



Organizational and Cultural DNA



HOW WE ROLL

These are the values and principles that shape how we go about building and operating our organization. These principles instruct us and keep us accountable to a way of functioning that is healthy and in-step with reality rather than impulsive and self-centered. We believe these principles, while not guaranteeing us economic success, ensure we are building an organization we can be proud of and one that genuinely provides good for all stakeholders.

Identity

Love God

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." - Saint Augustine

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). To orient ourselves properly in life and work, we must acknowledge our place in the cosmos - we are creatures who have a creator. We are not the point of everything. We are not at the center. God is. God is the beginning, middle, and end of all things. Whether we exist or not, God is. God is infinitely good and loving, and in that goodness and love, he created man and woman in his image and placed them in this world to fill it, rule it, and enjoy it. God is not distant and aloof, but near and involved, demonstrating this most notably in His Son, Jesus Christ. Our highest allegiance and deepest gratitude are to God. Our primary aim is to live and work in a way that honors Him. We do what we do because He loves us and we love Him.

- “And Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.” Matthew 22:37-38
- “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” John 17:3

≡ Love the Process

"It is the process, not the end, which is glorifying to God." - Oswald Chambers

The process itself is the goal. The work is the point. The work we do is not a means to an end. The work we do on Tuesday isn't valuable only if it leads to a certain result on Wednesday. Each moment is of infinite value. Sometimes our work will be mentally and emotionally exhilarating; sometimes it will be mentally and emotionally exhausting; and still other times it will be dry and boring. We are not to be addicts - constantly seeking the high of exhilaration. Each moment is meaningful. The high and low times are in God's hands. We will work faithfully either way.

- "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men."
Colossians 3:23
- "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." Galatians 6:9
- "Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men." Proverbs 22:29

≡ Direction, not Destination

"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God." - Corrie ten Boom

We are tied to the trajectory, not latitude and longitude. We do not need all the details to take action. Nor are we tunnel-visioned on a particular outcome. The future is in God's hands. While we certainly have a vision of the future and a picture we're pursuing, we are not slaves to that vision. We are simply moving in the direction God has shown us.

- "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going." Hebrews 11:8
- "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine." Ephesians 3:20



≡ Hands Off

“Hold everything in your hands lightly, otherwise it hurts when God pries your fingers open.” - Elisabeth Elliot

Express Pros Training, including all its parts, is not “ours.” This company does not belong to us. God is the One who brought this company about, and God can shut it down. God determines our shelf-life. No particular area or aspect of the company belongs to any one person. We are all temporary stewards. Our responsibilities can shift. Our assignments can morph. We are to steward well what is in our hands in the moment. And when it's time for things to change, we don't grab.

- “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped...”
Philippians 2:5-6
- “Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist. When your eyes light on it, it is gone, for suddenly it sprouts wings, flying like an eagle toward heaven.” Proverbs 23:4-5

Relationships

≡ Love Others

“Love is not an affectionate feeling, but a steady wish for the loved person's ultimate good as far as it can be obtained.” - C.S. Lewis

Our hearts and minds gravitate toward self-preservation. When others are seen as a threat to our safety, we react in relationally-destructive ways: from passive and detached to aggressive and domineering, and everywhere in between. Because we know we are loved and provided for by God, we are free to forget about self and genuinely love others. Whether it's co-workers, clients, or vendors, our priority is the same - to desire and work toward good for the other.



- “Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.” Ephesians 5:1-2
- “And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’.” Matthew 22:39

Collaboration

“When we live our lives in isolation, what we have is unavailable and what we lack is unprocurable.” - Basil the Great

We do not live and operate in a vacuum. Nor are there any actual James Bonds or Tomb Raiders in the world. God is not a bachelor in the sky. He is Triune - three persons, one God. He is, at the same time, absolutely diverse and perfectly unified. He is, within Himself, a community, and humans, created in His image, only truly thrive when they live in community. By nature, we are dependent creatures. When we show up to work, our dependent nature doesn't disappear. We are to bring our strengths and skills, generously, to the team and, at the same time, seek, stay open to, make room for, and accept the strengths and skills of others. This pooling of strength is not for the glory and elevation of any one member - it is for the production, progress, and growth of the organization as a whole.

- “Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.” 1 Corinthians 12:14
- “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 4:10

Trust

“We should be rigorous in judging ourselves and gracious in judging others.” - John Wesley

Because we know God is for us and not against us, and because we know our teammates love us and function with a collaborative spirit, we do not have to live and work in paranoia - with one eye looking over our shoulder. No one is out to get us. No one is trying to sabotage us. We can trust that our teammates mean well and are laboring for the common good. When apparent data indicate otherwise, we give the

benefit of the doubt. We calmly and graciously talk through challenges and misunderstandings. We are not to labor watching our backs. We are free to throw ourselves into our work knowing our teammates have our backs.

- "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31
- "Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man."
Proverbs 3:3-4

Execution

≡ Obey the Next Step

"Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."
- Soren Kierkegaard

Do we have enough clarity to direct what we should do in the next hour or two? Then we have enough information to keep moving. We will rarely hit home runs in our work. The majority of our days will consist of strikes, foul balls, and base hits...and occasionally we'll even get hit by the pitch. This mundane activity is not a sign of poor performance - it's the nature of work and life on earth. There are times we are tempted to overthink, play out an infinite list of what-ifs, and delay action, waiting for more and more information. We wait and wait, hoping we will experience the sensation of certainty and guaranteed success. This is a trap. There is no guarantee of success. Once we know the direction, we're supposed to go. Simply take the next step.

- "Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and feed on faithfulness." Psalm 37:4
- "The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he won't bring it back to his mouth."
Proverbs 26:15
- "The sluggard says, 'There is a lion in the road! There is a lion in the streets!'"
Proverbs 26:13



≡ Embrace Creative Tension

“By perseverance, the snail reached the ark.” - Charles Spurgeon

At any given moment, a gap exists between where we are and where we want, need, or ought to be. The awareness of this gap produces all sorts of reactions in us: both negative - like despondency, frustration, and discouragement; and positive - like motivation, determination, and anticipation. If we're not careful, the negative emotions will dominate, and we will find ourselves in a bad mental state. This, in turn, cripples our ability to be creative, innovative, and visionary. We get stuck, or even regress, thus widening the gap between where we are and where we need to be. Then, as should be obvious, the negative emotions compound, our performance suffers, the gap widens further still...rinse and repeat. It can be a vicious cycle.

To maintain a positive view of the gap we must learn to embrace, rather than resent, the reality that we're not “there” yet - wherever “there” is. The euphoric feeling of achieving a goal or crossing a finish line is a fleeting one - it is not long before another goal emerges, thus creating a new gap. To live a life of achievement and accomplishment, we must get very comfortable with the reality that there is always progress to be made; we must get comfortable with the tension of simultaneously being content with where we are and wholeheartedly laboring toward the future.

- “Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.” Hebrews 10:35-36
- “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” James 1:2-4



≡ Continuous Learning and Feedback

“We need to be willing to constantly let go of what we think we know, so that we can be opened to receive what God wants to teach us.” - Henri Nouwen

The second law of thermodynamics (the branch of physics dealing with energy) shows that a closed system leads inexorably to increasing entropy - i.e., disorder and randomness. The system ceases to function properly. Individually, and collectively, if we want to continue to grow, we must be an open system - we must stay open to outside input. We want our experiences and outcomes to teach and inform us. We don't want to be a closed system - blindly denying or ignoring outside reality. We want to learn and receive help from others - our teammates, our clients, our competitors, industry experts, et. al. However informed our perspective and knowledge, we remain vibrant and strong only insofar as we receive light and energy from the outside.

- “Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.” Proverbs 19:20
- “Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence.” Proverbs 15:22
- “Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is honored.” Proverbs 13:18
- “Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.” James 1:19

