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5 Shares **12 Rules For Life by Jordan Peterson Summary + PDF**

2

Our Rating

In *12 Rules For Life* author Jordan Peterson provides a guide to a fulfilled life with advice based on ethics, religion, philosophy and psychology.





you often
don't
have to

5

Shares

2

-Jordan Peterson



3

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Bullet Summary

- Abusive people prey on the weak: muster the capacity for aggression to protect yourself against abusers
- Don't let people -or your kids- mistreat you or embarrass you: it will breed resentment
- Tell the truth and stand up for your values: it will build your character

12 Rules For Life – Summary

About The Author: Jordan Peterson is a Canadian clinical psychologist and professor of psychology at the University of Toronto.

He has risen through fame in the last years and become a leading figure of

conservative, alt-right movements and, in part, for red-pill communities (<https://thepowermoves.com/the-truth-about-the-red-pill/>).

This summary of 12 Rules For Life will cut through all the abundant flowery language in the book and focus instead on the major insights.

#1. Stand Up Straight With Your Shoulders Back

Shares

The author says naive people have too rosy of an outlook on the world.

2

They believe people are mostly good, but they invite abuse because **abusive people prey on the weak and naive.**

3

I agree with that.

Also read:

- Alpha male body language (<https://thepowermoves.com/alpha-male-body-language/>).

Aggression Can Be Good

Jordan Peterson says People who buy into the idea that *any* sign of aggression are wrong can end up with psychological issues.

These people try to block within themselves ALL aggressive emotions, and bottling up emotions need to come out some way.

Peterson says there can be good uses for aggression.

Aggression does not necessarily translate into cruelty and destruction. **Aggression is also channeled into good causes.**

Jordan says when people they see themselves as dangerous (at least potentially) they're shocked at first, but their fear also decreases. And they develop more confidence and self-respect.

They see in themselves the ability to withstand aggression and evil. And at that point, they might be able to begin resisting oppression.

5
Shares “*If you can bite, you often don't have to*

2

My Note:

I have built The Power Moves partially out of anger, indeed.

3
See my speech about it:



Also read “using pain and defeat for motivation (<https://thepowermoves.com/leveraging-failure-and-pain/>)” and this other speech on the dark side of motivation (<https://youtu.be/1UiWQFPL82o>).

#2. Treat Yourself Like Someone You Are Responsible For Helping

Well, the title said it all for me here.

The rest of the chapter was some deep mental lucubration. Interesting, maybe. But not highly applicable and loosely connected to the title at best.

#3. Make Friends With People Who Want The Best For You

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Shares

Carlo Rogers (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Rogers) says it's impossible to convince someone to change and improve.

2

The desire to improve is indeed a precondition for progress, says the author.

3 Peterson says it's a good thing, not a selfish thing, to choose people who are good for you, he says.

#4. Compare Yourself To Who You Were Yesterday, Not Who Someone Else Is Today

This is one of my favorite rules.

The author talks about the famous invisible gorilla experiment (<https://thepowermoves.com/the-invisible-gorilla-book/>) and says that our mental resources are limited to what we pay attention to (also see Incognito (<https://thepowermoves.com/incognito-david-eagleman-summary/>)).

That means that we really see what we focus on.

And there's no point in focusing on people who "have it better".

Compare yourself to yourself instead. Compare yourself to how you're improving and getting better.

My Note:

Exceptions apply.

If you can find motivation in anger, then it can be OK to compare yourself to others as a tactical device.

#5. Do Not Let Your Children Do Anything That Makes You Dislike Them

Shares

The author says refraining from some parental tough love is only going to harm our children.

The world, he says, will dish out far harsher punishments on the unprepared.

Parents, Peterson says, must act as (caring) proxies for the world.

He also says no adult human could tolerate being dominated by an upstart child. When you do that, you will harbor resentment which will lead to revenge either directly or indirectly. That's why you shouldn't allow your children to behave in a way that will make you dislike them.

“If you allow your own kids’ behavior to repel you, imagine what it will do to others

#6. Set Your House In Perfect Order Before You Criticize The World

Set your house in order means to work on yourself before you think about anything else.

It means to focus on what you can change and what you can do, instead than

it means to focus on what you can change and what you can do, instead than wasting time on everything that's wrong.

I couldn't agree more.

As the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (<https://thepowermoves.com/the-7-habits-of-highly-effective-people/>), say, start with yourself first.

My Note:

And this is one of the reasons why I don't recommend Greene's advice from "The 48 Laws of Power (<https://thepowermoves.com/48-laws-of-power-summary/>)" of "seeking attention at all costs".

Seek improvement at all costs instead. Then, maybe, seek attention.

#7. Pursue What Is Meaningful (Not What Is Expedient)

Pursuing what's meaningful is to forego instant gratification to build a better future.

Today's sacrifice will forge your character and provide tomorrow's reward.

This is very true indeed.

The key to future success is today's habits of hard work (also see: "The Compound Effect (<https://thepowermoves.com/the-compound-effect-summary/>)").

And as Roy Baumeister explains in "Evil (<https://thepowermoves.com/evil-inside-human-violence-and-cruelty/>)", a good chunk of the world's evil is the consequence of short-term thinking and shortcut-seeking.

#8. Tell The Truth, Or At Least Don't Lie

The easy way out or the truth are not just two different choices, but they are two wholly different paths through life.

And lying is the easy way out.

And lying is the easy way out.

Lying is a betrayal of yourself and it weakens your character. Especially when you say yes but really wanted to say no.

My note:

I agree with the weakening of character. And that's important because your identity becomes that of someone who can't speak his mind.

⁵Read here how to build a resilient identity (<https://thepowermoves.com/the-antifragile-ego/>).
Shares

² ³#9. Assume That The Person You Are Listening To Might Know Something You Don't

Speak more than you listen.

And listen without premature judgment.

My Note:

I would personally underline "premature". There is nothing inherently wrong with judging, and high quality men (<https://thepowermoves.com/high-quality-men/>) and women (<https://thepowermoves.com/high-value-women/>) do judge.

Don't judge too early, but don't otherwise get lost in a sea of relativity.

If you're interested in communication skills check:

- Best communication skills books (<https://thepowermoves.com/best-communication-skills-books/>)
- Best communication skills books (<https://thepowermoves.com/best-communication-skills-books/>)

#10. Be Precise In Your Speech

LOL, this is funny coming from Peterson.

The guy built his career on being precise with his speech and that's how he controls and win most of his debates.

Being precise in your speech is not just about your words. It also means being precise in looking at the world around you.

5 Shares

Like Ray Dalio writes in his seminal book Principle
2(<https://thepowermoves.com/principles-by-ray-dalio-summary/>): look at the world as it is, love reality even when it hurts.

3 **#11. Do Not Bother Children When They Are Skateboarding**

The author says it's not true that gender is a social construct.

It's not, and it's not a debate because data proves it: genders are different. And trying to culturally change that by removing masculine traits is bad for everyone.

Also read:

- The Blank Slate (<https://thepowermoves.com/the-blank-slate/>),
- The Female Brain (<https://thepowermoves.com/the-female-brain/>),
- The stupidity of the Swedish bathrooms
(<https://thepowermoves.com/forum/topic/on-the-idiotcy-of-forcing-gender-equality-the-restrooms-in-sweden/>),

My Note:

I couldn't agree more here.

It's popular these days to say that "men and women are the same", but that doesn't make it any less wrong to anyone who has taken the time to research, study and analyze the world around him.

The Dark Side Calling

5 Shares The author says that when softness become the only socially acceptable virtue, then dominance and violence start becoming unconsciously appealing.

2 This is, he says, one of the reasons for the rise of fascist political parties. And part of Trump's appeal (check Trump's dirty debating tactics (<https://thepowermoves.com/trump-debate-tricks/>)).

3

"People have a great capacity for evil as much as good"

#12. Pet A Cat When You Encounter One On The Street

In the last chapter Peterson deals with the hard moments of life.

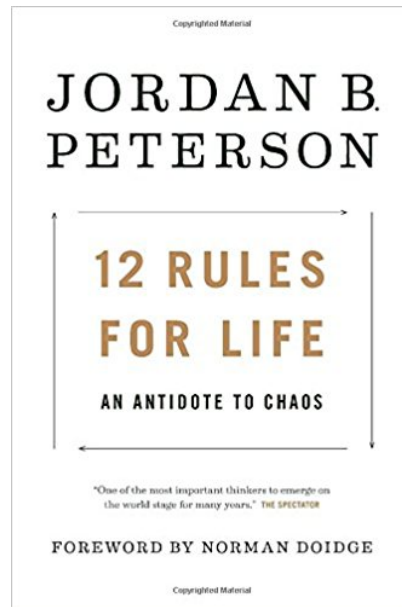
But abandoning oneself to nihilism and hatred is not the answer, he says.

There's nothing in nihilism, he says. It only perpetuates and spread more evil and pain.

He proposes instead to look for the beauty in life.

Petting a cat is the synonym of enjoying the sparkles of beauty that life has to offer.

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Shares



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Real Life Applications

- **Master Your Dark Side**

Don't hide or repress your dark side but use it for good. I like the way Tim Grover (<https://thepowermoves.com/relentless-summary/>) put it:

“*To get what you really want, you first need to be who you really are.*”

- **Channel Your Aggression**

Don't allow your aggression to dominate you or to take ugly forms. Use it to stand up to evil, protect and foster good and for creative endeavors.

- **Educate Your Children**

Educate your children in a way that prepares them for the world. Importantly,

don't let them -or anyone else- disrespect you or that will breed resentment in you. And resentment will eventually show.

- **Stand For What You Believe**

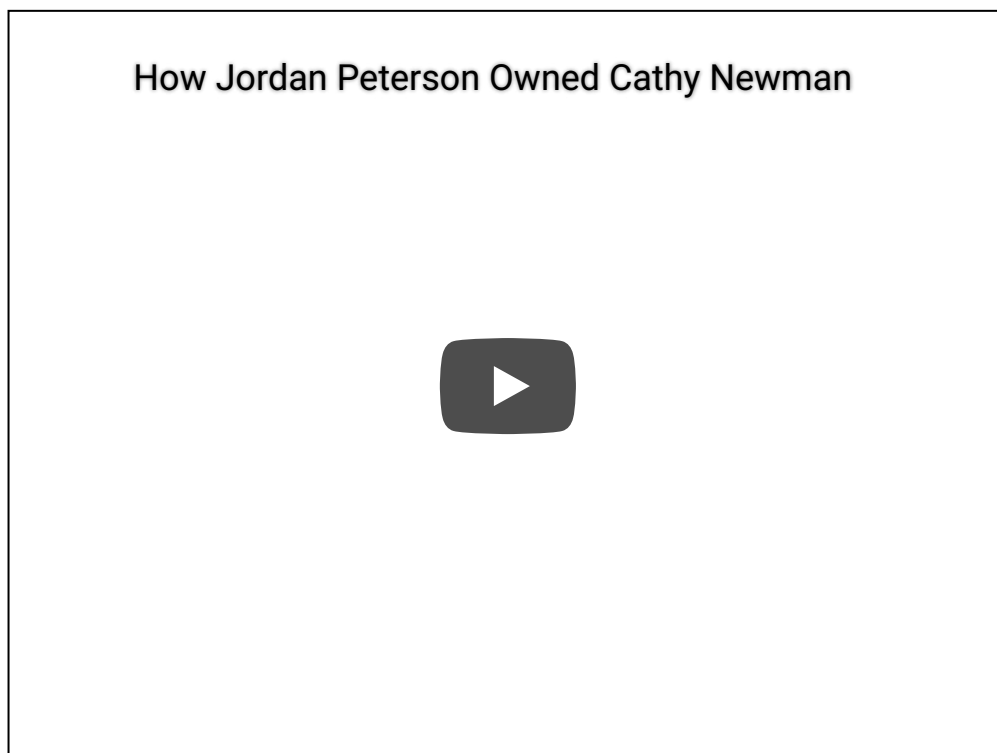
Stand for what you believe in and don't hide behind lies. It will build your character.

5

Shares

Peterson in Action

2 I have done a video on Jordan Peterson interview with Newman. Take a look, he was really good there:

3

CONS

- **Big Words**

Jordan Peterson own rule says to be precise in your speech.

Obviously, there's a difference between precise and simple, because he certainly doesn't have a simple prose.

It doesn't have to be a con, especially if you like poetry. But at times it feels to me like aesthetics get a bit out of hand to become *the* message instead of *supporting* the message.

5 • Bit Diluted

Shares

There are some great insights that really spoke to me.

2

Some of them changed me for the better and even clarified this website's mission in a way.

3

I would have preferred the book being built around those key insights instead of being just ingredients in the bigger dish.

PROS

• Deep Wisdom

There is a lot of great wisdom in The 12 Rules for Life.

And it's a type of wisdom that's rather unique and very rare in the self help literature -or even in the philosophical literature for that matter-.

That's a pity because this type of information is highly relevant and highly useful.

12 Rules For Life Criticism

Jordan Peterson is a controversial figure.

And his book was bound to be somewhat controversial.

I read the Financial Times' review (<https://www.ft.com/content/40c05b84-f7a7-11e7-a4c9-bbdefa4f210b>) and The Guardian's summary (<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/jan/28/12-rules-for-life-an-antidote-to-chaos-by-jordan-b-peterson-digested-read>) before reading the book.

And lo and behold, they were both scathingly negative and even derisive.

⁵ Shares I didn't know Peterson well, and I let the reviews influence me for the negative: I was indeed expecting 12 Rules for Life to be a terrible book.

² Boy was that an awesome experience.

³ As I started listening to it, I was flabbergasted at how both reviewers spectacularly failed to see the sparkle of greatness.

In my Reading Effectively guide (<https://thepowermoves.com/effective-reading-guide/>) I share that one of my goals is to look for new wisdom even when some of the message isn't as great.

And that's where I think those reviewers failed: they let the part they disagreed with contaminate the whole.

Big mistake.

There's indeed much of this book that can ruffle feathers if you're not religious -or if you prefer more fact-based, less aesthetic writing-.

But denying the nuggets of wisdom in 12 Rules for Life is a spectacular failure both as a reviewer and as a man looking for truth and self development.

For me The 12 Rules for Life is a book with some genius content mixed with too much aesthetic. Read below for more details.

•

Review

10 seconds review: “12 Rules for Life” has major Christian influences and a bit of a bombastic style. But it also has many sparkles of genius, several practical tips, and lots of great psychology.

There were some key passages that really struck a cord with me.

5 Shares In many ways, the first chapter of “12 Rules For Life” is similar to The Power Moves. Peterson says that **some people are too naïve and let the world take advantage of them.**

2 I could see myself there and that’s exactly one of the pillars of this website.

The author also says that **the ability to muster aggression is needed to stand up to evil.**

And he says people refusing to embrace the dark side and acknowledge the existence of evil will not be able to fight against oppression and abuse.

And since oppression and abuse do exist in this world, these people are easy victims.

I got the chills reading this.

This is exactly The Power Moves credo.

And the knowledge of how to master and deploy aggression will also decrease the chances it will ever be needed.

Because if you can bite, you generally don’t have to.

And this is another pillar of this website.

The author then goes one step further when he says:

“***There is little difference between the capacity for destruction and strength of character.***”

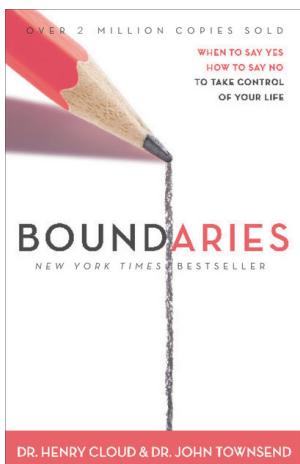
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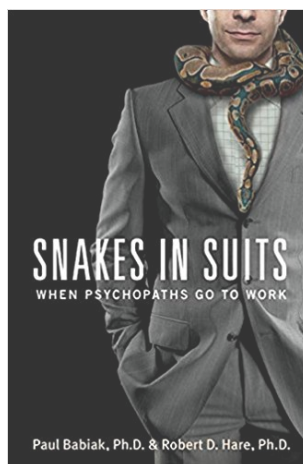
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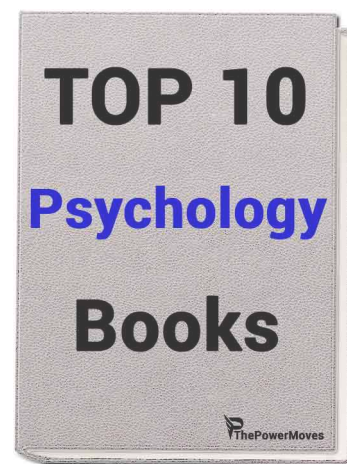
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Lucio is a social scientist, member of APA and a perpetual researcher of human nature. He teaches power dynamics because he believes that to be good, you first need to learn how to be bad.

ThePowerMoves.com is where this new breed of leaders come to train.

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