0080 What The Principle Does Not Claim

The Summers Principle Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/0080-what-the-principle-does-not-claim/

The principle governs the operating domain of the restaurant. It does not claim jurisdiction outside that domain. Every natural law has a boundary condition, and naming the boundary is what separates a law from a universal metaphysical assertion.

Newton's laws hold at non-relativistic speeds. They do not claim jurisdiction over subatomic physics or over the geometry of spacetime near a black hole. Thermodynamics governs energy transfer inside closed systems. It does not claim to answer questions about consciousness or free will. Every real law is powerful inside its boundary and silent outside it. The Summers Principle is the same.

Here is what the principle does not claim.

It does not claim jurisdiction over metaphysics. Whether human choice is ultimately free or determined by prior causes is a philosophical question the principle does not answer. The principle governs the operating domain, given an operator who is present and capable of choice. Every present moment is a Summers moment on present capacity. How the operator arrived at that capacity — inheritance, upbringing, education, prior choices, prior operators — is upstream of the principle's scope. The regress runs behind the operator. The principle runs in front of them.

It does not claim moral judgment. The principle names causes, not virtues. An operator with limited capital, limited knowledge, or limited authority still operates under design or default within their capacity envelope. The principle does not measure the operator against an ideal design. It names what caused the outcome inside the operator's actual capacity. Operators who ran the design that was available to them and produced wrong outcomes are not moral failures. They are operators whose design was insufficient at some layer — and the principle names that layer so the design can be rebuilt.

It does not claim to predict specific outcomes. The principle predicts the cause structure of outcomes. It does not predict which outcome will come in on any given shift. Two operators running design at similar capacity can produce different outcomes based on the specifics of their design. Two operators running default can produce different outcomes based on the specifics of the ambient forces they are defaulting to. The principle governs the cause layer, not the outcome

layer. It says the outcome will trace to design or default. It does not say what the outcome will be.

It does not claim to eliminate risk. Design against a condition reduces the operator's exposure to bad outcomes from that condition, but does not eliminate exposure. An operator who designs a strong succession bench still faces the possibility of a hire not working. An operator who designs a strong maintenance schedule still faces the possibility of equipment failure. The principle does not promise that design produces the outcome the operator wanted. It promises that the outcome will trace to the design that was run and the design that was not.

It does not claim that all defaults are equally bad. Some defaults produce outcomes close to what design would have produced. An operator who defaults on cast onboarding but happens to hire strong cast members produces cast outcomes that look like designed outcomes. The default is still a default. The next hire cycle may not go the same way. The principle names the cause, not the outcome quality. A default that produces a good outcome is still a default, and it is still fragile in a way design is not.

It does not claim to replace craft, skill, or intuition. The principle names the cause structure. It does not tell the operator what to design or how. The design content — what makes a good hire, what makes a strong GX, what makes a healthy P&L — is the work of the craft. The principle governs whether that craft is applied with engineered intent or whether the operation runs on ambient forces. Craft without the principle produces uneven outcomes because the craft is applied unevenly. The principle without craft produces engineered intent applied to designs that may not work. The two run together. The principle names the physics; the craft designs against it.

The boundary of the principle is the operating domain of the restaurant. Inside that boundary, the law is absolute. Outside that boundary — in metaphysics, in moral philosophy, in the prediction of specific outcomes, in the elimination of risk — the principle is silent. Silence is not weakness. Silence is a well-drawn boundary. A law that claims jurisdiction over everything is not a law. It is a religion.