

Leaving a Legacy—Principles to Live By by Jim Rohn

You know me, I am a philosopher. I love principles. Yes, actions are great and I talk about them regularly, but the important stuff is what lies underneath—the principles.

Here are what I consider to be the principles that we must commit to if we are to leave the legacy we desire:

1. Life is best lived in service to others. This doesn't mean that we do not strive for the best for ourselves. It does mean that in all things we serve other people, including our family, co-workers and friends.

2. Consider others' interests as important as your own. Much of the world suffers simply because people consider only their own interests. People are looking out for number one, but the way to leave a legacy is to also look out for others.

3. Love your neighbor even if you don't like him. It is interesting that Jesus told us to love others. But he never tells us to like them. Liking people has to do with emotions. Loving people has to do with actions. And what you will find is that when you love them and do good by them, you will more often than not begin to like them.

4. Maintain integrity at all costs. There are very few things you take to the grave with you. The number one thing is your reputation and good name. When people remember you, you want them to think, "She was the most honest person I knew. What integrity." There are always going to be temptations to cut corners and break your integrity. Do not do it. Do what is right all of the time, no matter what the cost.

5. You must risk in order to gain. In just about every area of life you must risk in order to gain the reward. In love, you must risk rejection in order to ask that person out for the first time. In investing you must place your capital at risk in the market in order to receive the prize of a growing bank account. When we risk, we gain. And when we gain, we have more to leave for others.

6. You reap what you sow. In fact, you always reap more than you sow—you plant a seed and reap a bushel. What you give you get. What you put into the ground then grows out of the ground. If you give love you will receive love. If you give time, you will gain time. It is one of the truest laws of the universe. Decide what you want out of life and then begin to sow it.

7. Hard work is never a waste. No one will say, "It is too bad he was such a good, hard worker." But if you aren't they will surely say, "It's too bad he was so lazy—he could have been so much more!" Hard work will leave a grand legacy. Give it your all on your trip around the earth. You will do a lot of good and leave a terrific legacy.

8. Don't give up when you fail. Imagine what legacies would have never existed if someone had given up. How many thriving businesses would have been shut down if they quit at their first failure? Everyone fails. It is a fact of life. But those who succeed are those who do not give up when they fail. They keep going and build a successful life—and a legacy.

9. Don't ever stop in your pursuit of a legacy. Many people have accomplished tremendous things later on in life. There is never a time to stop in your pursuit of a legacy. Sometimes older people will say, "I am 65. I'll never change." That won't build a great life! No, there is always time to do more and achieve more, to help more and serve more, to teach more and to learn more. Keep going and growing that legacy!

These are core principles to live by if you want to become the kind of person who leaves a lasting legacy.