



50 Rules Kids Won't Learn in School: Real-World Antidotes to Feel-Good Education

By Charles J. Sykes

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Charles J. Sykes offers fifty life lessons not included in the self-esteem-laden, reality-light curriculum of most schools. Here are truths about what kids will encounter in the world post-schooling, and ideas for how parents can reclaim lost ground---not with pep talks and touchy-feely negotiations, but with honesty and respect. Sykes's rules are frank, funny, and tough minded, including:

- #1 Life is not fair. Get used to it.
- #7 If you think your teacher is tough, wait until you get a boss. He doesn't have tenure, so he tends to be a bit edgier. When you screw up, he's not going to ask you how you FEEL about it.
- #15 Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your grandparents had a different word for burger flipping. They called it "opportunity."
- #42 Change the oil.
- #43 Don't let the success of others depress you.
- #48 Tell yourself the story of your life. Have a point.

Each rule is explored with wise, pithy examples that parents, grandparents, and teachers can use to help children help themselves succeed---in school and out of it.

A few rules kids won't learn in school:

- #9 Your school may have done away with winners and losers. Life hasn't.
- #14 Looking like a slut does not empower you.
- #29 Learn to deal with hypocrisy.
- #32 Television is not real life.
- #38 Look people in the eye when you meet them.
- #47 You are not perfect, and you don't have to be.
- #50 Enjoy this while you can.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Expanded from an original list of 14 first broadcast on his Milwaukee, Wis., radio talk show, the latest book from Sykes (*Dumbing Down our Kids*) equips parents to help tween- or teenage children find success in life beyond school. Taking on the education system's "modern bubble-wrap mentality" of "no losing, no disappointments, no harsh reality checks," Sykes takes a hard-line but humorous approach to instilling the discipline, morals and good sense that keep kids from becoming "sulky, self-centered, spoiled brats."

Consider Rule 19: "It's not your parent's fault. If you screw up, you are responsible"; or Rule 14: "Looking like a slut does not empower you." Rules are largely rooted in common sense ("Change the oil"), traditional values ("Don't forget to say thank you") and the wisdom that only time can bring ("Be nice to nerds. You may end up working for them. We all could"), and get fleshed out in punchy, chuckle-worthy commentary. Though he can be harsh ("You are not a victim. So stop whining"), Sykes helpfully points out that "Grown-ups forget how scary it is to be your age," and also that "You are not perfect, and you don't have to be" (illustrated in an amusing story about Mother Teresa misapplying a bandage); parents will appreciate Syke's no-nonsense style, but teenage readers may find him condescending (see Rule 21: "You're offended? So what? No, really. So what?").

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Review

"Sykes takes a hard-line but humorous approach to instilling the discipline, morals and good sense that keep kids from becoming 'sulky, self-centered, spoiled brats.'" *Publishers Weekly*

From the Inside Flap

"Education consists mainly in what we have unlearned."---Mark Twain

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author photo?: Yes?forwarded to Lorna Lloyd

Author Photo credit: No

Charles J. Sykes is the author of five previous books: *A Nation of Victims*, *Dumbing Down Our Kids*, *Profscam*, *The End of Privacy*, and *The Hollow Men*. His columns have appeared in numerous newspapers, including *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. A radio and television host at WTMJ in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and a senior fellow at the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, he is married and has three children.

Users Review

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Chris Walker:

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