

The Nine Noble Virtues

The Nine Noble Virtues are derived from the ancient Norse teachings and the Asatru religion, which was the religious views of the Vikings. The main book that these virtues are taken from is called the Havamal. The Havamal contains a lot of wisdom and also gives insight into the culture and values of the Vikings.

The Nine Noble Virtues fit perfectly into the warrior lifestyle, as one would expect since they originated from a warrior culture. These virtues coincide with the virtues of warrior cultures throughout the world, and once again proves that true character and honor is universal. Now, let's delve into the virtues of the Vikings.

Courage

The Nine Noble Virtues start with courage. This is very appropriate because without courage, you cannot live up to your code of honor for very long. The word "courage" comes from the Latin word "heart." It takes courage to stand for your beliefs and live according to your own code of ethics. The Vikings were known for their courage and bravery in battle, but courage applies to more than simply being brave in battle.

Courage actually applies to every part of your life. It takes courage to do what you know is right, especially when those around you disagree with your point of view. In our politically correct society, courage is more important than ever. Your personal values may be challenged on a daily basis. Standing for what you believe can take a lot of courage.

You must have enough conviction in your beliefs to stand for what you believe and live your life by your own code. This does not mean that you act in rash and tactless ways. There is a difference in being courageous and in being stupid. Have the courage to live by your own code of honor, but do so with wisdom and discretion.

"The test of courage comes when we are in the minority." -Emerson

"The brave and generous have the best lives. They're seldom sorry." -The Havamal

Truth

You should have enough confidence in your beliefs and your actions to be truthful. Truth is simply being honest about what you believe or know to be true and right. Simply put – don't lie. This sounds very straightforward, but lying has become so commonplace that it is almost expected in today's world. It shouldn't be this way for the true warrior.

Lying, in most cases, is an act of cowardice. Live according to what you believe in your heart to be right and you will have no reason to lie about your actions. If you do not think an action is right – don't do it. If something is not true – don't say it. Whenever I write or teach this concept,

I inevitably have people argue that no one truly knows the truth, or that the truth depends on someone's point of view.

While it is true that different people see things differently, and thus perceive the truth in different ways, that should not affect you. You live by your truth as best you can. Respect other people's right to believe what they want, but you live according to the truth as you perceive it in your life. The main thing to consider where truth is concerned, is to always be truthful with yourself. Do not deceive yourself anymore than you would deceive someone else.

The true warrior must make truth a part of his or her life, but as with courage, it is important to remember that you must do so in the right way. There is a right way and wrong way to do everything. Sometimes lying is the right thing to do. The Vikings permitted lying if you were being lied to. The true warrior understands that honor is not black and white. Every action must be evaluated by whether or not it is right and it originates from pure intentions.

"There is always a way to be honest without being brutal." -Author Dobrin

"There should be truth in thought, truth in speech, and truth in action." -Gandhi

Honor

Without honor, there can be no true warrior, or true human being as far as that goes. As I just said, honor is not a black and white character trait. It is hard to define. One could define honor as your internal integrity or dignity. Many people wrongfully think that their honor simply has to do with their reputation, but that is not true. It is the warrior who determines his or her honor; your reputation is determined by other people's thoughts, for the most part.

You determine your own honor, or lack of honor, by staying true to your own beliefs and living according to your own code of honor. Your personal honor is determined internally by your own commitment to live up to your predetermined ethics. It is your intentions and your actions which determine your honor, not what someone else thinks. The true warrior, who lives by a code of honor, will have very few regrets in life because he will know that he has done the best that he can to live a life of honor with truth and purity of intention.

Fidelity

The word fidelity simply means being faithful. There are many things that you can be faithful to, not all of them of honorable. Fidelity as used in the Nine Noble Virtues refers to being faithful or loyal to God, to yourself and your beliefs, to your family, and to your friends. The warrior will defend his family and friends no matter what the cost, because of his dedication to this virtue.

Being loyal and faithful to those that the warrior loves is non-negotiable. The Vikings knew this. If someone murdered a Viking's family, he or she would have an obligation to seek vengeance and put things right. This is not the same thing as seeking revenge. There is a difference in revenge and in fulfilling an obligation to your loved ones.

Only those with honor can be true friends because it takes loyalty, faithfulness and honor to be a true friend. All others are mere acquaintances. The true warrior is also a true friend once that bond has been entered into. He will take his fidelity to his friends and family seriously, as he does his spiritual relationship with his God.

Discipline

Discipline, as referred to in the Nine Noble Virtues, mostly means self-discipline. These virtues or qualities are not perfected overnight. It takes discipline to live according to your own personal code of ethics. The true warrior lives according to his own code, rather than according to what corrupt politicians or cultural standards dictate. This means that he must exercise a great deal of self-discipline.

If the warrior is going to live by his own standards, he must be willing to control his own actions. Many things that are legal go against the warrior's own code of honor, and many things that governments declare illegal may be permitted by the warrior's personal standards. In order for the warrior to stay true to his own principles and virtues, he must develop self-discipline.

"He who lives without discipline dies without honor." -Icelandic Proverb

"What lies in our power to do, it lies in our power not to do." -Aristotle

Hospitality

Hospitality is definitely a warrior trait. The warrior is expected to treat others with respect and dignity. You must see other people as people who deserve to be treated with respect and courtesy. The Vikings believed that sometimes the gods would visit people in human form and that in being disrespectful to strangers they could also be disrespecting the gods. The Bible also states a similar belief, stating that many people have entertained angels unknowingly when they have entertained strangers.

Whether or not angels or gods visit people in the form of strangers is irrelevant. What matters is that you treat everyone with respect and courtesy. The warrior does this because it is a part of his own code of ethics. You should treat others with hospitality not because they deserve it, but because that is how you behave towards other people. It has to do with your own principles; what others deserve has nothing to do with it.

"It is the task of a good man to help those in misfortune." -Sophocles

"We should behave to our friends as we would wish our friends to behave to us." -Aristotle

Industriousness

Industriousness simply means the willingness to work hard at whatever you do. If something is worth doing, do it well. Do it with pride and do it to the best of your ability. The Vikings looked

down on those who were lazy and felt that their gods looked down on those who were lazy also. The warrior has to work hard and smart to take care of his family.

This doesn't just apply to your vocation, but to everything you do – your entire way of life. The true warrior is a person of excellence. He or she will do everything with care and detail. Mediocre acts are not acceptable. Warriors set high expectations for themselves in everything that they do, and they refuse to lower their standards in their work or their personal beliefs.

“Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody else expects of you. Never excuse yourself.” -Henry Ward Beecher

Self-Reliance

Warriors are by nature independent beings. This doesn't mean that the warrior doesn't like other people or enjoy being around other people, but rather that he strives to ensure that he doesn't have to depend on others for his survival. The warrior is responsible for taking care of himself and his family; this is his first and foremost duty in life. He is never comfortable if his family's welfare depends on something outside of his own control.

Being dependent on someone else for your own needs puts you in a dangerous position. Such a position can make it very hard on the warrior as he may be put into a position to choose between his standards and principles or his job. For this reason, it is best to strive to be as independent of outside influences as possible. This is hard to do in today's world. Being frugal and financially stable is an important part of being self-reliant. Do your best not to have to depend on other people for your welfare.

Perseverance

Without perseverance you will not be successful in applying the Nine Noble Virtues in your life. No one is perfect and you will make mistakes. In order to live the warrior lifestyle, you cannot simply give up and quit when you fall short of your mark. You must persevere. You must not give up.

The warrior's code of honor is too important for him to give up or give in when the going gets tough. The warrior lifestyle is a lifelong way of living. Being a true warrior is not something you try; it is something you are. It is a way of living, a way of being. You don't try to be a warrior – you either are a warrior or you are not a warrior. You either have honor and integrity or you don't. For the true warrior, falling short doesn't mean failing, it means learning and being determined to do better next time. Perseverance is essential to live the warrior lifestyle.