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A „Practicing Kantian“  
(31 March 2018)

1. Understands that every creature has **LIMITS**, physically and intellectually, that keep one humble.
2. Understands that each and every human being (regardless of physical or mental limits) possesses a spark of creativity of some kind in some region of experience that is capable of **INTENTIONALLY** changing nature/the world in ways that nature/the world cannot change on its own.
3. Understands that this spark of creativity is the basis of the individual's capability to assume **RESPONSIBILITY** for her/his decisions/actions unlike any other species of which we are aware – although it is possible intentionally to suppress the assumption of responsibility, to have it “beaten out” of one, or can be ignored a desperate circumstance.
4. Understands that this spark of **CREATIVITY** is the basis of **HUMAN DIGNITY** that cannot be given or taken away much less substituted for something or someone else.
5. Understands that the issue is not “who” but “how” we respect the dignity of others that matters. We should neither allow ourselves nor the other **TO BE TREATED AS A MERE MEANS FOR OUR OR SOMEONE ELSE'S ENDS BUT ALWAYS AS AN END** in themselves.
6. Understands that when one decides and acts on the basis of one's dignity and responsibility – even when one does so contrary to what appears to be one's self-interest, one experiences a sense of “**MORAL WORTH**” and a “**FEELING OF BEING ALIVE**” that is superior to monetary wealth, public applause, and even health.
7. This acknowledgement of dignity **REJECTS ALL DE-HUMANIZATION BASED ON THE EXTERNAL APPEARANCES AND ACTIONS OF OTHERS** (e.g., racism, sexism, homophobia, nationalism, religious intolerance, etc.).
8. Understands that there are **TWO SYSTEMS OF LAWS** that we must assume govern all experience, for without these there is no understanding or responsibility: **PHYSICAL LAWS AND MORAL LAWS**.
9. Understands that part of our intellectual limits is our inability to causally explain the origin of or to prove or disprove that these two systems of laws apply at all times and all places. They are a **NECESSARY ASSUMPTION** (faith) for us to live and thrive.
10. Understands that these two systems of physical and moral laws are **NEITHER THE CIVIC LAW** that govern the negotiation of a social world **NOR TECHNICAL AND PRAGMATIC RULES** that govern the acquisition and exercising of skills but the “lawful orders” required “below” (in nature) and “above” (in the individual) them by even the civic law, technical- and pragmatic for the achievement of justice according to the civic law and the responsible application of technical and pragmatic skills.
11. Understands that **NOT EVERYTHING THAT IS “RIGHT” IS “MORAL.”** Life is not a system of repressive, mechanical legalities but a project of spirited and creative transformations that can embrace the unexpected precisely by affirming dignity.
12. Understands that when acknowledgement for physical and moral laws are combined with human dignity by the individual, s/he deserves the **HIGHEST RESPECT** of others – although it is impossible for us to know the internal principles upon which another has chosen to act.
13. Understands that when we step outside our limits to give an explanation of things for which we are incapable of accounting, **WE STORM THE CITADEL OF DIVINITY AND BECOME THE MOST DANGEROUS SPECIES ON EARTH.**
14. Understands that, although everyone is capable and does lie, **LYING IS WRONG** not just because it deceives the other but because it erodes the individual's internal consistency upon which all “proper” understanding and action depends.
15. Understands that the committing of **SUICIDE** out of shame or financial collapse **IS THE APPLICATION OF ONE'S OWN CREATIVE SPARK TO DESTROY ITSELF**, the ultimate contradiction of human dignity with all the devastating shock waves that the destruction of dignity sends out through one's world.
16. Understands that all human capacities as well as the very universe are a **GIFT**, that each individual is **PRICELESS** (i.e., incapable of being substituted by some-one or some-thing else – including technology),

that we all have a responsibility to **MAINTAIN OUR HEALTH** as much as our decisions influence it, to **DEVELOP OUR TALENTS**, and to **RESPOND TO THE SUFFERING OF OTHERS** – with the limit that we ourselves don't end up requiring the aid of others because of our own generosity.

17. Understands that we are **RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT** and **THE PROPER TREATMENT OF ANIMALS**, not capriciously sovereign over them for the mere purpose of serving our self-interest.
18. Understands that no one is or can be perfect, but that we have an obligation to ourselves, others, and the universe **TO MAKE OUR BEST EFFORT**, which only the individual can know for sure, **TO ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER TO DO SO, AND TO AFFIRM AND SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER TO THE EXTENT THAT WE CAN DISCERN THAT S/HE HAS.**

Just as a “practicing Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Taoist, Shinto (not to speak of the Aboriginist religions of the world and all of the sub-sects of religion)” etc., does not require a personal grasp of the intricacies of “theology” or “religious teaching” much less a command of the ritual and history of the respective tradition involved, so too, a “practicing Kantian” does not require a grasp of Kant’s notions of “theoretical” and “practical” reason, determining and reflecting judgment, and aesthetics (beauty and the sublime) with all of their esoteric jargon.

At the risk of sinking into jargon ..., Kant wrote in the *Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge ed., 193; AA VI, 443-444):

[...] we have a duty *with regard to* what lies entirely beyond the limits of our experience but whose possibility is met with [only] in our ideas, for example, the idea of God; it is called the *duty of religion*, the duty ‘of recognizing all our duties as [...] divine commands.’ But this is not consciousness of a duty [owed] *to God* [...] Rather, it is a duty of a human being to himself [*sic.*] to apply this idea, which presents itself unavoidably to reason, to the moral law in him, where it is of the greatest moral fruitfulness. In this (practical) sense it can therefore be said that to have religion is a duty of the human being to himself.

In short, religion is concerned with “faith” in the reality of the physical law without and the moral law within, and its aim is to make us “better” human beings – not to guarantee our happiness in this or some other life. In this respect, there is only “one” religious faith although there are many religious traditions.