

17 Rules for a Better Way to Live *by Og Mandino*

1. **Count your blessings.** Once you realize how valuable you are and how much you have going for you, the smiles will return, the sun will break out, the music will play and you will finally be able to move forward toward the life that God intended for you...with grace, strength, courage and confidence.
2. **Today, and every day, deliver more than you are getting paid to do.** The victory of success will be half won when you learn the secret of putting out more than is expected in all that you do. Make yourself so valuable in your work that eventually you will become indispensable. Exercise your privilege to go the extra miles, and enjoy all the rewards you receive. You deserve them!
3. **Whenever you make a mistake or get knocked down by life, don't look back at it too long.** Mistakes are life's way of teaching you. Your capacity for occasional blunders is inseparable from your capacity to reach your goals. No one wins them all, and your failures, when they happen, are just part of your growth. Shake off your blunders. How will you know your limits without an occasional failure? Never quit. Your turn will come.
4. **Always reward your long hours of labor and toil in the very best way, surrounded by your family.** Nurture their love carefully, remembering that your children need models, not critics, and your own progress will hasten when you constantly strive to present your best side to your children. And even if you have failed at all else in the eyes of the world, if you have a loving family, you are a success.
5. **Build this day on a foundation of pleasant thoughts.** Never fret at any imperfections that you fear may impede your progress. Remind yourself, as often as necessary, that you are a creature of God and have the power to achieve any dream by lifting up your thoughts. You can fly when you decide that you can. Never consider defeat again. Let the vision in your heart be in your life's blueprint. Smile!
6. **Let your actions always speak for you, but be forever on guard against the terrible traps of false pride and conceit that can halt your progress.** The next time you are tempted to boast, just place your fist in a full pail of water, and when you remove it, the hole remaining will give you a correct measure of your importance.
7. **Each day is a special gift from God, and while life may not always be fair, you must never allow the pains, hurdles, and handicaps of the moment to poison your attitude and plans for yourself and your future.** You can never win when you wear the ugly cloak of self-pity, and the sour sound of whining will certainly frighten away any opportunity for success. Never again. There is a better way.
8. **Never again clutter your days or nights with so many menial and unimportant things that you have no time to accept a real challenge when it comes along.** This applies to play as well as work. A day merely survived is no cause for celebration. You are not here to fritter away your precious hours when you have the ability to accomplish so much by making a slight change in your routine. No more busywork. No more hiding from success. Leave time, leave space, to grow. Now. Now! Not tomorrow!
9. **Live this day as if it will be your last.** Remember that you will only find "tomorrow" on the calendars of fools. Forget yesterday's defeats, and ignore the problems of tomorrow. This is it. Doomsday. All you have. Make it the best day of your year. The saddest words you can ever utter are, "If I had my life to live over again..." Take the baton, now. Run with it! This is your day!
10. **Beginning today, treat everyone you meet, friend or foe, loved one or stranger, as if they were going to be dead at midnight.** Extend to each person, no matter how trivial the contact, all the care and kindness and understanding and love that you can muster, and do it with no thought of any reward. Your life will never be the same again.

11. **Laugh at yourself and at life.** Not in the spirit of derision or whining self-pity, but as a remedy, a miracle drug, that will ease your pain, cure your depression, and help you to put in perspective that seemingly terrible defeat of the moment. Banish tension and concern and worry with laughter at your predicaments, thus freeing your mind to think clearly toward the solution that is certain to come. Never take yourself too seriously.
12. **Never neglect the little things.** Never skimp on that extra effort, that additional few minutes, that soft word of praise or thanks, that delivery of the very best that you can do. It does not matter what others think, it is of prime importance, however, what you think about you. You can never do your best, which should always be your trademark, if you are cutting corners and shirking responsibilities. You are special. Act it. Never neglect the little things.
13. **Welcome every morning with a smile.** Look on the new day as another special gift from your Creator, another golden opportunity to complete what you were unable to finish yesterday. Be a selfstarter. Let your first hour set the theme of success and positive action that is certain to echo through your entire day. Today will never happen again. Don't waste it with a false start or no start at all. You were not born to fail.
14. **You will achieve your grand dream, a day at a time, so set goals for each day-not long and difficult projects, but chores that will take you, step by step, toward your rainbow.** Write them down, if you must, but limit your list so that you won't have to drag today's undone matters into tomorrow. Remember that you cannot build your pyramid in twenty-four hours. Be patient. Never allow your day to become so cluttered that you neglect your most important goal-to do the best you can, enjoy this day and rest satisfied with what you have accomplished.
15. **Never allow anyone to rain on your parade and thus cast a pall of gloom and defeat on the entire day.** Remember that no talent, no self-denial, no brains, no character, are required to set up in the faultfinding business. Nothing external can have any power over you unless you permit it. Your time is too precious to be sacrificed in wasted days combating the menial forces of hate, jealousy and envy. Guard your fragile life carefully. Only God can shape a flower, but any foolish child can pull it to pieces.
16. **Search for the seed of good in every adversity.** Master that principle and you will own a precious shield that will guard you well through all the darkest valleys you must traverse. Stars may be seen from the bottom of a deep well, when they cannot be discerned from the mountaintop. So will you learn things in adversity that you would never have discovered without trouble? There is always a seed of good. Find it and prosper.
17. **Realize that true happiness lies within you.** Waste no time and effort searching for peace and contentment and joy in the world outside. Remember that there is no happiness in having or in getting, but only in giving. Reach out. Share. Smile. Hug. Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself.

Reference:

Mandino, O. (1990). *A better way to live*. New York: Bantam Books.

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