

## What alternative Rule would be more realistic and helpful?

New Rules can transform everyday experiences. They allow you to deal comfortably and confidently with situations which, under the old system, would have been code violations, triggering anxiety or self-criticism. What would have been disasters become passing inconveniences. What have seemed matters of life and death become exciting challenges and opportunities. New Rules open the door to attaining what is most important to you in life.

To help you to free up your thinking, consider whether you would advise another person to adopt your old Rule. If for example, an alien from outer space came to you for advice on how to ensure a happy and fulfilled life in your part of the planet, what would you say? Or again, would you want to pass on your Rule to your children, if you had any? If not, what would you prefer their Rule to be?

Your task is to find a new Rule which as far as possible allows you to enjoy the payoffs of the old, but eliminates its disadvantages. The new Rule will probably be more flexible and realistic than the old one, more able to take account of variations in circumstances, and to operate in terms of 'some of the people, some of the time'. It will inhabit the middle ground rather than the extremes. So it will be phrased in terms of 'I want . . .', 'I enjoy . . .', 'I prefer . . .', 'It's OK to . . .', rather than 'I must . . .', 'I should . . .', 'I ought to . . .', or 'It would be terrible if . . .' You may find that the new Rule starts with the same 'if . . .', but ends with a different 'then . . .'. For example, Rajiv replaced 'If someone criticises me, it means I have failed' with 'If someone criticises me, I may or may not deserve it. If I have done something worthy of criticism, that's not failure — it's all part of being human, and an opportunity to learn, and there's nothing wrong with that.'

The above example illustrates something typical of new Rules: they are often longer and more elaborate than old ones. This reflects the fact that they are based on your adult ability to understand how the world works at a deeper level and to take account of variations in circumstances.

Sometimes it is nice, however, to capture their essence in a slogan, the sort of snappy statement you might find on a badge or T-shirt. For example:

**'You don't have to be great, to be great'**

or . . .

**'Good enough is good enough'**