

Penn Jillette's 10 Commandments for atheists

by [Kimberly Winston](#)

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(RNS) In his new book, "God, No!" atheist magician Penn Jillette tells how he was challenged by conservative radio host Glenn Beck to come up with an atheist's version of The Ten Commandments.

"I wanted to see how many of the ideas that many people think are handed down from (G)od really make sense to someone who says, 'I don't know.'"

Here's his list:

1. The highest ideals are human intelligence, creativity and love. Respect these above all.
2. Do not put things or even ideas above other human beings. (Let's scream at each other about Kindle versus iPad, solar versus nuclear, Republican versus Libertarian, Garth Brooks versus Sun Ra -- but when your house is on fire, I'll be there to help.)
3. Say what you mean, even when talking to yourself. (What used to be an oath to (G)od is now quite simply respecting yourself.)
4. Put aside some time to rest and think. (If you're religious, that might be the Sabbath; if you're a Vegas magician, that'll be the day with the lowest grosses.)
5. Be there for your family. Love your parents, your partner, and your children. (Love is deeper than honor, and parents matter, but so do spouse and children.)
6. Respect and protect all human life. (Many believe that "Thou shalt not kill" only refers to people in the same tribe. I say it's all human life.)
7. Keep your promises. (If you can't be sexually exclusive to your spouse, don't make that deal.)

8. Don't steal. (This includes magic tricks and jokes -- you know who you are!)

9. Don't lie. (You know, unless you're doing magic tricks and it's part of your job. Does that make it OK for politicians, too?)

10. Don't waste too much time wishing, hoping, and being envious; it'll make you bugnutty.