

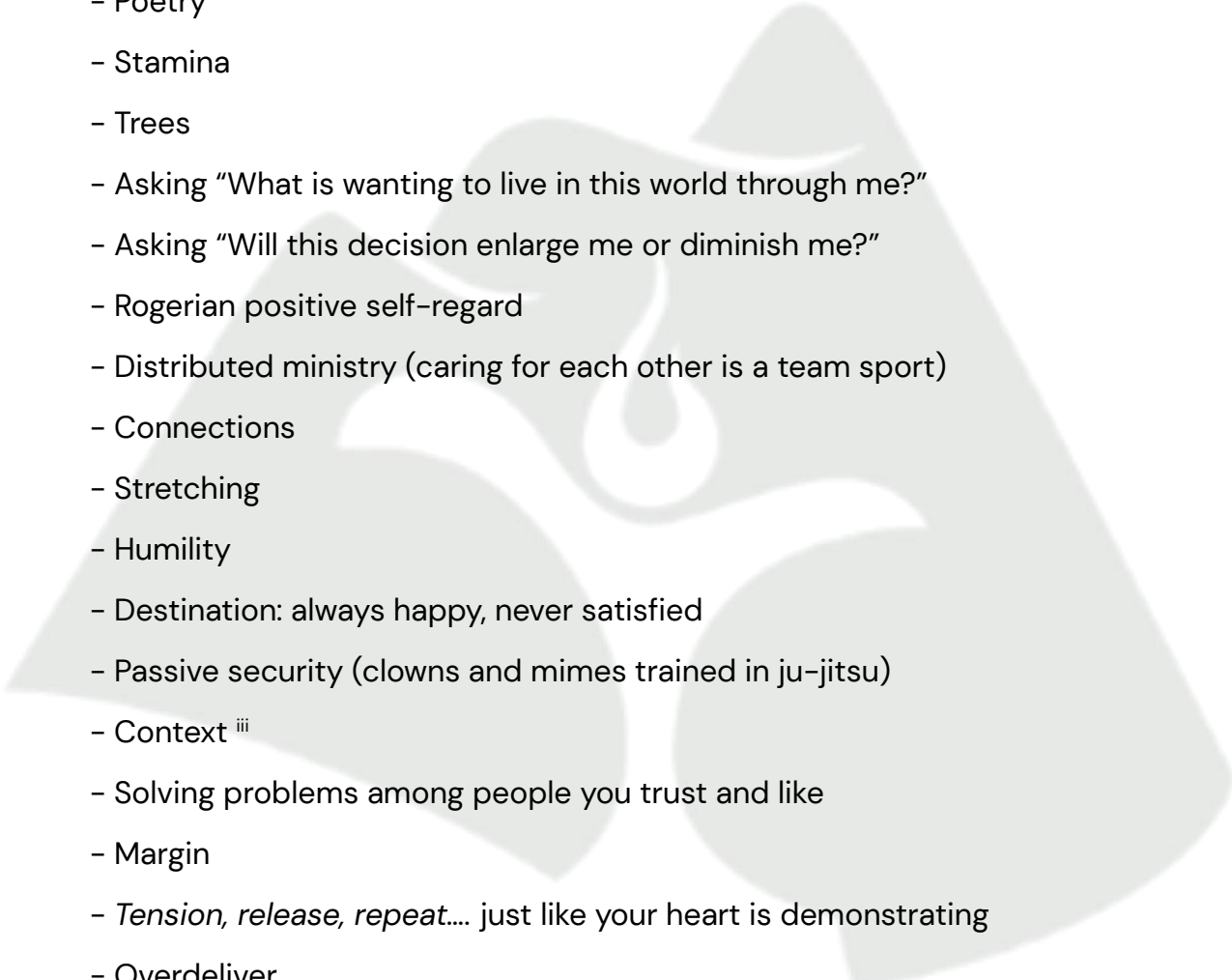
“The Secret of Life”

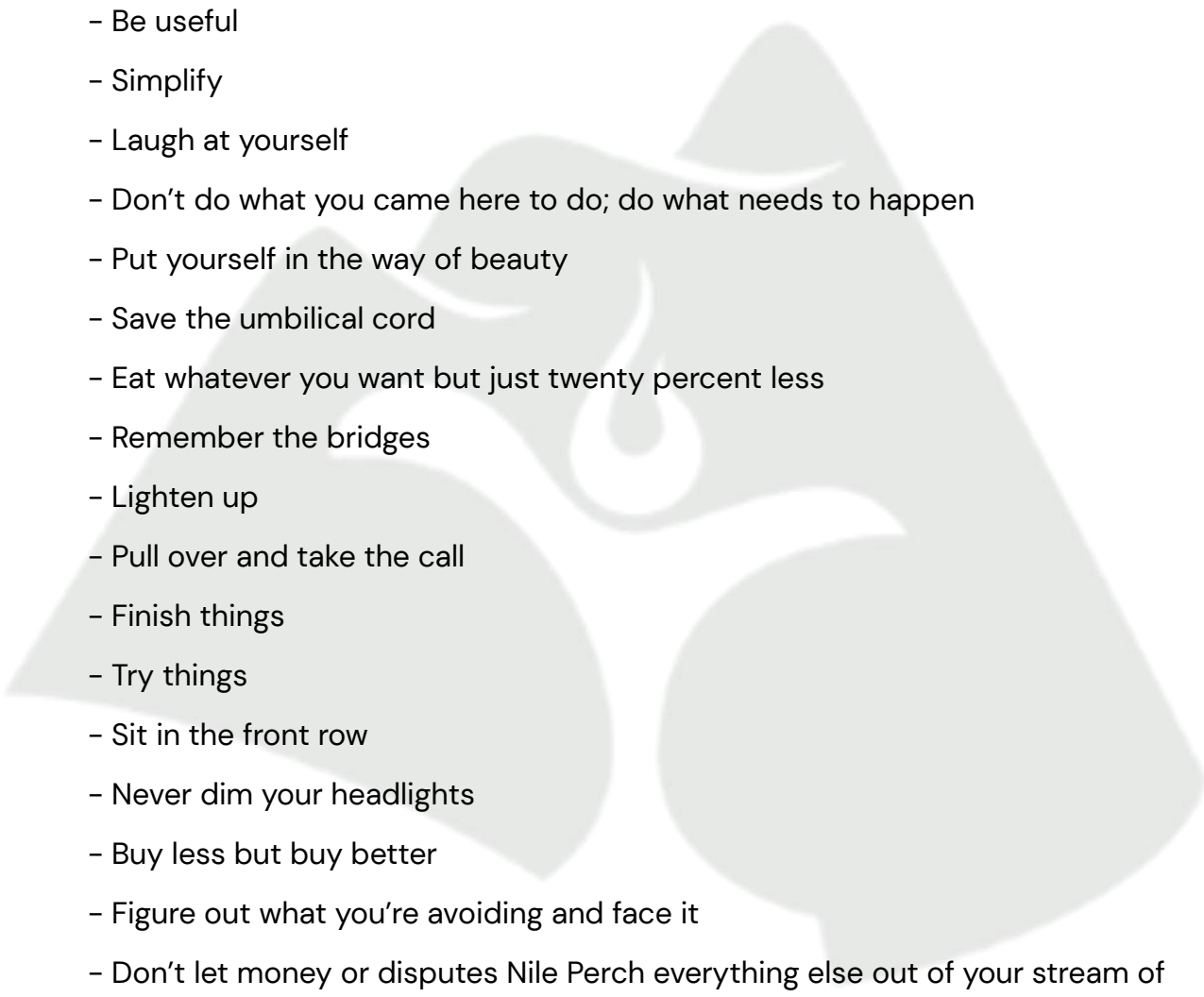
Bruce Grierson’s List (from his Reflection on October 18, 2026)

“Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Do not be afraid.”

– Frederick Buechner

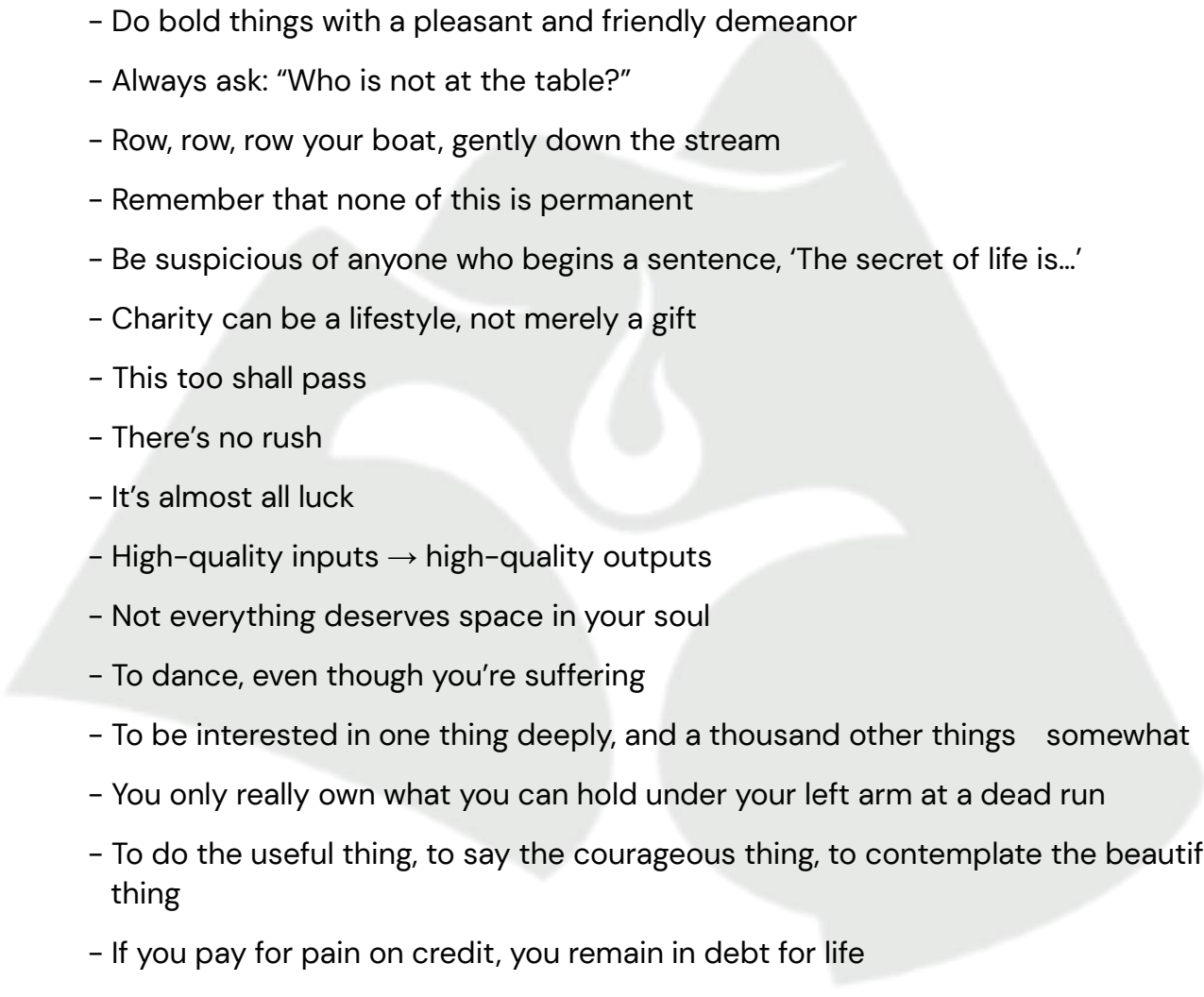
- Resistance
- Contrast
- Leg strength
- Gamma waves
- Good bread, good soup
- The Golden Rule
- Naps
- Peppermint tea
- Somewhere for men to go
- Systems
- *Amor fati*
- A teaspoon of honey (and maybe a little cinnamon)
- Lifelong learning
- Backup
- Diversity
- “Neutral spine”
- Compound interest
- The kindness of strangers
- Fiber ⁱ
- Balance ⁱⁱ
- Clean teeth

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- Portion control
 - Golden retrievers
 - The long game
 - Ten thousand steps and ten thousand words (reading) a day
 - Outliving your bad habits
 - Less talking, more doing
 - Poetry
 - Stamina
 - Trees
 - Asking "What is wanting to live in this world through me?"
 - Asking "Will this decision enlarge me or diminish me?"
 - Rogerian positive self-regard
 - Distributed ministry (caring for each other is a team sport)
 - Connections
 - Stretching
 - Humility
 - Destination: always happy, never satisfied
 - Passive security (clowns and mimes trained in ju-jitsu)
 - Context ⁱⁱⁱ
 - Solving problems among people you trust and like
 - Margin
 - *Tension, release, repeat....* just like your heart is demonstrating
 - Overdeliver
 - Undershare
 - Start before you're ready
 - Flatten the curve
 - Let them
 - Argue like you're right, listen like you're wrong
 - Be interesting and interested

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- Think INSIDE the box ... just look more closely
 - Practice difficulty before life requires it. ^{iv}
 - Try to retain – or recover – your ability to be pleasantly surprised
 - Manage your own regret, and other people's expectations
 - Be vulnerable
 - Be opportunistic
 - Be useful
 - Simplify
 - Laugh at yourself
 - Don't do what you came here to do; do what needs to happen
 - Put yourself in the way of beauty
 - Save the umbilical cord
 - Eat whatever you want but just twenty percent less
 - Remember the bridges
 - Lighten up
 - Pull over and take the call
 - Finish things
 - Try things
 - Sit in the front row
 - Never dim your headlights
 - Buy less but buy better
 - Figure out what you're avoiding and face it
 - Don't let money or disputes Nile Perch everything else out of your stream of consciousness
 - Follow people who think differently than you do
 - Don't take things personally
 - Define your nightmare; prepare for it
 - Make others look good
 - Don't expect applause

- Try to say things you've never said before
- Do the daily puzzle. ^v
- Always do a "dope check" when you leave. ('Did I leave my dope behind?' was a Sixties question. 'Was I a dope just now?' Timeless.)
- Assume positive intent
- Give people (your students, employees) breaks
- Find a way to have a good day
- Teach in order to learn
- Make things that raise goosebumps on people's skin
- Align your heartbeat with the score of the universe
- Look for the magicians
- Pressure-test your work for leaks
- Hold things, but hold them lightly (dreams, opinions, loved ones)
- Know where you are, not just how you got here
- Stop pretending there is infinite time — this is your one life
- Fire the arrow and then draw the target around it
- Do what makes your mornings exciting and nights peaceful
- Get there early
- Work harder, be nicer
- Wait it out
- Make more than you take
- Ride the horse in the direction it's going
- When reading anything, scan for what will stand the test of time
- Use money to build bonds with people you love
- Balance the water level in your two wells – the well of your experiences and the well of your income. ^{vi}
- Be a generalist, not a specialist – generalists are happier
- While procrastinating, think of fun things that could eventually be profitable
- Never come into a house with your empty arms dangling

- Develop a system for saving your best ideas
- Free your mind and your ass will follow
- Devote yourself to the shift from “me” to “we”
- Renounce all but the essential so that the essential may speak
- Don't worry about your weaknesses; double down on your strengths
- Make most decisions within the space of seven breaths
- Keep your hands busy (especially when your brain feels broken)
- If it's dry, make it wet; if it's wet, make it dry
- Move stuff from the back to the front on a regular basis (applies to fridge leftovers, books, ideas, employees, friends)
- Find a great question, then hunt for the bottom of it
- Find the fun in the task
- Do the day's hardest thing before 9am
- Plant yourself where you can thrive
- Show up on time and keep your guitar in tune
- Send out all your dogs, and trust that one will come back with dinner
- Shed self-absorption (it is the opposite of wonder)
- Cultivate the character virtue the Finns call *sisu*.^{vii}
- Extirpate all traces of greed. Also, never use the word *extirpate*
- Assume and fulfill your responsibilities
- Pay attention to the people you love without trying to control them
- Be a specialist in the short run and a generalist in the long run
- Keep your hands clean (metaphorically and literally)
- Tackle interesting problems. (It's the tackling that matters, not the solving.)
- Keep moving (movement is medicine)
- Don't look back (you're not going that way)
- Remember that you are not actually driving
- Lay off things that have lost their luster; commit to resparkle things you used to enjoy

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- Don't deify individuals – celebrate humans generally
 - Reduce the unforced errors
 - Be the cheering section for the people you love
 - Rejoice in the way things are
 - Indulge your curiosity, but in a way you are in control of
 - Try to contribute joy to the world
 - Do bold things with a pleasant and friendly demeanor
 - Always ask: "Who is not at the table?"
 - Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream
 - Remember that none of this is permanent
 - Be suspicious of anyone who begins a sentence, 'The secret of life is...'
 - Charity can be a lifestyle, not merely a gift
 - This too shall pass
 - There's no rush
 - It's almost all luck
 - High-quality inputs → high-quality outputs
 - Not everything deserves space in your soul
 - To dance, even though you're suffering
 - To be interested in one thing deeply, and a thousand other things somewhat
 - You only really own what you can hold under your left arm at a dead run
 - To do the useful thing, to say the courageous thing, to contemplate the beautiful thing
 - If you pay for pain on credit, you remain in debt for life
 - The one with the most interesting thoughts wins
 - There's more here
 - Happiness comes neither from within or without, but from between
 - The important stuff you need to learn the universe will remind you of twice in quick succession
 - The hard way's pretty hard ... but it's not nearly as hard as the easy way

- Reduce unknown risks as much as possible so that you can take more deliberate risks
- You cannot optimize everything; there's always trade-offs
- We are all translators
- Life's a zipper: if you're stuck, pull back and have another go
- Analog is the antidote
- So much depends on what you leave out
- Intention *does* matter.
- Normal is forgotten; only weird survives
- You are who you are when no one's looking
- The time to be absurd is now
- If you're not happy with your life, change one of three things: who you're with, what you do, or where you live
- Job One is reconciling what we believe with what we feel
- The folks who'll be most affected get to decide
- Every group needs a bass player, a goalie or a sous-chef. There are lots of ways to serve
- Nothing important comes with instructions
- Effortless living is not the dream; powerful living is
- No one wins unless everyone wins
- The world also needs cat-sitters
- As long as you have your reflective vest, anything is possible
- You can get pretty far in life by sticking to one style ... but to achieve great things, you probably have to learn how to code-switch
- It isn't success unless you have someone to share it with
- Success and happiness parallel how much value we create for others
- The best revenge is to *not be like that*
- Things generally work out in the long run; try to stay alive long enough to see the long run
- Nouns grow up to be verbs, and verbs grow up to be insights

- The only real test of intelligence is if you get what you want out of life
- It's not a race. You are not ahead, and you are not behind. You are here
- Everything rhymes

FOOTNOTES:

i See Lancet study on longevity and food groups. The optimal longevity diet is 50 to 55 percent carbs. Fiber is particularly important.

ii Not to be confused with stasis. Balance is dynamic.

iii Knowledge provides context, and context provides wisdom

iv Hard things are more fulfilling; we judge them as more purposeful.

v Solvable problems are a good thing; they gird us against the unsolvable ones.

vi Typically we deplete one to fill the other. The secret to happiness is to find a dodge that raises the level in both wells at the same time – like getting paid for something you love to do.

vii *Sisu* is grit, bravery and persistence all rolled into one.