

# From the President's Desk

## A game of cards that is well worth playing

In the immortal words of Forrest Gump, "Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're gonna get."

Others may prefer a different, more erudite expression: "Life is like a game of cards. The hand you are dealt is determinism; the way you play it is free will."

In either context, the message revolves around the philosophical quandary on life's uncontrollable circumstances versus personal choices. The matter highlights the fact that success depends largely on navigating challenges rather than relying on a visit from lady luck.

Sticking with the card analogy, one of life's great mysteries is why certain people are born into a world of wealth and privilege, while others are seemingly trapped from birth in a web of poverty, hardship, and despair. Some are dealt hands filled with queens, kings, and aces, while others are destined to play a no-name collection of 2s, 3s, and 4s.

Ultimately, of course, individuals do not choose where or to whom they are born. Being born into a wealthy, stable family in a developed country is a major factor of good fortune, often referred to as a "birth lottery." Relatedly, being born during a time of economic growth, rather than in a recession or military conflict, can significantly impact a person's initial life trajectory.

Similarly, those blessed with good health are handed perhaps life's most valuable card, while those racked with illness, injuries, and disease experience nothing but years of medical misfortune.

Questions as to why some children are born with extraordinary intelligence while others are confronted with overcoming a host of cognitive disorders are especially puzzling, although they may be explained by a complex interplay of genetic, environmental, and behavioral factors.

The line between "advantage" and "disadvantage" is not easily drawn, as we can point to countless examples of "trust-fund babies" who go off the rails, exhibiting reckless behavior due to a lack of financial education and a wanton desire for excessive, unmerited personal perks. Stories abound of those who have had it all in terms of money and fame only to be inexplicably mired in a lifetime of unhappiness and/or personal tragedy.

The key to living a good life, most sociologists agree, is achieved by finding purpose, cultivating gratitude, and choosing joy – factors often rooted in faith or personal resilience. True fulfillment, they say, is most likely found by pursuing meaningful passions, serving others, and maintaining a proper perspective.

And, I might add, by making good choices, which are fundamentally aligned with long-term goals rather than short-term gratification.



A blueprint can be found in the Six Pillars of Primerus, which if followed in your daily life can have application far beyond mere professional success. These principles serve as the bedrock of our organization and represent a vow of integrity in all dealings and a commitment to excellence in work product.

The first pillar – Integrity – is of utmost importance and is often regarded as the cornerstone of a person's character, a "moral compass" that guides actions, behavior, and decisions. At the heart of integrity is trust, credibility, and character, three traits that play a vital role in ethical decision-making. Integrity acts as a sense of moral direction, guiding individuals to make decisions that align with their core values and principles.

With integrity as the foundation, the five other pillars naturally follow, ensuring a strong belief in: Excellent Work Product; Reasonable Fees; Continuing Education; Civility; and Community Service.

I see choosing to follow the Six Pillars as an all-or-nothing decision, serving as an opportunity to display a sense of courage and conviction that can be your moral measuring stick for life – both personally and professionally.

Best regards,  
**Jack Buchanan, President**