

12 Principles We Believe In – Talking Points

- 1 If life has any meaning, it is this: that each event of life is meant to bring wisdom. The wise person is able to see through the events of life, to their essence, and in that, find their Soul.
- 2 If it ain't working, doing more of it isn't going to work either. If you're hammering on some issue and no one else is interested, maybe you need to let the thing go. If you're ignoring something and hoping it will go away, and it isn't, maybe you have to deal with it. If you find yourself saying, "It always turns out like that," maybe you need to try another approach.
- 3 We have the potential, in dialog, to examine and re-examine the stories of our life. We can listen to what we tell ourselves, how we describe our situation, and we can begin to understand that, far from seeing our lives objectively, we see them "objectively," and find ourselves living self-fulfilling prophecies that are limiting and limited in the extreme.
- 4 I must (horrors!) take full responsibility for my choices, decisions and directions. Just as there is no one to compare myself to, no one is to blame for any choice I have ever made. I am where I am and I know what I know based solely upon what I have chosen to learn, to absorb, to assimilate and to find within myself.

- 5 For each of us, the path to self-knowledge is a circle. We go inside and review what we are about, what we “know” and what we are enacting. We look for blocks, fears, terrors. We then make a pact to reveal our thoughts, feelings, fears, and joys with a select few - a principal partner, therapist, spiritual director, and bodyworker. We devise ways to let down the walls and let out the repressed material. We then commit to the discovery of other ways of enacting our being. We don’t just keep stuffing our stupidities down other people’s throats. To paraphrase Ken Wilber, we access, we accept, we express, we transcend and we include. Again, and again, and again.
- 6 My “I-am-ness” is limited only as I choose to limit myself. If I identify with “good/bad”, right/wrong lists, or with what others think or what others want, my “I-am-ness” becomes a small, tight box. I must realize that I am not a noun. I am a verb. The question, then, is this: how much of my “I-am-ing” will I bring into consciousness, and how much will I choose to live?
- 7 I’ve watched a ton of people hear me spell out the “blame game,” and immediately and simply choose to stop doing it, without making a decades long problem out of it. Everyone can get over himself or herself, right now. No exceptions. The only question is, will they? To say, “Well, maybe other people can, but I can’t,” is to say, “I won’t, because then I’d have to give up being special. I’ve earned this pain, and I’m going to keep it.” That, emphatically, is not the same as “I can’t.”

- 8 The idea we promote here at The Phoenix Centre is to structure our lives with both plan and purpose. Just as the goal of higher education is to encourage "lifelong learning," the goal here at The Phoenix Centre is to encourage lifelong self-actualization. And the key to that, as we say endlessly, is self-responsibility, self-knowing, deconstruction of the ego and reconstruction of a fuller sense of self.
- 9 As we've noted endlessly, the stories we tell ourselves aren't "true" - they're just constructs taken from the database that is our memories. In a sense, our memories work exactly like the Google search engine. The results are exact mirrors of what was asked for. When we search Google, however, we never wonder if the results are "true." We may question relevance - and relevance is a question of utility. Relevance answers the question, "Does this "set" accomplish what I had pre-determined I was looking for?"
- 10 One of the toughest "sells," both in therapy and in life, is this: there is no need, nor is there any way, to resolve the issues of the past. There is not a hope in hell that water, once under the bridge, can be pushed back upstream and filtered until clean. There is letting it go, or letting it own you. Letting go of the past is neither a pleasant nor an easy choice.
- 11 Growing up means hearing hard truths about ourselves and, rather than get defensive and run around whining about being ill-treated, go inside, and self-soothe. Once I'm calm, I want to look at the criticism and decide if the behaviour needs changing. I then choose to change, not for the other person, but for myself.

- 12 It is impossible to live life free of anxiety. There is the anxiety of the crucible - of change, of pain, of growth. Or there is the anxiety of trying to stay the same, in denial, pretending. The crucible, to me, seems the better choice. From there, I can be intimate, and choose to love well.