

Fundamental Rules

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Note: As I always maintain, everything I say below is only my opinion, which is based on my own experiences and observations. – *Swami Devanand*

I have been living my life according to the following basic ideas/policies/guidelines (whatever you want to call them). I wish the list were shorter than this, but I suppose I am not smart enough to reduce it further!

1. There are no fixed rules in any realm of life; there are only theories. You should definitely consider existing theories/opinions, because that might save you considerable time designing your own, but, you must subject them to your own analysis and testing before accepting them.
2. You should be flexible and not be dogmatic about any ideas. That's because theories evolve and ideas can change. Even a cursory study of human history will prove this point. If you meet someone who has an "ultimate" idea (theory/philosophy/religion) run away from that person!
3. Everything in life is probabilistic (people misunderstand the word "random"). In other words: there are no guarantees. Your job is to give your best, but events and outcomes are most often influenced by this randomness. If you mentally accept this uncertainty in life, you end up being a much peaceful person.
4. You should have a "problem-solving" attitude. Whenever there is a problem/issue, think how to solve that problem, work around it, or simply move on. A lot of people like to analyze what went wrong, who did it, how to punish that person, and so on, which seems to me a waste of time. This attitude of "moving on" is also useful when bad things happen, which often do!
5. Always work on developing an understanding of how things (and people and phenomena) work. That understanding will help you create strategies for dealing with them. For instance, when you understand how your body works, you will be able to develop a proper food/exercise/sleep/cleanliness/care regimen. When you understand how your car works, you will be able to use/drive it better. When you understand how people are driven by their emotions, you will stop expecting purely logical responses. When you understand yourself, how to live your life becomes an

easy problem to solve. And so on.

6. Keep learning and challenging yourself all your life. How you want to challenge yourself is up to you. For example, athletes/sportsmen like to challenge themselves physically; intellectuals like to challenge themselves intellectually; and so on. Learning/challenging makes life fun.

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