

# THE 7 VIRTUES

## The Way of the Warrior

By Michael Aloia

At times, many of us fantasize about being that ancient warrior, living the life of battles and glory while maintaining balance and purity with all things in the universe. We come to realize that as modern day practitioners of the arts, most of what we believe about the life of a warrior has been romanticized and reconstructed by film, books and of course, our imaginations. Often, we become blinded by the exaggerated fictional stories many of us have come to love and embrace as fact, misplacing our training efforts in a completely unattainable way. For some, living the fantasy is living the life. But for those who are searching for a deeper meaning, a stronger purpose, the seven virtues present a roadmap for self-discovery and spiritual enlightenment.

The seven virtues were a warrior's code of behavior, a code of chivalry. These virtues were to distinguish the warrior class from the commoner. They were designed as a manner of everyday living, on and off the battlefields. They defined a life as they defined the warrior who upheld them. The virtues were passed down more by the way of action than by word and created a doctrine of moral principles that are alive today and within each of us.

At first glance, the seven virtues appear to be larger-than-life expectations for anyone confronted with the trials and tribulations of everyday life, let alone warfare. How can one uphold these virtues and not be made a doormat for others and the world? Is the impossible being asked?

Rather than being etched in stone, the virtues laid out are more guidelines, whereas the interpretations take on a personal connotation for those who choose to pursue them. The seven virtues are a test of character—one's own character—and this character is being tested each day, with each passing minute, as we are faced with situation after situation. How we choose to act is how we define who we are.

These seven virtues teach us to be true to others by first being true to ourselves. What words we choose, what steps we take, the intent behind our actions, all relate to how we interpret the virtues of the way. Being true to one's self is not selfish or a disregard for others.

How do we show respect, compassion, honesty and sincerity to others if we are unable to demonstrate it with ourselves? How do we establish integrity, honor, loyalty and courage towards others if we have not yet established those qualities from within?

# THE 7 VIRTUES

THE VIRTUES AND THEIR MEANINGS LAY OUT A LIFE FILLED WITH PURPOSE:

WITH INTEGRITY, WE COME TO LEARN THE MEANING OF COMMITMENT. WE EXUDE A SENSE OF JUSTICE IN ALL THINGS WE ENCOUNTER. WE LEARN TO BE THOROUGH AND ASTUTE. WE TAKE PRIDE IN ALL THAT WE DO, ALL THAT WE ARE.

WITH RESPECT, WE COME TO ADORE ALL LIFE, COMPLETELY APPRECIATING THE SUBTLETIES THAT SURROUND US. WE UPHOLD THE PRESERVATION OF QUALITY OVER QUANTITY. EVERYTHING HAS VALUE.

WITH COURAGE, WE FACE EACH DAY WITH WONDER AND EAGERNESS. WE DO NOT SETTLE FOR THE Mundane, BUT TURN EACH OPPORTUNITY INTO A CHANCE TO GROW. WE NEVER GIVE UP.

WITH HONOR, WE ALLOW OURSELVES TO JUST BE WHO WE ARE. WE ARE FREE OF JUDGMENT FROM OTHERS AND FROM OURSELVES.

WITH COMPASSION, WE ARE INVITED TO BE THERE FOR OTHERS WHEN NEEDED. WE SEEK TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD AROUND US—ONE MOMENT AT A TIME.

WITH HONESTY AND SINCERITY, TRUST IS BUILT. TRUST YOURSELF AND OTHERS WILL TRUST YOU. BOTH YOUR WORDS AND ACTIONS WILL MOVE MOUNTAINS.

WITH DUTY AND LOYALTY, WE BECOME RESPONSIBLE. OUR ACTIONS AND OUR WORDS HOLD GREAT POWER AND CAN BE EASILY USED TO DESTROY. WE TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY NOT TO MISUSE THIS POWER AND STAND TO BE COUNTED IN THE WAKE OF THEM.

As we dive deeper, attaching the virtues to our core essence, we discover a miraculous transformation. We become in tune with the universal energy that connects all things. This connection inspires us to attain the virtues' existence and continuation with others.

We find that the opportunity to uphold the seven virtues presents itself each and every day. In the hopes of being successful, we must allow ourselves to indulge one moment at a time, eliminating the overwhelming notion of failure or the daunting image of being a doormat. These guidelines offer no simple task and require a great amount of focus. The virtues make each of us aware and through that awareness we look to foster growth.

This way of the warrior encrypts a code of ethics for one to embrace life and to enhance life. It is a way to strengthen not only the body, but the mind and spirit as well. And it all begins with us. **TW**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Michael Aloia operates Asahikan Dojo in Pennsylvania, where he works to release the individual path of each student. He has studied various styles and forms of defense. Michael has produced the DVD series, Aikido—An Art in Motion and the Essential Defense System series. He is the author of the books How Aikido Can Change the World and the Essential Basics of Self Defense. More information can be found at [asahidojo.com](http://asahidojo.com).

