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# THE RULES OF LIFE

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RICHARD TEMPLAR

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RULES  
OF  
LIFE

So be careful how you make your bed. What goes around, comes around. There is instant karma. What you sow you reap. Better to stand up and be counted right from the start. Do the right thing, every time. You know what it is. Then when you get in the bed you've made, not only will you be able to sleep at night, but you'll sleep the sleep of the just.

**DO THE RIGHT THING, EVERY  
TIME. YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS**

# Life can be a bit like advertising

Someone once said that half of the money he spent on advertising was wasted but he didn't know which half.\* His point was of course that if you can't tell which half, then you have to keep on doing the whole lot, fully aware that not all of it will produce rewards. Life is a bit like that. Sometimes it seems so unfair. You put in loads of effort and get nothing back. You're polite to people and everyone seems rude back. You work up a sweat and others cruise it. Well, you have to keep on doing the 100 per cent because you don't know which bits will pay off. I know it isn't fair but then life isn't. Your efforts will be rewarded eventually but you'll probably never know which efforts are being rewarded – or for what – and which aren't.

We tend to think we are being lucky sometimes when actually we are just being rewarded for some bit of effort long ago that we have forgotten about. We have to keep going. You can't give up on the grounds that you've had a setback or two because you don't know which setbacks are the ones which count and which ones aren't. I suppose it's like the number of frogs you have to get acquainted with before you find your prince (or princess). Or the pile of oysters you'd have to open to find a pearl.

But whatever you do, don't lose heart because things don't seem to be panning out. Only by keeping up the effort will rewards come in eventually – and you'll never know from which bits comes the best reward.

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\* Lord Leverhulme I believe.

Most well balanced and happy people will tell you that sometimes you have to work at something without looking for a pay-off – apart from the immediate pay-off that we are being kept busy with and thus can't get into trouble. Always looking for success, rewards, a pay-off, can be detrimental to our wellbeing when things don't pan out. Sometimes it's OK to do things just for the sheer enjoyment of doing them. I love painting miniature water-colours – tiny, tiny landscapes. Once in a while someone will come along and suggest I put them into an exhibition or sell them commercially. And every time I do it fails miserably and I give up for a while. Once the dust has settled I always go back to them and I have learnt it is a personal thing and no longer will I try to sell them or show them. They are a not-for-profit part of my life and immensely rewarding. No, you can't see one.

**YOU'LL NEVER KNOW FROM  
WHICH BITS OF EFFORT  
COMES THE BEST REWARD**

# Get used to stepping outside your comfort zone

Be prepared to be a little bit brave every day. Why? Because if you don't you'll grow stagnant and mouldy or curl up and wither. We all have a comfort zone where we feel safe and warm and dry. But every now and then we need to step outside and be challenged, be frightened, be stimulated. It's this way that we stay young and feel good about ourselves.

If we grow too attached to our comfort zone, chances are it will either start to shrink, or something will come along and dis-mantle it. Fate, or whatever it is that runs things, doesn't like us to get too complacent and every now and then gives us a great big cosmic kick up the backside to wake us up. If we have practised stretching the boundaries of our woolly cocoon occasionally, that kick won't have too much impact – we're ready for it – it's much easier to cope.

But it's more than that. Expanding your comfort zone makes you feel good about yourself. It gives you extra confidence. And the best bit is that you can do it oh so gently. You don't have to go hang-gliding or fire-walking or have sex with a stranger just to test your comfort zone. It might be as simple as volunteering for something that you've never done before and that you feel slightly nervous about. It could be taking up a new sport or hobby. Maybe it will involve joining something. It could be doing something alone that you've only ever done in company before or speaking up for yourself when you would usually keep quiet.

We impose a lot of restrictions on ourselves that limit us, hold us back. We think we couldn't do that, wouldn't feel happy with that. Taking the challenge of expanding our comfort zone brings us out of ourselves and keeps us learning and growing. You can't grow mould if you're growing experience.

**EXPANDING YOUR COMFORT  
ZONE MAKES YOU FEEL  
GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF**

# Learn to ask questions

Look, you may not like the answers but if you ask questions then at least you'll know. Most of the world's problems can be laid firmly at the feet of assumptions. If we assume (no, I'm not going to do that dreadful 'It makes an ass out of u and me' stuff\*) then, in effect, we think we know but we don't. We assume that our bit of faulty information is a fact and things go on getting worse. We assume that other people like our plan but they don't and it all goes pear-shaped. Better to ask questions right from the start and know what's what.

Questions help clarify the situation. Questions put people on the spot, which means they have to think – and thinking is always a good thing for everybody about everything. Questions help people clarify their thoughts. Questions demand answers and answers require the situation to be thought through, to its logical conclusion.

As someone very wise and very dear to me once said: 'The better you understand the beliefs, actions, desires and wants of others, the more likely you are to make the right response, alter your own thinking where necessary and generally be successful'.

**QUESTIONS HELP PEOPLE  
CLARIFY THEIR THOUGHTS**

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\* I know I did but that was a joke.