



WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

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“

We need to build constructive beliefs, behavior patterns, thought patterns, habits, values and principles to override the deconstructive ones.

”

Barry Naude, The Essential Skills for Success

OUTLINE

- **Why** should we talk about **BELIEFS** instead of talking about **ISSUES**?
- **The foundation**: what should serve as the basis for our belief system?
- **The framework**: how should we create a lasting and resilient belief system?
- **The finished work**: your worldview
- **The purpose**: to sustain and share

WHY?

- We want to believe that what we believe to be real is really real.
- We want to believe that what we believe to be Truth matters in the greater scheme of things.
- These are difficult times to talk about what we believe to be the Truth.
- While we shouldn't denigrate the beliefs of others, we must be able to differentiate between Truth and other beliefs.

“

“What you see and what you hear depends a great deal on where you are standing. It also depends on what sort of person you are.”

”

C.S. Lewis “The Magician’s Nephew” (1955)

WHY?

- The public is intensely divided on a multitude of issues.
- Our ability to thrive as individuals is being challenged on many fronts.
- The fabric of society depends upon our ability to coalesce around common goals.

“

“We do not want merely to see beauty ... We want something else which can hardly be put into words — to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it.”

”

C.S. Lewis “Transposition and Other Addresses” (1949)

THE FOUNDATION

- Truth
- Wisdom
- Discernment
- Critical thinking

TRUTH

- Truth is conformity to facts or reality; exact accordance with that which is, or has been, or shall be. (Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary)
- Truth cannot be believed or wished into existence.
- Truth adheres to the ideas of correspondence, coherence, and pragmatism.

TRUTH

- The intellectual attempts to encompass the truth within his sphere of understanding. This diminishes the significance of real Truth, and turns it into a tool for the manipulation of ideologies.
- Ideologies should be built upon universal Truth, rather than trying to develop conceptual truths to support the ideology.

TRUTH

- In order to accept Truth, it is necessary to recognize that it belongs to something that is beyond human comprehension. One must accept Truth, not understand it.
- When truth becomes relative, it ceases to be Truth. Truth must exist beyond the understanding of mere mortals in order for it to have universal relevance.

TRUTH

- Classical: Monistic idealism. What is true is the “whole complete truth”. Individual judgments or ideologies are not the whole complete truth.
- Neo-classical: Truth is situational, subjective, and circumstantial.
- Post-modernism: is not definable as a truth claim.

POSTMODERNISM

- Defined by an attitude of skepticism, irony, or rejection toward what it describes as the grand narratives and ideologies associated with modernism, often criticizing Enlightenment rationality and focusing on the role of ideology in maintaining political or economic power.

POSTMODERNISM

- Postmodern thinkers frequently describe knowledge claims and value systems as contingent or socially-conditioned, describing them as products of political, historical, or cultural discourses and hierarchies.

POSTMODERNISM

- Common targets of postmodern criticism include universalist ideas of objective reality, morality, truth, human nature, reason, science, language, and social progress.
- Postmodern thought is broadly characterized by tendencies to self-consciousness, self-referentiality, epistemological and moral relativism, pluralism, and irreverence.

TRUTH

- Constructive empiricism: some scientific assertions are not expressions of truth so much as expressions of “acceptance” or “empirical adequacy”.

TRUTH AND SCIENCE

- Truth and science share at least one common attribute: they are the reflection of what is, not what one wants them to be.
- Truth cannot be created in support of an ideology: Truth can be used only to determine if the ideology is supported by reality and facts (correspondence).

TRUTH AND SCIENCE

- Science cannot be used to create a novel reality in order to achieve a desired end result (e.g. climate change, gender identity).
- Science can only be used to determine if a theory is consistently supported by reality and facts (coherence and pragmatism).
- The role of science is to discover the truth, not to create it.

“

The good thing about science is that it's true
whether or not you believe in it.

”

Neil deGrasse Tyson

STEP ONE

TRUTH

TRUTH AND POLITICS

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Des Moines Register
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IOWA STATE FAIR

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WISDOM

- Wisdom is not about intellect and knowledge; it is about belief, observation, and understanding.
- Use Truth as the foundation for building wisdom.
- Wisdom is the most important tool for the evaluation of our world.

“

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have good understanding.

”

Psalms 111:10 (NIV)



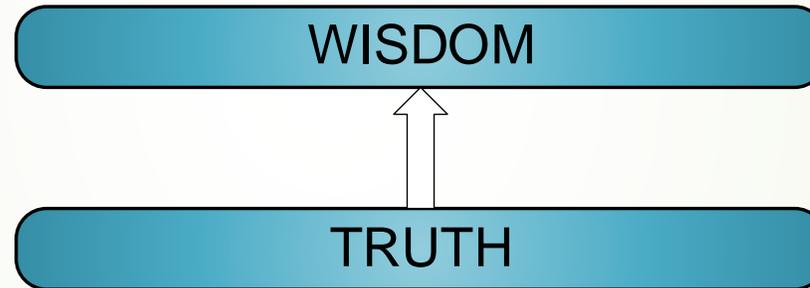
“

Knowing others is intelligence; knowing
yourself is true wisdom.

”

Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching

STEP TWO



DISCERNMENT

- Considered as a virtue, a discerning individual is considered to possess perceptual skills, wisdom, and to be of good judgement.
- When the Truth is known, one can differentiate (judge) between the truth and the lie.

“

Teach me knowledge and good judgment,
for I trust your commands.

”

Psalms 119:66

DISCERNMENT

- True discernment means not only distinguishing the right from the wrong; it means distinguishing the primary from the secondary, the essential from the indifferent, and the permanent from the transient. And, yes, it means distinguishing between the good and the better, and even between the better and the best.

“

Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but
not to his own facts.

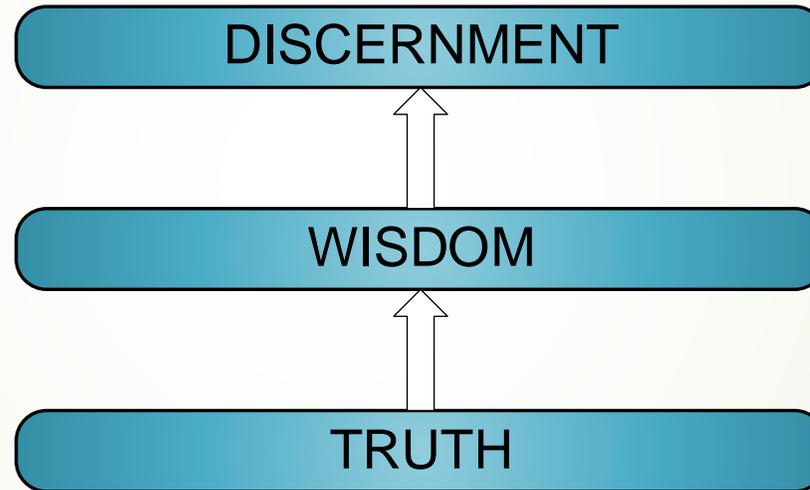
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Daniel Patrick Moynihan

DISCERNMENT

- How does discernment affect the way we live?
 - It acts as a means of protection.
 - It acts as an instrument of healing for others and for relationships.
 - It functions as a key to Christian freedom.
 - It serves as a catalyst to spiritual development.

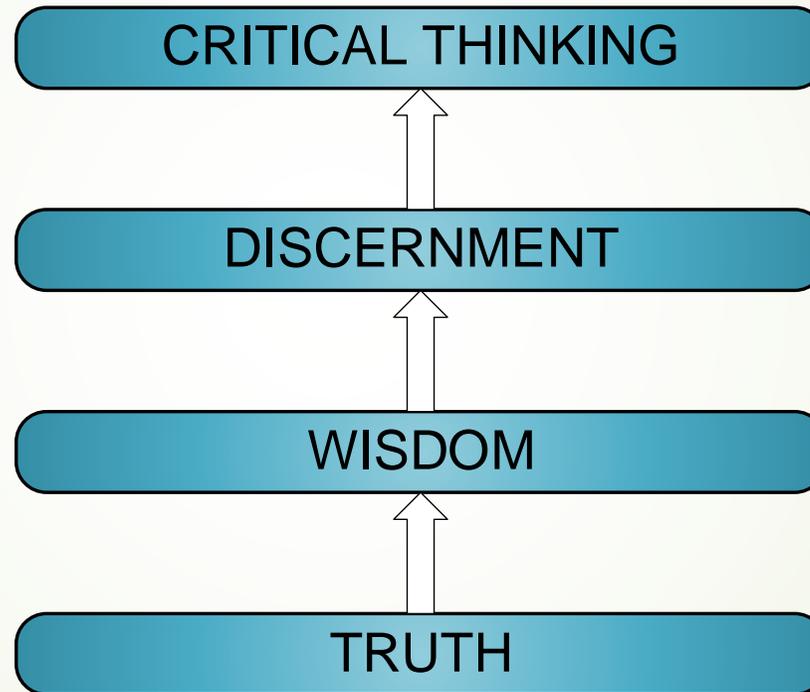
STEP THREE



CRITICAL THINKING

- To know the lie, you must first know the Truth and be able to discern between the two.
- Critical thinking is like approaching a railroad crossing...stop, look, and listen...then reflect on the Truth and make your judgement about whether the issue aligns with the Truth.

STEP FOUR



THE FRAMEWORK

- Sovereignty
- Core values
- Courage and resilience
- Personal responsibility

SOVEREIGNTY

- Sovereignty is the right and/or ability of an individual or group to control their actions and/or direct their destiny.
- We have been created in the image of God (imago dei), with the unique characteristic of having the gift of self-determination (free will).

“

Free will, though it makes evil possible, is also the only thing that makes possible any love or goodness or joy worth having.

”

C.S. Lewis Source: "Mere Christianity" (1952)

SOVEREIGNTY

- God has granted each individual self-sovereignty and free will. From this concept is derived the idea of "pursuit of happiness", which becomes the fulfillment of the will of the individual to improve his condition to meet his desires.

SOVEREIGNTY

- We have the right and responsibility to exercise our sovereignty in alignment with God's will.
- God has granted us dominion over the resources of nature.
- God has given us the intellectual freedom to convert those resources to our personal benefit.
- God has granted us the natural right to accumulate and protect those benefits.

SOVEREIGNTY

- Sovereignty does not grant the right to demand that others sacrifice to meet our needs.
 - Trade is the equitable exchange of goods or services.
 - Charity is the voluntary, inequitable granting of goods or services to another.
 - Theft or usurpation is the inequitable taking of goods or services by force or demand.

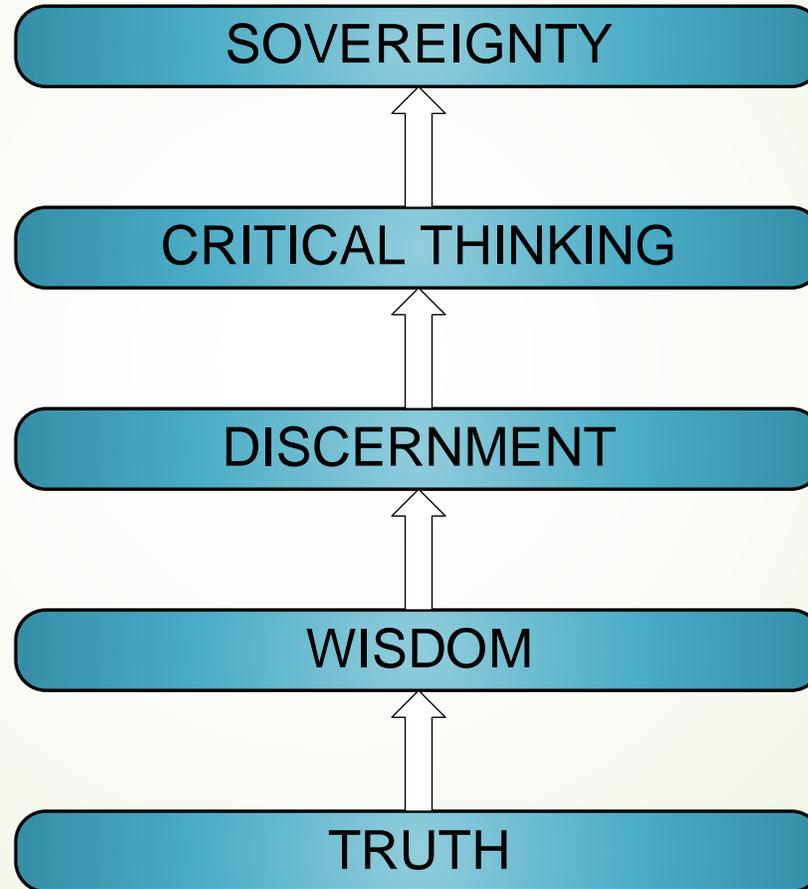
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Each day we are becoming a creature of splendid glory or one of unthinkable horror.

”

C.S. Lewis “Mere Christianity” (1952)

STEP FIVE



CORE VALUES

- Core values are internal beliefs that dictate how life should be lived.
- We should establish (define, clarify, and adhere to) our own personal core values.
- Core values are built from critical thinking, based on discernment and wisdom, with a foundation of Truth.

CORE VALUES

- One's core values are built upon foundational principles...your foundation will determine your core values, and your core values will determine your decisions and your actions.

CORE VALUES

- Core values can be established consciously or unconsciously.
- Core values can be strongly influenced by environment.
- Core values can be either positive values or negative values.

CORE VALUES

- Some positive core values might be;
 - A belief, or lack thereof, in God or an affiliation with a religious/spiritual institution
 - A belief in being a good steward of resources and in exercising frugality
 - A belief that family is of fundamental importance

CORE VALUES

- A belief that honesty is always the best policy and that trust has to be earned.
- A belief in maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

THE 9/12 VALUES

- Honesty
- Reverence
 - Hope
 - Thrift
- Humility
- Charity
- Sincerity
- Moderation
- Hard work
- Courage
- Personal Responsibility
- Gratitude

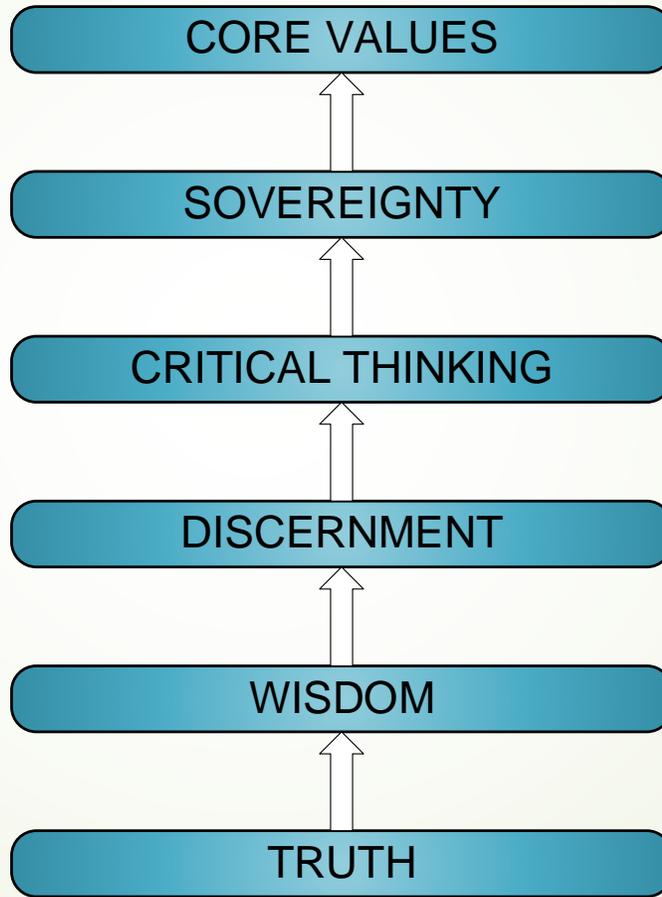
CORE VALUES

- Negative core values can develop when people live in fear or insecurity and are forced to focus on survival in difficult circumstances.
- Some examples of negative core values include the following:
 - A belief that the world is a fundamentally brutal place and that only the strong survive

CORE VALUES

- A belief that people are powerless to change their fates or personal situations
- A belief that you don't deserve good things or relationships in life
- A belief that other people are fundamentally untrustworthy and unloving
- A belief that life is meaningless

STEP SIX



COURAGE AND RESILIENCE

- It is courage that enables us stand firm upon the foundation of our worldview.
- It is resilience that enables us to withstand the challenges that we face.
- It is our foundational belief in Truth that provides the basis for our core values.

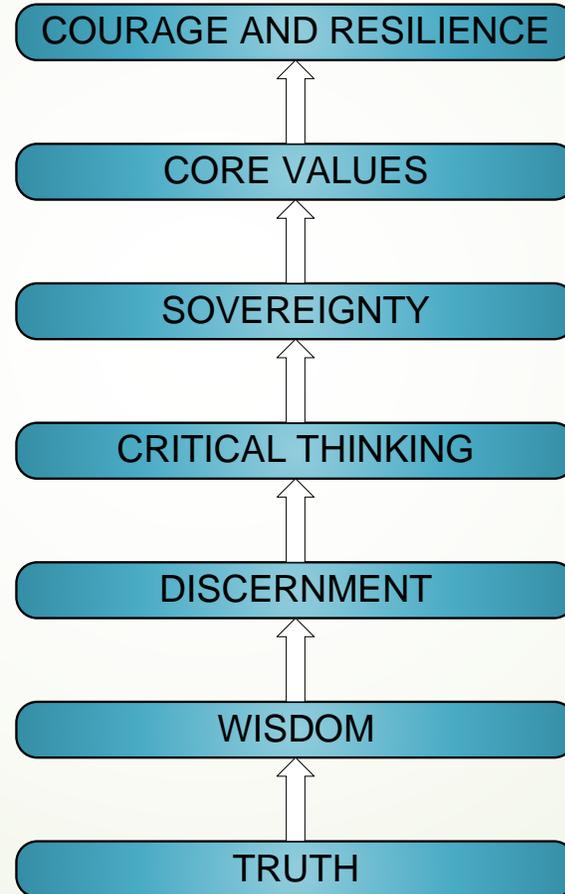
“

I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. 'Tis the business of little minds to shrink, but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death.

”

Thomas Paine

STEP SEVEN



PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- We have been created for Eden; our lifelong task is to prepare ourselves for our return.
- Civil society is created through the sacrifice of a degree of self-sovereignty in favor of the group.
- Civil society is only effective when compliance is voluntarily adhered to.

“

...stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.

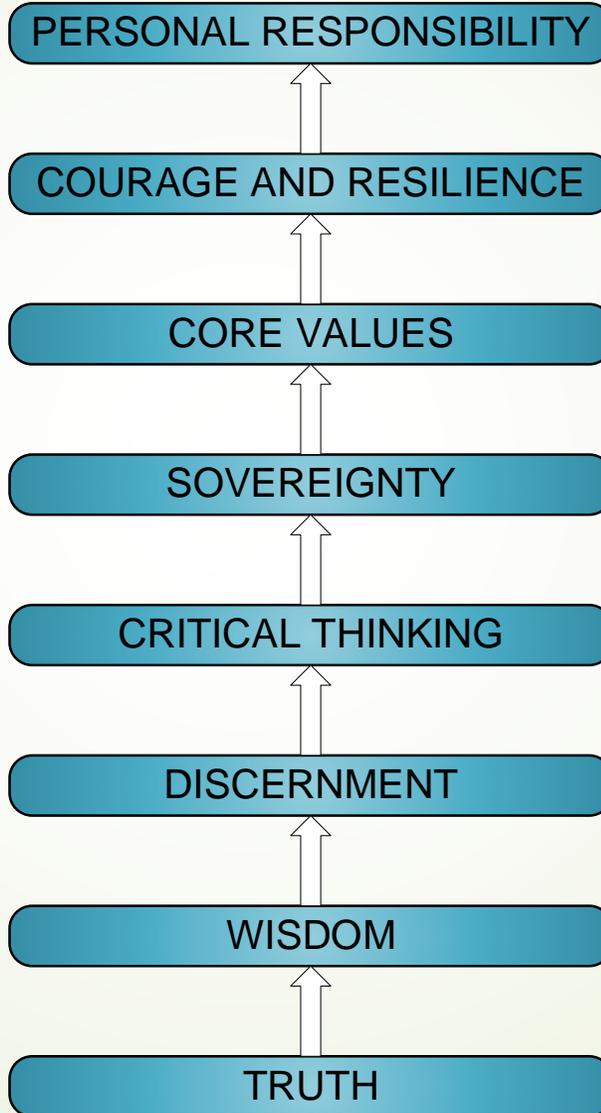
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Philippians 1:27-28

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Assimilation is the process of accepting that sacrifice is part of the process of being part of civil society, and that the benefits outweigh the sacrifice.
- To refuse assimilation (anarchy) is to undermine the very fabric of civil society and to consequently forfeit the inherent benefits.

STEP EIGHT



THE FINISHED WORK

WORLDVIEW

- Your worldview is the lens through which you interpret the world around you.
- In most cases this worldview is not consciously applied, but is a subconscious filter through which those interpretations are made.

“

Your worldview will enable you to see things according to who you are; not according to how they are portrayed.

”

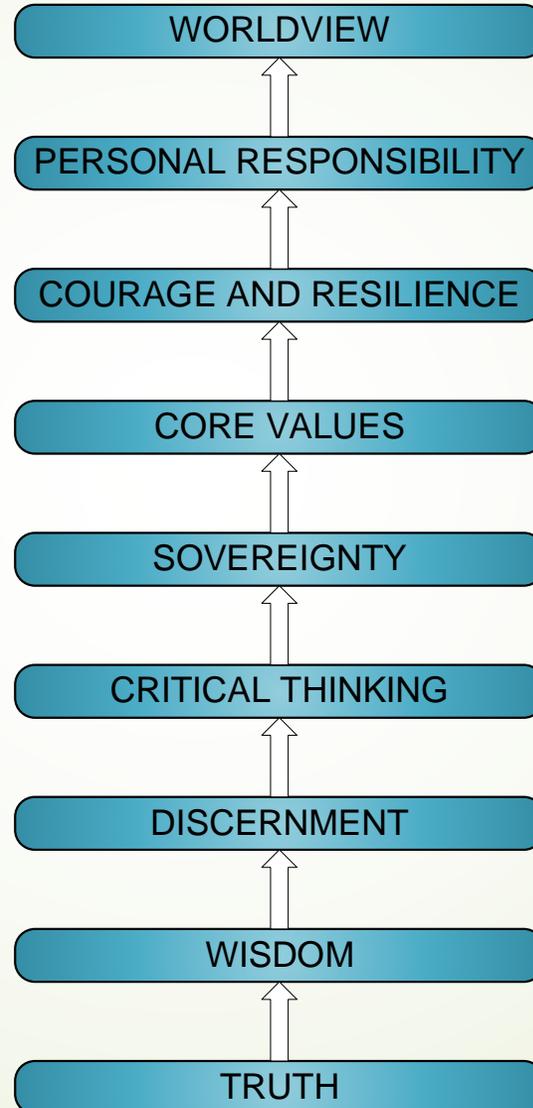
THE FINISHED WORK

- You can and should consciously and intentionally work to develop and reinforce your worldview to ensure that you are able to adhere to its tenets and resist the external forces that assail you.

THE FINISHED WORK

- Postmodern intellectuals seek to tear down your worldview in an effort to be able to instill their ever-changing and circumstantial ideologies.
- Your worldview should be able to answer four questions with correspondence to truth claims and coherence across all situations, and these questions are;
 - Origins, Meaning, Morality, and Destiny

STEP NINE



THE PURPOSE

- To understand
- To sustain
- To enable
- To share
- To inform
- To encourage

UNDERSTAND

- REFERENCE the Truth in everything.
- Truth is your foundation for all that you believe in.
- Truth serves as the ultimate reference and resource when you need to ask the question, “Does this make sense?”

SUSTAIN

- BUILD on your foundation of truth.
- Does an issue or ideology adhere to the ideas of correspondence (matches what you know), coherence (consistent with what you know), and pragmatism (practically applicable)?
- If it does not feel right, then it probably isn't.

“

He who believes is strong; he who doubts is weak. Strong convictions precede great actions.

”

J. F. Clarke

ENABLE

- TRUST your beliefs.
- Don't second-guess what you know to be True in order to try to placate the opinions of others.
- Judge what you hear based upon the worldview that you have spent the work developing.

“

It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.”

”

Aristotle, Metaphysics

SHARE

- Man has been created for relationship.
- Through relationship we find meaning, common bonds, sense of purpose, and a desire to serve others.
- SPEAK with patience, love, and understanding.

INFORM

- There are four steps to create change in the thinking of another;
 - Converse: create the relationship
 - Convict: create an awareness
 - Convince: create the desire to change
 - Convert: create the pathway to change

ENCOURAGE

- When dealing with another person of different ideas, perspectives, and/or opinions, it is not your job to change their thinking, it is your job to offer them an alternative and encourage them to at least consider it.

“

In life, it's important to know when to stop arguing with people and simply let them be wrong.

”

“

If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.

”

Luke 9:5

IN CLOSING

- Build your worldview on the foundation of Truth.
- Inquire about the belief system of those with whom you disagree.
- If they are willing to share their worldview, then explore how it corresponds to their ideologies and opinions.
- Be willing to walk away.