

# THE VIGOROUS VIRTUES

DAILY SUCCESS PRINCIPLES  
FROM DIVERSE AMERICAN FOUNDERS

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# THE VIGOROUS VIRTUES

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### Day 1 - Courage SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE

*In the spirit of candor and humility we intend . . . to lay our case before the public, with a view to arrest the progress of prejudice and shield ourselves against the consequent evils. We wish to conciliate all and to irritate none, yet we must be firm and unwavering in our principles and persevering in our efforts.*

**Editors of Freedom Journal**

On March 16, 1827, John Russwurm, the first black graduate of Bowdoin College, joined with Samuel Cornish, to publish the first weekly edition of *Freedom's Journal*, the first newspaper owned and operated by African Americans in the United States. Russwurm, Cornish and other leading free blacks launched the periodical in New York City, committed to blaze trails in the marketplace of ideas in support of their double- edged message — directed not only against the institution of slavery in the South but also to foster equal opportunities and respect for their peers in the North.

In the first edition, which was targeted to the 500,000 free African Americans throughout the states, the founders demonstrated their courage by publishing an editorial that proclaimed their high purpose.

*We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the public been deceived by misrepresentations in things which concern us dearly, though, in the estimation of some, mere trifles; forthough there are many in society who exercise toward us benevolent feelings, still (with sorrow we confess it) there are others who make it their business to enlarge upon the least trifle which tends to the discredit of any person of color, and pronounce anathemas and denounce our whole body for the misconduct of this guilty one.*

*We are aware that there are many instances of vice among us, but we avow that it is because no one has taught its subjects to be virtuous; many instances of poverty, because no sufficient efforts accommodated to minds contracted by slavery and deprived of early education have been made, to teach them how to husband their hard earnings and to secure to themselves comforts.*

The publishers made sure to pledge their support for their brothers in bondage.

*We would not be unmindful of our brethren who are still in the iron fetters of bondage. They are our kindred by all the ties of nature; and though but little can be effected by us, still let our sympathies be poured forth, and our prayers in their behalf ascend to Him who is able to succor them.*

Though the paper lasted only a couple of years, the courageous initiative of the publishers helped to set the tone and build the momentum for the Abolitionist movement, leading to the legal prohibition of slavery in the next generation. The editorialists endeavored to strike that delicate balance between confrontation and conciliation. You can do the same as you:

**CUSHION** — Protect those who cannot protect themselves. Russworm and Cornish used their status as free blacks to advocate for slaves. As you experience success and rise towards your destiny, make sure to look out for those still stuck in the circumstance from which you've ascended.

**CONFRONT** — Like the Freedom Journal editors, confront wrongdoing. Don't be silent in the face of injustice. Position yourself head-on a challenging circumstance and declare victory over it. Let your voice resound for truth and justice. You'll have greater peace and end up on the right side of history.

CONCILIATE — Don't get carried away with confrontation; don't do it for its own sake. Conciliation is often the better approach. Look for ways to bring people together, emphasizing those things that cause the least conflict with others. Use the strategy of the Freedom Journal editors: blend confrontation with conciliation, as the Apostle Paul directed (Ephesians 4:15).

[Watch Video # 22 in Courage](#)

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### Day 2- SELF-DISCIPLINE **BE DISCIPLINED FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS**

*Whenever this effect shall be produced among us; whenever the vicious portion of population shall be permitted to gather in bands of hundreds and thousands and burn churches, ravage and rob provision stores, throw printing presses into rivers, shoot editors, and hang and burn obnoxious persons at pleasure, and with impunity — depend on it, this government cannot last.*

#### **Abraham Lincoln**

On November 7, 1837, rioters in Alton, Illinois, murdered journalist Reverend Elijah Lovejoy, who was defending his abolitionist newspaper press from mob attack. Lovejoy had moved across the river from the slave state of Missouri to the free state of Illinois after his printing press in St. Louis had been destroyed three times by mobs there. The Alton violence took place about a week after the charter convention of the Illinois antislavery society.

Twenty-four year old Abraham Lincoln had entered politics in 1832 running for the Illinois legislature from nearby Sangamon County. He lost that race but won two years later and was a state legislator at the time of Lovejoy's death. On January 27, 1838, Lincoln addressed the mob-killing in a speech to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois. At his talk's climax, he

challenged his audience to rise up as a disciplined citizenship, taking preemptive action as responsible people against future atrocities. *Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well-wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution never to violate in the least particular the laws of the*

*country; and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of '76 did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and laws, let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor; let every man remember that to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his father and to tear the character of his own and of his children's liberty. Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap; let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges . . . let it be preached from the pulpit . . . let it become the political religion of the nation; and let the old and the young, the rich and the poor . . . of all sexes and tongues, and colors and conditions, sacrifice unceasingly upon its altars.*

Lincoln's words still ring true — and loudly so. They are a clarion call for you and me — for all of us — to be disciplined for the benefit of others. Four ways — personal management techniques, so to speak — stand out for you to practice this principle and become a positive influence in the lives of others.

### [Watch Video #28 in Self-Discipline](#)

**MANAGE YOUR THOUGHTS** — Mental discipline is the hard part because your thoughts are so easily influenced by external forces. Memorizing Bible verses and other inspirational materials will help defend against assaults on your soul. Daily reading of uplifting writings will help discipline your thinking.

**MANAGE YOUR WORDS** — Herein lies great benefit or great danger, because your words possess the power to speak life or death over your life as well as other lives. The mob that murdered Lovejoy spoke words of death and acted in accordance with them. Eschew their example. Align your words and actions with the shining lights of kindness and self-control. Your words are very powerful instruments, which can be used to produce good or bad consequences. Use your words to spawn the former and spurn the latter.

MANAGE YOUR ACTIONS — Lincoln exhorted his crowd to live out founding principles of liberty and justice. Look for ways to make those values come alive in your life as a lighthouse to lives in your community.

MANAGE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS — Stay away from mobs of ill- will and violence — whether in person or online. Use whatever influence you have to steer others clear of destructive associations. Fill your relationships with love, not hate.

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### Day 3 - COMPASSION **BE GUTSY WITH YOUR COMPASSION**

*Our willingness to aid the slaves was soon known, and hardly a fugitive came to the city without applying to us for assistance. There seemed to be a continual increase of runaways, and such was the vigilance of the pursuers that I was obliged to devote a large share of time from my business to making arrangements for their concealment . . .*

#### **Levi Coffin**

Known as the “President of the Underground Railroad”, Quaker businessman Levi Coffin facilitated throughout the 1850’s the branch of the vast interstate network that aided slaves to freedom northward through the midwestern states on to Canada. In his autobiography, “Reminiscences of Levi Coffin”, published many years after his anti- slavery exploits, Coffin reflected on efforts to help slaves escape through such places as southern Indiana and Ohio, key locations because of their proximity to slave states.

His compassion entailed not only a big commitment of time but also of money and of his own residence, which some called the “Grand Central Station” of the Underground Railroad.

*They sometimes came to our door frightened and panting and in a destitute condition, having fled in such haste and fear that they had no time to bring any clothing except what they had on, and that was often very scant. The expense of providing suitable clothing for them when it was necessary for them to go on immediately, or of feeding them when they were obliged to be concealed for days or weeks, was very heavy. . . . Our house was large and well adapted for secreting fugitives. Very often slaves would lie concealed in upper chambers for weeks without the boarders or frequent visitors at the house knowing anything about it.*



His life incessantly threatened by slave hunters, Coffin courageously continued his crusade, holding fast to his religious convictions.

*If by doing my duty and endeavoring to fulfill the injunctions of the Bible, I injured my business, then let my business go. As to my safety, my life was in the hands of my Divine Master, and I felt that I had his approval. I had no fear of the danger that seemed to threaten my life or my business. If I was faithful to duty, and honest and industrious, I felt that I would be preserved, and that I could make enough to support my family.*

If you're faced with a big mission like Coffin's and you need to be gutsy in your compassion, be sure to:

**GO OUT OF YOUR WAY** — Take some risks. Be careful to manage them as Coffin did, but understand that to reach some needy people you have to take the road less traveled. If you go out of your way to serve, you will find, like Coffin, divine grace and guidance all along that journey.

**GRIND FROM YOUR GUT** — Selfless compassion can be hard work. Be willing to labor before work, after hours, on weekends and holidays, to uplift the needy. You may feel you don't have the strength to do it all. Reach down deep inside your soul; you will find the mettle there. Remember — when you make great personal sacrifices to serve others, you open the door to unexpected, overflowing blessings.

**GET OTHERS EMPOWERED** — This kind of compassion is about much more than giving a needy person a few dollars. It takes guts to bring liberty into the life of another. Make this your goal: to take the person in need to a whole new place of life, to set the captive free.

**GRIP YOUR FAITH** — Because of the risks, don't endeavor to work on contemporary "Underground Railroads" without divine help. Coffin is the role model here. Without a strong faith to support your compassion, you may find yourself without access to supernatural protection and miraculous provision when you need them most.

[Watch Video #24 in Compassion](#)

# THE VIGOROUS VIRTUES

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### Day 4 - PERSEVERANCE KEEP ON BEING YOURSELF

Such as I am, I am a precious gift

**Zora Neale Hurston**

In 1937 African American writer Zora Neale Hurston published the novel “Their Eyes Were Watching God”, widely regarded as her master work. The attainment was a long time coming. Hurston was born in Alabama in 1891 and had a literary awakening a decade later when some northern school teachers visited her town with a trove of books. But she suffered an educational setback as a teenager, dismissed from boarding school because her parents couldn’t keep up with tuition. Hurston didn’t graduate from high school until she was 27. She then so distinguished herself as a Howard University student that she earned a scholarship to Barnard College of Columbia University, where she became the only black student. Hurston graduated with a bachelor’s degree in anthropology at 37.

Through all her academic journeying, she managed to find time to write creatively, which eventually connected her to Langston Hughes and other Harlem Renaissance writers. This association fueled her passion. Her creative perseverance yielded several short stories, a play, musical revues, the critically acclaimed “Mules and Men”, all of which paved the way for “Their Eyes Were Watching God”, which firmly established her literary reputation.

A significant part of her writing explored her struggles as an African American woman, and the wisdom she gained enduring through life’s challenges. Hurston kept on being herself, boldly and creatively expressing her identity in ways that elevated the black experience in America. Her insights are priceless and timeless; the following passages project principles for you to follow as you persevere in living out the person you’re destined to be.

COURAGE — *I have the nerve to walk my own way, however hard, in my search for reality, rather than climb upon the rattling wagon of wishful illusions.*

CONTENTMENT — *Sometimes, I feel discriminated against, but it does not make me angry. It merely astonishes me. How can any deny themselves the pleasure of my company? It's beyond me.*

CONFRONTATION — *If you are silent about your pain, they'll kill you and say you enjoyed it.*

CONFIDENCE — *I am not tragically colored. There is no great sorrow dammed up in my soul, nor lurking behind my eyes. I do not mind at all. I do not belong to the sobbing school of Negrohood which holds that nature somehow has given them a lowdown dirty deal and whose feelings are all hurt about it. Even in the helter-skelter skirmish that is my life, I have seen that the world is to the strong regardless of a little pigmentation more or less. No, I do not weep at the world — I am too busy sharpening my oyster knife.*

CONSCIOUSNESS — *Everybody has some special road of thought along which they travel when they are alone to themselves. And his road of thought is what makes every man what he is.*

CURIOSITY — *Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.*

CLAIRVOYANCE — *Learning without wisdom is a load of books on a donkey's back.*

CLARITY — *If you haven't got it, you can't show it. If you have got it, you can't hide it.*

COWARDICE — *Bitterness is the coward's revenge on the world for having been hurt.*

CONQUEST — *I have been in Sorrow's kitchen and licked out all the pots. Then I have stood on the peaky mountain wrapped in rainbows, with a harp and sword in my hands.*

As you apply these “Zora Principles” to your life, you will discover new strength to keep on being yourself.

[Watch Video #4 in Perseverance](#)

# THE VIGOROUS VIRTUES

## DAILY SUCCESS PRINCIPLES FROM DIVERSE AMERICAN FOUNDERS

### Day 5 -TEAMWORK ORGANIZE FOR JUSTICE

*We the colored citizens of Frankfort and vicinity would respectfully state that life, liberty, and property are unprotected among the colored race of this state.*

#### **Negro Coalition of Kentucky**

On March 25, 1871, African Americans from Kentucky made an appeal to the U.S. Congress for protection of their life and property. Many such appeals were made by Southern blacks during the Reconstruction era following the Civil War because of the violence and persecution of white extremists attempting to restore their social and political supremacy. The Kentucky petition made its case from the opening paragraph.

*Organized bands of desperate and lawless men, mainly composed of soldiers of the late Rebel armies, armed, disciplined, and disguised, and bound by oath and secret obligations, have by force, terror, and violence subverted all civil society among colored people, thus utterly rendering insecure the safety of persons and property, overthrowing all those rights which are the primary basis and objects of the government which are expressly guaranteed to us by the Constitution of the United States . . . We believe you are not familiar with the description of the Ku Klux Klan's riding nightly over the country, going from county to county, and in the county towns spreading terror wherever they go by robbing, whipping, ravishing, and killing our people without provocation, compelling colored people to break the ice and bathe in the chilly waters of the Kentucky River.*

On April 20, 1871, largely in response to these pleas for federal intervention, Congress passed the Enforcement Act — one of three such legislative initiatives from 1870 to 1871 — empowering President Ulysses Grant to suspend the writ of habeas corpus and take other action to combat the terrorist campaigns of Ku Klux Klan. Also known as the Klan Act, the bill empowered President Grant to send federal troops to Southern states to enforce the law. Consequently, hundreds of Klansmen were fined or imprisoned, causing the decline of the white supremacist group until its return in 1915. Unfortunately, with the Compromise of 1876, the Klan Act under President Rutherford Hayes was mostly shelved.

African Americans of Kentucky and other Southern states experienced some success in confronting the existential threats of post-Civil War America because they came together for change. When you're facing big, seemingly insurmountable challenges, don't go at it alone. Close ranks with those of common interest and overturn barriers to change by working together. Keeping the following points in mind will help you organize for justice.

**STATUS QUO** — Recognize right up front that there are long-standing systems in place that are resistant to social change. That's why big changes don't happen without a team. You may start with the vision; it's necessary but not sufficient. If your goal is to reform the status quo, you'll need help. Surround yourself with like-minded people. Like the Kentucky blacks of 150 years ago, come together with a committed cohort and you'll be in a better position to be heard; societal improvement will follow.

**STRATEGY** — And come together around a shared mission. A focused strategy is key to implementing change. If you're not on the same page with your teammates, step back; slow down; brainstorm; plan. It's better to wait on clear and coordinated tactics than to venture onto the battlefield moving in different directions. Remember — your victory rises from your strategy.

**STRENGTH** — The petition of the Kentucky coalition demanded

that President Grant send in federal troops to quell the Klan; the blacks knew that state militias weren't up to the task. Grant heeded their call for intervention because the masses had lined up in support behind the initiative. Strength comes in numbers. Keep building your team, adding more and more members, to create such enormous strength that change becomes irresistible . . . inevitable . . . impending . . . irreversible. The words of Andrew Carnegie captured this precept.

*Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.*

[Watch Video #11 in Teamwork](#)

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### Day 6 - INTEGRITY Let Others Know Who You Truly Are

*The voice of the Great Spirit is heard in the twittering of birds, the rippling of mighty waters, and the sweet breathing of flowers.*

**Zitkála-šá**

In 1884 eight-year-old Zitkála-Šá left the Yankton Indian Reservation in South Dakota where she had been born, traveling to Wabash, Indiana to attend the Indiana Manual Labor Institute. Though Zitkála learned to read and write English and play the violin, she was concerned about the assimilationist zeal of the Quaker missionary school: she was forced to cut her traditionally long hair and to distance herself from the mores of her tribe. She articulated her distress:

*Perhaps my Indian nature is the moaning wind which stirs my schoolteachers now . . . But, however tempestuous this is within me, it comes out as the low voice of a curiously colored seashell, which is only for those ears that are bent with compassion to hear it.* Zitkála left the missionary school then returned a few years later, passionate about her musical studies, eventually doing advanced work in the violin at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. She taught music at Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania and performed with the school's band at the Paris Exposition in 1900. She later collaborated with American composer William F. Hanson, playing Sioux melodies on the violin, for which she wrote libretto and songs. Her creative work led to "The Sun Dance Opera"; based on Sioux and Ute cultural themes, it was the first opera adapted from the Native American oral musical tradition.

Zitkála's other passion was writing, which featured her struggles with cultural identity: the tension between her Native American traditions and majority white society. She wrote both autobiographical narratives and



legendary stories from Native American history. Zitkála also served as editor of the “American Indian Magazine”, to which she contributed numerous articles. Rising from her literary activism, she co- founded and was president of the National Council of American Indians, whose influence fostered the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, which became known as the “Indian New Deal”.

Zitkála used her music, writings and activism to let others know who she truly was. Let others know who you truly are by practicing these principles.

**REFLECTION** — The first step is for you to realize who you truly are on the inside, to get in touch with your character. One of the best ways to do it is reflection: take some time each day in prayerful meditation; let your mind focus on your actions and motivations for doing them. As you get disciplined about this quiet time, you will realize more and more whether there’s consistency or conflict between what you say and what you do. Start your quiet discipline by reflecting on Molière’s words.

*Men are alike in their promises. It is only in their deeds that they differ. The difference in their deeds is simple: People of character do what is right regardless of the situation.*

**REVELATION** — Zitkála sang and wrote about her struggles as well as her triumphs. Be transparent about your flaws and weaknesses, about your quirks and idiosyncrasies. Reveal your inner truth, open a window to your soul. Share with someone you trust what you’re truly feeling; you will be making a step towards emotional maturity. Sing your own song. Write your own story.

**RAMIFICATION** — Make a move to get out of your own little world. Don’t be a prisoner of your own mind — nor of your narrow circumstances. Stretch your mind by reading a new book. Branch out by visiting a different neighborhood or a distant shore. Zitkála ended up performing music in Paris. A change of perspective and a change of place will broaden your understanding as you communicate it to others.

**REWARD** — Zitkála worked hard to help others win; her advocacy led to passage of federal legislation that furthered the rights of all Native Americans. Your greatest reward in life is helping other people win. Zitkála overcame countless obstacles to do it. Why not you?

[Watch Video#3 in Integrity](#)

# THE VIGOROUS VIRTUES

## DAILY SUCCESS PRINCIPLES FROM DIVERSE AMERICAN FOUNDERS

### Day 7 -INDUSTRIOUSNESS WORK HARD TO UPLIFT OTHERS

*When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced.  
Live your life so when you die the world cries and you rejoice.*  
Native American Proverb

In 1928, when she was five years old, Betty Mae Tiger, also known as Potackee, was forced to move from the Seminole camp near Indiantown, Florida, because her life was in danger. Some medicine men in Tiger's Seminole tribe were so strongly against intermarriage that they threatened to kill her because her father was white. Tiger's great-uncle intervened, relocating her family to a reservation in another county where they would be safe.

Reflecting later on the lessons of her early life, Tiger stated:

*I had three goals in my life. To finish school, to take nurse's training and come back and work among my people, and to write three books.*

Education was a challenge. Seminole children were not accepted in white or black schools in Florida's segregated school system. Tiger had to go to North Carolina to attend a federal Indian boarding school. She worked hard at her studies, becoming the first of her Seminole tribe to read and write English. After graduating high school — also the first from her tribe to achieve this — Tiger was off to Oklahoma where she enrolled in the nursing program at the Kiowa Indian Hospital.

With her nursing degree in hand, Tiger returned to Florida and was confronted by the tribal tradition of health care only being administered by medicine men. She decided to get additional training, understanding that health care education would be as important as service delivery. She went on to do nursing for forty years, traveling to various Native American communities, inoculating countless children with vaccinations for the first time, convincing patients to go to hospitals as needed — laboring to provide better healthcare for the Seminole tribe.

The tribe recognized her hard work, electing Tiger its first female chief. She took over a near-bankrupt organization; before the end of her tenure the tribe was

well in the black. She also co-founded and served as editor of the tribe's first newspaper, wrote three books, and was appointed by President Nixon to the National Congress on Indian Opportunity.

Tiger worked hard and she uplifted others in the process. You can do the same when you:

**SET YOUR GOALS** — When she was young Tiger figured out what she wanted to do with her life. The earlier you figure it out for yourself, the sooner you will plug into what really motivates you. What makes you tick? Once you put your finger on it, write down the goals to get you there. And give yourself a head start in this competitive World by working towards your dreams just as soon as they're clear to you.

**STRENGTHEN YOUR WORK ETHIC** — Your willingness to work hard — not your natural talent or good looks -- is the most important factor in achieving success. Whether at school or on the job, Tiger just kept working hard. Check yourself: your time -- are you spending more time playing games than self-improving?...your energy -- is my diet/exercise/rest regimen preparing me for maximum output?...your heart: am I really willing to give things up in order to get ahead?...

**SECURE YOUR SKILLS** — To secure the necessary skills to pursue her dream, Tiger first went from Florida to North Carolina, then to Oklahoma. By securing her skills, Tiger put herself in the best position to succeed and serve. Her example highlights this precept.

*Before you try to climb the ladder of success, make sure it's leaning against the right wall.*

**SEEK TO HELP** — In everything you do, approach it with a servant mindset. Endeavor to add value to others. Always remember -- at the end of every day, making a difference is worth more than making a dollar.

[\*\*Watch Video #2 in Industriousness\*\*](#)

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