

Gary Hoopfer

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### The Honor Code

When I was nineteen years old while in my second year of college, I decided to make a list of ten or more lifelong vows that would perhaps set a guide for me to better myself upon my journey through life. Some of these vows would perhaps be easy at that time, but others had to be a true challenge considering my family upbringing and the daily anger and emotional tensions at both my two parents' homes and at school. Both my father and mother considered conflict, anger, verbal and physical abuse, imposed guilt, and family warfare as an everyday adventure.

My father was a school teacher and, in his home, there was a rule concerning everything; how to wash the dishes, how to hang the toothbrush, how to squeeze the toothpaste, how to hang the bath towel, how make the bed, how to cut the lawn, how to mop the floor, etc. And God help anyone who violated any Paulus Hoopfer's rules and laws!

My brother, Joe, whom I have grown quite close to these past ten years who my father adopted after his third marriage took much of my father's wrath some of which was his of his own doing since Joe, I truly believe that he kind of enjoyed pissing my father off. I once asked him, "Why do you do it? You know he checks on everything." Joe responded, "Just to watch him scream and sweat." Joe received some major league physical abuse.

My father never laid a hand on me since I believe that he was afraid of mother with good reason. She absolutely hated him. There were many verbal battles on the porch between she and my father. Though my mother bad mouthed my father continually, my father never said anything against my mother in front of me.

My father while I was college asked me what I considered his biggest disappointment to me. I replied, "You didn't come to my Confirmation, and

neither did my mother. Neither of you asked or cared, and I will never forgive you or her. I walked to the church alone and walked home alone. I was I was your only son and you didn't care or did not know but as my father, it was your job to know."

My maternal grandmother knew exactly what buttons to push to enrage my mother, yet my mother would call my grandmother five times a day, seven days a week seeking advice. I lived with my grandmother for nine years off and on, and she opened her day with a bottle of beer and two Chesterfield cigarettes, and then made breakfast. She was a tough old lady.

When I was nine years old, my mother remarried. Frank was a nice guy, but just another guy. Eleven months later, my brother, Dennis, was born. I, who use to be mommy's little boy was now third place in the pecking order.

Dennis demonstrated strange emotional and behavioral issues in grade school and was in psychiatric care for the next five years. He was in four different schools during the next five years. He is currently living in Westminster, California. He is crazy as hell.

Back to my lifelong vows.

1. I vow that I was only going to be married once. I have an entire family of a history of divorce and I vow never place my children in what I had to endure.
2. I vow to control my temper.
3. I vow to be always loyal to my friends, no matter their issues.
4. I vow to be kind, understanding, and helpful to the poor, underprivileged, and those who need my help.
5. I vow that very girl whom I date is a possible wife and I promise to treat her with the respect for someone who may be my lifelong partner and the mother of my children.
6. I vow to never to hate someone who has an opposing political, religious, or racial belief.
7. I vow to be moderate in the use of drugs and alcohol.

8. I vow to serve my civic duty regarding military service.

The other five or six are none of any of your business,

When I was informed in 1967, that I was to become an officer candidate in the United States Army, I, along with my other officer candidates, were informed during the second week of the course that we were obligated to take the Honor Code Oath that was required for all potential military officers that included West Point, Annapolis, Air Force Academy, The Citadel, Virginia Military Institute, and all other military academies.

The Honor Code Oath reads: "I hereby vow that I will not lie, cheat, or steal, and I will not tolerate anyone who does in my midst."

Twelve or thirteen officer candidates in my class refused to stand and accept the taking of the oath. They were dismissed from the class.

To me, the Honor Code Oath has been having been a lifelong oath that has served me well in my personal and business life. This has occasionally caused me issues, especially in the business world.

You will notice that I did not list a vow of tact and/or diplomacy.