

Life's Lessons

Charles Sykes is the author of *Dumbing Down our Kids*. He volunteered for high school and college graduates a list of things they did not learn in school.

Rule 1: Life is not fair; get used to it.

Rule 2: The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something before you feel good about yourself.

Rule 3: You will not make \$40,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice-president with a car phone until you earn both.

Rule 4: If you think your teacher is tough, wait til you get a boss. He doesn't have tenure.

Rule 5: Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your grandparents had a different word for burger-flipping, they called it opportunity.

Rule 6: If you screw up, it's not your parents' fault. So, don't whine about your mistakes; learn from them.

Rule 7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way paying your bills, cleaning your room, and listening to you tell them how idealistic you are. So, before you save the rain forest from the bloodsucking parasites of your parents' generation, try delousing the closet in your room.

Rule 8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life has not. In some schools, they have abolished failing grades; they'll give you as many times as you want to get the right answer. This, of course, bears not the slightest resemblance to anything in real life.

Rule 9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off, and very few employers are interested in helping you find yourself. Do that on your own time.

Rule 10: Television is not real life. In real life, people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.

Rule 11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are that you'll end up working for one.