

Real World Rules

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1. No one else is responsible for your choices. Ultimately, you will bear the consequences for what you do, regardless of the circumstances and influences that "made" you do it.
2. Others can help you succeed, but they cannot make you fail.
3. We learn very little from our successes. We can learn a great deal from our failures, but only when we choose to.
4. Quitting is the easy way, and it's habit forming. Break the habit now, or it will eventually break you. Quitting is not a solution, and it's a lousy way to "make a point". The only point it makes is that you aren't good for your commitments.
5. "Life Isn't Fair." So what's your point? The world will not reorganize itself to suit your ideas of fairness. Deal with it. You don't get to choose your circumstances. You must choose your responses to circumstance.
6. There's no such thing as a "good excuse." Good excuses are still excuses, and they cost just as much as bad excuses. The race clock doesn't run slower when you had a "good reason" for not training hard enough. Having a "good reason" for poor job performance will not keep your boss from firing you. Stop making excuses and start making the effort.
7. Usually, you won't be in charge. Learn to live with authority.
8. Get out of the habit of making things "someone else's fault." Even when it's true it isn't helpful. You can't do anything about somebody else's choices. Take responsibility for "your part" in any situation and make your own wise choices.
9. You are not the center of the universe. The world will not stop at your convenience. Don't live as if it should. You will get far more out of relationship and connection with a team, family, or peer group than you ever will from "looking out for number one." Always give more than you demand.
10. They say nothing comes easy. But that's not true. Lots of things come easy: failure, mediocrity, debt, loneliness, hum-drum existence... it's just the good stuff you have to work for.
11. Nothing happens in a vacuum. Every choice you make today will impact who you are tomorrow, and what choices and consequences you'll have to deal with then. There are no "victimless crimes" in life. Your poor choices will negatively impact those around you. Likewise, your good choices will ultimately make things better for the rest of your world.
12. Learn from Yoda: "Try not. Do or do not. There is no try." Don't start "settling" for less than your best this early in life. Silt settles, and spends its existence on the bottom of the stream. If you want to be at the top, you have to do something about it. If you can't swim, tread water. Don't try. Do.