

# 15 Rules for Teenage Boys

By Basil Beighey

Leaving childhood behind and entering manhood is not an easy transition for an adolescent male. Both your body and your thoughts are in a state of flux and confusion — a state that will not fully resolve until you are well into your twenties. As you leave adolescence and begin to enter manhood there are a few rules you would be wise to observe. Failing to heed any of the following rules can lead to mistakes that at best, will retard your advancement and at worst, will destroy your potential for future peace and success. Please remember you are not special in the sense that you are “above the rules.” As stated in the movie North Dallas Forty, “Seeing through the game is not the same as winning the game.” Knowing is not doing. To be successful, you must have the wisdom to understand and the discipline to execute.

## 1 - Men Are Responsible

The major difference between a man and a boy is that a man accepts responsibility for his actions. Know that you are the sum of your deeds — take responsibility for them. Consider carefully the choices you make. Before you act, consider the consequences. Know that men are held accountable.

## 2 - Guard Your Character

My great aunt often told me that my character was my most valuable asset and it must be guarded at all costs. She was right. Your character is an invisible bank account on file with everyone you know. This bank account, however, is filled with trust, instead of money. Ultimately, you will learn trust is infinitely more valuable than money. How do you build your character? Never lie, cheat, or steal is a good way to start. Also, do what you say you will do and be mindful not to make any promise you can't keep. Beware, good character is not like a coat you can put on and take off. Character is built slowly over time. It is ingrained in your very core and will be reflected in everything you do and say. Guard your character. It can be destroyed in seconds through one inconsiderate action. Other people of good character are adept at spotting cues in your language and your actions indicating the quality of your character. They can't be fooled, so don't try. Simply be a gentleman of good character at all times and it will invisibly work for you every minute of every day.

## 3 - Make School Count

You are entering your high school years. You have no choice but to be there, so make it count. These years set the tone and tempo for your college and graduate years. High school, is relatively easy. There is no reason not to get an “A” in every class. Focus on developing good study habits. Use every scrap of time during school hours to get homework done and always finish homework before engaging in leisure activities such as TV watching or game playing. Finishing at the top of your class will ensure you have the option to attend a “brand name” college if you wish.

#### **4 - Respect the Relationship Between Mind and Body**

Psyche and Soma - Mind and Body, are two sides of the same coin. You cannot be the best you can be if either is ignored. What the mind harbors, the body will manifest. Likewise, a strong, tireless body leads to a stronger, more confident mind. Place equal importance on the development of each. Respect your body as the temple of your spirit. Pay attention to the things that nourish it and avoid the substances that degrade or destroy it.

#### **5 - Engage in an Individual Sport for Life**

When I was young, I made the mistake of dividing my attention between four sports: baseball, football, basketball, and tennis. This was a big mistake. A young man is much better served by focusing on one sport “year-round.” By focusing on and practicing one sport year-round, you dramatically improve your chances to compete at the highest level. Also, while the big stadium team sports (football, basketball, soccer, etc.) present your best chance for “fame” in high school, individual sports such as golf, swimming, running, or tennis will serve you better in three respects. First, because these are “sports for life,” you can participate in them your whole life long. This will be important as you age and require physical activity to keep your body robust. Second, individual sports eliminate any possibility of “favoritism” or “nepotism” blocking your ascension to the highest level possible. Third, with few exceptions, individual sports do not require anyone else to practice. This flexibility allows you to practice as much as you want.

#### **6 - Understand the 10,000 Hour Rule**

The book “Outliers” by Malcolm Gladwell repeatedly refers to 10,000 hours as the minimum amount of time needed to achieve proficiency at the highest level in any activity. Want to be a concert pianist? Practice 10,000 hours — it’s that simple. Practice three hours a day for ten years, and you have a chance to make it to

center court. Start now and by the time you're in your mid-twenties, you could be a "pro" at anything you wish.

## **7 - Perfect Practice Makes Perfect**

Sadly, with regard to the 10,000-hour rule, it's not enough to simply "put in your time". You must strive to practice "perfectly". This means you must constantly be looking for new and better ways to improve your skills. Look to those who have already achieved success at the highest level for advice. Read books, watch documentaries, search the internet for answers, and constantly network. Strive to make your practice perfect.

## **8 - Read and Write**

Everyone knows that reading is important. The knowledge of the ages is in print and at your fingertips via your keyboard and the internet. But few appreciate the importance of writing. In your quest for completeness, writing is equal to reading in importance. Writing forces you to organize your thoughts and truly understand yourself and your arguments. On another level, writing is the supreme instrument of communication. You can be the smartest person in the world, but if you cannot communicate your thoughts, you'll die in obscurity. Don't fear writing. Like everything in life, it gets easier with practice. The first sentence is always the hardest. Heed the advice of Ernest Hemingway: "Begin by writing the truest sentence you know". Don't be afraid to expose your thoughts and feelings. It is only through the exchange of ideas, the defense of your ideas, and the debate of opposing viewpoints, that knowledge is gained. Read and write every day.

## **9 - Work for Love, Not Money**

The surest path to hell is to work for money. Most people work all their lives at a job they don't like to get to a point financially when they can retire and do what they want. I suggest you follow your passion and do what you love every day. Forget about the foolish myth that doing nothing will bring you happiness. Even wealthy, retired people get bored and must do something to fill the hours. Fill your hours with whatever productive activity interests you. If you love to golf, work at a golf course picking up range balls, then play for free. If you like to travel, fill a backpack and hitchhike around the country or work on a freighter to pay for your passage to Asia. It's amazing how little it takes to get by when you don't care about anything except what you love. Opportunities to earn money doing what you love will present themselves and you'll be in a better position to seize them if you are in that place.

## **10 - Keep Your Load Light**

The corollary to rule #9 is to keep your load light. To be free to do what you love, you must keep your possessions to a bare minimum. “Stuff” is a free man's enemy. The more “things” you accumulate, the more time, effort, and money you must spend maintaining them. Most people are imprisoned by their possessions. Until age thirty, you should have no more stuff than you can fit in a small hatchback car or van. If you must have furniture, buy old used stuff you can walk away from in a pinch. Drive a car you can abandon if necessary. Own no more clothes than you can fit in a suitcase or backpack. Owning little frees you to seize opportunities wherever they may be. The only necessities in these times are a good laptop and a smartphone. When your editor offers you an opportunity to cover the African wildebeest migration, you can grab your backpack and go. Think like Luke Skywalker, only carry a lightsaber.

## **11 - Stay Liquid**

Never use credit or borrow money unless it's to buy an asset that returns more than it costs. In short, never borrow money to buy personal assets such as TVs, appliances, furniture, or any other “thing” that doesn't return a profit. Think twice about financing a car. It's much better to buy a “junker” for cash. Any debt you accumulate will work as an anchor on your freedom. Accumulating debt increases the “weight” of your load and encumbers movement both physically and professionally. Live at home as long as possible to avoid unnecessary expenses. Conversely, your savings equate to liquid freedom. The more you save, the more freedom you'll enjoy. Savings enable you to seize opportunities. Avoid debt like a disease and save as much as possible.

## **12 - Build Your Career, Then Build Your Family**

As you follow your passion, you will inevitably discover opportunities to earn a living doing what you love. Fully develop your career before you attempt to build a family. Let me be more straight forward — do not get married or cohabitate with a partner before your thirtieth birthday, or before your career is fully established. Women are beautiful creatures and someday you'll invite a princess to join you in your kingdom, but until your “kingdom” is established, don't think about it. You must be at least thirty years old before getting serious with a partner. Neither you nor your partner knows who or what they are until at least age thirty. You will change, she will change, your values will change, and you must be free to travel unencumbered. Don't buy into the myth that love conquers all. It doesn't. It usually doesn't even last. What you will mistake for “love” in your teens and

twenties is only sexual lust. Do what you must do to pass the time, but do not get involved, do not get married, and by no means, do not have children before your thirtieth birthday and then only if your career is established. Remember the old joke, love is grand, divorce is about a hundred grand.

### **13 - Attract Women With Wealth and Power**

Regardless of what you've heard in movies and storybooks, ultimately women are attracted to men who can provide them safety and security. At face value, this sounds mercenary, but it's a good thing and it is relative. It's relative in the sense that you'll always be "richer" than someone. It's a good thing because if she's looking to you for security, she needs you. Because you'll be working for love, you won't know where your career is heading in your early years. Once you know where your career is headed, you have a fairly realistic idea regarding your income expectations. You can then select a mate that will be happy and satisfied with your station in life. For instance, if your passion is archeology, by age thirty, you'll have a fairly good idea of what lifestyle your future partner can expect. Then, select accordingly. Beware of marrying above your station in life, women can do it, but men can't. The odds dictate that any woman marrying below her station is only trying to shock her parents. Don't be part of that misadventure. She will tire of your lack of means and leave you for a wealthier model. Worse, she may constantly badger you to improve (change) your position or accept "help" from family and friends. It will always end badly. Conversely, marrying at or below your station in life offers a much better probability that your future mate will be satisfied. Also, beware of ambitious women who would use you as a "stepping stone" and move on. Avoid women who aspire to build careers. Look for a sweet mate, a nurturing mother who will fully appreciate your station and support your career choice.

### **14 - Raise Your Children**

The decision to have children is going to be the most important decision you will ever make. Raising children is an incredible responsibility, an enormous amount of work, and a huge financial obligation. Be careful not to enter into this obligation "flippantly" or "accidentally." You may ruin or retard many lives, including yours. Raising a child can either be the greatest joy or the greatest burden you'll ever realize. Take care to ensure it's the former and not the latter. Should you decide you want children, first, make sure your career and marriage

are solid. Assess your financial situation to ensure you can reasonably afford to support a new being in your household. Consider all costs in terms of money and time. Reach an agreement with your wife regarding the raising of the child. Clarify the responsibilities and discuss the values you will eventually impart to your offspring. Avoid daycare at any cost. Choose a wife that relishes the opportunity to raise children. Subcontracting the raising of your children to disinterested third parties is a sin and those who engage in the practice bear children for selfish reasons. Bear offspring with the intention of creating individuals more loving and capable than yourself. If you don't want to spend time with them, don't have them.

## **15 - Consider Self Employment**

Like playing an individual sport, self-employment ensures no one can hold you back, limit your potential, or determine your destiny. Self-employment engages you in the American Dream - risking capital and engaging your creativity to hopefully reap unlimited rewards. Self-employment means rising each morning and deciding for yourself what is important and how you will invest your time. Self-employment means employing others to leverage your creativity and energy in the service of your vision. Speaking from experience, no job can approach the satisfaction of building a business that provides a valuable product or service that improves the lives of others.