

1 DIDN'T YOU KNOW THERE WERE RULES?

Don't you just love it when you're absolutely succeeding at life? When you're cruising in top gear; nailing your studies; sinking the shots; kicking the goals; attracting the girls (or guys) and everyone looks at you and says:

'I want what you're having!' 'I wanna be like you!'

All of us want to feel like we're achieving some sort of success. That life is worth living. That we're getting on top. That there's nobody who can bring us down.

1. THERE ARE RULES TO FOLLOW

And you've probably worked out by now there are rules you've got to follow if you want to come out on top. I don't mean official written-down rules. But in every area of your life there are **unwritten** rules – guidelines that you're expected to live up to... and there's no way you're going to be a success if you don't understand and follow these unofficial regulations.

As a little kid, someone made up a rule that you weren't allowed to step on the cracks when you walked along the footpath...

Somewhere in primary school, you discovered that on your birthday, some kids had a rule that they had to punch you – one punch for every year of your age... (*ouch!*)

In secondary school, someone made up a rule that the back seat on the bus was the place of honour, and only incredibly cool kids were allowed to sit there ...

School for me was a tough time. At my catholic boys-only college there were

all sorts of rumours about... well... you know... catholic boys at catholic boys' schools, where we were taught by unmarried men who all wore glasses and long black dresses! As students, we were very determined to show that we were real blokey-blokes – and we all knew that there was no way in the world that you would ever be accepted or envied or admired if you broke any of the unofficial 'rules' in how to be a blokey-bloke.

If you wanted to succeed at my school, you had to understand that there were a whole lot of unwritten rules you had to follow, so you could avoid ever being thought of as 'sexually suspect.' It didn't take much to have someone call you by a very unflattering nickname. Here were the things to avoid to make sure that no one would call you 'gay'.

a) Never wear shorts to school

Shorts were one of the options for our summer school uniform, but no one at my school was game to wear shorts – because as soon as you did, you would be labelled 'gay'. Even on the hottest summer day, we sweltered away in our long trousers. Better to be unbearably hot than to be thought of as 'uncool'.

b) Never wear white socks

For some reason, white socks were deemed to be 'uncool'. I don't know why – but they were, and everyone knew it. No one would be caught dead in a pair of white socks. It was a sure sign that you were weird.

c) Never carry an umbrella

Umbrellas are incredibly sensible things to carry when it is raining. But not at our school! Umbrellas were a certain give-away that you were definitely sexually-suspect. Better to be covered in rain than to be covered in shame!

d) Never drink strawberry milk

It was probably the pink colour that doomed this particular product at our school canteen. No self-respecting boy would buy it. Drinking strawberry milk was decidedly uncool. In the end our school canteen had to stop stocking it. They couldn't even give it away!

e) Never pull the bus cord

This one actually caused the most problems. Fortunately, this did not

occur at my school, but at another boys' school down the road. They had decided that pulling the bus cord (to tell the driver to stop at the next bus-stop) was the wettest thing ever. The result? Boys went kilometres out of their way – not being game to pull the cord – and desperately hoping that some other poor kid would pull it for them and suffer the indignity of having the whole bus look at them with fingers pointing and yelling insults! Not very smart, but I guess it kept us fit.

You see, if you want to be a success in life, you've got to know the game plan. You've got to know the strategy so you can win the fight.

Still not convinced there are unwritten 'rules' for success? Well, think about the unwritten 'rules' that exist for getting to know guys and girls.

'IF YOU WANT TO SUCCEED, YOU HAVE TO KNOW THE GAME PLAN'

2. RULES FOR UNDERSTANDING WOMEN

Can I just talk to the guys for a moment? (*Girls, you can skip to the next heading if you like*). Guys – you know that if you ever want to be a success with girls, you've got to understand the rules they live by – and the rules they have for us. Girls will always say that these rules are not true. **But fellas – you all know – if you don't understand these rules, you don't get anywhere.**

I'm not sure I actually believe all these rules. They certainly don't apply to everyone. But see what you think!

- a) Women never have anything to wear. You might see a wardrobe full of hundreds of different outfits, but men, you just don't understand. She has nothing to wear.
- b) A man can take 5 minutes to get ready for the big date, but women need a lot longer. Learn to be patient!
- c) All women believe they are overweight, **but you must never agree with them!**
- d) Women do not want an honest answer to the question: 'How do I look?'

- e) It's okay for girls to go to the toilet in pairs, or in small groups. It's kind of a social excursion. **Guys must NEVER do this!**

3. RULES FOR UNDERSTANDING MEN

Girls, you know if you want to be successful with guys, there are rules you've got to understand. Ignore these rules at your own peril!

- a) Guys never need help. They might be completely lost – in a strange part of town, with no idea how to get to their destination – but they **never need help**. You need to understand that reaching for a street directory, or (*heaven forbid!*) actually asking someone for directions, would be a denial of their basic manhood. And they **certainly** don't need help from you (*even if you're right – which you probably are!*). Work out what you really want – do you want to get to your destination, or do you want to keep your man?
- b) Being faster/better/stronger/cleverer **really** matters to them. Don't ever suggest that you know a better way. Don't ever beat them – at Trivial Pursuit, at arm wrestling, at **anything!** Their fragile masculinity probably can't cope with it.
- c) They have selective sight and selective hearing. They can spot a new-model car half a kilometre away, or notice a new hamburger joint under construction, but don't expect them to notice that you've had your hair cut or that you're wearing a new outfit. When they're watching the footy on TV, they will listen intently to every word of the commentator, but they may not remember anything personal or precious you have said to them. If you ever hear the phrase '*yes, dear*', you know they haven't heard a word you've said.
- d) Strong emotions are reserved for sport, cars and gadgets. Apart from these three items, there is no discernable difference between your man when he is angry, your man when he is sad, or your man when he is asleep. One mood fits all.
- e) When a man does a minor chore around the house – like emptying the dishwasher – he will act like he's just cleaned

the whole house and deserves a few hours off as a reward. Just smile... and sigh.

I don't know whether any of these rules are true or not, but certainly guys and girls are different. If you don't know the rules (*and who really does?*) – if no one ever explains them to you – it will be very hard to be successful at your relationships.

4. WOULDN'T IT BE GOOD IF SOMEONE EXPLAINED THE RULES?

Wouldn't it be good if someone sat down with you and explained all the rules – and mapped out an entire strategy for you – so you could be successful with **the opposite sex?**

Wouldn't it be good if someone sat down with you and explained all the rules – and mapped out an entire strategy for you – so you could be successful with **your life?**

C'mon! You want to be successful in what you do! But you need someone who understands it all to sit down and explain the whole thing to you.

Sometimes that's exactly what happens.

You're in the army – and your battalion has to go and capture a village so you can free the innocent people who have been held hostage. The night before it all happens, your commanding officer stands in front of your

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troop and says: *'Here's the battle plan. Here's how we're going to win. Here's how every one of you can be successful.'*

Or maybe you're on a sports team – and your coach sits down with you on the sideline before the match, and says: *'Here's the game plan. Here's how we're going to win. Here's how every one of you can be successful.'*

Wouldn't it be great if this could happen in your everyday life? Wouldn't it be great if this could happen in your Christian life?

Wouldn't it be fantastic if Jesus could sit down with you and look at your life – and look at your relationships – and how things are at home – and at church – and at school – and look at your future – and your struggles – and your obedience – and your ministry and your opportunities – and Jesus would look you in the eyes and say to you: *'Here's the game plan for your life. Here's how you're going to win. Here's how you can be my faithful disciple on this crazy planet. Here's how you can be effective at winning your friends to also be my disciples. I have made you and designed you to be a success on this planet. Here's how to do it.'*

Wouldn't that be the coolest thing possible? If Jesus could sit down with you and say: *'Here's how you can be a success at being my disciple. Here's how you can be a success at changing this world for me.'*

5. THAT'S WHAT THIS BOOK IS ALL ABOUT

Everybody wants to be genuine. Everybody wants to be real. That's the cry of **everybody's** heart. We're going to look at three chapters in the Bible where Jesus sits down with his disciples and explains how to be genuine. Jesus is going to explain to you all the rules – he's going to show you all the guidelines – he's going to give you the battle plan – to show you how to win – so that you can be his genuine disciple.

Genuine in the way you remain faithful to him. Genuine in the way that God uses you to change the lives of those around you.

Jesus doesn't want you to be a half-hearted disciple – or a 'when I feel like it' follower – or a 'one day when' believer – or a 'maybe tomorrow' Christian!

Jesus doesn't want you to be a half-hearted, wishy-washy, namby-pamby, mealy-mouthed, lazy-dog, uncommitted, wake-up-at-midday, never-say-a-word-about-your-faith, sit-on-your-backside, don't-give-a-stuff disciple who is totally indistinguishable from all the unbelievers who live on this planet.

Jesus has called you to be different. Jesus has called you to be genuine. Jesus has called you to have a future that is genuine, a ministry that is genuine, an

impact on this world that is genuine. Jesus has called you to have a life that is genuine.

He has placed you on this planet so that you will be a genuine disciple for him. As you read this book, imagine that Jesus is going to sit down with you and explain to you the game plan – explain to you how to live for him and achieve the things that he has destined for you.

Are you ready? Let's start by looking at what it means to experience **genuine success!**

