

# 12 Rules For Life Summary

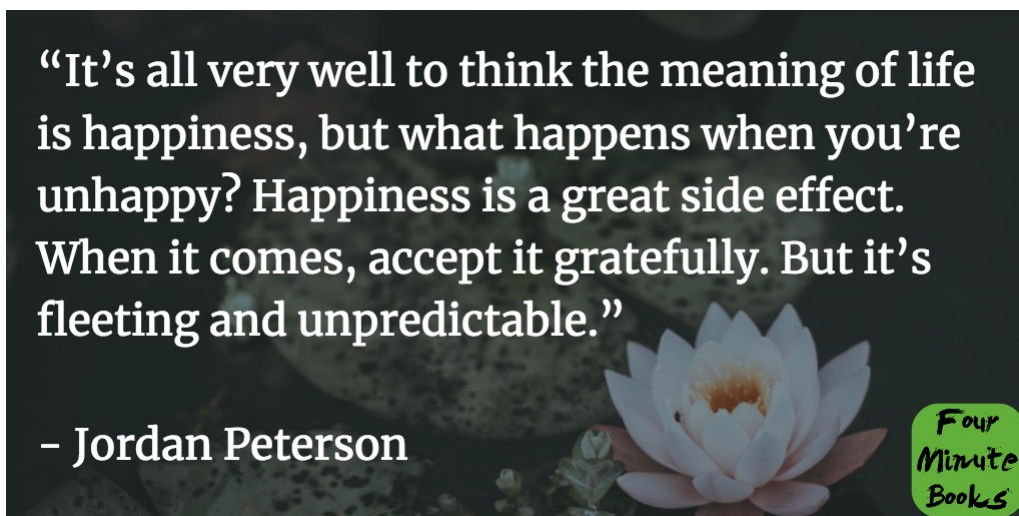


[fourminutebooks.com/12-rules-for-life-summary](https://fourminutebooks.com/12-rules-for-life-summary)

**1-Sentence-Summary:** *12 Rules For Life* is a stern, story-based, entertaining self-help manual for young people, that lays out a set of simple principles, which can help us become more disciplined, behave better, act with integrity, and balance our lives while enjoying them as much as we can.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Four words every writer is dying to hear at least once in life: “One million copies sold.” But you wouldn’t expect to hear them four months after the publication of your second book. Then again, Jordan Peterson’s *12 Rules For Life* isn’t just a book. As for his first one, Peterson spent years collecting and refining the ideas that would create a sort of blueprint for a good life. This time, however, the book didn’t flop and sell less than 500 copies.

Since its publication in January and Peterson’s accompanying world tour, *12 Rules For Life* completely exploded, dominating bestseller lists around the globe. Suddenly, millions view, listen to, and follow Peterson on social media, he’s racked up over \$60,000 in monthly donations through Patreon, and, of course, one million copies sold.

Whether he’s just struck the right nerve at the right time or put his finger on true significance and meaning, only time will tell, but with thousands of people messaging him how the book’s changed their lives, chances are good it’s the latter. Let’s look at 3 of his 12 rules to begin to find out:

1. Sweep in front of your own door before pointing out the street is dirty.
2. Treat yourself like a child you’re responsible for.
3. Aim to do what is meaningful, not convenient.

These form the premise Peterson’s book is built on and thus, the context for understanding why it’s been such a success. Let’s go!

## Lesson 1: Before you judge the world, take responsibility for your own life.

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Life isn't fair. We all learn that one way or other. Some of us sooner, some later, some in small ways, some from terrifying blows. But we all realize it eventually. Like the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, who, in his short, philosophical piece, A Confession, concluded there are only four reasonable responses to the absurdity of life:

1. Ignorance, like a child refusing to accept reality.
2. Pleasure, like an addict on the hedonic treadmill.
3. Suicide.
4. Holding on, despite everything.

Even though he concluded suicide was the most honest answer, Tolstoy himself chose the last option, forever struggling on, which tells you a lot about his and Peterson's beliefs about a good life: **No matter how unfair life gets, you should never blame the world**. There's always someone who's suffered worse than you. Like Viktor Frankl, for example.

Besides, even though the future may sometimes look bleak, if you can focus on taking responsibility and keeping your own house clean, so to speak, you'll find the bad times will pass.

## Lesson 2: Care for yourself like you would for a loved one.

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Have you ever gotten a prescription from the doctor and thought: "Naaa, I don't need that?" Over one third of people do it regularly. According to Peterson, it's neither smart nor smug. It's a subversive form of self-punishment. We do it a lot and, as a result, tend to take better care of others than ourselves.

Peterson suggests this is a consequence of our inability to deal with the insanity of life described above. Just like Adam and Eve *had* to taste the forbidden fruit of knowledge, we too indulge in our dark sides from time to time and thus, feel we deserve punishment. But, as with the unfairness of life, we *all* got thrown out of the Garden of Eden. Like Yin and Yang, we all carry both light and dark inside us. One can't exist without the other.

That means instead of just striving for either one, we should seek balance, which is why his second rule is to **care for yourself like you would care for a loved one: do what is best for you, even though it might not always make you happy**.

## Lesson 3: Seek meaning through sacrifice, not happiness through pleasure.

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Balancing your light and your dark side can take many different forms. Sometimes, it may be staying in bed to get healthy, even though you want to work. Other times, it might mean staying late at work on a Friday. However it looks like, it always involves **choosing meaning by making a sacrifice, rather than temporary happiness by choosing pleasure**.

Peterson says this is a great coping mechanism, because it helps balance your life between drowning in hedonism and being so righteous it drives you mad. Of course not all sacrifices are equal. Those you make for personal gain, like working overtime to pay for a vacation, hold less meaning than those you make for the greater good, like volunteering on a Saturday.

Even though it might feel like it when you do it, sacrifice is never really about giving up rewards, it's about deferring them until you can get something even better, usually a feeling of whole-ness or contentment. As such, it's also great willpower training.

I'll leave you with an analogy Peterson makes. The Lotus flower starts out at the very bottom of the lake, drenched in darkness. Inch by inch, it grows its way towards the surface, until, eventually, it breaks through and into the sunlight. I could sure think of worse ways to spend a life than to be a Lotus flower.

## My personal take-aways

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I haven't gotten around to reading the full book, but I'd like to. It's full of stories, science, myths, a broad mix of engaging ways to get his message across. It's mainly targeted at male millennials, but don't let that stop you. There's something for everyone in 12 Rules For Life.

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## What else can you learn from the blinks?

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- Where the expression 'pecking order' comes from
- What makes Jordan sad every time he returns to his childhood home
- Why you should assess your life like a home inspector
- The real job of parents
- Nietzsche's tool for measuring the strength of the human spirit
- How you can practice active listening
- Why you should pet all cats you see on the sidewalk

## Who would I recommend the 12 Rules For Life summary to?

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The 27 year old college student, who's worried because she hasn't figured out life, the 48 year old parent, who's in a crisis, because he thinks he's too old for this, and anyone who's feeling lonely and depressed.