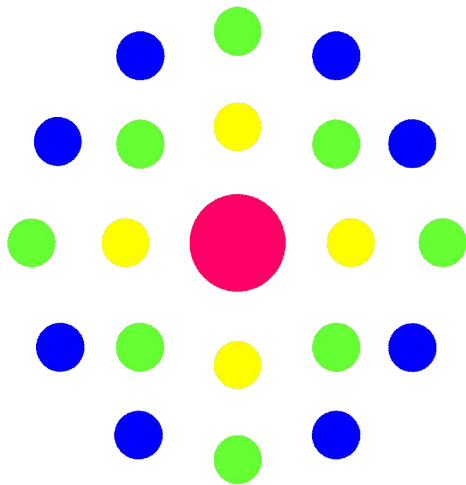


# thrive • agility

## *Rules*



*by Angela Stauder*  
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*Thriving* is a choice – and a practice. It is an orientation to living, loving, leading and learning – whole-heartedly, on purpose. It *isn't* surviving better – although surviving is obviously an essential component.

*Thriving* is a way of being – aware, appreciative and attending to what matters most – striving for harmony and to make dents in the universe for good.

While there is no perfect or right way to thrive, there are some 'rules'. Guidelines, really – or practices and ways of doing whatever you're doing – that dramatically make increase your chances of thriving and enjoying the journey.

The thrive • agility rules are simple (but not easy):

- Show Up.
- Be Yourself.
- Connect.
- Contribute.
- Do Work That Matters.

What follows are my thoughts about what each of these 'rules' means to me. I offer them as a place to start, as sparks to catalyze your thinking and thriving. Only you know what each means for you.

## Show-up

Be right here – right now. Pay attention to whatever is right in front of you. Be present to what is – to yourself, to others, to the world around you. No multi-tasking. No escaping, hiding or making excuses. No what you ‘woulda-coulda-shoulda’ done yesterday or what ‘might-could-possibly-maybe happen’ tomorrow. Listen with your whole mind and speak from your heart. It is not always easy, and sometimes it isn’t pleasant. Yes, it requires effort and practice – and you will never perfect it. Luckily, life is your practice field, and you get opportunities to practice every minute of every day. This moment is all you have – and you get to choose how you spend your limited resources of time, energy and attention. You can waste them by allowing the world to tell you what to do with it, or you can practice investing it by showing up for what you care about. Learn investment strategies – and invest wisely.

## Be Yourself

Be the most authentic, powerful version of yourself that you can be. You are different, unique and uncommon – just like everybody else. There are things about yourself that you can’t change: your passions, your aspirations, your talents and aptitudes, your values. That’s your Genius. There are things about yourself you can change: your hair color, your behavior, your way of seeing and being in the world, your orientation to living, working and the quality of your relationships with other people. You can change your perspective – and where you focus your attention – and it makes all the difference.

You can focus on things you can’t change – exhausting yourself (and others around you) trying to fix, cover-up, shut-up and mold yourself into a shape so that you will ‘fit in’. You can keep trying to cram yourself into a tiny package of what you *should* be and do is or what *they* (whoever you think they are) think you should be and do – but it takes extraordinary effort and doesn’t work – unless

you want to live a life in conflict with the voices in your head, being chased by shoulds and coulds.

Or you can focus on being the best and brightest version of **you**, nurturing your Genius so that you can offer what you have and who you are to the world. You can learn to embrace your whole self as the wonder you are and use your Genius to increase your capacity to be joyful, to bring joy to others and to do good in the world.

Stand tall and proud – confident that you are doing the best you can to live every minute you are blessed with, learning to better use the gifts you have been given. You are a gift – and the world is waiting to receive your offer.

## Connect

Success is never a solo act. Human beings are social creatures – and we need each other. We are all connected. You are part of something bigger – and everything you do or don't do has an impact on others – most of whom you can't see and will never know. It is only in connecting with others that you can be the person you are meant to become, when you can see the powerful possibilities that emerge when you join with others to engage in the collective dance of Genius. When you reach out and actually *see* another person, honor their humanity and connect with them – even for moment – we all benefit. Have the courage to connect first to your own heart – and then to open it to allow you to see and connect with others. When you extend a hand of compassion, share a smile or a tear in empathy and live and love with an open heart – you change the world. And you change – for the better.

## Contribute

Use the gifts you have been given to serve others and make dents in the universe that make a difference. Call it duty, or fate or destiny – or just contributing to making the world a better place for you having roamed the planet for a brief

moment in cosmic time. In exchange for the life you have been given, share your gifts and your Genius with others. You cannot thrive alone, and our collective future comes down to little actions on a regular basis by people like you and me – one after another. One person can make a difference – and you may never know the importance or the results of your actions. Offer what you have in each moment with generous intention – over and over – and trust that that is enough.

The funny thing about contributing is this: when you connect with what matters and offer what you have with an open heart, you receive so much more than you give. It's the way the universe works. When you feel empty or hopeless, look at the gifts you have been given, and cultivate gratitude. They are not yours to protect – they are yours to share. Generosity feels good. Offer your gifts. Don't give till it hurts. Give until your heart is overflowing with joy and fulfillment.

## Do Work that Matters

Work matters. It is how you will spend most of your waking hours as an adult. Even when you aren't 'at' work, you are tinged with the memories of the work of the past and thinking about possibilities for the future. How you spend those hours – what you are engaged in doing, how you show up and do what you do and the reason you do *that* work – is totally up to you. You make the choices in where you work and the contribution you make. You decide whether you indulge your Genius – your power to do *your* work – or whether you punch a clock, sell your soul for a paycheck or make a compromise somewhere in between. Your life is a patchwork of complex colors, shapes and conditions that is as unique as you are. It is easy to get lost in competing priorities – particularly if you try to achieve balance.

So don't. Seek *harmony*. Do it consciously. What are you here to do? What is your Genius? What matters? That gives you a point on the horizon to move toward. Now think about what dents you can make *today*. Let go of greatness, magnificence and legacy. You can't control most outcomes – and you definitely can't control other people's thoughts, feelings or actions. Get clear in your

intention, focus on *your* effort and make progress. Right now. This week. This month. This year. What is your work in this moment? Decide what *your* work that matters is. Then go do it.

You are always the boss of you. You can't give up that job – or get fired – no matter how hard you try. No one can make you do anything. Not all choices will seem fair or easy. But they are all yours to make. Connect with your Genius – with what matters – and make a difference.

## Repeat

Every morning the sun rises, every evening the sun sets. In those waking hours are thousands of moments for each of us to choose. You can Show-up, Be Yourself, Connect, Contribute and Do Work that Matters – or not. You can't ever be perfect – you can only do your best. Practice curiosity and compassion, gratitude and generosity – and watch what happens. Listen to your heart, focus your attention on your aspirations, and then on 'what is' – and honor both. Look for opportunities to experience hope and bring it to others. Embracing yourself and *your* Genius – the passions, aspirations, values, talents and aptitudes that make you 'you' – is a practice. The more you practice – the more frequently you bring your attention to your intention and take deliberate action – the more your capacity for contribution and connection grows.

It all matters. Take one step at time – *Shift on Purpose* – and do *your* work that matters. Make the dents in the universe for good that only you can make.

You will thrive more. You will change the world.

*To learn more about how you can discover your Genius and increase your thrive•agility, contact Angela Stauder at the [angela@thrivagility.com](mailto:angela@thrivagility.com).*