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Article

## 12 rules for life

Although life is the best it has ever been, people seem to be in need of guidance more than ever. The self help section of bookstores and libraries online and in paper are swollen with guides to reformation, insights into addiction, trends and fads that will help you lose weight, kick a habit, pick up a new one, concentrate, meditate, make friends, understand yourself and others and so on ad infinitum.

So, are we more lost now than we have been before or are we simply more aware? Perhaps we ask more questions, maybe we are more demanding, maybe the pressures of living in a consumer environment trap us in an endless loop of dissatisfaction. There's certainly truth in the statement that an 'unhappy consumer is a good consumer.' The complete person doesn't yearn for the latest mobile upgrade or a bigger sofa to use it on.

With the rise in intellectual self reflection, can we predict an enlightenment that will see people look less to the things they own and more to the development of themselves, could the self help section be a shiny pin in the consumer bubble?

Questions are certainly a part of it.

There's one book in particular that has stood out in recent years, the author of which has remained steadfast in the centre of the controversy that whirls around him. '12 rules for life – an antidote to chaos' by Professor Jordan Peterson has hit the best sellers list on a global scale, reaching out to an audience of young and old alike, here is a short summary of some of the rules.

### 1. Stand up straight with your shoulders back

Solid advice from a physiological perspective, good posture has an incredible impact on your health, encouraging better circulation and reducing stress on your joints, especially the spine. This rule seems to have been the source of ad hominem attacks on the Professor's work during interviews as he bases his research on Lobsters, a fact which is often used to discredit him as a 'mad scientist.' Lobsters share their biological composition and structure with humans. They also operate within a dominance hierarchy. When Lobsters play out their hierarchy in combat, the winning lobster receives a hit of serotonin the 'feel good' neurotransmitter. He feels like Jagger and adds a little swagger to his scuttle. It changes how the Lobster 'presents' himself and the others know about, his posture changes, back straight, shoulders back. The opposite can be seen in the defeated Lobster, slumping into a posture of existential woe. How you present yourself, is often how you are received. The same way you wouldn't attend an important meeting in your pyjamas, body language plays a vital role not only in how you are perceived by others, but also in how you consider yourself.

### 2. Treat yourself like someone you are responsible for helping

This rule is supported by an anecdote relating to a pet. Say you have a dog and it gets sick. What do you do? Take it to the vet right? (not 'kill it' as one of my students suggested) You pick up a prescription and if you have to give that dog, I don't know, drops in its eyes every 4 hours you make sure it happens, you see it through to the end. However, people rarely apply this rule to themselves. Many people won't even visit a Doctor if they think something might be wrong, or if they do, they won't follow their prescription correctly. It seems it is easier for us to be kind and graceful towards others than ourselves, but wouldn't it make more sense to take care of ourselves in the same way? Surely then we would have even more to give.



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#### **4. Compare yourself to who you were yesterday, not who someone else is today**

In the digital age, it seems being connected to the 'www' has left us disconnected from each other. Social media promotes an unreal version of our lives, highlighting the best moments, placing a filter over our memories. When peering through the digital windows of 'influencers' and 'Social media celebrities' it is easy to come away feeling that you weren't invited to the party. If you have an objective, the only way you can get from where you are now to where you want to be is to haul your ass there. Nobody is going to carry you. How do you lose 10 kilos? You lose 1 kilo ten times, be your own coach.

#### **11. Do not bother children when they are skateboarding**

Take risks. If you never fail, you never learn.