

Team Alfalah

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23
Pakistan Day

SUCCESS
is never
PERMANENT
FALIURE
is never
FINAL
so do not stop efforts
until your victory makes a
HISTORY

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Editor's *Note*

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"All of us look for success either it is office or cricket match that is perhaps not possible without excellent team effort. Best teams don't happen by chance. A lot of research is taking place all over the world to find the characteristics of best performing teams. Of course, each member of the team needs to have a great set of skills individually, but they also need to prove that they can work well within a team. It is like puzzle pieces that fit together as a result of hard work and sound leadership. Following are some of the characteristics of a highly effective team, according to scientific researches.

Emotional intelligence of each team member

Effective teams possess not only technical skills, but also emotional intelligence. In fact, studies have shown that emotional intelligence is more important than the IQ of each team member.

A good mix of introverts and extroverts

As a society, we think of extroverts as doers, go-getters, superior team-players. They are perceived as the more competent team members as they seem to get along with others more easily. But as it turns out, studies have shown that extroverts usually do worse than they're expected and so lose status as they disappoint others, while introverts gain status as they exceed expectations for their group participation.

They share the same stories

Your team members need to have common goals and shared ambitions in order to be as efficient as possible. A series of studies on military tactical teams has shown that efficient group work depends on how team members apply a shared understanding of the task.

They make time for humor

Humor might not be such an obvious factor in the effectiveness of a team, but actually humor inspires trust and intimacy – which can lead to better team interactions.

They communicate proactively

Effective teams have proactive communication. Proactive communication can be materialized in four ways:

1. Team members provide information before being asked.
2. They provide support and assistance before being asked.
3. They take team initiative by providing guidance and making suggestions to other team members.
4. They provide updates, creating situational awareness for other team members.

Great leadership

Even when all the team members fit in with the above, teams still need great leadership. The role of the leader isn't only to set an example and to motivate team members, but also to provide effective feedback and to nurture the soft skills mentioned above. The role of the team leader becomes even more important as he is the one responsible for hiring the right people, encouraging communication and ensuring team members share the same story.

Finally, a highly effective team will stand the test of time. They will stick together through thick and thin. They will know how to celebrate achievements and how to readjust their efforts after defeats. But all of this starts with this handful of characteristics of a highly effective team."

Islamic Corner

Surah Rehman

Ayat 9

Weighing Justly "

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ

اور انصاف کے ساتھ وزن کو ٹھیک رکھو اور تول کو کم نہ کرو

And keep weighing justly and do not make the balance fall short.

A True Muslim Leader

Once Hadhrat Umar (Radhiyallahu Anho), during his caliphate, was going on his usual rounds towards Harrah (a suburb of Madinah) with his slave Aslam, when he saw a distant fire in the desert. He said, "There seems to be a camp. Perhaps, it is a caravan that could not enter the town due to night fall. Let's go and look after them and arrange for their protection during the night."

When he reached there, he found a woman and some children. The children were crying. The woman had a pan of water over the fire. Hadhrat Umar (Radhiyallahu Anho) greeted her with salaam and, with her permission, went near her. (The woman didn't recognize that it was Umar).

Umar, "Why are these children crying?"

The Woman, "Because they are hungry."

Umar, "What is in the pan?"

The Woman, "Only water to soothe the children, so that they may go to sleep in the belief that food is being prepared for them. Ah! Allah will judge between Umar (Radhiyallahu Anho) and me, on the Day of Judgment, for neglecting me in my distress."

Umar (weeping), "May Allah have mercy on you! How can Umar know of your distress?"

The Woman, "When he is our Amir, he must keep himself informed about us."

Hadhrat Umar (Radhiyallahu Anho) returned to the town and straight away went to the Baitul Mal (House of Charity) to fill a sack with flour, dates, fat, and clothes, and also drew some

money. When the sack was ready, he said to Aslam, "Now put this sack on my back, Aslam."

Aslam, "No please, Amir-ul-Momineen! I shall carry this sack."

Umar refused to listen to Aslam, even on his persistent requests to allow him to carry the sack, and remarked, "What! Will you carry my load on the Day of Judgment? I must carry this bag, for it is I who would be questioned (in the Hereafter) about this woman."

Aslam most reluctantly placed the bag on Umar's (Radhiyallahu Anho) back, who carried it with a swift pace right to the woman's tent. Aslam followed at his heels. He put a little flour and some dates and fat in the pan and began to stir. He blew (with his mouth) into the fire to kindle it.

Aslam says, "I saw the smoke passing through his thick beard."

After some time, the pottage was ready. He himself served it to the family. When they had eaten to their fill, he made over to them the little that was left for their next meal. The children were very happy after their meal and began to play about merrily.

The woman felt very grateful and remarked, "May Allah reward you for your kindness! In fact you deserve to take the place of Khalifah instead of Umar."

Umar consoled her and said, "When you come to see the Khalifah, you will find me there."

He sat for a while at a place close by and kept on watching the children. He then returned to Madinah. On his way back, he said to Aslam, "Do you know why I sat there, Aslam? I had seen them weeping in distress. I liked to see them laughing and happy for some time."

Employee Corner



Mr Muhammad Imran Iqbal Soomra has joined Alfalah Insurance Co as Executive Officer, underwriting department in February, 2015; he will be performing his duties in Lahore Unit 1. He has a degree of MSc Actuarial Sciences from Punjab University, along with a degree of certified Financial Consultants (CFC). Mr. Imran has more than 1 year experience in micro insurance at National Rural Support Programme. We welcome him to Alfalah and wish him all the best, we are optimistic that he will prove to be good team player.

Types of Risk Management

Risk Management deals with the identification, assessment and various strategies that help mitigate the adverse effects of risk on the organization. Management uses risk management as a strategic tool to mitigate the loss of property and increase the success chance of the organization.

There are various kinds of risk and the risk management deals with their timely identification, assessment and proper handling. The types of risk management differ on the basis of the nature of operations of a particular organization and other factors like its overall goals and performance. All these risk management processes play a significant role behind the growth of an organization in the long run.

Commercial enterprises apply various forms of risk management procedures to handle different risks because they face a variety of risks while carrying out their business operations. Effective handling of risk ensures the successful growth of an organization.

Various types of risk management can be categorized as follow:

Enterprise Risk Management:

It is a strategic framework that checks the potential risks that have adverse impacts over the enterprise. These risks could be in terms of risk related to resources, product and services or the market environment in which the enterprise operates.

Enterprises develop risk management capabilities to deal with these risks and a proper action plan. Enterprises must note down all the possible risks that may occur and prepare a set of action plans depending on the nature of risk.

Operational Risk Management:

Operational risks are present in every enterprise. These risks

arise due to the execution of the business functions of the enterprises. Enterprises need to assess these risks and prepare action plans to meet the impact of risk. At the primary level, operational risk management deals with technical failures and human errors like:

- Mistakes in execution
- System failures
- Policy violations
- Legal infringements
- Rule breaches
- Indirect and direct additional risk taking

Financial Risk Management:

The process of financial risk management can be defined as minimizing exposure of a firm to market risk and credit risk using various financial instruments. Financial risk managers also deal with other risks related to foreign exchange, liquidity, inflation, non-payment of clients and increased rate of interest. These risks affect the financial position of the enterprise.

Market Risk Management:

Enterprises need to understand the risks present in the market, inherent to the industry or arising out of competition. Enterprise needs to properly assess it and develop their capabilities. It Deals with different types of market risks, such as interest rate risk, equity risk, commodity risk, and currency risk.

Other types of risk management may include:

- Credit Risk Management
- Commodity Risk Management
- Currency Risk Management
- Project Risk Management
- Technology Risk Management

The Great Fire of London



In the early morning hours, the Great Fire of London breaks out in the house of King Charles II's baker on Pudding Lane near London Bridge. It soon spread to Thames Street, where warehouses filled with combustibles and a strong easterly wind transformed the blaze into an inferno. When the Great Fire finally was extinguished on September 6, more than four-fifths of London was destroyed. Miraculously, only 16 people were known to have died.

The Great Fire of London was a disaster waiting to happen. London of 1666 was a city of medieval houses made mostly of oak timber. Some of the poorer houses had walls covered with tar, which kept out the rain but made the structures more vulnerable to fire. Streets were narrow, houses were crowded together, and the firefighting methods of the day consisted of neighborhood bucket brigades armed with pails of water and primitive hand pumps. Citizens were instructed to check their homes for possible dangers, but there were many instances of carelessness.

So it was on the evening of September 1, 1666, when Thomas Farrinor, the king's baker, failed to properly extinguish his oven.



He went to bed, and sometime around midnight sparks from the smoldering embers ignited firewood lying beside the oven. Before long, his house was in flames. Farrinor managed to escape with his family and a servant out an upstairs window, but a bakery assistant died in the flames--the first victim.

Sparks from Farrinor's bakery leapt across the street and set fire to straw and fodder in the stables of the Star Inn. From the Inn, the fire spread to Thames Street, where riverfront warehouses were packed full with flammable materials such as tallow for candles, lamp oil, spirits, and coal. These stores lit aflame or exploded, transforming the fire into an uncontrollable blaze. Bucket-bearing locals abandoned their futile efforts at firefighting and rushed home to evacuate their families and save their valuables.

It had been a hot, dry summer, and a strong wind further encouraged the flames. As the conflagration grew, city authorities struggled to tear down buildings and create a firebreak, but the flames repeatedly overtook them before they could complete their work. People fled into the Thames River dragging their

The Great Fire of London

The Great Fire of London

 <p>The fire began on the 2nd of September 1666 at 12pm</p>	 <p>Thomas Fraynor on Pudding lane forgot to sweep his oven and then flames came.</p>	 <p>A servant saw the flames and was able to warn people but forgot to tell a maid.</p>
 <p>Thomas and his family managed to get out of the bakery safely.</p>	 <p>Samuel Pepys wrote a diary while he was in his houses and he wrote about the fire.</p>	 <p>The wood was easy to burn the houses down and the wood spread the fire</p>

possessions, and the homeless took refuge in the hills on the outskirts of London. Light from the Great Fire could be seen 30 miles away. On September 5, the fire slackened, and on September 6 it was brought under control. That evening, flames again burst forth in the Temple (the legal district), but the explosion of buildings with gunpowder extinguished the flames.

The Great Fire of London engulfed 13,000 houses, nearly 90 churches, and scores of public buildings. The old St. Paul's Cathedral was destroyed, as were many other historic landmarks. As estimated 100,000 people were left homeless. Within days, King Charles II set about rebuilding his capital. The great architect Sir Christopher Wren designed a new St. Paul's Cathedral with dozens of smaller new churches ranged around it like satellites. To prevent future fires, most new houses were built of brick or stone and separated by thicker walls. Narrow alleyways were forbidden and streets were made wider. Permanent fire departments, however, did not become a fixture in London until

well into the 18th century.

In the 1670s, a memorial column commemorating the Great Fire of London was erected near the source of the calamity. Known as the Memorial, it was probably designed by the architect Robert Hooke, though some sources credit Christopher Wren. The column stands 202 feet above the pavement and features sculpture and engravings that tell the story of the conflagration. Even though an official inquiry into the Great Fire concluded that "great wind, and a very dry season" caused it, an inscription on the Memorial (removed in 1830) blamed the disaster on the "treachery and malice of the Popish faction."

In 1986, London's bakers finally apologized to the lord mayor for setting fire to the city. Members of the Worshipful Company of Bakers gathered on Pudding Lane and unveiled a plaque acknowledging that one of their own, Thomas Farrinor, was guilty of causing the Great Fire of 1666.

Pakistan Day - 23rd March, 1940



From March 22 to March 24, 1940, the All India Muslim League held its annual session at Minto Park, Lahore. This session proved to be historical.

On the first day of the session, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah narrated the events of the last few months. In an extempore speech he presented his own solution of the Muslim problem. He said that the problem of India was not of an inter-communal nature, but manifestly an international one and must be treated as such. To him the differences between Hindus and the Muslims were so great and so sharp that their union under one central government was full of serious risks. They belonged to two separate and distinct nations and therefore the only chance open was to allow them to have separate states.

In the words of Quaid-i-Azam: "Hindus and the Muslims belong to two different religions, philosophies, social customs and literature. They neither inter-marry nor inter-dine and, indeed, they belong to two different civilizations that are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their concepts on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Muslims derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, different heroes and different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other, and likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state".

He further said, "Mussalmans are a nation according to any definition of nation. We wish our people to develop to the fullest spiritual, cultural, economic, social and political life in a way that we think best and in consonance with our own ideals and according to the genius of our people".

On the basis of the above mentioned ideas of the Quaid, A. K. Fazl-ul-Haq, the then Chief Minister of Bengal, moved the historical resolution which has since come to be known as Lahore Resolution or Pakistan Resolution.

The Resolution declared: "No constitutional plan would be workable or acceptable to the Muslims unless geographical contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary. That the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in majority as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign".

It further reads, "That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in the units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights of the minorities, with their consultation. Arrangements thus should be made for the security of Muslims where they were in a minority".

The Resolution repudiated the concept of United India and recommended the creation of an independent Muslim state consisting of Punjab, N. W. F. P., Sindh and Baluchistan in the northwest, and Bengal and Assam in the northeast. The Resolution was seconded by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan from Punjab, Sardar Aurangzeb from the N. W. F. P., Sir Abdullah Haroon from Sindh, and Qazi Esa from Baluchistan, along with many others.

The Resolution was passed on March 24. It laid down only the principles, with the details left to be worked out at a future date. It was made a part of the All India Muslim League's constitution in 1941. It was on the basis of this resolution that in 1946 the Muslim League decided to go for one state for the Muslims, instead of two.

Having passed the Pakistan Resolution, the Muslims of India changed their ultimate goal. Instead of seeking alliance with the Hindu community, they set out on a path whose destination was a separate homeland for the Muslims of India.

PROPERTY INSURANCE



We are fully aware that our clients wish to secure their assets against fortuitous losses. We offer various forms of Property insurance providing comprehensive covers to safeguard the insured assets against the widest possible forms of risks.

We can provide the following forms of covers:

- ◆ "Fire & Allied Perils" covers all losses or damages by Fire, Lightning and other named allied perils.
- ◆ "Property All Risks" covers property insured that is accidentally physically lost, destroyed or damaged through any cause other than what's excluded.
- ◆ Business interruption following insured perils.
- ◆ "Householder's Comprehensive" to cover individual homes.



Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS)



If you're bothered by an overwhelming urge to move your legs when you lie down, or if there is an unpleasant tingling, aching, or itching sensations in your legs keeping you up at night, you may have a sleep disorder known as restless legs syndrome (RLS). Fortunately, restless legs syndrome can be treated with medical treatment, healthy lifestyle changes, and self-help remedies.

What is restless legs syndrome (RLS)?

Restless legs syndrome (RLS) is a recognized neurological disorder that can interfere with resting or falling asleep. If you have restless legs syndrome, a typical night might go like this: You lie down in bed, ready to go to sleep, and just as your body begins to relax, an uncomfortable leg sensations begins to overwhelm your legs. You try to ignore the crawling, tingling, or itching in your legs, hoping it will go away, but it only gets worse. You toss and turn for a while, but eventually the urge to move is too much. You get out of bed to stretch and pace the floor and, for a moment, you find relief. But when you

lie down again, the restless sensations in your legs start all over again.

Understanding RLS

Although restless legs syndrome (RLS) is common—many studies estimate that 1 out of 10 people have it—it hasn't always been easy to find help and support. Unfortunately, many RLS sufferers never get proper treatment because it's hard to explain and often misdiagnosed as being "nervous." Other people—even doctors—may not take restless legs seriously, recognize the symptoms, or realize it's a real medical condition. Those who haven't experienced the distressing symptoms may not understand how severely restless legs syndrome can impact the quality of your rest

The good news is that recent research has increased our understanding of restless legs syndrome, leading to more effective treatments. At the same time, restless legs syndrome is becoming more widely recognized. If you suffer from restless legs syndrome, there are plenty of options to help you find relief and get the sleep you need.

What Causes RLS?

Experts believe that restless legs syndrome is caused by an imbalance of dopamine, a chemical that transmits signals between nerve cells in the brain. Restless legs syndrome is usually genetic, about 60% of people with restless legs have a family member with the condition. Although anyone can have restless legs syndrome, it is more common in older adults and women. In fact, about 40% of mothers experience temporary restless legs syndrome during pregnancy. Health conditions such as diabetes, iron deficiency, rheumatoid arthritis, and kidney failure can also trigger restless legs syndrome.

What Causes RLS?

Not only are the signs and symptoms of restless legs syndrome different from person to person, but also they can be tricky to explain. Some describe the leg sensations as "creeping," "prickling," "burning," "tingling," or "tugging." Others say it feels as if bugs are crawling up their legs, a fizzy soda is bubbling through their veins, or they have a "deep bone itch."

Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS)

Here are some signs and symptoms of RLS:

- **Leg discomfort and strong urge to move** – Uncomfortable sensations deep within the legs, accompanied by a strong, often irresistible urge to move them. Many describe the sensations as tingling, jitteriness, a “creepy crawly” feeling, itching, or pulling.
 - **Rest triggers the symptoms** – Leg pain is normally triggered by activity and relieved by rest, but with restless legs syndrome, the reverse is true. Restless leg symptoms start or become worse when you’re sitting, relaxing, or trying to rest.
 - **Symptoms get worse at night** – RLS typically flares up at night, especially when you’re lying down. In more severe cases, the symptoms may begin earlier in the day, but they become much more intense at bedtime.
 - **Symptoms improve when you walk or move your legs** – The uncomfortable sensations temporarily get better when you move, stretch, or massage your legs. The relief continues as long as you keep moving.
- Night time leg twitching** – Many people with restless legs syndrome also have periodic limb movement disorder (PLMD), a sleep disorder that involves repetitive cramping or jerking of the legs during sleep. These leg movements further disrupt your sleep.

Lifestyle treatments for restless legs syndrome (RLS)

There is a lot you can do to take care of restless legs syndrome yourself. Mild RLS can often be treated with lifestyle changes alone. The following daytime habits can help reduce the frequency and severity of your restless legs symptoms.

- **Sleep better by sticking to a regular sleep schedule.** Fatigue can worsen the symptoms of restless legs syndrome, so doing what it takes to get enough sleep is crucial. Try hitting the sack at the same time every night, (or try warm baths or reading in bed) allowing plenty of time for winding down.

Exercise in moderation. Daily activity, including moderate aerobic exercise and lower-body resistance training, can significantly reduce the symptoms of restless legs syndrome. Swim, go for a walk, take the stairs, or spend a few minutes doing jumping jacks. Keep in mind that excessive exercise—like training for a marathon—can actually make restless legs syndrome worse.

- **Cut back on caffeine.** Caffeine often makes the symptoms of restless legs syndrome worse. Try reducing or eliminating your consumption of coffee, tea, soft drinks, and caffeinated foods such as chocolate.
- **Avoid alcohol and cigarettes.** Many people with restless legs syndrome find that their symptoms improve when they stop drinking and smoking.
- **Consider dietary supplements.** Check with a doctor or nutritionist to find out if you’re low on iron, vitamin B, folic acid, or magnesium. Deficiencies can bring on RLS.

Lose weight. If you’re overweight, dropping the extra pounds can often relieve or lessen the symptoms of restless legs syndrome.

Try practicing relaxation techniques such as yoga and meditation. Stress can make RLS symptoms worse. Daily stretching and meditation can promote relaxation and alleviate (RLS).

Tips for relieving RLS symptoms in the moment

- Get up and walk around
- Take a cold shower
- Soak in a hot tub
- Massage your legs
- Take an over-the-counter pain reliever
- Distract yourself with a game or activity
- Apply hot or cold packs to your legs

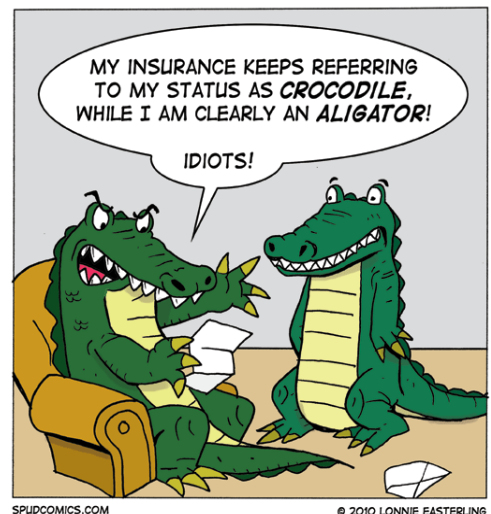
Humor Corner



"Why were we not told about flood risk when we bought this house 25 years ago?"



"Maybe you can get the same policy cheaper on the internet. But what you can't get is the friendly face to face service we provide here."



Moral Values

Are you looking for a simple guide to live by?

Use this moral values list as your own jumping-off point. A *definitive morals list* is nearly impossible to create because people will add their own spiritual/religious (or lack thereof) values to the list; however, this is a good start, and you can fill in the missing elements that you intuitively feel are right for you.

Why have morals?

Morals help create a civilized society where the greater good is valued over personal gain at others' expense. Morals can be looked as a guide, a set of standards or a blueprint for our behavior. They help us think about the consequences of our actions before we take them; listen before we speak; and consider the lives and rights of others. Unfortunately, not everyone follows a strict or even a loose moral code.



Not everyone is fortunate enough to have an upbringing with strong moral values. To make matters worse, certain situations often put people in the impossible place of choosing actions not aligned with our morals (such as war). And, some people's moral values differ so drastically from other people's as to be the cause of conflict.

How to live according to a moral values list:

How do you apply the list to your life? **Be "just a little more" every day.** Just a little more honest. A little more caring. A little more courageous. A little more of what is on your list. It helps to keep a journal where you can chronicle things you did that you used to not do and you can see yourself becoming a better person each and every day.

1. **Be honest and trustworthy.** Refrain from lying, cheating and stealing. It includes being honest with yourself as well as with others.
2. **Be courageous.** Do what is right, even when you're faced with unpleasant or difficult personal consequences including personal danger and rejection by others.
3. **Be self-controlled.** Master your thoughts and control your emotions, speech and actions – especially in times of stress, anger, emotional upheaval or fear.
4. **Have integrity.** Have courage of conviction. Stand up for what is right. Do what you say you will do; be dependable and keep your promises.
5. **Be caring and compassionate.** Do what you can to improve the lives of others (as well as all life on this planet).
6. **Be fair and just.** Treat others as you want them to treat you. Do not discriminate.
7. **Pursue excellence.** Always do your best and strive to do better.
8. **Persevere.** Don't give up; see obstacles and setbacks as lessons.
9. **Make the world a better place.** Find ways to better your community, family, self, country, etc.
10. **Take personal responsibility.** Own your life! Be accountable for your thoughts, words and actions. Know that your circumstances are a direct result of your thoughts, words and actions. Do not blame, judge, criticize or condemn.

Moral Values



11. Have empathy. See things from different perspectives; put yourself in others' shoes so you can understand them and their point of view.

12. Add value to the world. How can you best share your talents? How can you improve the world using your talents, skills, knowledge and ideas?

13. Respect others. Know that your way is not the only way; it is one of several billion ways. Acknowledge the dignity, freedoms and rights of others.

14. Be patient. Learn to delay gratification and learn to enjoy the process.

15. Forgive. Leave past hurts and misunderstandings behind. Stop any cycles of causing pain to oneself or others. Don't seek revenge – seek peace.

16. Cooperate. Be willing to compromise for the greater good.

17. Have fidelity. Be faithful to your values. Be faithful to your vows and promises.

18. Be a good friend, especially in hard times.

19. Be tolerant. Accept and enjoy the differences among people. Choose to see people's positive attributes instead of their flaws.

20. Respect autonomy. Respect the rights of individuals to live their lives their way.

21. Have self-respect. Don't abuse your body; strive to constantly improve yourself.

22. Do no harm. To anyone, or anything, including yourself. Value life. Every living thing has a right to live; do not make another living thing suffer.

23. Be open-minded. Open your mind to alternative points of view – different points of view are just as real to others as your point of view is to you.

24. Speak your truth, but consider that your truth is not the only truth, and another person's truth may be vastly different from yours. Honor their truth as being as valid as your own.

25. Be willing to serve. That doesn't mean making yourself subservient to another person; it means using your knowledge, time, skills, talents and ideas to improve the lives of others.

26. Do everything in the spirit of love. Real love is unconditional!

Using the Silva Method to Live Out Your Moral Values List

One of the biggest challenges in living out your moral values list is to be more open-minded and accepting of other people's points of view and values. In meditation, you can use the Silva visualization exercises to mobilize your imagination to help you put yourself in other people's shoes and imagine what the situation might be like from their point of view. This will help develop your compassion and understanding – and help you be more firmly committed to your own values.

Traveler's Corner: Barcelona

Mosaiced upper level
at Guadi's Parc Guell



Musee d'Historia
de la Clutat.



Placa Reial



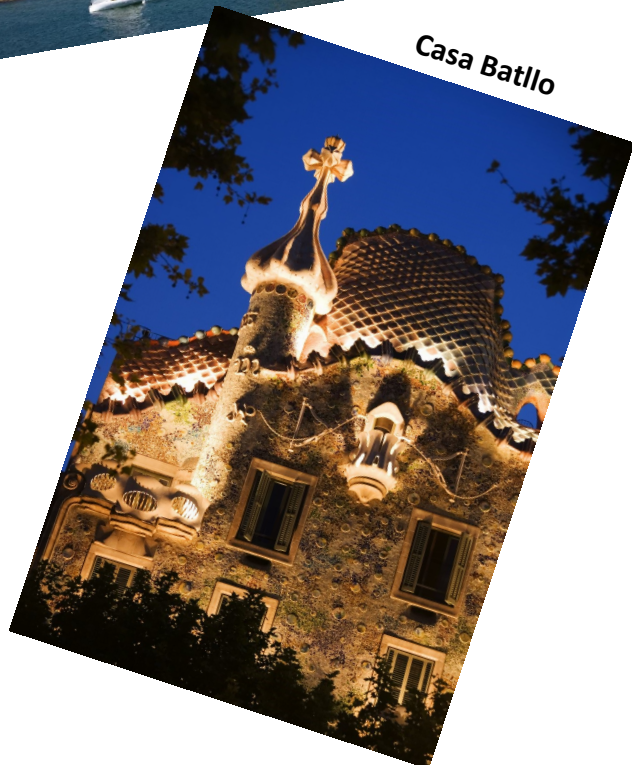
Platjas



Església de Santa
Maria del Pi



Casa Batllo



Traveler's Corner: Barcelona

Barcelona is an enchanting seaside city with boundless culture, fabled architecture, and a world-class drinking and dining scene.

A Moveable Feast

Barcelona's great artistic traditions don't end at the canvas. The masters of molecular gastronomy – Albert Adrià, Carles Abellan et al – are part of the long and celebrated tradition of Catalan cooking. Simple, flavourful ingredients – seafood, *jamón* (cured ham), market-fresh produce – are transformed into remarkable delicacies and then served up in captivating settings. You can feast on hearty, rich paella at an outdoor table overlooking the sea or step back to the 1920s at an elegant art nouveau-filled dining room. Barcelona's wide-ranging palate adds further complexity: Basque-style tapas bars, Galician seafood taverns, avant-garde Japanese restaurants and sinful chocolate shops are all essential parts of the culinary landscape.

Twenty-four Hour Party People

The night holds limitless possibilities in Barcelona. Start with sunset from a panoramic terrace or dig your heels in the sand at a rustic beachside *chiringuito*. As darkness falls, live music transforms the city: the rapid-fire rhythms of flamenco, brassy jazz spilling out of basements, and hands-in-the-air indie-rock at vintage concert halls.

Why I Love Barcelona

I love the sea, and taking an early-morning jog along the Mediterranean is my favourite way to start the day. I'm also a bit of a history nerd, and relish strolling the cobblestone lanes of the Gothic quarter, thinking about all the people in past centuries who walked these same streets. And then there's the food and drink – the first-rate tapas bars, the superb and reasonably priced multicourse lunches. Add to all this Catalan creativity (Modernisme, Miró, Dalí), bohemian bars and stunning nearby getaways and you have, quite simply, one of the world's most captivating cities.

Under the Iberian Sun

The deep blue Mediterranean beckons. Sun-drenched beaches make a fine backdrop to a jog, bike ride or long leisurely stroll along the seaside – followed by a refreshing dip, of course. You can also enjoy the view from out on the water while kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding or taking it easy on a sunset cruise. Looming behind the city, the rolling forest-covered Collserola Hills provide a scenic setting for hiking, mountain biking or just admiring the view. Closer to the city centre, hilltop Montjuïc offers endless exploring amid botanic and sculpture gardens, an old castle and first-rate museums with panoramic views at every turn.

Architecture of the Ages

Barcelona's architectural treasures span 2000-plus years. Towering temple columns, ancient city walls and subterranean stone corridors provide a window into Roman-era Barcino. Fast forward a thousand years to the Middle Ages by taking a stroll through the shadowy lanes of the Gothic quarter, past tranquil plazas and soaring 14th-century cathedrals. In other parts of town bloom the sculptural masterpieces of Modernisme, a mix of ingenious and whimsical creations by Gaudí and his Catalan architectural contemporaries, for which this city is so well known.