



# 10 Principles for a Happy Life and Career

## Principle 7: Tolerance

By Michael A. Crawford, CPA

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*Editor's Note: Mike Crawford has, by even his own accounts, had a successful and happy career as a CPA in Oklahoma. He says there are 10 basic principles that have guided him through a joyful life and a fulfilling career. In this and future issues of CPAFOCUS, Crawford shares that idea and those principles.*

**T**olerance is the oil that takes the friction out of life." – Wilbert E. Scheer

As the world we live in becomes more globally available to us through technological advances, we become more aware of the qualities that make us different—religious beliefs, cultural beliefs, race, language, gender, sexual orientation, etc. In a world with more than seven billion inhabitants, there are going to be a number of differences. However, in spite of all these differences, all humans share a common desire: to be happy and free of suffering.

Keeping this basic commonality in mind, we should respect each other's different beliefs, unless those beliefs are inherently evil. Our individual lives on earth, when considered within the scheme of all time, are just tiny molecules in vastness of space. So why not respect the beliefs of others and make the most of our relatively short time together on this planet?

An important aspect of tolerance is the art of graciousness, or knowing how to make people comfortable and feel included when it may be easier to ignore and exclude them. One of the greatest gifts we can give other human beings is to make them feel welcome and accepted, especially when they are struggling to fit in. Graciousness is about humility and is a trait not often found in those who are arrogant.

When I seized the opportunity to start my own accounting firm in 1984, I had a clear vision of how I wanted to treat my staff and build a family environment around our work. My vision was at the opposite end of how most professional firms were operated at the time. Most of my previous work environments seemed so impersonal and cold. I wanted to create an environment where all employees felt accepted and part of a family that worked together with humility, free of intimidation and with the utmost flexibility for meeting the needs of all its work family members. Thirty years later, our work family has grown in numbers from one to 26 and we still operate the firm with the same vision and in the same manner as I did at its inception. We have few formal policies and rules and do our best to treat each person with respect and ask they treat each other in that same way. We truly enjoy each other's company, so we also enjoy a variety of family style entertainment get-togethers.

While our staff comes from different backgrounds and beliefs, and even from different countries and cultures, the commonality of our desire to respect and care for each other creates a work environment centered around tolerance and understanding. It's amazing how much work can be done, and how well it can be done, when people enjoy what they do and who they do it with.

Don't judge others; you don't know their life journey. ☺