

## 12 Laws of Life

These are non-negotiable and there are no escape clauses. No excuses are accepted. Ignore them at your own risk.

I got this information over decades of living, but many people never learn these rules at all. And so they live in "quiet desperation." You don't have to settle for that. If you consider these Facts and test them against your experience (NOT your conditioning!), I predict you'll adopt them, and you'll be on your way to a life of freedom and accomplishment.

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### **1. SELF-MANAGEMENT AND PEOPLE SKILLS ARE THE KEYS TO YOUR SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS.**

This is a MAJOR fact of life. And it took me a long time to get this. If you want to be smarter than me you'll give this first principle serious consideration.

Your skill level in these two areas will determine the quality of your whole life. Every champion and high achiever knows this. These simple skills are the clear difference between winners in life, and losers.

If you learn to manage yourself you can accomplish anything you can dream up. You can deal with negative experiences wisely and you can add skills as you need them. You can become unstoppable. Self management puts you on the launching pad to all the success you desire.

Most people limit themselves by their unwillingness to consider personal change. They won't learn new things and they won't change their behaviors even when they discover they've been wrong.

The funny thing is, self-change is EASY. You are the one person that you can get to anytime you want. You don't need permission or an appointment, and no one can stop you from learning and changing whenever you decide to. The only obstacle is you!

Self-management is actually the first step to building people skills.

Once you commit to changing yourself into who you can be, you will notice the people around you in a different way. Now you see them as fellow beings with their own fears and drives. And they will see you with new respect and attractiveness.

You are surrounded by people who can help or harm you, based on how you treat them. Learning how people work is a skill, just like learning how you work. These people can multiply your efforts and supercharge your success

It takes leadership and persuasion skills – people skills.

People skills are like a booster rocket propelling you to your dreams. And the process of succeeding with others can be learned just like you learn to make toast. If you follow directions and practice, you can develop the skills that will make you very happy and prosperous.

## **2. YOU ARE AT THE CENTER OF YOUR UNIVERSE. STAY THERE!**

As a young sailor I learned the hard way that when I was in a foreign port I needed to take my corners wide and keep my hands out of my pockets. In other words, I had to stay balanced, alert and ready to react to surprises. I've found that a lot of life's situations are like "foreign ports." They range from the bedroom to the boardroom, and you will encounter them throughout your life.

Keep your balance. Stay centered. Expect surprises.

Being centered has two sides; inner and outer.

Begin within.

Inner centeredness comes first; look there for your best self. It is how you will find peace of mind. There is a place in you that's connected to something beyond you. Spending time there will keep your mind clear and your spirit refreshed. That "doorway" is your center.

Until you're connected to your core you won't be very good at handling the rest of the world. Few people really get this. It is the single most important and least understood fact of life

Your center is easy to find. Every spiritual tradition in history teaches prayer and meditation — it's the most important thing you can do for the quality of your life. Just take a little break a couple of times a day, and learn to be still and RELAX.

If you give yourself this little time each day you will become calmer, stronger and your physical and mental health will improve. You will begin to focus more on what you think of yourself than what others may think of you.

For outer centeredness, you need to gain awareness of your personal boundaries. This is critical. Pay close attention to where you stop and others start.

Protect your personal prerogatives and respect those of others. Allowing others to invade your boundaries will destroy your personal freedom and subject you to their tyranny.

If you cross the boundaries of others you become codependent with them, caring more about how they live their lives than how you live yours. You can care about others without having to run their lives. Let them go and feel the relief, once you get used to living only your own life.

## **3. WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT MOST IS WHAT YOU GET.**

There is a Law of Attraction in human nature. What is in your mind is reflected "out there," in what you experience as your reality.

Afraid? Then all the goblins that you fear will be attracted to you. The only useful purpose of fear is to remind you to plan. Plan so that you protect yourself from harm,

but don't become timid. If you play it TOO safe you'll freeze in place and trade your life away for nothing.

Angry? Then you'll get a lot of angry people to tussle with. Your life will fill up with honking horns and people pushing you around, and you'll spend all your time pushing back.

It's a good idea to choose your habitual thought patterns carefully.

Love, optimism and gratitude are good choices. These states of mind inspire you to explore, to create, to grow and to give. People and opportunities will become attracted to you. And the goblins and angry people will get smaller and less important, and finally they'll fade and go away.

The point of choice comes up when you have to deal with a challenging situation. Do you call it a "bad break" – some S.O.B. was out to get you? Or was it just something that happened, leaving it up to you to interpret in the most nourishing way?

You might as well be positive. Bottom line — it works better. It makes you easier to be around and more creative and good-natured. And your immune system will be strengthened.

Events are just events until our thoughts and reactions turn them into experience. What the experience means, how useful it might be, those are the choices that we make — they're the stories we tell ourselves about our lives.

We're taught that it's not 'reasonable' to expect to win all the time. Nonsense! That kind of thinking numbs ambition and smothers greatness. Even worse it leads to reasonable excuses. Excuses don't accomplish anything so do NOT be reasonable.

Actually, achieving the impossible is quite normal — you've done it thousands of times. EVERYTHING you do now was impossible for you before you did it the first time, from feeding yourself to balancing your checkbook.

Try this for a week. Focus on what you want instead of what you don't want. Practice the skills of optimism, gratitude, generosity and forgiveness and your life will expand.

**Yes, that's right. PRACTICE.**

Good attitudes are skills that you develop through repetition, just like swimming or math. And skills become second nature through practice. You will become stronger and more relaxed when you decide that you might as well thrive.

Your commitment to expectancy is another skill, and it's decisive and magnetic. It attracts luck and creates focus. People and opportunities will be drawn to you. Life starts to get easier. And more fun.

**Go ahead and test it. What have you got to lose? The only way you can fail at anything is to quit trying!**

#### **4. YOU MAKE YOUR HABITS AND THEN YOUR HABITS MAKE YOU.**

You've probably heard the saying, "As you sow, so shall you reap."

It means that our lives are created by what we do, not by what we intend. It means that we can harvest only what we plant. And every day you're planting something, so choose wisely.

The biggest and most important influences in your life are created by small daily acts. For example — Meditate, Study, Set Goals, Save Money, Exercise, Floss, Smile, and Say Thank You.

When you do the right thing at the right time it makes more difference than if you make a big dramatic effort too late. Cramming may work in school, but not in real life. The school term is over in a few months; life lasts longer. Days turn into years and those years become your life.

The most important qualities in life — Spirituality, Health, Relationships, Wealth, and Your Personal Character — are developed by regular acts done on a daily basis. They're called "practices."

Daily practices — done on schedule. What? Just "can't do anything on a schedule?"

Baloney. You can do anything you want on a schedule, unless you've never gotten to a plane on time. It's a matter of priorities. And your priorities create your quality of life.

Choose the practices of your life as if you were a farmer. You can't skip spring planting if you want a fall harvest. Master this principle and you will live your life to its fullest.

Changing your life doesn't take a lot of work — just repeat a single positive act daily for three weeks and it will become a habit. Good. Now add another one. Then another one. The force of good habits will automatically generate power and "good luck," and your life will blossom.

## **5. GUILT ENSLAVES YOU. RESPONSIBILITY LIBERATES YOU.**

Here's a secret about "Original sin". It's guilt, and you get it from your parents.

Are you self-conscious? Most people are. They're worried that they're "unzipped." They're walking around thinking that people will notice their missing button, their bad hairdo, their poor credit and personal shortcomings.

These feelings are universal — we all got them while we were being taught how to behave as infants ("No!" "Bad!" "Don't!").

When we become adults we are supposed to leave these feelings of inadequacy in childhood where they were needed.

The way to do this is to forgive your parents for their shortcomings, whether they were minor or major. And then forgive yourself for all your sins, real and imagined.

Forgiving doesn't mean that you think what happened was okay. It just means that you free yourself from the work of remembering it and getting mad at people that are not even around anymore. Including the younger "you."

You **MUST** do this if you want to be free.

## 6. “OBLIGATIONS” ARE A FRAUD.

Okay, take a deep breath here. This one gets a lot of people, because most of us have been brainwashed all of our lives to believe a huge lie. We’ve all been taught that we “owe” other people all sorts of obligations, and that we should expect lots of things from them in return.

That idea, in one word, is bullshit.

We waste an incredible amount of time either doing things we don’t want and don’t have to do, or feeling guilty because we didn’t do something we “should” have done. We also waste a lot of time and emotion being disappointed when we don’t get what we expect from others.

Freedom lies in the other direction.

The truth is, you don’t owe anyone anything and they don’t owe anything to you. This is all part of the “guilt” thing. It’s good for us to give to others, but ONLY when and how we choose.

The difference between free people who master their lives and those who are slaves is easy to spot.

Who sets their priorities?

Free people set their own priorities, while “slaves” allow them to be set by outsiders. Your life belongs to you and you alone — and not anyone else.

Want a formula for unhappiness? Make your welfare dependent upon someone else’s choices. Do you need “support” from those you love? Or approval from a parent or friend? Or permission from anybody to pursue your own path?

**That’s not living — that’s slavery!**

Don’t look to anyone else for your success or happiness. That’s your job and yours alone. You must tend to your own welfare. No one else will, nor should they.

## 7. EXPECT LESS FROM OTHERS AND MORE FROM YOURSELF.

Most people expect way too much from others while they themselves actually get very little done. Inertia and distraction are insidious and damn near universal — expect it in others but guard against it in your own behavior.

Everyone listens to his or her favorite mental radio station — W.I.I.F.M., which stands for, “What’s In It For Me?” So don’t take it personally when you’re overlooked, your call goes un–returned, and you go un–thanked.

Most of your fellow humans are so distracted and disorganized that they only get around to the most essential, familiar or urgent things in their lives. They’re on “auto–pilot” most of the time — aren’t we all on occasion?

This self-interest is natural and healthy. Use this knowledge of other's desires in your plans and proposals.

Here's the big principle. If you want something to happen, take control and do it yourself. Don't get bitter if perhaps someone else didn't keep a commitment to help you.

It is a waste of time to criticize others, and a bigger waste to pay attention to anyone's criticism of you. Just know that you can get better at doing things on your own. It's a LOT easier than trying to get someone else to change.

## **8. NOBODY WAKES UP IN THE MORNING CHOOSING TO BE THE VILLAIN.**

Everyone alive thinks that they're the "good guy." He or she is the hero in their version of the story. They have a reason for what they do — even if it's impractical or unworkable or has evil consequences.

People who are troublesome aren't worth changing. Don't even waste time complaining about them.

If someone hurts you, it's not about you and you shouldn't act like it was. People do what they do because of their own inner reality. Learn what you can do differently the next time, then forgive them and move on.

Really. Forgive them completely. And then, figure out how to manage, tolerate or avoid them in the future.

By the way, forgiving doesn't mean that you think whatever they did is okay. It's NOT okay. But here's the thing — if you don't forgive someone you can't ever let it go. Then you have to go around with this burden of anger and sourness.

Wasn't the original hurt enough for you? Why would you want to preserve it and remember it? Or them?

Carrying grudges ties up brain cells that you could use to make life sweeter for yourself and those you love. So, after you forgive them, forgive yourself for getting hurt — and then LET IT GO!

## **9. THERE IS NO "HAPPILY EVER AFTER" IN THE REAL WORLD.**

Friends and mates may change or leave, luck comes and goes, and there are no guarantees. The only certainty is that someday your life will be over, and only you can decide how it will be lived. If you want a happy ending you need to create it.

Think about it. When would "Happily Ever After" start?

After you win the lottery? — Most lottery winners are broke within three years.

When the wedding bells ring? — Over half of all marriages fail.

When you retire? — 95% of those over 65 live from check to check.

**Stories have to have happy endings, because the story ends before their characters do.**

Real life is different. You're going to live until you die, so you need to have a plan for every day of it.

Choose your goals, write them down, and track them daily. Your life will happen by accident unless you have a plan for it. Either way things will happen to you. On every day of your life, after every climax, every tragedy and every triumph, the sun will rise again.

You get a new day every morning of your life. And as long as you're alive you'll have to prepare for that next day and the one after that.

So respect reality.

Think as if you have a future, because that's where you're going to spend the rest of your life.

## **10. THERE IS A HELL, AND IT STARTS EARLY.**

People create their own personal hell with moral shortcuts, regrets about lost opportunities, resentment, and guilt. Then they add jealousy and envy, and they've paid the toll to enter Hell's suburbs.

What toll do they pay? They give up their peace of mind, and sometimes their self-respect. They trade it for short-term pleasure.

Those who avoid doing anything that requires effort — physical exercise or forgiving or doing something for someone else — grow more narrow and less flexible day by day. Stunted ambition strangles their dreams and their enthusiasm dies.

By the time they enter "downtown Hell" they've got a bad attitude about most things in life. They complain and criticize because "life has let them down." The truth is life didn't let them down — they quit trying.

Pretty soon their immune system gets the message and then their physical afflictions begin — their relationships are desolate and life becomes an ordeal. They start looking and acting older than they really are.

When these people look ahead, the future looks just like the past. Stretching on and on, day after unhappy day.

And that is truly Hell.

## **11. YOU CAN CREATE PARADISE ON EARTH. MANY PEOPLE DO.**

You can make your life sweeter bit by bit. It doesn't take much, just some daily practice.

Spend some time in solitude each day renewing your peace of mind.

Invest in good memories by managing your behavior so that you enjoy looking back on your life.

You create your Heaven by small acts of generosity to others, making them smile and feel better.

You create it by little acts of courage — doing the right thing when no one but you will ever know you did it.

By making promises to yourself and keeping them, which builds your self-respect.

You create it by telling the truth even if it's inconvenient or embarrassing. It makes you careful about what you do, or what you commit to doing. And that brings credibility and trust. And most important, you will know you're liked for who you are instead of for some lie you're living.

You're in Heaven's neighborhood when you notice the amazing number of things in life there are to be grateful for, especially as your gratitude becomes a constant part of your being.

Humans are the most flexible beings on this planet, and you build Heaven by stretching sometimes to try something new or a little scary.

Your reward is learning that you are more than you thought.

And you can always stretch more.

As you become older your personal Heaven becomes a bigger influence on those around you. Your life will expand faster than your physical abilities contract.

You will laugh a lot more than most people, and enjoy more contentment and peace than you ever thought possible. And it just keeps getting better and better.

If you choose to follow this path, you'll be in Paradise long before you leave this life.

## **12. IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO CHANGE.**

Everyone alive gets the same amount of time. 1440 minutes a day. 168 hours in each week. As long as you live. The only difference is in how you spend those hours.

You decide how to spend your time and you make that choice each minute.

You can begin to turn your life around in a second.

The only thing you need to do is decide to make it better. You can start to change immediately, beginning with a simple act and letting the acts pile up on each other, creating the change almost effortlessly.

You know the scriptural quote, "By their deeds you shall know them?"

It was talking about us. It doesn't really matter much what we think or what we intend, until the thought is expressed as action.



## **The quality of our lives comes from what we actually do.**

Experience comes in moments — and the moments will keep coming for you until they finally stop. Each moment is a gift, and the chance to make your life different comes to you during each one of them.

Each of these “Facts” boils down to a single principle. **Decide.**

You can decide how your life will go during any moment you choose. This may be that moment.

It's okay to dream big. Where do you want to go from here? How do you want your next moments to be? It's up to you.

## **IN CLOSING**

I'd like to leave you with a personal note.

Odds are I'm older than you and I'll confess something. I wasn't born knowing these Facts of Life. I got them one by one, over decades that would have gone better if I had known all of these rules earlier. But the bottom line is I eventually got them, and with each new breakthrough every area of my life (health, wealth, relationships and happiness) has gotten better and better.

The very few regrets I have are mostly not about the “sins” I may have committed. No, they are about the things I didn't do when the opportunity arose.

I invite you to avoid creating regrets in your future by embracing opportunities for growth as they appear.

This article may be one of those opportunities. And who knows?

You could decide to use these rules as guidelines, and spend your life turning your dreams into reality.

If you try it, I think you'll like it.

Seeya,

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