

**DO IT ANYWAY:
THE PARADOXICAL COMMANDMENTS**

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Last year, my wife and I formed our own company, and in September I left my work at the YMCA to become a full-time speaker and writer. I did that to focus on one of my passions, which is to help people find personal meaning in a crazy world. I do that by making presentations, conducting seminars, doing research, and writing books. I find meaning by helping others to find meaning.

The Sixties/The Silent Revolution

The question of meaning is one that has interested me for most of my life. In fact, my interest began back in the sixties. I was active in student government in high school, and when I got to college, I continued speaking and writing about secondary school activities programs. During my four years in college, I gave more than 100 speeches to students at high schools, workshops, and conventions in eight different states.

As many of you remember, the sixties were a time of passion and hope, and also a time of conflict and confrontation on many college and some high school campuses. While I saw a lot of disturbing things during those years, I think what disturbed me the most was watching a lot of idealistic young people go out into the world to do what they thought was right, and good, and true, only to come back a short time later, discouraged, or even embittered, because the change they sought didn't occur, or nobody seemed to appreciate what they were trying to do.

I had two messages for them. First, I told them that they really had to love people, because change usually takes time, and love is one of the few motivations that is strong enough to keep you going until you achieve the change you seek. Second, I said that if they did what was right and good and true, they would get a lot of meaning and satisfaction, and that meaning and satisfaction would be enough. If people appreciated them, that was fine, but if they didn't, that was okay. If they had the meaning, they didn't need the glory.

I wrote two booklets for student leaders. I have one of the few remaining copies of the original edition of the first booklet: *The Silent Revolution: Dynamic Leadership in the Student Council*. It was a leadership manual, about motivation, and how to build coalitions and count votes and not lose your ideals when you have to compromise. In that booklet, on just one page, I wrote 149 words that I called the Paradoxical Commandments. This is what I wrote:

1. People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered. Love them anyway.
2. If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives. Do good anyway.
3. If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies. Succeed anyway.
4. The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.
5. Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway.
6. The biggest men and women with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest men and women with the smallest minds. Think big anyway.
7. People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs. Fight for a few underdogs anyway.
8. What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.
9. People really need help but may attack you if you do help them. Help people anyway.
10. Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth. Give the world the best you have anyway.

The Paradoxical Commandments are guidelines for finding personal meaning in the face of adversity. That's why the first phrase in each commandment is about adversity, or difficulty, or disappointment. People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered. The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. People really need help, but may attack you if you do help them.

But each statement about adversity is followed by a positive commandment: Love people anyway. Do good anyway. Help people anyway.

The paradox is that even when the world out there is going badly—even when the world out there is crazy—we can still find personal meaning and deep happiness. We do that by facing the worst in the world with the best in ourselves.

The fact is that, as individuals, we can't control the external world. We can't control the world economy, and the rate of population growth. We can't control the weather, or natural disasters like fires and floods and tsunamis. We can't control when terrorists may strike or wars may break out. We can't control which companies will acquire which companies, and which jobs will be downsized and which jobs will open up. We work hard, and prepare, and seize opportunities—we have to do that. We join with others to try to influence the external world—we should do that, too. But there are lots of things in our external world we just can't control.

What we can control is our inner lives. You and I get to decide who we are going to be and how we are going to live. And we can live our most cherished values, and we can stay close to our families and friends, and we can do what we know is right and good and true—no matter what. *No matter what*. The good news is that these are the things that have been giving people a lot of personal meaning for a long, long time. The even better news is that personal meaning is a key to being deeply happy.

What do I mean by “deep happiness”? I mean the kind of happiness that touches your spirit and connects with your soul. People have a lot of different names for that kind of happiness. Some call it self-actualization. Others call it self-fulfillment, or being centered. People of faith may call it finding God's will for their lives and then living that will. But whatever we call it, personal meaning is a key.

Some people call the Paradoxical Commandments a personal declaration of independence. It's a declaration of independence from all the external factors that we don't control. Whatever the world does to us, we can still find meaning and be happy.

Others call the Paradoxical Commandments a “no excuses” policy. Sure, some people are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered. So what? That's no

excuse. You have to love them anyway. You don't want to limit your life by limiting your love. And maybe the good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. So what? That's no excuse. You don't run out and do bad. You have to do good anyway. That's who you are, that's your character, that's your spirit— and that's where the meaning is to be found.

Some people have told me that when they first read the Paradoxical Commandments, they thought I must have been having a very, very bad year when I wrote them. That's not true. I have always been very optimistic. I think that if you do what is right, and good, and true, things will usually work out for you, and you will often receive recognition and praise.

But what if you don't? What if you put your heart and mind and soul into a project, and it fails? What if you do a brilliant job, and nobody notices? The answer is: So what? *So what?* You still have to be who you have to be. You still have to do what you have to do. You still have to live your most cherished values, and stay close to your family and friends, and do what you know is right and good and true— because that's where you'll find the most meaning. That's where you'll find the deep happiness. And you don't want to give that up. Don't ever give that up— especially not when times are tough.

Where the Paradoxical Commandments Have Traveled

My first student leadership booklet, the one that included the Paradoxical Commandments, was published by Harvard Student Agencies in 1968, and later by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. About 25-30,000 copies were sold between 1968 and 1972.

I went on with my life, and for 25 years, I didn't know what was happening to the Paradoxical Commandments. What I know now is that people were lifting the commandments out of that little booklet and putting them up on their walls and on their refrigerator doors, and putting them into speeches and articles. They spread around the United States and then around the world. Today, it is estimated that they have been seen and used by millions of people.

I know now that they have been used by business leaders, government officials, military commanders, religious leaders, university presidents, teachers, social workers, athletic coaches, and students. They were used by Boy Scouts in Canada and the United States. They were used by Rotary Clubs in Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Alabama— I like that combination! They were used by student leaders

in South Africa, the Cambodian Free Speech Movement, and an Iranian news and culture organization. They were used by a homeless shelter in Philadelphia, a welfare agency in Texas, a Family Council in Ohio, and a Methodist church in Kansas. They were used by the President of Zimbabwe. Karl Menninger used them in a speech at the United Nations in 1981. They have been translated into Japanese and used in homilies by a Japanese Catholic priest in Tokyo. They were published in John C. Maxwell's book, *Becoming a Person of Influence*, Rev. Robert Schuller's book, *Turning Hurts into Halos*, and Wayne Dyer's book, *There's a Spiritual Solution to Every Problem*. They are in Stephen Covey's new book, *The 8th Habit*. They have been set to music by a Suzzy and Maggie Roche in New York. They appeared in Ann Landers and *Reader's Digest*. They were in a Harvard Management Update and a newsletter of the engineering institute at Tufts University. They were used by a leadership program at a university in Belgium.

Why the Paradoxical Commandments Have Traveled

People ask me: Why have the Paradoxical Commandments traveled throughout the world for the past 37 years? The honest answer is that I don't know. However, from watching and listening and talking with people, I think there are probably four reasons.

First, they are a call to meaning, and people are hungry for meaning. The Paradoxical Commandments focus on the things that have given people meaning and a richer spiritual life for centuries— loving people, helping people, doing good.

Second, I think that the Paradoxical Commandments have spread because they are so fundamental that they cut across different ideologies, philosophies, and theologies. They are about the things that people have in common, not the doctrines that divide us. They have been used by Protestants, Catholics, Mormons, Jews, Buddhists, Confucianists, Jains, agnostics, and atheists. They seem to easily cross national boundaries. Each month I get between 4,000 and 5,000 visitors on my website, and they click in from at least 50 different countries. In addition to the United States and Canada, they click in from Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Ghana, Hong Kong, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Lebanon, Morocco, Nepal, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Romania, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, and dozens more. There is something about the commandments that interests people regardless of their country or culture.

Third, I think that the Paradoxical Commandments have spread because they are short, easy to read, easy to put up on a wall or inside a notebook, and easy to send to a friend or post on a website. They can be used as a kind of checklist, a quick reminder of how we need to live and who we need to be. For example, people have told me that they look at the Paradoxical Commandments every morning before going to work, to get some focus and perspective before starting their day.

Finally, I think that the Paradoxical Commandments have spread because they aren't questions or issues— they are commandments, written in the imperative voice. They're not wishy-washy. They don't say: Think about the possibility of maybe considering doing something. No— they say “Do it!” And no excuses— “Do it anyway!”

So those are my guesses as to why the Paradoxical Commandments have traveled around the world during the past 37 years. They are a call to meaning; they are fundamental; they are short and easy to share; and they are not wishy-washy— they are commandments.

The Mother Teresa Connection

The discovery that changed my life happened at the Rotary Club of Honolulu, down the street at the Royal Hawaiian hotel, in September 1997. We began each meeting with a poem or prayer or a thought for the day. That day, my fellow Rotarian got up and noted that Mother Teresa had died two weeks earlier, and said that in her memory, he wanted to read a poem she had written. I bowed my head in contemplation, and was astonished to recognize what he read out loud—it was eight of the original ten Paradoxical Commandments, exactly as I had written them thirty years earlier.

I went up after the meeting and asked him where he got the poem. He said, “Isn't it wonderful?” And I said, “Well, uh, actually, I wrote it.” He was a kind and courteous Rotarian, so he didn't say a word. However, he did give me a look. I don't know what that look meant to him, but to me, it meant “you poor self-delusional megalomaniac.” I asked him where he got the poem, and he said it was in a book about Mother Teresa, but he couldn't remember the title.

The next night I went to a bookstore and started looking through the shelf of books about the life and works of Mother Teresa. I found it, on the last page before the appendices in a book entitled, *Mother Teresa: A Simple Path*, compiled by

Lucinda Vardey. The Paradoxical Commandments had been reformatted to look like a poem, and they had been re-titled “Anyway.” There was no author listed, but at the bottom, it said: “From a sign on the wall of Shishu Bhavan, the children’s home in Calcutta.”

That really hit me. I wanted to laugh, and cry, and shout— and I was getting chills up and down my spine. The idea that Mother Teresa had put the Paradoxical Commandments up on the wall to look at from time to time as she and her colleagues ministered to their children— that touched me deeply. That was when I decided to start speaking and writing about the Paradoxical Commandments again, thirty years after I first wrote them.

Friends, Books, and Public Relations

Many people have been very helpful to me since then. I want to mention several as a way of saying thank you to them.

By the fall of 2000, I had finished writing a book about the Paradoxical Commandments, and was going to publish it myself, but good fortune struck. Wally Amos— Famous Amos— is a friend from Rotary and a member of the Board of Directors of the YMCA in Honolulu where I was working. Wally had been using the Paradoxical Commandments for years in his own speeches. He knew me, but he didn’t know that I wrote them. I knew him, but I didn’t know he was using them. When he found out, he also found out that I had a manuscript, and he connected me with his agent, who connected me with Inner Ocean Publishing on Maui. Inner Ocean was a new start-up company at the time. They decided to publish my book in the fall of 2001 as one of their first five books. The title was *The Paradoxical Commandments: Finding Personal Meaning in a Crazy World*.

Good fortune struck a second time, when Spencer Johnson agreed to do the foreword to the book. As you know, Spencer is the co-author of *The One Minute Manager*, which has sold untold millions of copies over the past 20 years, and more recently authored *Who Moved My Cheese?* which has sold more about 12 million copies around the world. My family has known Spencer and his family since they moved to Oahu more than ten years ago. In the mid-90s, he spent many hours with me, encouraging me to do more writing and speaking. It occurred to me that this book was in many ways the result of his mentoring. I asked him, and he agreed to do the foreword.

The book was introduced at the Maui Writers Conference in August 2001, two months before its official launch date. Good fortune struck again, in the form of Jack Canfield. As many of you know, Jack is the co-creator of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series. He was at the Maui Writers Conference, talked with Inner Ocean Publishing, and learned about my book. A short time later, he received a manuscript from Warner Books entitled “Anyway.” It was a book by Joann Davis, who was a senior executive at Warner Books and is now an agent. Joann didn’t know who wrote the Paradoxical Commandments— she just loved them and wanted to write a book about them. Warner books had paid her the advance and had laid out the book. They were just circulating the manuscript to get endorsement quotes from famous people. The book was to be published a few months later, in January 2002.

Jack Canfield realized that the Joann Davis book about “Anyway” was about the Paradoxical Commandments, and he notified Inner Ocean Publishing. Then a minor miracle occurred: I was able to find the copyright claim that I filed in 1968 on my student leadership booklet. We sent Warner Books a copy of the page of that booklet that included the Paradoxical Commandments, along with a copy of my copyright claim, and Warner Books withdrew their book.

The good fortune continued. Inner Ocean sent 40% of its full-time staff—that is to say, two people—to the international book fair in Frankfurt, Germany, in October 2001 when the book was launched nationally. They knocked on doors, met publishers, and hired a foreign rights agent. Within weeks, the foreign rights agent had sold the rights to my book to publishers in a dozen countries. The total has now exceeded 20. It has been translated and published in at least 16 languages.

That sudden surge of foreign interest led Inner Ocean to conclude that they needed a big boost for the book in the United States. So Inner Ocean hired a domestic rights agent, who found Susan Petersen Kennedy, the President of Penguin Putnam. Susan Petersen Kennedy wanted to publish a book on the Paradoxical Commandments, but couldn’t find the author. She had had her staff write to the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, the order founded by Mother Teresa. They responded that the Paradoxical Commandments were on the wall there, but nobody knew who wrote them. When our agent walked into Penguin Putnam and showed my book to Susan Petersen Kennedy, she recognized the commandments, and immediately made an offer to publish a new American edition.

Penguin Putnam published the new American edition of my book on April

29, 2002 under the title *Anyway: The Paradoxical Commandments*. Penguin Putnam did a spectacular job on publicity. They got my photo and story on the front page of *The New York Times*, and a feature story with photos in *The Washington Post*. I was interviewed by Katie Couric on the NBC “Today Show”—I was between golf tips and Bonnie Raitt. An Associated Press story reached hundreds of newspapers around the country, and even ships at sea.

People magazine did a two-page spread on me. When *People* magazine sent a reporter and photographer to Honolulu for several days to interview me and photograph me—well, my respect for *People* magazine just shot right up! I didn’t realize that they were focused on the meaning of life and related spiritual issues.

Penguin Putnam sent me on a national book tour for 5 ½ weeks. During that time I visited 29 major cities in 23 states. I did 15 TV interviews, 61 radio interviews, and 161 bookstore visits.

My second book was published by Inner Ocean Publishing in November 2003. The title is *Do It Anyway: The Handbook for Finding Personal Meaning and Deep Happiness in a Crazy World*. It is about how to live the Paradoxical Commandments in your daily life. It has questions for reflection or group discussion, and 40 stories from 32 different people who live the Paradoxical Commandments. Many of those people live here in Honolulu.

I have just finished writing my third book, which is titled *Jesus Did It Anyway: The Paradoxical Commandments for Christians*. The book illustrates the commandments with stories and verses from the Old and New Testaments. It is scheduled to be published this October by Penguin Putnam.

As a result of my books and the national publicity, I am now getting messages from people all over the world, telling me about how they have used the Paradoxical Commandments in their lives. People tell me they have used them to raise their kids, or get through a tough time at work, or set their goals. Many people have told me that they have carried the commandments in their wallets or purses or had them on their walls for twenty years. One man wrote to tell me that when he was young, the Paradoxical Commandments were the last gift that his mother left for him when she died of cancer. A woman wrote to tell me that the Paradoxical Commandments were read at her husband’s funeral, because he tried to live them every day. I learned that school children sent the Paradoxical Commandments to New York City firefighters and police after 9/11.

The New York Times called me the Rip Van Winkle of inspirational gurus. I wrote something when I was 19, and then 30 years went by, and wow! I “woke up” and discovered where the Paradoxical Commandments have been. I am now a part of a growing network of kindred spirits, and it is an unexpected blessing. I set out to inspire people, and now they are inspiring me.

The Search for Meaning

So what’s it all about? Well, it’s about finding personal meaning. Why would that be an issue? Why do people need help in finding personal meaning? I think people need help because they are looking for meaning in the wrong places. That’s because the search for success and the search for meaning are not the same search. They may overlap, but they are not the same. The things that our commercial, secular society considers to be “symbols of success” may have little to do with personal meaning.

For example, power is a symbol of success, but people learn over time that there is more meaning in service than in power. Wealth is a symbol of success, but people learn that there is more meaning in just enjoying the richness of daily life—family, friends, hobbies, sunsets. Fame is a symbol of success, but people know that there is more meaning in being known intimately to a few people than being known superficially by millions. Winning is a symbol of success, but people discover that the most meaning comes from always doing one’s personal best, win or lose.

The “symbols of success” are not necessarily bad. They’re just not *enough*. They aren’t enough as sources of personal meaning. We need more than success if we want to be deeply happy. We need a broader, deeper, more balanced life that is close to our sources of personal meaning.

My Hobby

One of my hobbies is conducting research on sources of personal meaning. Over the past few years, I have surveyed more than two thousand people. Most of them have been students at the University of Hawaii, but I have also surveyed Army officers, business and community leaders, a group of YMCA staff members, and members of my Rotary Club.

I use a survey instrument asking people to rate 27 different sources of personal meaning on a scale of 1 to 10, in which 1 is low and 10 is high. I have

used samples of convenience, not random samples, so I can't extrapolate the results to larger populations. But the results are interesting.

All but one of the groups I have surveyed have given the highest average rating to "my family." The rating is always a 9.0 or higher. Most have given the next-highest rating to "giving and receiving love." (The one group that didn't rate "my family" the highest, rated it a close second to "giving and receiving love.") Other sources of personal meaning that have always received high ratings are "intimate relationships," doing my personal best," "a sense of accomplishment," and "living my values." I find these results encouraging. These are wonderful sources of personal meaning.

Equally interesting, I think, is that all the groups I have surveyed so far have given low average ratings to power, wealth, fame, and winning—all typical symbols of success. These symbols of success usually get a 3, 4, or 5. Fame is always lowest, around a 4 or so. Wealth is usually higher, but still no higher than a 6 or 7. People know that these symbols of success are not important sources of personal meaning.

In short, I think people know where the most meaning comes from. The challenge is to live that way. The challenge is to live as close as possible to our sources of personal meaning— to incorporate them into our lives, so that we can find deep happiness. To do that, I think we need each other. We need to inspire each other, encourage each other, and gently remind each other to live that way. That is what I seek to do in my speaking and writing— inspire, encourage, and gently remind people.

Finding Meaning at Work

I am spending more time now working on the issue of finding meaning at work. The simple reason is that I get a lot of calls from people who say that they and their colleagues are tired, worn down, perhaps even burned out. They invite me to come and speak to them, in the hope that I might be able to share some wisdom and help them in some way.

The world of work is mostly built around the old notion that people can be motivated by extrinsic rewards like salary and benefits, good working conditions, and recognition by the boss or one's peers. These extrinsic rewards have been with us since the industrial revolution. They assume that the work that we are asking people to do is basically not interesting or satisfying, so the only way to get people

to do it is to offer rewards that are extrinsic to the work itself. Extrinsic rewards are important, but they aren't enough to keep us happy and energized. They don't prevent burnout or employee turnover.

Research and common sense tell us that we are happier, more productive, more innovative, more committed, and less likely to burn out if we are *intrinsically* motivated. We are intrinsically motivated when we do something because we want to, not because we have to. Research on intrinsic motivation has concluded that "meaningfulness" is an important intrinsic motivator. We want to do work that is meaningful to us.

Because of my interest in this area, I have begun surveying people regarding sources of meaning at work. Last fall I surveyed the leadership group at a bank in Northern California. I received 88 surveys rating 29 potential sources of personal meaning at work. The scale was "1" is low and "10" is high. Here are their highest rated sources of meaning:

Supporting my family	9.5
Living my values	9.5
Always doing what's right	9.4
Always doing my personal best	9.4
Relationships with colleagues	9.3
A sense of accomplishment	9.3
Making a difference	9.3

And here are their lowest-rated sources of personal meaning:

Recognition by superiors	7.2
My salary/wage	7.1
Accumulating wealth	6.6
Winning	6.4
Having power/influence	5.8
Fame	4.2

These were all leaders and managers at a successful, medium-sized financial institution. Two weeks ago, I got similar results from 92 people in the management group of a New York insurance company. They are leaders of a mid-size insurance company that is growing rapidly and expanding its base nationally.

While there are many dimensions to intrinsic motivation, I think it is clear that organizations that want productive, innovative, committed employees need to create environments in which their employees can live their values and enjoy the meaningfulness of their work. At a minimum, leaders and managers need to be “meaning makers,” identifying and articulating the meaningfulness of the programs, products, and services that their company is providing.

The Universal Moral Code

If I had to really narrow it down, and pick only a few things that are basic, universal sources of personal meaning, I would pick four. These are four principles or ideas that I think can be found in most of the world’s great religions and the teachings of many spiritual leaders. Here they are: Love people, help people, live ethically, and don’t be too attached to material things.

I think there is a causal link between these four principles. If you love people, you will want to help them. And if you are loving and helping people, you will want to treat them right— you will want to treat them ethically. Finally, if you are busy loving and helping others, and trying to treat them right, you are probably more focused on people than on material things.

Notice that one of these universal sources of personal meaning is to live ethically— to be moral in your treatment of others. I am convinced that most people share the same basic ideas about morality and ethics. When you look at the teachings of the world’s great religions, ancient laws, literature, and customs and practices around the world, you find a lot of similarities.

I have drafted my own list of moral principles that I think can be found throughout the world. I call this set of moral principles “The Universal Moral Code.” That’s my own name for it. The Universal Moral Code is not a set of principles that everyone follows successfully every day, nor a set of principles that each of us would apply the same way in every case. It is a set of moral principles that incorporate what most people believe is the right way to live— the right way to treat each other. The principles describe the kind of behavior we continually aspire to. Even when we fail to live up to these principles, we keep trying, because we believe that this is how we *should* live.

In my own experience and research, I have found fundamental moral principles expressed in both negative terms and positive terms. The negative

statements are about not doing harm, while the positive statements are about doing good. I think that the negative and positive statements, taken together, make up a balanced code. Here is the code as I see it:

DO NOT HARM OTHERS.

Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you.

Do not lie.

Do not steal.

Do not cheat.

Do not falsely accuse others.

Do not commit adultery.

Do not commit incest.

Do not physically or verbally abuse others.

Do not murder.

Do not destroy the natural environment upon which all life depends.

DO GOOD TO OTHERS.

Do to others what you would like them to do to you.

Be honest and fair.

Be generous.

Be faithful to your family and friends.

Take care of your children when they are young.

Take care of your parents when they are old.

Take care of those who cannot take care of themselves.

Be kind to strangers.

Respect all life.

Protect the natural environment upon which all life depends.

Of course, these are not the *only* moral rules we call upon to guide us in life, but I believe they are the most fundamental and universal.

I want to be clear: I'm not trying to impose this Universal Moral Code on anybody. Rather, I believe that people around the world are already imposing it on themselves. People around the world know that they should live this way, and they make a serious effort to do so. In fact, they have been making a serious effort for thousands of years— at least as far back as the Ten Commandments of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi of Babylon. We know that we need to follow these moral principles in order to live together successfully in our families and communities.

I believe that people who regularly lie, cheat, steal, and murder make up a very small percentage of the world's population. James Q. Wilson, in his book, *The Moral Sense*, estimates that only 5 or 6 percent of the world's population doesn't follow the basic moral rules of the societies in which they live. These are the people we are always reading about in the newspaper and seeing so vividly on TV. They cause a lot of pain and a lot of tragedy. But they are a very small minority. The real miracle, from my point of view, is that literally billions of people—the other 94 or 95 percent of the world's population—*do* behave themselves on a daily basis.

Now, it may be that most people attempt to live these moral principles because they have been trained by their parents and social institutions to do so. Perhaps they have been disciplined by their parents or punished by the justice system for breaking the rules, or they *fear* that they will be disciplined and punished for breaking the rules, so they follow the rules. Or, it may be that most people follow moral rules because they are obedient to religious teachings that emphasize the importance of living a moral life. They fear God, so they live as morally as possible.

I think there is an additional reason for living a moral life, which is that living a moral life is a meaningful and fulfilling thing to do. The people I have surveyed about the sources of meaning in the lives and work have given very high ratings “living my values” and “always doing what's right.” These are important sources of personal meaning, and personal meaning is a key to being deeply happy.

To put it simply, living ethically is not only the right thing to do, it is good in and of itself, and it leads to good things. For example, when you live ethically, you treat people right. Treating people right is fundamental to building strong, trusting, loving relationships. Those relationships can be a wonderful source of personal meaning and deep happiness. So among the reasons for articulating the Universal Moral Code is the reason that living morally will actually add personal meaning and happiness to one's life.

Transmitting the Message to the Next Generation

I get a lot of meaning out of passing the Paradoxical Commandments and the Universal Moral Code on to others—especially the next generation. One of my dreams is to get them into hundreds of thousands of classrooms all over the United States.

I know that the separation of church and state is an important issue in our country. I can understand when the Ten Commandments are removed from a government courthouse in Alabama. However, there is no constitutional issue regarding the Paradoxical Commandments, because they do not refer to divinity or religion. I want to thank our fellow member, Jerry Burris, and the *Honolulu Advertiser* for suggesting in an editorial published in December 2003 that the Ten Commandments in that Alabama courthouse could be replaced with the Paradoxical Commandments.

I would like to suggest that the Ten Commandments in that courthouse could also be replaced with the Universal Moral Code. And the interesting thing is that the Universal Moral Code includes the last six of the Biblical Ten Commandments. Only the first four of the Ten Commandments are about religion or our relationship with God. Quoting from the New International Version of the Bible, the first four are:

You shall have no other gods before me.
You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven
above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.
You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

The next six commandments are different. They are basic moral principles that are about our relationships with each other in our families and communities. The six are:

Honor your father and your mother.
You shall not murder.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

These statements come from a religious source, but they are moral statements. They are not about what or whom to believe in, they are about how to live. And what they say about how to live is fundamental and universal. I have included all six of them in my draft of the Universal Moral Code.

It seems to me that the basic values expressed in the Paradoxical

Commandments and the moral principles articulated in the Universal Moral Code can be shared without promoting religion. Certainly, these values and moral principles derive from, or are included in, religious teachings and sacred scriptures. But the values and moral principles themselves can be shared without religious references. I think they belong in our schools, universities, courthouses, and all manner of public and private places— wherever people wish to display them and teach them. They represent great wisdom, they are ancient and universal, they are consistent with our civil laws, and they are a source of personal meaning and deep happiness.

In Closing

I began by saying that I have a passion for helping people to find personal meaning. That's because I believe that, when all is said and done, if you want to find deep happiness, the most fundamental question is not: Is my life hard or easy? The most fundamental question is not: Am I a success or a failure? The most fundamental question is not: Do people appreciate me? The most fundamental question is: *Is my life meaningful?* I think that each of us can find the meaning that we need to be deeply happy. We know where it is. We just need to be inspired, encouraged, and gently reminded.

I urge people to live the paradoxical life, loving and helping others, and doing what is right and good and true. There are many benefits to living that way. One is this: When you look back, at the end of your life, you will have few regrets. In fact, you may not have any. You will look back on a life filled with meaning. Even more important, you won't wonder why you have lived. You'll know. You'll *know*. And that may be the greatest blessing of all.