story of one person whose life was lost to war or injustice. Remember them.
5. Protect one small life this week: an animal, a plant or a stream.

Remember

- Life comes in many forms: people, animals, plants, rivers and the earth itself. All of it is connected.
- Support the groups that protect life, and choose them with care.
- No single group can do it all. A garden needs many plants, and the bees and birds that help it grow.

Notes and Links

Every link shown below was confirmed on November 1, 2026.

1. GoAmour.com, “Principles of GoAmour,” Principle 6. https://goamour.com/principles/
2. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 16, “ParentsPlea,” from page 116: “I want to tell you about the most important work I have ever done that almost nobody has heard of”; ParentsPlea “grows the way grief grows: one family at a

time, one name at a time." At the time of writing it held over 140,000 profiles, more than 107,000 of them deaths from war and armed conflict, and the rest from police brutality, corporate negligence and social injustice. Free at https://noethicsinbigtech.com/book/

3. ParentsPlea.com, deaths recorded, checked on November 1, 2026: 142,733. https://parentsplea.com/
4. Author's account to the editor, November 1, 2026: ParentsPlea's new beta feature for stories of people who are injured, missing or imprisoned (no fundraising, no endorsement; users may share links to their own campaigns or documents); not every ParentsPlea profile has a photo yet (the author's correction); the organizations he supports, including Doctors Without Borders, HEAL Palestine, Amnesty International, World BEYOND War (https://worldbeyondwar.org), the Electronic Frontier Foundation, Veterans For Peace and RootsAction.org (https://rootsaction.org); and the garden image: "A garden needs various trees and flowers for it to look balanced and full of life."
5. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), preface: ParentsPlea.com "is a free website. It carries no advertising. It takes no affiliate revenue. It does not sell, trade, or monetize the data of the families who trust it with the stories of their dead"; "we need more than a wall of names. We need biographies. We need family testimony."
6. Airwars source record for a ParentsPlea.com profile, showing ParentsPlea used as a source in Airwars' civilian-harm research. https://airwars.org/?p=338638
7. On HEAL Palestine (Health Education Aid and Leadership), a U.S.-based nonprofit co-founded by pediatrician Dr. Zeena Salman that brings injured children from Gaza to U.S. hospitals for treatment: NPR, via WGLT, August 4, 2025, https://www.wglt.org/2025-08-04/a-non-profit-will-carry-out-the-largest-evacuation-of-children-from-gaza-to-the-u-s; Local News Matters, https://localnewsmatters.org/?p=163140
8. *Forever Peace Now*, directed by Vahid Razavi (2025), drawn from sixteen years of documenting Silicon Valley and the tech industry's role in armed conflict, as described in the author's essay "You Have the Right to Free Speech. You Do Not Have the Right to Be Heard." ForeverPeaceNow.com, August 20, 2026. Film: https://youtu.be/kf845Lfr22A
9. Vahid Razavi, "GoAmour Principles!" video, about 7:13 to 7:50: organizations "that are into protecting life and its many forms … they need to be protected they need to be supported they need to

be cherished … so please be picky on who you support and lend your voice to these organizations." https://youtu.be/WHhn_J21PSk

10. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 18, page 129: "The sixth principle is the willingness to support organizations and ideologies that promote life in its many forms. Not just human life. Not just the lives of people who look like you and believe what you believe. Life in its many forms — the child in Gaza, the fisherman in Colombia, the content moderator in Nairobi, the whale, the forest, the aquifer. All of it is worth defending because all of it is connected, and the severing of any part of the web diminishes the whole."
11. Deuteronomy 30:19. King James Version: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+30%3A19&version=KJV
12. Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5: "Whoever destroys a soul, it is considered as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world." Some manuscripts read "a single soul from Israel"; others do not. https://voices.sefaria.org/sheets/403498
13. John 10:10. King James Version: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+10%3A10&version=KJV
14. Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* (May 24, 2015), paragraph 91: "Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society"; paragraph 77: "Even the fleeting life of the least of beings is the object of his love." As compiled in "Select Quotations from Laudato Si' and Laudate Deum," The Nathaniel Report, August 2025, https://nzceo.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/3169/select_quotations_from_laudato_si_and_laudate_deum.pdf vatican.va: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html#91; https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html#77
15. Qur'an 5:32, Sahih International: "Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land — it is as if he had slain

mankind entirely. And whoever saves one — it is as if he had saved mankind entirely." https://surahquran.com/quran-search/english-aya-32-sora-5.html

16. Qur'an 6:38, Sahih International: "And there is no creature on [or within] the earth or bird that flies with its wings except [that they are] communities like you." https://quran.is/6/38
17. Sahih al-Bukhari 2466, narrated by Abu Huraira (translation by Muhammad Muhsin Khan): the man who gave water to a thirsty dog; "Allah thanked him for that deed and forgave him." The people asked, "Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?" He replied: "Yes, there is a reward for serving any animate (living being)." https://www.thehouseofislam.com/hadiths/bukhari?n=2466
18. Saadi, *Bustan* (The Orchard, 1257), chapter 2, "On Beneficence," section 14. Saadi tells how the Sufi teacher Shibli carried a sack of wheat home, found an ant inside, and carried it back so as not to tear it from its home. Then Saadi quotes Ferdowsi:

    میازار موری که دانه‌کش است

    که جان دارد و جان شیرین خوش است

    Literal translation: "Do not harm the ant that carries a grain, for it has a life, and sweet life is dear."

    Persian text: Ganjoor, https://ganjoor.net/saadi/boostan/bab2/sh14. In the critical edition of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* by Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, the line has a slightly different form:

    مکش مورکی را که روزی‌کش است

    که او نیز جان دارد و جان خوش است

    Literal translation: "Do not kill a little ant that gathers its daily food, for it too has a life, and life is sweet."

    Text and translation note: Adib Masumian, https://adibmasumian.com/translations/sadi-bustan-yousefi-verse-1331/; on the Ferdowsi attribution: Doroudi and Fadayi, Kharazmi University, https://jpll.khu.ac.ir/article-1-4182-en.pdf
19. Acaranga Sutra, translated by Hermann Jacobi (1884, public domain): "There are beings living in water, many lives; of a truth, to the monks water has been declared to be living matter"; and it warns against one "who uses water which is not strained." https://hinduwebsite.com/sacredscripts/jainscripts/akaranga.asp
20. Dhammapada 130. Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu: "All tremble at the rod, all hold their life dear. Drawing the parallel to yourself, neither kill nor get others to kill." Translated by Acharya

Buddharakkhita: “All tremble at violence; life is dear to all. Putting oneself in the place of another, one should not kill nor cause another to kill.” https://accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.10.than

21. Mencius 1A3, translated for this book: “don’t use fine-meshed nets; cut timber only in season.” James Legge’s translation (public domain): “If close nets are not allowed to enter the pools and ponds, the fishes and turtles will be more than can be consumed. If the axes and bills enter the hill-forests only at the proper time, the wood will be more than can be used.” Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/mengzi/liang-hui-wang-i
22. Ohiyesa (Charles A. Eastman), *The Soul of the Indian* (1911, public domain), Chapter II, “The Family Altar”: “He thinks that he is a blood brother to all living creatures, and the storm wind is to him a messenger of the ‘Great Mystery.’” https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/340
23. Albert Schweitzer, *Out of My Life and Thought* (1931): “Late on the third day, at the very moment when, at sunset, we were making our way through a herd of hippopotamuses, there flashed upon my mind, unforeseen and unsought, the phrase, ‘Reverence for Life’”; “I am life which wills to live, in the midst of life which wills to live”; good “consists in maintaining, assisting and enhancing life,” and “to destroy, to harm or to hinder life is evil.” Quoted in Colin Mackenzie, “Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965),” Philosophy Now, https://philosophynow.org/issues/171/Albert_Schweitzer_1875-1965; and Daily Philosophy, https://daily-philosophy.com/quotes-schweitzer-reverence-for-life. Nobel Peace Prize for 1952.
24. Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières: “MSF was founded in 1971 by a group of doctors and journalists in the wake of war and famine in Biafra, Nigeria” (MSF Canada legacy brochure, https://www.doctorswithoutborders.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/MSF_Legacy-Brochure_ENG_F3b.pdf); founded in Paris by doctors and journalists who believe témoignage, “bearing witness,” has a crucial role in medical humanitarian action (MSF Canada, https://dispatches.doctorswithoutborders.ca/article/50-years-of-bearing-witness-and-speaking-out/); care “regardless of race, religion, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation” (MSF USA, https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/who-we-are/our-history/nobel-peace-prize-25-years); its stated mission “has always been to help those affected by armed conflict, epidemics and natural disasters” (Novaya Gazeta Europe, https://new.novayagazeta.eu/articles/2024/10/09/doctoring-history-en).

25. The 1999 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Médecins Sans Frontières “in recognition of the organisation’s pioneering humanitarian work on several continents.” MSF, “The Nobel Peace Prize speech,” https://www.msf.org/nobel-peace-prize-speech. The Nobel Committee also recognized MSF as a “frequent critic of violence and violations of human rights,” and MSF used the prize money to expand access to care for patients “too often overlooked”: MSF USA, https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/who-we-are/our-history/nobel-peace-prize-25-years
26. James Orbinski, Nobel Lecture, Oslo, December 10, 1999: “We are not sure that words can always save lives, but we know that silence can certainly kill”; and “No doctor can stop a genocide. No humanitarian can stop ethnic cleansing, just as no humanitarian can make war. And no humanitarian can make peace. These are political responsibilities, not humanitarian imperatives.” https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1999/msf/lecture/; MSF Middle East, https://msf-me.org/node/2135. On his condemnation of the bombing of civilians in Chechnya: MSF UK, https://msf.org.uk/nobel-peace-prize

Chapter 7. A Cure, or Judgment: Justice on This Earth

The Principle

Demanding a cure to hate and violence by those who inflict it — if they can be cured and changed. And if not, having these criminals face judgment in this world, and not just in the next.[1]

In plain words: First, try to heal hate and stop violence. When people who cause mass harm will not change, they must face a fair court here on earth, not only in the next life.

My Story

Some people say we should leave judgment to God. Wait for Judgment Day, they say. I have never been able to accept that.

In my video about the principles, I asked a simple question. Why should we wait for Judgment Day for the evils we are seeing all around the world today? Innocent civilians, mothers and children are being killed in the name of power, greed, land grabs and colonialism. The people responsible, I said, need to face justice on this earth, not only in the next.[2]

I built my career in Silicon Valley. I worked inside Amazon Web Services. I know how these companies think. As I wrote in No Ethics in Big Tech, the only language that reaches them is “the language of consequence.”[3]

So I started a petition. It asks prosecutors in Spain to investigate five big tech companies, Amazon, Google,

Microsoft, Oracle and Palantir, and their top leaders. It asks whether they helped commit genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Gaza by supplying the technology.[3]

In September 2026, the Occupy Wall Street movement turned fifteen. That month, a coalition of groups took the campaign to four countries: Spain, the Netherlands, France and Ireland.[4]

Let me be clear about what this is, and what it is not. These are claims we are asking courts to investigate. They are not verdicts. As our campaign put it, the process exists so that “courts, not campaigners, make that determination.”[4]

I have also had to correct myself. My first petition leaned on a legal argument that, after studying Spain’s court decisions, I no longer think works. I said so in public. As I wrote, “I am not going to pretend otherwise to protect a document I wrote.”[5]

Fair judgment starts with being fair to the truth. And as our campaign says: “No one is too small to demand justice, and no one should give up hope.”[4]

Why It Matters

This principle has two halves. First comes the cure. Hate can sometimes be healed, and people can change. When they can, we should help them.

But when people who cause mass death will not stop, the second half applies: judgment, in a fair court, in this world.

Today, some of that death is guided by machines. In 2024, the Israeli magazine +972 and its Hebrew partner, Local Call, reported on an AI system called Lavender. Six Israeli intelligence officers spoke to the reporters. They said it

marked as many as 37,000 Palestinians in Gaza as suspected militants. Another system, called “Where’s Daddy?”, tracked people to their family homes.[6]

One officer described his part: “I would invest 20 seconds for each target at this stage, and do dozens of them every day. I had zero added-value as a human, apart from being a stamp of approval.” The Israeli military called parts of the report baseless.[6]

In my book, I called this “algorithmic mass killing, validated after the fact by a human signature that had less than twenty seconds to think.”[7] And I wrote: “The kill lists are numbers until you find the family of one of those 37,000 people.”[8]

So where can a case like this go? There are two world courts in The Hague, in the Netherlands. The International Court of Justice judges countries. The International Criminal Court judges people.[9][10]

In January 2024, the International Court of Justice gave Israel an order. It must do all it can to prevent acts of genocide in Gaza. The court found that Palestinians had a plausible right to be protected from genocide.[9]

In November 2024, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for two Israeli leaders: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. The warrants are for crimes against humanity and war crimes. In 2025, the United States placed sanctions on the court’s prosecutor and on judges who worked on the case.[10][11]

In September 2025, a UN panel led by Navi Pillay, a former international judge, made its finding. It concluded that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza. Israel rejects that finding.[12]

But world courts are slow, and powerful countries can block them. As I wrote, the court's findings are real, but "their enforcement is another matter entirely."[3] That is why I ask countries to act in their own courts too.

It can be done. In 2005, a court in Spain convicted a former Argentine naval officer of crimes against humanity committed in Argentina. You will read about it in this chapter's Lived It story.[13]

Spain also has something unusual. Under its constitution, any Spanish citizen can start a criminal case, even if they were not harmed themselves. It is called the acción popular, the "people's action."[5]

Some crimes harm the earth itself. Ecocide means destroying nature on a massive scale. In 2024, Belgium became the first country in the European Union to make ecocide a crime. That same year, the European Union passed a law that lets courts send people to prison for years for the worst harms to nature. And three Pacific island nations, Vanuatu, Fiji and Samoa, asked the International Criminal Court to add ecocide to its list of crimes.[14]

If the law can protect a swamp, it can protect people too. As I wrote: "We are not asking for anything Europe has not already granted to a wetland." And as I like to say: live in peace, not just rest in peace.[14]

Find Your Lens

Each lens shows how one tradition answers hate and violence, with healing where possible and with justice where not. Read the one that speaks to you, or read them all. Each lens stands on its own. When you see the words "in plain English," the old text has been put into simple

modern words. The full standard translation is in the notes at the end of the chapter.

Lenses in this chapter: Jewish · Christian · Muslim · Persian and Zoroastrian · Hindu, Jain and Sikh · Buddhist · Chinese · Humanist and Scientific. The Native American lens sits out this chapter.

Jewish Wisdom

The Torah gives a command that repeats one word for force. In plain English: “Justice, justice you shall pursue.”[15]

The prophet Amos pictured justice as a flood. In plain English: “Let justice roll down like waters, and goodness like a mighty stream.”[16]

And the prophet Micah summed up what God asks of us. In plain English: “Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.”[17]

How it supports the principle: In Judaism, justice is not a wish. It is a command, to be chased and never given up.

Christian Wisdom

The apostle Paul gave a short rule for answering evil. In plain English: “Do not be overcome by evil. Overcome evil with good.”[18]

Apartheid in South Africa ended in the 1990s. Afterward, Archbishop Desmond Tutu led a group called the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. People who had committed crimes could ask for amnesty, which means a pardon. But they got it only if they told the whole truth about what they had done.[19]

Tutu called this restorative justice. In his words, it is “concerned not so much with punishment as with correcting imbalances, restoring broken relationships, with

healing, harmony and reconciliation."[19] In other words, healing comes first.

The commission did not finish the job. Many people who were refused amnesty were never put on trial, and Tutu himself was among its sharpest critics.[19] The cure works best when judgment stands behind it.

How it supports the principle: Christian faith reaches for healing first. Tutu's commission shows the power of truth. It also shows that we need justice when truth is not enough.

Muslim Wisdom

The Qur'an forbids letting hatred bend our sense of justice. In plain English: "Do not let your hatred of a people stop you from being fair. Be fair: that is closer to doing right."[20]

It also asks us to stand for justice even when it costs us. In plain English: "Stand firm for justice, as witnesses for God, even against yourselves, your parents or your relatives."[21]

How it supports the principle: Islam asks us to cure our own hate and still demand justice, fairly, for everyone.

Persian and Zoroastrian Wisdom

Ferdowsi's great Persian epic, the Shahnameh, tells of a cruel king named Zahhak. His cruelty took the sons of a blacksmith named Kaveh.[22]

Kaveh refused to bow. He tied his leather work apron to a spear and raised it as a banner. The people rallied behind it and joined the prince Fereydun, who defeated the tyrant.[22]

Then comes the part many people forget. When Fereydun was about to kill Zahhak, a heavenly messenger named Sorush stopped him. Instead, he bound the tyrant in chains inside Mount Damavand.[22]

Kaveh's apron became Iran's royal banner. It is a symbol of ordinary people rising up against cruelty.[22]

How it supports the principle: The Shahnameh honors the people who stand up to tyrants, and it chooses judgment over revenge.

Hindu, Jain and Sikh Wisdom

Mahatma Gandhi led India's struggle for freedom without violence. In his autobiography, he drew a sharp line between people and what they do.[23]

"Man and his deed are two distinct things," he wrote. A good deed should be praised, and a wicked deed condemned. But the person, good or bad, always deserves respect or pity. "Hate the sin and not the sinner" is easy to understand, he wrote, but rarely practiced, "and that is why the poison of hatred spreads in the world."[23]

How it supports the principle: Gandhi shows how to cure hate without excusing harm. Judge the deed. Do not hate the person.

Buddhist Wisdom

Near its very beginning, the Dhammapada, a collection of the Buddha's sayings, gives this law. In plain English: "Hatred is never ended by hatred in this world. Only by non-hatred is hatred ended. This is an eternal law."[24]

How it supports the principle: The Buddha points to the cure. Hate cannot heal hate. Only its opposite can.

Chinese Wisdom

A king once asked Mencius if it was right for a ruler to be killed. Mencius answered that a ruler who wrecks goodness and justice is no longer a true ruler. He is just "a

mere fellow.” Punishing such a person, Mencius said, is not the murder of a king.[25]

The Daoist teacher Laozi warned that weapons bring bad luck. When many people are killed, he said, weep for them. Even a victory in war should be marked with the rites of mourning.[26]

How it supports the principle: For Mencius, no ruler is above judgment. For Laozi, violence is always a sorrow, never a triumph.

Humanist and Scientific Wisdom

The word genocide did not exist until 1944. A Polish Jewish lawyer named Raphael Lemkin made it up. He needed a name for the crime of trying to destroy a whole people. In 1948, the nations of the world signed a treaty promising “to prevent and to punish” genocide.[27]

After the Second World War, Nazi leaders were put on trial at Nuremberg. The American prosecutor, Robert Jackson, said something remarkable in his opening speech. The winners of the war, he said, had chosen to “stay the hand of vengeance” and to “submit their captive enemies to the judgment of the law.”[28]

Today, the International Criminal Court carries that work forward. It can put people on trial, including people who help others commit the worst crimes. But it cannot try companies, only people.[29]

How it supports the principle: Humanity has built courts so that judgment does not have to wait for the next world. And it does not have to become revenge.

Lived It: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo

In 1976, the army took power in Argentina. In the years that followed, thousands of people were taken from their homes and never seen again. They were called the disappeared. Human rights groups say there were 30,000.[30]

On Saturday, April 30, 1977, fourteen mothers met in the Plaza de Mayo, the square in front of the presidential palace in Buenos Aires. They wanted to know one thing: where are our children?[30]

Public meetings were banned. So the mothers walked, slowly, around the square. They wore white headscarves made from their children's old cloth diapers, with their children's names stitched on them.[30]

The government struck back. In December 1977, after the mothers printed the names of the missing in a newspaper, three of their founders were kidnapped and disappeared. One of them, Azucena Villaflor, had started the group. She was killed on a "death flight," in which prisoners were thrown from planes into the sea. Years later, her remains were identified through DNA. Her ashes now rest in the Plaza de Mayo.[30]

Still, the mothers kept walking. They have walked on Thursdays ever since. Their sister group, the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, has found about 140 grandchildren who were stolen as babies.[30]

And judgment came, slowly. In 1985, Argentina put the leaders of the dictatorship on trial.[13] In 2005, a court in Spain convicted Adolfo Scilingo, a former Argentine naval officer, of crimes against humanity. He had taken part in two death flights that killed thirty people. It was the first time Spain had tried someone for crimes committed in

another country. Amnesty International in Spain called it “a step forward against impunity.”[13]

The mothers never used violence. They used their feet, their scarves and their voices. They demanded the truth first. Then they demanded judgment, in this world. That is this principle, lived.

What You Can Do

1. Learn the difference between the two world courts. The International Court of Justice judges countries. The International Criminal Court judges people. Explain it to a friend.
2. Do not spread hate, online or off. When you see it, answer it with facts and kindness.
3. Ask your country’s leaders to make ecocide a crime and to support international courts.
4. Bear witness. Learn the name and story of one person whose life was taken by war or injustice.
5. If you are old enough, read the petition for yourself and decide whether to sign it.

Remember

- First, try to cure hate and stop violence. People can change.
- When those who cause mass harm will not stop, they must face a fair court, in this world.
- Judgment is not revenge. It is truth, proven in court, for everyone.

Notes and Links

Every link shown below was confirmed on November 1, 2026.

1. GoAmour.com, “Principles of GoAmour,” Principle 7. https://goamour.com/principles/

2. Vahid Razavi, “GoAmour Principles!” video, about 7:50 to 8:40: “curing hate and violence if it can be cured and changed and if not having it face judgment in this world and not the next … why should we wait for Judgment Day for some of the evils that we are witnessing today … to innocent civilians mothers children and in the name of power greed land grab colonialism … these people need to face Justice on this Earth.” https://youtu.be/WHhn_J21PSk
3. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 14, “The Case for Spain,” pages 103 to 106: “I know that the only language that reaches them is the language of consequence”; on the International Court of Justice, “The court’s findings are real. Their enforcement is another matter entirely”; and the petition’s four demands, addressed to the Attorney General of Spain, the Central Courts of Instruction of the Audiencia Nacional and the Government of Spain. Petition: https://foreverpeacenow.com/petition/. Book free at https://noethicsinbigtech.com/book/
4. Vahid Razavi, “15 Years After Occupy Wall Street, a Global Coalition Launches Criminal Petition Across Four Countries Accusing Big Tech Companies and Executives of Complicity in Genocide,” NoEthicsInBigTech.com, September 17, 2026: jurisdictions Spain, the Netherlands, France and Ireland; “The campaign is explicit that these are allegations advanced through petitions and legal filings, not adjudicated findings — and that the process exists precisely so that courts, not campaigners, make that determination”; “No one is too small to demand justice, and no one should give up hope.” https://noethicsinbigtech.com/15-years-after-occupy-wall-street-a-global-coalition-launches-criminal-petition-across-four-countries-accusing-big-tech-companies-and-executives-of-complicity-in-genocide/
5. Vahid Razavi, “Spain Is the Only Country Where an Ordinary Citizen Can Start This Case. Here Is What It Would Take.” NoEthicsInBigTech.com, Jurisdiction Series, Part Four, August 2026: “Having gone through the case law properly, I no longer think that argument works, and I am not going to pretend otherwise to protect a document I wrote”; “In Spain, any Spanish citizen can start a criminal case without having been harmed at all” (Spanish Constitution, Article 125; Ley de Enjuiciamiento Criminal, Articles 101 and 270). https://noethicsinbigtech.com/spain-is-the-only-country-where-an-ordinary-citizen-can-start-this-case-here-is-what-it-would-take/
6. Yuval Abraham, “‘Lavender’: The AI machine directing Israel’s bombing spree in Gaza,” +972 Magazine and Local Call, April 3, 2024, based on six Israeli intelligence officers: Lavender marked as many as 37,000 Palestinians as suspected militants; “Where’s

Daddy?" tracked targets to their family homes. Officer quotation reported in The Defense Post, April 4, 2024, https://thedefensepost.com/2024/04/04/israel-ai-targets-gaza/amp/; the Israeli military called parts of the reporting "baseless" (AI Incident Database, report 3860, https://incidentdatabase.ai/reports/3860).

7. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 2, "How We Got Here," page 17, on Lavender: "It is algorithmic mass killing, validated after the fact by a human signature that had less than twenty seconds to think."
8. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 13, page 101: "The kill lists are numbers until you find the family of one of those 37,000 people Lavender flagged and let them speak."
9. International Court of Justice, *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*, Order on provisional measures, January 26, 2024. The Court's then-President, Joan Donoghue, explained on BBC HARDtalk (April 2024): "The Court decided that the Palestinians had a plausible right to be protected from genocide and that South Africa had the right to present that claim in the Court." Opinio Juris, https://opiniojuris.org/2024/01/27/the-icjs-provisional-measures-order-in-the-south-africa-v-israel-case-unsurprising-politically-and-legally-significant/; UN, https://un.dk/un-world-court-issues-appeal-calling-for-prevention-of-genocidal-acts-in-gaza/
10. International Criminal Court, arrest warrants for Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant issued by Pre-Trial Chamber I on November 21, 2024, for crimes against humanity and war crimes. JusticeInfo, "Justice for Gaza: who is doing what?" https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/151753-justice-for-gaza-who-is-doing-what.html
11. On U.S. sanctions against the ICC: executive order of February 2025; sanctions on Prosecutor Karim Khan (February 2025) and on judges, including a judge of the chamber that issued the warrants. Anadolu Agency, https://aa.com.tr/en/world/us-sanctions-4-icc-judges-deputy-prosecutors-over-netanyahu-arrest-warrants/3664800; Al-Monitor/AFP, December 18, 2025, https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2025/12/us-imposes-sanctions-two-more-icc-judges-israel-probe
12. UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, chaired by Navi Pillay, report of September 16, 2025, concluding that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza; Israel rejected the report. JusticeInfo, https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/151753-justice-for-gaza-who-is-doing-

what.html; Jurist, https://www.jurist.org/news/2025/09/un-panel-finds-israel-committed-genocide-in-gaza/

13. Spain's Audiencia Nacional convicted Adolfo Scilingo of crimes against humanity on April 19, 2005 (Judgment 16/2005), for two death flights in which 30 people were killed; sentence of 640 years, later raised to 1,084 by Spain's Supreme Court. It was Spain's first trial of a person for abuses committed in another country. Argentina's junta leaders had been tried in 1985. IPS, https://www.ipsnews.net/?p=15072; NBC News/AP, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/amp/wbna7557986; ASIL, https://asil.org/node/216; Amnesty International Spain, "Un paso adelante contra la impunidad," https://www.es.amnesty.org/en-que-estamos/noticias/noticia/articulo/la-audiencia-nacional-condena-a-el-ex-militar-argentino-adolfo-scilingo-por-crimenes-de-lesa-humanid/
14. Vahid Razavi, "The Ecocide Precedent: Why Tech, AI and Financial Executives Must Face Personal Criminal Liability," NoEthicsInBigTech.com, September 4, 2026 (with full sources): Directive (EU) 2024/1203, adopted April 11, 2024, with maximum penalties of at least ten years for offences causing death and at least eight years for "qualified" offences comparable to ecocide; Belgium's new Criminal Code, Article 94, adopted February 22, 2024, the first EU member state to criminalize ecocide; the Rome Statute amendment proposed by Vanuatu, Fiji and Samoa on September 9, 2024; "We are not asking for anything Europe has not already granted to a wetland"; "Live in peace, not just rest in peace." https://noethicsinbigtech.com/the-ecocide-precedent-why-tech-ai-and-financial-executives-must-face-personal-criminal-liability/
15. Deuteronomy 16:20. Hebrew: tzedek, tzedek tirdof, "Justice, justice you shall pursue." King James Version: "That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live." Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+16%3A20&version=KJV
16. Amos 5:24. King James Version: "But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Amos+5%3A24&version=KJV
17. Micah 6:8. King James Version: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+6%3A8&version=KJV
18. Romans 12:21. King James Version: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Bible Gateway (KJV): https://

www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A21&version=KJV

19. On Archbishop Desmond Tutu and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (chaired from December 1995 to October 1998; amnesty in exchange for full disclosure): Irish Times review of Tutu's *No Future Without Forgiveness*, https://irishtimes.com/culture/tutu-believes-reconciliation-possible-for-all-1.296294; Tutu's words on restorative justice, quoted by AFP via JusticeInfo, https://www.justiceinfo.net/en?p=85817; on Tutu as the commission's most vocal critic, AFP via JusticeInfo (above); on unfinished prosecutions, Apartheid Museum, "Unfinished business: Tutu, truth and reconciliation," https://www.apartheidmuseum.org/uploads/files/Unfinished-business.-Tutu-truth-and-reconciliation.pdf
20. Qur'an 5:8, Sahih International: "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness." Quran.com: https://quran.com/5:8
21. Qur'an 4:135, Sahih International: "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives." Quran.com: https://quran.com/4:135
22. Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, the story of Kaveh the Blacksmith, Zahhak and Fereydun: Kaveh raised his leather apron on a spear (the Derafsh Kaviani) and rallied the people to Fereydun; when Fereydun was about to kill Zahhak, Sorush (Sraosha) told him to bind him in Mount Damavand instead. The story belongs to the reign of Zahhak, early in the Shahnameh. Kheradgan, https://en.kheradgan.ir/p/summary-of-the-uprising-of-kaveh-the-blacksmith; Wikipedia, "National symbols of Iran," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_symbols_of_Iran
23. M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography, or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*: "Man and his deed are two distinct things. Whereas a good deed should call forth approbation and a wicked deed disapprobation, the doer of the deed, whether good or wicked, always deserves respect or pity as the case may be. 'Hate the sin and not the sinner' is a precept which, though easy enough to understand, is rarely practised, and that is why the poison of hatred spreads in the world. This ahimsa is the basis of the search for truth." https://gandhiashramsevagram.org/autobiography/chapter-85.php
24. Dhammapada 5, translated by Acharya Buddharakkhita: "Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. By non-hatred alone is

hatred appeased. This is a law eternal." Access to Insight: https://accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.01.budd.html

25. Mencius 1B8, translated for this book: "One who wrecks humaneness is called a wrecker; one who wrecks rightness is called a destroyer. A wrecker and destroyer is called a mere fellow. I have heard of the punishment of the fellow Zhou; I have not heard of a ruler being murdered." Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/mengzi/liang-hui-wang-ii
26. Laozi, *Daodejing*, chapter 31, translated for this book: "Weapons are instruments of ill omen. … When many people are killed, weep for them with grief; when you win a war, treat it with the rites of mourning." Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/dao-de-jing
27. Raphael Lemkin coined the word "genocide" in *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944). Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), Article I: "The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish." UN Digital Library (A/RES/260(III)[A]): https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/666848
28. Robert H. Jackson, opening statement before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, November 21, 1945: "That four great nations, flushed with victory and stung with injury stay the hand of vengeance and voluntarily submit their captive enemies to the judgment of the law is one of the most significant tributes that Power has ever paid to Reason." Robert H. Jackson Center: https://www.roberthjackson.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Excerpts-from-the-Nuremberg-Opening-Statement.pdf; full text, Yale Avalon Project: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/chap_05.asp
29. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998; in force 2002), Article 25: individual criminal responsibility, including for those who aid, abet or otherwise assist (Article 25(3)(c)); the Court's jurisdiction is over natural persons (Article 25(1)). International Criminal Court: https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/Publications/Rome-Statute.pdf
30. On the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo: first gathering of fourteen mothers on Saturday, April 30, 1977; white headscarves made from their children's cloth diapers; the disappearance of founders Azucena Villaflor, Esther Ballestrino de Careaga and María Ponce de Bianco in December 1977; Villaflor's identification by DNA and burial in the Plaza de Mayo; weekly Thursday marches; about 140 grandchildren found by the Grandmothers; 30,000 disappeared as cited by human rights groups. Buenos Aires Herald, https://buenosairesherald.com/human-rights/46-years-of-

the-mothers-of-plaza-de-mayo; The Real News, https://therealnews.com/mothers-of-argentinas-30000-disappeared-half-century-struggle-for-justice; openDemocracy, https://archive.opendemocracy.net/en/mothers-plaza-de-mayo/; Gender Security Project, https://gendersecurityproject.com/subversion-diaries/mothers-of-plaza-de-mayo-resisting-disappearance-and-erasure; Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mothers_of_Plaza_de_Mayo

Chapter 8. We Are One: Oneness with All Life

The Principle

A commitment to oneness. Oneness with fellow beings, with nature, with God, and with all forms of sentient beings and life.[1]

In plain words: We are all connected: to each other, to nature, to whatever you hold sacred, and to every living thing. Live like it.

My Story

I was five when Iraq attacked Iran. My mother was a nurse. On Fridays, I went with her to the hospital, where refugees and frightened families sheltered in the corridors. As I wrote many years later: “We had no bunker. We had each other.”[2]

At eleven, I arrived in California as, in my words, “the neighbor nobody had asked for,” an Iranian boy in ESL classes.[2] A Vietnamese boy named Trần and his friends took me in. You met them in Chapter 1.

The hospital corridor and the ESL classroom taught me the same lesson. In hard times, the people who matter are the ones next to you. They are not always the ones who look like you or pray like you.

Today my mornings hold more than one tradition. I pray Fajr, the dawn prayer of Islam. I hear the Lord’s Prayer in Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke. I join in Buddhist chanting. I carry the Qur’an, the Bible and the poems of Rumi.[3]

My church, the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples in San Francisco, was built on this idea. You will meet its founder in this chapter's Lived It story.

In my book No Ethics in Big Tech, I named the real struggle of our time. It is between two competing ideas: "I am one. And we are one. Silicon Valley has built a monument to the first. This book is an argument for the second."[4]

This chapter is an argument for the second, too.

Why It Matters

Oneness does not mean everyone must believe the same thing. In my video about the principles, I said: "I don't know what your higher power is. Some people are atheists, some people are agnostics, some people believe in music. There's a lot of things that can unite us."[5]

Oneness is not sameness, either. Remember the garden from Chapter 6. It needs many kinds of trees and flowers to be full of life. A family is one, but no two members are alike.

Why does this matter? Because the opposite idea, "I am one," is powerful. It says: my company, my shareholders, my side come first. In my book, I wrote that the surveillance economy and the AI targeting systems are "built on the first competing idea: I am one. My shareholders are one. My quarterly earnings are one."[6]

Oneness says the opposite. Think of a person whose house was bombed by a system a tech company built. As I wrote, the line between you and that person "is not a moral boundary. It is a geographic accident. And geographic accidents do not create moral permission."[6]

In plain words: being born on the other side of a border does not make someone matter less.

Oneness also reaches across the whole planet. Some powerful people take risks that could harm everyone. As I wrote, they make that choice “on behalf of eight billion people who were never asked.”[7]

And oneness reaches beyond humans. The principle includes all forms of sentient beings and life, every creature that can feel. In my book I added “forms of sentient life we do not yet understand.”[6]

Oneness is not a feeling you wait for. It is a commitment. It shows up in how you treat a neighbor, a stranger, an animal and a river.

Find Your Lens

Each lens shows how one tradition sees the oneness of all people and all life. Read the one that speaks to you, or read them all. Each lens stands on its own. When you see the words “in plain English,” the old text has been put into simple modern words. The full standard translation is in the notes at the end of the chapter.

Lenses in this chapter: Jewish · Christian · Muslim · Persian and Zoroastrian · Hindu, Jain and Sikh · Buddhist · Chinese · Native American · Humanist and Scientific.

Jewish Wisdom

The prophet Malachi asked a question that still stings. In plain English: “Do we not all have one Father? Did not one God create us? Then why do we betray one another?”[8]

Jews traditionally say the Shema, the central prayer of their faith, every morning and evening. In plain English: “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One.”[9]

How it supports the principle: One God made all of us. That makes every human being a brother or sister.

Christian Wisdom

The apostle Paul told the people of Athens that God made all nations from one source. In plain English: “From one blood God made every nation of people to live on the face of the earth.”[10]

He wrote that faith erases the walls between people. In plain English: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female. You are all one in Christ Jesus.”[11]

And on the night before he died, Jesus prayed for his followers “that they all may be one.”[12]

How it supports the principle: In Christian faith, the human family shares one blood and one hope.

Muslim Wisdom

The Qur’an teaches that human differences are a gift, meant to bring us closer. In plain English: “People, We created you from a male and a female. We made you nations and tribes so that you may know one another. The most noble of you before God is the most righteous.”[13]

It also reminds us of where we all began. In plain English: God “created you from one soul.”[14]

Imam Ali wrote a famous letter to Malik al-Ashtar, his new governor of Egypt. He told him to fill his heart with mercy and kindness for all the people. Why? Because “they are of two kinds, either your brother in religion or one like you in creation.”[15]

The Prophet Muhammad said that the angel Gabriel kept urging him to treat his neighbors well. Gabriel urged him

so often that the Prophet thought the neighbor would be made an heir, part of the family.[16]

How it supports the principle: In Islam, every person is either your brother or sister in faith or your equal in creation. No one is left outside.

Persian and Zoroastrian Wisdom

In the 1200s, the Persian poet Saadi of Shiraz wrote a short poem that many Iranians know by heart. Here it is in my own translation:[17]

“The children of Adam are limbs of one body, made of one essence. When one limb aches, the others cannot rest. If you feel nothing for another’s suffering, you do not deserve the name of human.”[17]

How it supports the principle: Saadi says we are one body. When anyone hurts, all of us should feel it.

Hindu, Jain and Sikh Wisdom

An ancient Hindu text, the Maha Upanishad, has a famous saying. In plain English: “‘This is mine, that is theirs,’ say the narrow-minded. For the noble-hearted, the whole world is one family.” These words are carved in the entrance hall of India’s Parliament.[18]

Guru Gobind Singh was the son of Guru Tegh Bahadur, whom you met in Chapter 5. After his father was put to death, he still taught that all people are one. “Someone is Hindu and someone a Muslim,” he wrote, “then someone is Shia, and someone a Sunni. Recognize the whole of human race as one.”[19]

How it supports the principle: For the noble-hearted, the world is one family, and every label is smaller than our shared humanity.

Buddhist Wisdom

Right after his awakening under the Bodhi tree, the Buddha reflected on how all things are connected: “When this is, that is. From the arising of this comes the arising of that. When this isn’t, that isn’t.”[20]

How it supports the principle: Nothing exists on its own. Everything rises together, so what we do to one thing, we do to all.

Chinese Wisdom

Mencius taught that love grows in widening circles. It starts with “affection for kin,” grows into “humaneness toward the people,” and reaches “care for creatures.”[21]

He also said, “The ten thousand things are all complete within me.” In Chinese, “the ten thousand things” means everything that exists.[22]

The Daoist teacher Laozi spoke of “the One” that holds the world together: “Heaven got the One and became clear; Earth got the One and became settled.”[23]

How it supports the principle: In Chinese wisdom, the good heart keeps widening until it holds the whole world.

Native American Wisdom

The Lakota people end their prayers with two words: Mitakuye Oyasin. They mean “all my relatives,” or “we are all related.”[24]

These relatives are not only people. George Tinker is an Osage teacher of faith. He explained that, for every Lakota who prays this prayer, our relatives include “the four-leggeds, the wingeds, and all the living-moving things on Mother Earth.”[24] Animals, birds and every living thing are part of the family.

Butch Artichoker, a Lakota elder, added something beautiful: “In Lakota the word for prayer is ‘wacekiya’ which means to call on a relative!”[25]

How it supports the principle: For the Lakota, every prayer is a reminder that all life is one family.

Humanist and Scientific Wisdom

In 1950, the scientist Albert Einstein wrote letters to comfort two grieving fathers. Each had lost a child.[26]

“A human being is a part of the whole, called by us ‘Universe,’” he wrote. We feel separate from the rest, but that feeling is “a kind of optical delusion.” Our task, he said, is to free ourselves. We do it “by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”[26]

How it supports the principle: Even without religion, science shows that we are part of one whole. Compassion is how we live that truth.

Lived It: Howard Thurman

Howard Thurman was born in Florida in 1899. He was the grandson of people who had been enslaved.[27]

He grew up to be a minister, a teacher and a dean at Howard University. In 1936, he led a group of Black Americans on a journey to India, where he met Mahatma Gandhi. That meeting shaped the rest of his life.[27]

In 1944, America was still divided by race, and so were most of its churches. That year, Thurman, who was Black, and Alfred Fisk, a white minister, opened the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples in San Francisco. It was the first major church in the country built on purpose for people of every race and faith.[27]

By 1949, about half its members were white. The rest were Black, Chinese, Japanese and Filipino.[27] Its members still make a simple promise: “I affirm my need for a growing understanding of all peoples as children of God.”[28]

That same year, Thurman published Jesus and the Disinherited, a book about faith, fear and nonviolence. Martin Luther King Jr. read it and carried it during the Montgomery bus boycott. Thurman had been a classmate of King’s father in college.[27]

Thurman died in 1981. His church is still open. It is my church. Rev. Dorsey Blake, whom you met in Chapter 4, led it and wore Thurman’s robe. When I was in the hospital, he brought me Thurman’s books.

Thurman did not just talk about oneness. He built a home for it, and he opened the door to everyone.

What You Can Do

1. Visit a house of worship, a cultural center or a neighborhood that is not your own. Listen more than you speak.
2. Learn to say hello and thank you in the language of a neighbor.
3. Spend an hour outdoors. Notice every living thing you share it with.
4. When you hear “us versus them,” ask: who is “them,” and what would change if they were family?
5. Ask Saadi’s question: when someone else aches, do I feel it?

Remember

- We are one: with each other, with nature, with what we hold sacred and with all life.
- Oneness is not sameness. A family is one, but no two members are alike.
- A border is a geographic accident. It does not make anyone matter less.

Notes and Links

Every link shown below was confirmed on November 1, 2026.

1. GoAmour.com, “Principles of GoAmour,” Principle 8. https://goamour.com/principles/
2. Vahid Razavi, “Humanity Is Not a Rough Draft,” NoEthicsInBigTech.com, October 31, 2026: “I was five when Iraq attacked Iran. My mother, may she rest in peace, was a nurse, and on Fridays I went with her to the hospital, where refugees and frightened families sheltered in the corridors. We had no bunker. We had each other. At eleven I arrived in California as the neighbor nobody had asked for, an Iranian boy in ESL classes.” https://noethicsinbigtech.com/humanity-is-not-a-rough-draft/
3. The author’s account of his daily practice, given for Chapter 2 of this book.
4. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), preface, page iii: “The real struggle humanity is facing — beneath all the politics and the weapons and the corporate structures and the algorithms — is between two competing ideas: I am one. And we are one. Silicon Valley has built a monument to the first. This book is an argument for the second.” https://noethicsinbigtech.com/book/
5. Vahid Razavi, “GoAmour Principles!” video, about 8:40 to 9:30 (spoken words lightly cleaned up): “I don’t know what your higher power is. Some people are atheists, some people are agnostics, some people believe in music. There’s a lot of things that can unite us.” https://youtu.be/WHhn_J21PSk
6. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 18, pages 129 to 130: “The eighth principle is oneness. Oneness with fellow beings, with nature, with god, with forms of sentient life we do not yet understand … the whole of the AI targeting system is built on the first competing idea: I am one. My shareholders are one. My quarterly earnings are one … the boundary between you and the person whose house was bombed by a system your company built is not a moral boundary. It is a geographic accident. And geographic accidents do not create moral permission.”
7. Vahid Razavi, “The Ecocide Precedent,” NoEthicsInBigTech.com, September 4, 2026, section X: under the idea “We are one,” a grave risk to all “is a decision that no individual has the standing to make on behalf of eight billion people who were never asked.” https://noethicsinbigtech.com/the-ecocide-precedent-why-tech-ai-and-financial-executives-must-face-personal-criminal-liability/

8. Malachi 2:10. King James Version: “Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?” Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+2%3A10&version=KJV
9. Deuteronomy 6:4. King James Version: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.” Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+6%3A4&version=KJV
10. Acts 17:26. King James Version: God “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.” Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17%3A26&version=KJV
11. Galatians 3:28. King James Version: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+3%3A28&version=KJV
12. John 17:21. King James Version: “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.” Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17%3A21&version=KJV
13. Qur’an 49:13, Sahih International: “O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you.” Quran.com: https://quran.com/49:13
14. Qur’an 4:1, Sahih International: “O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women.” Quran.com: https://quran.com/4:1
15. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, letter to Malik al-Ashtar on his appointment as governor of Egypt, Nahj al-Balagha, Letter 53: “Habituate your heart to mercy for the subjects and to affection and kindness for them … since they are of two kinds, either your brother in religion or one like you in creation.” https://al-islam.org/fa/node/20881
16. Sahih al-Bukhari 6014 to 6015, as cited by the author in “Humanity Is Not a Rough Draft”: Gabriel kept urging the Prophet to treat neighbors well, until he thought Gabriel would make the neighbor an heir. Sunnah.com: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6014; https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6015
17. Saadi of Shiraz, *Golestan* (1258), chapter 1, “On the Conduct of Kings,” story 10. The main text gives the author’s own

translation, first published in “Humanity Is Not a Rough Draft,” NoEthicsInBigTech.com, October 31, 2026, https://noethicsinbigtech.com/humanity-is-not-a-rough-draft/. The Persian text, from the standard edition by Mohammad Ali Foroughi, with the 1888 English translation attributed to Edward Rehatsek (public domain):

بنی‌آدم اعضای یکدیگرند

که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند

The sons of Adam are limbs of each other / Having been created of one essence.

چو عضوی به درد آورد روزگار

دگر عضوها را نماند قرار

When the calamity of time afflicts one limb / The other limbs cannot remain at rest.

تو کز محنت دیگران بی‌غمی

نشاید که نامت نهند آدمی

If thou hast no sympathy for the troubles of others / Thou art unworthy to be called by the name of a man.

Persian text: Ganjoor, https://ganjoor.net/saadi/golestan/gbab1/sh10/. Many people quote the first line as “limbs of one body” (yek peykar), the reading the author’s translation follows; the oldest manuscripts read “limbs of one another” (yekdigar). Background and translations: Wikipedia, “Bani Adam,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bani_Adam

18. Maha Upanishad, chapter 6, verses 71 to 73 (numbering varies by edition). Standard translation: “‘This is mine, that is theirs’ — such is the reckoning of the narrow-minded. For those of noble character, the entire world is one family.” Sanskrit: ayam nijah paro veti ganana laghucetasam / udaracaritanam tu vasudhaiva kutumbakam. The verse is engraved in the entrance hall of the Parliament of India. Wikipedia, “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vasudhaiva_Kutumbakam

19. Guru Gobind Singh, Akal Ustat, verse 85 (Dasam Granth): “hindoo turak kooo raafajee imaam saafee maanas kee jaat sabai ekai pehichaanabo.” Translation from the World Religions Conference, “Sikh Perspective,” https://www.worldreligionsconference.org/index.php/34-40-documents/241-sikh-perspective-40th-wrc; Sikh Institute, https://sikhinstitute.org/ggs/9-arvindersingh.html

20. Udana 1.3, Bodhi Sutta (Awakening), translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu: “When this is, that is. From the arising of this comes the arising of that. When this isn’t, that isn’t. From the cessation of this comes the cessation of that.” https://accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/ud/ud.1.03.than.html
21. Mencius 7A45, translated for this book: “affection for kin, humaneness toward the people, care for creatures” (親親而仁民，仁民而愛物). Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/mengzi/jin-xin-i
22. Mencius 7A4, translated for this book: “the ten thousand things are all complete within me; to turn to myself and find sincerity, there is no greater joy.” Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/mengzi/jin-xin-i
23. Laozi, *Daodejing*, chapter 39, translated for this book: “Heaven got the One and became clear; Earth got the One and became settled.” Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/dao-de-jing
24. On Mitakuye Oyasin: Oglala Lakota Andrew Ironshell, “We say Mitakuye Oyasin at the beginning and end of our ceremonies” (Granta, https://granta.com/mitakuye-oyasin/); George “Tink” Tinker (Osage), “For All My Relations,” Sojourners, January 1991, quoted at Southern Methodist University, https://faculty.smu.edu/twalker/purpose.htm; Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitakuye_Oyasin
25. Butch Artichoker (Lakota), “NAMA Statement and Prayer for Our Members and Their Families,” Indianz.com. https://indianz.com/covid19/?p=1661
26. Albert Einstein, letters of consolation to Rabbi Robert S. Marcus (February 12, 1950, after the death of his young son from polio) and to Rabbi Norman Salit (March 4, 1950, after the death of his daughter). The often-quoted text blends wording from both letters and their translations: “A human being is a part of the whole, called by us ‘Universe,’ a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest — a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us … Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.” Einstein Archives, Hebrew University (AEA 60-425; AEA 61-226), via Open Siddur, https://opensiddur.org/prayers/life-cycle/death/mourning/ein-mensch-ist-ein-raumlich-und-zeitlich-beschranktes-a-human-being-is-limited-in-time-and-space-a-letter-of-consolation-by-albert-einstein-1950/; The

Marginalian, https://www.themarginalian.org/2016/11/28/einstein-circles-of-compassion/

27. On Howard Thurman (1899 to 1981): Boston University, Howard Thurman Papers Project, https://www.bu.edu/htpp/thurman; Stanford, Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/thurman-howard; BlackPast, https://blackpast.org/aaw/thurman-howard-1900-1981; PBS, This Far by Faith, https://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/people/howard_thurman.html; Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Thurman
28. Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples, commitment statement. https://www.fellowshipsf.org/

Chapter 9. Not How Long, but How Well: The Quality of Life

The Principle

Focus on the quality of existence, and not just the mere quantity of prolonging existence.[1]

In plain words: How well we live matters more than how long. Fill your days with love, meaning and service to others.

My Story

My father, Ali Razavi, was an engineer at the National Iranian Oil Company. When I was twelve, he was diagnosed with mesothelioma, the asbestos cancer you read about in Chapter 1.[2]

My mother was a nurse, and she became his nurse too. After his doctor visits, she cared for him at home. When he was in the hospital, she spent whole nights at his bedside.[2]

She could not give him more years. What she could give him was her care and her presence, every day he had left.

He died at home when I was thirteen, in my first year of high school. I was at school that day. No one came to get me. I walked home to Albany Hills, and when I got there, he was gone.[2]

For years, I carried anger about that day. I told myself it was because no one sent for me. But my anger was never really at my family. I was angry that I had lost him. It was misplaced anger.[2]

Losing him so young taught me what this principle means. We do not get to choose how long we have with the people we love. We do get to choose what we do with that time.

Why It Matters

In my video about the principles, I said: “Every day we’re told that we’re lucky because we get to live a long time. Yes, we might be lucky to live a long time, but what is the quality of that life? That matters.” What counts, I said, is “the impact and the quality of life that we have and what we do for future generations.”[3]

In No Ethics in Big Tech, I put it this way. Quality is “not survival. Not the prolongation of biological function.” Quality is “the richness of the experience, the depth of the relationship, the meaning of the work, the texture of the days.”[4]

This does not mean that a life with illness or disability is worth less. My father’s illness never made his life matter less. I walk with a cane I call El Pato, and it has carried me across Spain. Quality is about how we live and love, not about having a perfect body.

It also means that every life cut short is a loss beyond counting. The children named on ParentsPlea.com lost more than years. As I wrote, they “lost futures that were full of quality — full of things they would have loved and built and become.”[4]

Some of the world’s richest people pour fortunes into bunkers and plans to escape to other planets. They are chasing more time and more safety for themselves. But as I wrote, “The answer … is not a better rocket. It is a better practice.”[5]

That practice is how we spend our days: with the people we love, with our neighbors and for the generations after us. The last chapter of my book has a title that says it best: “Live in Peace, Not Just Rest in Peace.”[6]

Find Your Lens

Each lens shows how one tradition measures a good life by how it is lived, not by how long it lasts. Read the one that speaks to you, or read them all. Each lens stands on its own. When you see the words “in plain English,” the old text has been put into simple modern words. The full standard translation is in the notes at the end of the chapter.

Lenses in this chapter: Jewish · Christian · Muslim · Persian and Zoroastrian · Hindu, Jain and Sikh · Buddhist · Chinese · Humanist and Scientific. The Native American lens sits out this chapter.

Jewish Wisdom

A psalm asks God for help to use our time well. In plain English: “Teach us to count our days, so that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”[7]

And the book of Ecclesiastes gives this advice. In plain English: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your strength.”[8]

How it supports the principle: Counting our days is not about how many there are. It is about making each one count.

Christian Wisdom

Jesus warned against measuring life by what we own. In plain English: “Watch out for greed. A person’s life does not consist in how much he owns.”[9]

He also taught where real treasure lies. In plain English: “Do not store up treasures on earth … For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”[10]

How it supports the principle: A rich life is not a life of riches. It is a life where the heart is in the right place.

Muslim Wisdom

The Qur’an says God created life and death for a reason. In plain English: God “created death and life to test you, to see which of you is best in deeds.”[11]

The test is not who lives the longest. It is who does the most good.

Imam Ali gave advice on how to live among people. He said: “Meet people in such a manner that if you die they should weep for you and if you live they should long for you.”[12]

How it supports the principle: In Islam, a life is measured by its deeds and by the love it leaves behind.

Persian and Zoroastrian Wisdom

The ancient Persian faith of Zoroastrianism sums up a good life in three phrases: humata, hukhta, hvarshta. They mean “good thoughts, good words, good deeds.”[13]

How it supports the principle: A good life is not measured in years. It is measured in what we think, what we say and what we do.

Hindu, Jain and Sikh Wisdom

Rabindranath Tagore was a poet from India. In 1913, he became the first person from Asia to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. In 1916, he wrote one line that holds this whole chapter: “Let life be beautiful like summer flowers and death like autumn leaves.”[14]

How it supports the principle: Tagore asks for a life that is full and beautiful. When death comes, may it come gently, in its season.

Buddhist Wisdom

The Dhammapada compares a short good life with a long empty one. In plain English: “Better to live one day good and mindful than to live a hundred years wicked and wild.”[15]

How it supports the principle: For the Buddha, one good day is worth more than a hundred wasted years.

Chinese Wisdom

Confucius said, “If I hear the Way in the morning, I could die content in the evening.” The Way means the right way to live. To find it, even for one day, is enough.[16]

The Daoist teacher Laozi said, “Whoever knows what is enough is rich.” He also said, “To die without perishing is longevity.” A life well lived does not vanish when it ends.[17]

How it supports the principle: In Chinese wisdom, the measure of a life is its goodness, not its length.

Humanist and Scientific Wisdom

In 1946, the nations of the world set up the World Health Organization. They wrote a new definition of health. It says: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”[18]

In other words, being healthy is not just about not being sick. It is about living well in body, mind and community.

The same group says that good care for very sick people makes life better for them and for their families.[19] That is what my mother gave my father.

How it supports the principle: Science agrees that a good life is about well-being, not just survival.

Lived It: Martin Luther King Jr.

By 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. had led the Montgomery bus boycott, spoken at the March on Washington and won the Nobel Peace Prize. He was 39 years old.[20]

That spring, the sanitation workers of Memphis, Tennessee, were on strike. King went to Memphis to stand with them.[20]

On April 3, he was exhausted, with a sore throat and a fever. He asked his friend Ralph Abernathy to speak in his place that night. But the crowd wanted King, and he came.[20]

Near the end of his speech, he said: “Like anybody, I would like to live a long life — longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will.”[20]

Then he said: “I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land.”[20]

The next evening, April 4, 1968, he was shot and killed in Memphis.[20]

King lived only 39 years. Measured in courage, in love and in what he did for future generations, his life was enormous. He chose quality over length, for the sake of others. Howard Thurman, whom you met in Chapter 8, helped shape his faith in nonviolence.

What You Can Do

1. Each night, ask yourself: what did I do today that mattered to someone else?
2. Spend real time with someone you love. No phone. Just be there.

3. Do one thing for a future you will not see: plant a tree, teach a younger child, clean a shared space.
4. Thank a caregiver: a nurse, a parent or a teacher who helps others live well.
5. Write down how you want people to remember the way you lived.

Remember

- How well we live matters more than how long.
- Quality of life is not about a perfect body. It is about love, meaning and service.
- Live in peace, not just rest in peace.

Notes and Links

Every link shown below was confirmed on November 1, 2026.

1. GoAmour.com, “Principles of GoAmour,” Principle 9. https://goamour.com/principles/
2. The author’s own account, given for this book: his father, Ali Razavi, an engineer at the National Iranian Oil Company, was diagnosed with mesothelioma when the author was twelve; his mother, a nurse, cared for him at home and at his hospital bedside; he died at home when the author was thirteen and a high school freshman, and the author walked home from school to Albany Hills. The author’s words on his anger: “I was angry that I lost him not at my family. It was misplaced anger.” On the illness and its cause, see Chapter 1.
3. Vahid Razavi, “GoAmour Principles!” video, about 9:30 to 10:00 (spoken words lightly cleaned up): “Every day we’re told that we’re lucky because we get to live a long time. Yes, we might be lucky to live a long time, but what is the quality of that life? That matters. It is simply not the quantity of our existence that we should be keeping track of, but the impact and the quality of life that we have and what we do for future generations.” https://youtu.be/WHhn_J21PSk
4. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 18, pages 129 to 130: “The ninth principle is the focus on quality of existence, not mere quantity. Not survival. Not the prolongation of biological function. Not the defense of life as a statistic on a population chart. Quality: the richness of the experience, the

depth of the relationship, the meaning of the work, the texture of the days. The children on ParentsPlea did not lose mere biological function when they died. They lost futures that were full of quality — full of things they would have loved and built and become." https://noethicsinbigtech.com/book/

5. Vahid Razavi, "Humanity Is Not a Rough Draft," NoEthicsInBigTech.com, October 31, 2026: "The answer to hierarchy, exit and scale is not a better rocket. It is a better practice." https://noethicsinbigtech.com/humanity-is-not-a-rough-draft/
6. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 18, "Live in Peace, Not Just Rest in Peace," page 126.
7. Psalm 90:12. King James Version: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+90%3A12&version=KJV
8. Ecclesiastes 9:10. King James Version: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+9%3A10&version=KJV
9. Luke 12:15. King James Version: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+12%3A15&version=KJV
10. Matthew 6:19 to 21. King James Version: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven ... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Bible Gateway (KJV): https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3A19-21&version=KJV
11. Qur'an 67:2, Sahih International: "[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed — and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving." Quran.com: https://quran.com/67:2
12. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, Nahj al-Balagha, Saying 10, translated by Sayyid Ali Reza. hadith.net, https://hadith.net/en/post/64393/nahj-al-balagha-hadith-n-10/; balagha.app, https://balagha.app/Sayings/10/export
13. The Zoroastrian maxim humata, hukhta, hvarshta (Avestan: good thoughts, good words, good deeds). The Yasna liturgy: "I praise good thoughts, good words, and good deeds." Avesta.org, https://avesta.org/yasna/

14. Rabindranath Tagore, *Stray Birds* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), no. 82, translated from Bengali by the author; public domain. Project Gutenberg eBook #6524, https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/6524/pg6524-images.html. Tagore received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913.
15. Dhammapada 110, translated by Acharya Buddharakkhita: "Better it is to live one day virtuous and meditative than to live a hundred years immoral and uncontrolled." Access to Insight: https://accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.08.budd.html
16. Confucius, *Analects* 4.8, translated for this book: "If I hear the Way in the morning, I could die content in the evening." Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/analects/li-ren
17. Laozi, *Daodejing*, chapter 33, translated for this book: "Whoever knows what is enough is rich" (知足者富); "to die without perishing is longevity" (死而不亡者壽). Chinese Text Project: https://ctext.org/dao-de-jing
18. Constitution of the World Health Organization (adopted 1946, in force 1948), preamble. WHO: https://www.afro.who.int/fr/node/7722
19. World Health Organization, fact sheet on palliative care: palliative care "improves the quality of life of patients and that of their families" who are facing the problems of serious illness. WHO: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/palliative-care
20. On Martin Luther King Jr.'s last speech, "I've Been to the Mountaintop," delivered at Bishop Charles Mason Temple, Memphis, April 3, 1968: Stanford, Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/ive-been-mountaintop (quoting King, "I've Been to the Mountaintop," in *A Call to Conscience*, ed. Carson and Shepard, 2001, pages 222 to 223); National Park Service, Mason Temple, https://www.nps.gov/places/tennessee-mason-temple-memphis.htm. King's speeches are under copyright; brief quotation only.

Chapter 10. Add Your Own!

The Principle

Open to suggestions! Who knows — figure it out and add to the list. Make this list as lengthy as you like, as long as the items on your list are in line with the nine principles above.[1]

In plain words: This list is not finished. Add your own principles, big or small, as long as they agree with the first nine.

My Story

I don't know it all. I said so in my video about the principles: "I don't have all the answers. This is not a complete list."[2]

That is why the tenth principle is an open door. At one of my GoAmour events, someone stood up with a new one: everyone should clean their own toilet. I kind of liked it.

It is simple. It is fair. Nobody should leave their mess for someone else to clean up.

In No Ethics in Big Tech, I wrote: "Whoever you are, reading this — you have something to add." Your version of love does not have to match mine. "It needs to be yours, honest, and in line with the nine principles above."[3]

The One Rule

There is only one rule. Your principle must agree with the first nine. It does not have to do all nine things. (Cleaning a toilet does not protect digital rights!) But it must never work against any of them.

Here are the nine, one line each:

1. Treat others the way you want to be treated.
2. Choose freely, without prejudice or judgment.
3. Stay free to end or continue any subscription, with no long-term traps.
4. Love with knowledge, respect, care and responsibility.
5. Protect human rights and digital rights.
6. Support life in all its forms.
7. Cure hate and violence, or bring them to justice in this world.
8. Remember that we are one.
9. Care about how well we live, not just how long.

If your idea fights with any of these, it does not belong on the list. If it fits with all of them, welcome aboard.

Clean your own toilet passes the test. It treats others fairly. It takes care of the home we share. And it makes life a little better for everyone.

Ideas to Get You Started

A principle does not have to be deep. It can be, but it can also be simple. Here are a few from friends and from me:

- Clean your own toilet.
- Take out your own trash.
- Limit your time online.
- Move your body every day, and take care of yourself.
- Learn the names of your neighbors.
- Say thank you to the people who serve you.

Your Turn

Write yours here.

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

15. _____

Want to share yours? Visit the principles page at GoAmour.com and send in your idea.[1]

Remember

- This list is never finished.
- Add anything you like, big or small, as long as it agrees with the first nine.
- Start with your own toilet.

Notes and Links

Every link shown below was confirmed on November 1, 2026.

1. GoAmour.com, “Principles of GoAmour,” Principle 10, with a “Suggest” option for readers. https://goamour.com/principles/
2. Vahid Razavi, “GoAmour Principles!” video, about 10:00 to 10:40 (spoken words lightly cleaned up): “The 10th principle is I don’t know it all. I don’t have all the answers. This is not a complete list … I encourage you to add content to it … make the list as long as you want, as long as the first nine conditions you agree with.” https://youtu.be/WHhn_J21PSk
3. Vahid Razavi, *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), Chapter 18, page 130: “And the tenth principle is the most radical of all: add your own. This list is not finished … Whoever you are, reading this — you have something to add. You have seen something, lost something, built something, survived something that I have not. Your version of love is not exactly mine. It does not need to be. It

needs to be yours, honest, and in line with the nine principles above.” https://noethicsinbigtech.com/book/

Afterword: Blessed Are the Peacemakers

Near the start of his most famous sermon, Jesus named the people who would be blessed. Two of his blessings have stayed with me through every chapter of this book.

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”[1]

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”[2]

Today, some of the richest people on earth are building bunkers and rockets. They are planning their escape.

I answered them with satire, a piece of writing that uses humor to make a serious point. In “Bon Voyage, Billionaires,” I made a mock formal proposal. Put the billionaires, the royals and the famous on the first rocket to Mars, and give their fortunes to refugees and the poor.[3] Send the rich away first, and let the meek inherit the earth.

The next day, I wrote “Humanity Is Not a Rough Draft.” In it I said: “Peace is not on Mars. It lives next door.”[4]

So let me be clear about who these principles are for. They are for people who want to live on earth, not escape from it to a bunker or to Mars.

To those who want to leave, I wish a great bon voyage. They should create their own principles. Some of them have already published their manifestos. They should stick with those, in their bunkers or on the way to Mars. Their own words will serve them much better than anything I could come up with.[5]

The rest of us are staying. Peace is not something the powerful will hand us from far away. It is something we build where we are, with the people next to us.

It starts with treating others as you want to be treated. It grows when we choose freely, love with care, protect each other's rights and stand up for life. It asks us to cure hate, and to demand justice when hate will not be cured. It reminds us that we are one. And it asks us to live well, not just long.

The meek and the peacemakers are not famous. They are nurses and teachers, neighbors and friends. They are mothers who march in a square every Thursday. They are pastors who drive ninety minutes to visit a friend in the hospital. They could be you.

So add your own principle. Visit GoAmour.com and share it. [6] Learn the name of one person whose life was taken by war, at ParentsPlea.com.[7] And keep going.

Live in peace, not just rest in peace.

Notes and Links

Every link shown below was confirmed on November 1, 2026.

1. Matthew 5:5. King James Version. Bible Gateway: https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5%3A5&version=KJV
2. Matthew 5:9. King James Version. Bible Gateway: https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5%3A9&version=KJV
3. Vahid Razavi, "Bon Voyage, Billionaires: A Formal Proposal to the Board of Peace," AgeofNepotism.com, October 30, 2026. https://ageofnepotism.com/bon-voyage-billionaires/
4. Vahid Razavi, "Humanity Is Not a Rough Draft," NoEthicsInBigTech.com, October 31, 2026. https://noethicsinbigtech.com/humanity-is-not-a-rough-draft/
5. The author's words, given for this book on November 1, 2026. Compare *No Ethics in Big Tech* (2026), "Author's Note on Mission and Financial Independence," page iii, on the defenders of the tech industry: "They can write and publish their own books." https://noethicsinbigtech.com/book/

6. GoAmour.com, “Principles of GoAmour.” https://goamour.com/principles/
7. ParentsPlea.com, a sourced memorial of lives lost to war and injustice. https://parentsplea.com

If You Need Help

Some parts of this book talk about war, death, suicide and deep sadness. If anything here brings up hard feelings, you do not have to face them alone.

If you are thinking about ending your life, or you are worried about someone else, please reach out now. Trained people are ready to listen, any time of day or night.

If you are in danger right now

Call your local emergency number: 911 in the United States and Canada, 112 in Spain and across the European Union, or 999 in the United Kingdom.

People you can call or text

- United States and Canada: call or text 988. In the United States, text AYUDA to 988 for help in Spanish.
- Spain: call 024.
- United Kingdom and Ireland: call Samaritans at 116 123.
- Anywhere in the world: visit findahelpline.com to find free support in your country.

Other ways to get help

Talk to someone you trust: a parent, a teacher, a school counselor, a doctor, a faith leader or a friend. You do not need the perfect words. “I am not okay” is enough.

If you take medicine prescribed by a doctor, talk to your doctor before you stop taking it.

Asking for help is not weakness. I have needed help myself. Asking for it is one of the bravest and wisest things a person can do.

Phone numbers can change. These were checked on November 1, 2026.[1]

Notes and Links

Every link shown below was confirmed on November 1, 2026.

1. Sources: SAMHSA, “988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline,” https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988; Find A Helpline (ThroughLine), 988 listing including Spanish text keyword AYUDA, https://findahelpline.com/; Wikipedia, “List of suicide crisis lines” (Spain 024; UK and Ireland 116 123), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_suicide_crisis_lines; Mayo Clinic Connect, crisis resources (Samaritans 116 123; findahelpline.com), https://connect.mayoclinic.org/blog/about-connect/tab/crisis-resources/
2. Research and editing assistance by Claude, an AI model made by Anthropic.

About the Author

Vahid Razavi was born in Tehran in 1975 and came to the United States in 1986, at the age of eleven, to escape the war between Iran and Iraq. He spent many years in the technology industry in Silicon Valley, including at Amazon Web Services.

He is the author of The Age of Nepotism (2009), Ethics in Tech and Lack Thereof (2018) and No Ethics in Big Tech (2026), and the director of the documentary Forever Peace Now. He founded GoAmour.com and ParentsPlea.com, a free memorial to people killed by war and injustice.

For more than a year and a half, he has lived on the road, sharing his film and his books.