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The Extropian Principles | High Existence

28-35 minutos

**** The following is a manifesto that fits the ideals of HighExistence quite nicely. As with any manifesto, it's a bit dogmatic at times but I do think much can be gained from reading and living out its principles. Enjoy. — Jordan ****

EXTROPY — the extent of a system's intelligence, information, order, vitality, and capacity for improvement.

EXTROPIANS — those who seek to increase extropy.

EXTROPIANISM — the evolving transhumanist philosophy of extropy.

Extropianism is a *transhumanist* philosophy. The Extropian Principles define a specific version or “brand” of transhumanist thinking. Like humanists, transhumanists favor reason, progress, and values centered on our well being rather than on an external religious authority. Transhumanists take humanism further by challenging human limits by means of science and technology combined with critical and creative thinking. We challenge the inevitability of aging and death, and we seek continuing enhancements to our intellectual abilities, our physical capacities, and our emotional development. We see

humanity as a transitory stage in the evolutionary development of intelligence. We advocate using science to accelerate our move from human to a transhuman or posthuman condition. As physicist Freeman Dyson has said: “Humanity looks to me like a magnificent beginning but not the final word.”

These Principles are not presented as absolute truths or universal values. The Principles codify and express those attitudes and approaches affirmed by those who describe themselves as “Extropian”. Extropian thinking offers a basic framework for thinking about the human condition. This document deliberately does not specify particular beliefs, technologies, or conclusions. These Principles merely define an evolving framework for approaching life in a rational, effective manner unencumbered by dogmas that cannot survive scientific or philosophical criticism. Like humanists we affirm an empowering, rational view of life, yet seek to avoid dogmatic beliefs of any kind. The Extropian philosophy embodies an inspiring and uplifting view of life while remaining open to revision according to science, reason, and the boundless search for improvement.

1. Perpetual Progress — Seeking more intelligence, wisdom, and effectiveness, an indefinite lifespan, and the removal of political, cultural, biological, and psychological limits to self-actualization and self-realization. Perpetually overcoming constraints on our progress and possibilities. Expanding into the universe and advancing without end.

2. Self-Transformation — Affirming continual moral, intellectual, and physical self-improvement, through critical and

creative thinking, personal responsibility, and experimentation. Seeking biological and neurological augmentation along with emotional and psychological refinement.

3. Practical Optimism — Fueling action with positive expectations. Adopting a rational, action-based optimism, in place of both blind faith and stagnant pessimism.

4. Intelligent Technology — Applying science and technology creatively to transcend “natural” limits imposed by our biological heritage, culture, and environment. Seeing technology not as an end in itself but as an effective means towards the improvement of life.

5. Open Society — Supporting social orders that foster freedom of speech, freedom of action, and experimentation. Opposing authoritarian social control and favoring the rule of law and decentralization of power. Preferring bargaining over battling, and exchange over compulsion. Openness to improvement rather than a static utopia.

6. Self-Direction — Seeking independent thinking, individual freedom, personal responsibility, self-direction, self-esteem, and respect for others.

7. Rational Thinking — Favoring reason over blind faith and questioning over dogma. Remaining open to challenges to our beliefs and practices in pursuit of perpetual improvement. Welcoming criticism of our existing beliefs while being open to new ideas.

1. PERPETUAL PROGRESS

Extropians seek continual improvement in ourselves, our cultures, and our environments. We seek to improve ourselves physically, intellectually, and psychologically. We value the perpetual pursuit of knowledge and understanding. Extropians question traditional assertions that we should leave human nature fundamentally unchanged in order to conform to “God’s will” or to what is considered “natural”. Like our intellectual cousins, the humanists, we seek continued progress in all directions. We go beyond many humanists in proposed fundamental alterations in human nature in pursuit of these improvements. We question traditional, biological, genetic, and intellectual constraints on our progress and possibility.

Extropians recognize the unique conceptual abilities of our species, and our opportunity to advance nature’s evolution to new peaks. We see humans as a transitional stage standing between our animal heritage and our posthuman future. On the early Earth, mindless matter combined so as to form the first self-replicating molecules and life began. Nature’s evolutionary processes generated increasingly complex organisms with ever-more intelligent brains. The direct chemical responses of single-celled creatures led to the emergence of sensation and perception, allowing more subtle and responsive behaviors. Finally, with the development of the neocortex, conscious learning and experimentation became possible.

With the advent of the conceptual awareness of humankind, the rate of advancement sharply accelerated as we applied intelligence, technology, and the scientific method to our condition. We seek to sustain and quicken this evolutionary

process, overcoming human biological and psychological limits.

We do not accept the undesirable aspects of the human condition. We challenge natural and traditional limitations on our possibilities. We champion the use of science and technology to eradicate constraints on lifespan, intelligence, personal vitality, and freedom. We recognize the absurdity of meekly accepting “natural” limits to our life spans. We expect life to move beyond the confines of the Earth — the cradle of human and transhuman intelligence — to inhabit the cosmos.

Continual improvement will involve economic growth. We see no shortage of resources to allow growth, and we find growth compatible with environmental quality. Extropians affirm a rational, non-coercive environmentalism aimed at sustaining and enhancing the conditions for our flourishing. Intelligent management of resources and environment will be fostered by vastly extended life spans. An effective economic system encourages conservation, substitution, and innovation, preventing any need for a brake on growth and progress. Migration into space will immensely enlarge the energy and resources accessible to our civilization. Extended life spans may foster wisdom and foresight, while restraining recklessness and profligacy. We pursue continued individual and social improvement carefully and intelligently.

We value perpetual learning and exploration as individuals, and we encourage our cultures to experiment and evolve. We are neither conservatives nor radicals: we conserve what works, for as long as it works, and we alter that which can be improved. In our search for continual improvement we steer carefully

between complacency and recklessness.

No mysteries are sacrosanct, no limits unquestionable; the unknown will yield to the ingenious mind. We seek to understand the universe, not to tremble before mystery, as we continue to learn and grow and enjoy our lives ever more.

2. SELF-TRANSFORMATION

Extropians focus on self-improvement physically, intellectually, psychologically, and ethically. We seek to become better than we are, while affirming our current worth. Perpetual self-improvement requires us to continually re-examine our lives. Self-esteem in the present cannot mean self-satisfaction, since a probing mind can always envisage a better self in the future. Extropians are committed to deepening their wisdom, honing their rationality, and augmenting their physical, intellectual, and emotional qualities. We choose challenge over comfort, innovation over emulation, transformation over torpor.

Extropians are neophiles and experimentalists who track new research for more efficient means of achieving goals and who are willing to explore novel technologies of self-transformation. In our quest for continual advancement, we rely on our own judgment, seek our own path, and reject both blind conformity and mindless rebellion. Extropians frequently diverge from the mainstream because they refuse to be chained by any dogma, whether religious, political, or intellectual. Extropians choose their values and behavior reflectively, standing firm when necessary but responding flexibly to new conditions.

As neophiles, Extropians study advanced, emerging, and future technologies for their self-transformative potential. We support biomedical research to understand and control the aging process, and we implement effective means of extending vitality. We practice and plan for biological and neurological augmentation through means such as neurochemical enhancers, computers and electronic networks, intelligent agents, critical and creative thinking skills, meditation and visualization techniques, accelerated learning strategies, and applied cognitive psychology. Shrugging off the limits imposed on us by our natural heritage, we apply the evolutionary gift of our rational, empirical intelligence as we strive to surpass the confines of our human limits.

Since every individual lives with others, we aim to continually improve our personal relationships. We recognize the intertwining of our interests with those of others and so we seek to act for mutual benefit. Self-transformation implies not self-absorption but a continued attempt to understand others and to work toward optimal relationships based on mutual honesty, open communication, and benevolence. We understand that evolution left us with animalistic urges and emotions that sometimes prompt us thoughtlessly into acts of hostility, conflict, fear, and domination. Through self-awareness and understanding of and respect for others we attempt to rise above these urges.

Although we are aware of the value of others, we focus primarily on self-transformation rather than trying to change others. We recognize the dangers of controlling others and so only try to

improve the world through setting an example and by communicating ideas. Some of us are intensely committed to the education and improvement of others, but only through voluntary means that respect the rationality, autonomy, and dignity of the individual.

3. PRACTICAL OPTIMISM

Extropians espouse a positive, dynamic, empowering attitude. We seek to realize our ideals in *this* world, today and tomorrow. Rather than enduring an unfulfilling life sustained by fantasies of another life (whether in daydreams or in an “afterlife”), we direct our energies enthusiastically into moving toward our ever-evolving vision.

Living vigorously, effectively, and joyfully, requires dismissing gloom, defeatism, and negativism. We acknowledge problems, whether technical, social, psychological, or ecological, but we do not allow them to dominate our thinking and our direction. We respond to gloom and defeatism by exploring and exploiting new possibilities. Extropians hold an optimistic view of the future, foreseeing potent antidotes to many ancient human ailments, requiring only that we take charge and *create* that future. Practical optimism disallows passively waiting and wishing for tomorrow; it propels us exuberantly into immediate activity, confidently confronting today’s challenges while generating more potent solutions for our future. We take personal responsibility by taking charge and creating the conditions for success.

We question limits others take for granted. Observing accelerating scientific and technical learning, ascending standards of living, and evolving social and moral practices, we project and encourage continuing progress. Today there are more researchers studying aging, medicine, computers, biotechnology, nanotechnology, and other enabling disciplines than in all of history. Technological and social development continue to accelerate. Extropians strive to maintain the pace of progress by encouraging support for crucial research, and pioneering the implementation of its results. We maintain a constructive skepticism to the limiting beliefs held by our associates, our society, and ourselves. We see past current obstacles by retaining a fundamental creative openness to possibilities.

Adopting practical optimism means focusing on possibilities and opportunities, being alert to solutions and potentialities. It means refusing to whine about what cannot be avoided, learning from mistakes rather than dwelling on them in a victimizing, punishing, guilt-ridden manner. We prefer to be for rather than against, to create solutions rather than to protest against what exists. Our optimism is also realism in that we take the world as it is and do not complain that life is not fair. Practical optimism requires us to take the initiative, to jump up and plow into our difficulties, our actions declaring that we *can* achieve our goals, rather than sitting back and submerging ourselves in defeatist thinking.

Our actions and words embody practical optimism, inspiring others to excel. We are responsible for taking the initiative in

spreading this invigorating optimism; sustaining and strengthening our own dynamism is more easily achieved in a mutually reinforcing environment. We stimulate optimism in others by communicating our extropian ideas and by living our ideals.

Practical optimism and passive faith are incompatible. Practical optimism means critical optimism. Faith in a better future is confidence that an external force, whether God, State, or even extraterrestrials, will solve our problems. Faith breeds passivity by promising progress as a gift bestowed on us by superior forces. But, in return for the gift, faith requires a fixed belief in and supplication to external forces, thereby creating dogmatic beliefs and irrational behavior. Practical optimism fosters initiative and intelligence, assuring us that we are capable of improving life through our own efforts. Opportunities and possibilities are everywhere, calling to us to seize them and to build upon them. Attaining our goals requires that we believe in ourselves, work diligently, and be willing to revise our strategies.

Where others see difficulties, we see challenges. Where others give up, we move forward. Where others say *enough is enough*, we say *Forward! Upward! Outward!* We espouse personal, social, and technological evolution into ever better forms. Rather than shrinking from future shock, Extropians continue to advance the wave of evolutionary progress.

4. INTELLIGENT TECHNOLOGY

Extropians affirm the necessity and desirability of science and

technology. We use practical methods to advance our goals of expanded intelligence, superior physical abilities, psychological refinement, social advance, and indefinite life spans. We prefer science to mysticism, and technology to prayer. We regard science and technology as indispensable means to the achievement of our most noble values, ideals, and visions and to our further evolution. We seek to foster these disciplined forms of intelligence, and to direct them toward eradicating the barriers to our extropian objectives, radically transforming both the internal and external conditions of existence.

Technology is a natural extension and expression of human intellect and will, of creativity, curiosity, and imagination. We foresee and encourage the development of ever more flexible, smart, responsive technology. We will co-evolve with the products of our minds, integrating with them, finally integrating our intelligent technology into ourselves in a posthuman synthesis, amplifying our abilities and extending our freedom.

Profound technological innovation excites rather than frightens us. We welcome constructive change, expanding our horizons, exploring new territory boldly and inventively. We favor careful and cautious development of powerful technologies, but will neither stifle evolutionary advancement nor cringe before the unfamiliar. We regard timidity and stagnation as unworthy of us. Extropians therefore favor surging ahead — riding the waves of future shock — rather than stagnating or reverting to primitivism. Intelligent use of biotechnology and nanotechnology and the opening of new frontiers in space, can remove resource constraints and discharge environmental pressures.

We favor technologies for the beneficial results they can bring. We do not pursue technological advance for its own sake. Intelligent Technology means not only using technology to amplify our abilities, but also designing tools and technologies that suit us rather than compelling us to conform to their workings.

We see the coming years and decades as a time of enormous changes, changes that will vastly expand our opportunities and abilities, transforming our lives for the better. This technological transformation will be accelerated by genetic engineering, life extending biosciences, intelligence intensifiers, smarter interfaces to swifter computers, neural-computer integration, worldwide data networks, virtual reality, intelligent agents, swift electronic communications, artificial intelligence, neuroscience, neural networks, artificial life, off-planet migration, and molecular nanotechnology.

5. OPEN SOCIETY

Extropians value open societies that protect the free exchange of ideas, the freedom to criticize, and the liberty to experiment. More dangerous than bad ideas is the coercive suppression of bad ideas. Better ideas must be allowed to emerge in our institutions through an evolutionary process of creation, mutation, and critical selection. The freedom of expression of an open society is best protected by a social order characterized by voluntary relationships and exchanges. We oppose self-proclaimed and involuntarily imposed “authorities”, and we are skeptical of coercive political solutions, unquestioning

obedience to leaders, and inflexible hierarchies that smother initiative and intelligence.

We apply critical rationalism to society by holding all institutions and processes open to continued improvement. Sustained progress and effective, rational decision-making require the diverse sources of information and differing perspectives that flourish in open societies. Centralized command of behavior constrains exploration, diversity, and dissenting opinion. We can pursue extropian goals in numerous types of open social orders but not in theocracies or authoritarian or totalitarian systems. Societies with pervasive and coercively enforced centralized control cannot allow dissent and diversity. Yet open societies can allow institutions of all kinds to exist—whether participatory, autonomy-maximizing institutions or hierarchical, bureaucratic institutions. Within an open society individuals, through their voluntary consent, may choose to submit themselves to more restrictive arrangements in the form of clubs, private communities, or corporate entities. Open societies allow more rigidly organized social structures to exist so long as individuals are free to leave. By serving as a framework within which social experimentation can proceed, open societies encourage exploration, innovation, and progress.

Extropians avoid utopian plans for “the perfect society”, instead appreciating the diversity in values, lifestyle preferences, and approaches to solving problems. In place of the static perfection of a utopia, we prefer an “extropia”—simply an open, evolving framework allowing individuals and voluntary groupings to form the institutions and social forms they prefer. Even where we find

some of those choices mistaken or foolish, we affirm the value of a system that allows all ideas to be tried with the consent of those involved.

We have no use for the technocratic idea of coercive central control by self-proclaimed experts. No group of experts can understand and control the endless complexity of an economy and society composed of other individuals like themselves. Unlike utopians of all stripes, Extropians do not seek to control the details of people's lives or the forms and functions of institutions according to a grand over-arching plan. Since we all live in society, we are deeply concerned with its improvement. But that improvement must respect the individual. Social engineering should be piecemeal as we enhance institutions one by one on a voluntary basis, not through a centrally planned coercive implementation of a single vision. We seek continually to improve social institutions and economic mechanisms. Yet we recognize the difficulties in improving complex systems. We are radical in intent but cautious in approach, being aware that alterations to complex systems bring unintended consequences. Simultaneous experimentation with numerous possible solutions and improvements—social parallel processing—works better than utopian centrally administered technocracy.

We see all law and government not as ends in themselves but as means to happiness and progress. We do not attach ourselves to any particular laws or economic structures as ultimate ends. We favor those laws and policies which at any time seem most conducive to maintaining and expanding the openness and progress of society. To foster open societies we

oppose dangerous concentrations of coercive power and we favor the rule of law instead of the arbitrary rule of authorities. Recognizing that coercive power corrupts and leads to the suppression of alternative ideas and practices, we favor applying rules and laws equally to legislators and enforcers without exception. We champion open societies as frameworks for the peaceful, productive pursuit of individual and group goals.

Extropians seek neither to rule nor to be ruled. We hold that individuals should be in charge of their own lives. Healthy societies require a combination of liberty and responsibility. For open societies to exist, individuals must be free to pursue their own interests in their own way. But for individuals and societies to flourish, liberty must come with personal responsibility. The demand for freedom without responsibility is an adolescent's demand for license.

6. SELF-DIRECTION

Extropians see personal self-direction as a desirable counterpart to open societies. As culture and technology present us with an ever-expanding range of choice, self-direction increases in importance. We decide for ourselves in what ways to change or to stay the same. Self-direction means being clear about our values and our purposes. Having clear purpose in life not only brings both practical and emotional rewards but also protects us against manipulation and control by others. Freedom from others brings fulfillment and personal progress only when combined with self-direction.

For self-direction to be possible, we must first create a clear sense of self then implement that vision in action by exercising self-control. The human self contains a bundle of desires and drives built into the biological organism through evolutionary processes and cultural influence. Taking charge of ourselves requires us to choose from among our competing desires and subpersonalities. While spontaneity plays an important role, creating and sustaining a healthy and successful self requires self-discipline and persistence.

Personal responsibility and autonomy go hand-in-hand with self-experimentation. Extropians take responsibility for the consequences of their choices, refusing to blame others for the results of their own free actions. Experimentation and self-transformation require risks; we wish to be free to evaluate potential risks and benefits for ourselves, applying our own judgment, and assuming responsibility for the outcome. We vigorously resist coercion from those who try to impose their judgments of the safety and effectiveness of various means of self-experimentation. Personal responsibility and self-determination are incompatible with authoritarian centralized control, which stifles the choices and spontaneous ordering of autonomous persons.

Coercion, whether for the purported “good of the whole” or for the paternalistic protection of the individual, is unacceptable to us. Compulsion breeds ignorance and weakens the connection between personal choice and personal outcome, thereby destroying personal responsibility. Extropians are rational individualists, living by their own judgment, making reflective,

informed choices, profiting from both success and shortcoming.

Since self-direction applies to everyone, this principle requires that we respect the self-direction of others. This means trade not domination, rational discussion not coercion or manipulation, and cooperation rather than conflict wherever possible. In appreciating that other persons have their own lives, purposes, and values, we seek win-win cooperative solutions rather than trying to force our interests at the expense of others. We respect the autonomy and rationality of others by learning to communicate effectively and working towards mutually beneficial solutions.

Extropians see benevolence as a virtue that guides our interactions with the self-directed lives of others. Benevolence naturally goes along with an appreciation of the value in other selves and with confidence in our own self. We see benevolence not as an obligation to sacrifice our interests, but as a disposition to be helpful to others. We approach others as potential sources of value, friendship, cooperation, and pleasure. We see a benevolent disposition not only as an emotionally more stable and enjoyable state than cynicism, hostility, and meanness, but also as more likely to induce reciprocal positive treatment. Benevolence implies a presumption of common moral decencies including politeness, patience, and honesty. While we do not seek to get along with everyone at any cost, we do seek to maximize the benefits of our interactions with others.

Self-direction means being in charge of our lives. This requires choosing our action intelligently. This in turn requires

independent thinking. Extropians recognize the common human weakness of giving up intellectual control to others. We see the surrender of independent judgement especially in religion, politics, morals, and relationships and strive to rise above it. Directing our lives asks us to determine for ourselves our values, purposes, and actions. New technologies offer us more choices not only over what we do but also over who we are physically, intellectually, and psychologically. By taking charge of ourselves we can use these new means to advance ourselves according to our personal values.

7. RATIONAL THINKING

Extropians affirm reason, critical inquiry, intellectual independence, and honesty. We reject blind faith and the passive, comfortable thinking that leads to dogma, conformity, and stagnation. Our commitment to positive self-transformation requires us to analyze critically our current beliefs, behaviors, and strategies. Extropians therefore prefer readily to admit error and to learn from it rather than to profess infallibility. We prefer analytical thought to fuzzy but comfortable delusion, empiricism to mysticism, and independent evaluation to conformity. We affirm a philosophy of life but distance ourselves from dogma, whether religious, political, or personal, because of its blind faith, debasement of human worth, and systematic irrationality.

We are not cynics who reject every new idea. Nor are we gullible people who accept every new idea without question. We employ critical and creative thinking to discover great new ideas while filtering out indefensible ideas whether new or old. We

recognize that to advance ourselves on an individual and social level we need to critically challenge the dogmas and assumptions of the past while resisting the popular delusions of the present.

We accept no final intellectual authorities. No individual, no institution, no book, and no single principle can serve as the source or standard of truth. All beliefs are fallible and must be open to testing and challenging. We do not accept revelation, authority, or emotion as reliable sources of knowledge. We place little weight on claims that cannot be checked. We rely on the judgement of our own minds while continually re-examining our own intellectual standards and skills. Our emphasis on the primacy of reason does not imply a rejection of emotion or intuition. These can carry useful information and play a legitimate role in thinking. But we do not take feelings and intuitions as irreducible, unquestionable authorities. We see them as unconscious information processing, the accuracy of which is uncertain.

Extropians seek objective knowledge and truth. We hold that we can know reality, and that through science the human mind can progressively overcome its cognitive and sensory biases to discover the world as it really is. Humans deserve to be proud of what we have learned, yet should appreciate how much we have yet to learn. We feel confident in our ability to advance our knowledge, yet remain wary of our human propensity to settle for and defend any comfortable explanation.

CONCLUSION

These Principles are not intended as rules to be imposed on anyone. They are not endorsements of particular technologies. They are not final, unalterable statements. They are not offered as absolute truths. They do express the values and attitudes common to Extropians as we determinedly but playfully pursue our personal goals.

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