

The background of the image is a purple textured surface, possibly a notebook cover or a mat. In the upper right, there is a white lined notebook page. A black pen with a colorful striped barrel and a small colorful object are lying on the purple surface. An orange rectangular box is positioned in the upper left, containing the author's name.

Gideon Hanekom

LOVE RULEBOOK

Top 10 Relationship Rules That Everyone Forgets

Top 10 Relationship Rules That Everyone Forgets

Let's start with a fact ...

“RELATIONSHIPS ARE HARD WORK! “

Anyone who's been in a relationship for more than six months knows this. Now, granted, it's also very fun 'work' when it works, but not so much when it doesn't. Make no mistake about it.

I work with couples all the time and the amount of frustration, unhappiness and pain that unhealthy relationships cause, are very real and very possible for everyone. No one is exempt from heartache when things go wrong for a couple.

Understanding this truth right from the start will save you the surprise when it happens BUT it will also prepare you much better for making your relationship work.

Listen ... I have a very simple approach to creating a happy, healthy, and intimate love relationship ...

STICK TO THE RULES THAT WORK AND YOU'LL BE HAPPY!

Look, there's plenty of advice out there that you've heard at least 100 times. I know from experience that the couples I see almost always KNOW what needs to be done, yet they're still there seeing ME.

So why is that?

I think two things ...

Top 10 Relationship Rules That Everyone Forgets

1. *They either know what needs to be done BUT don't apply what they know, and they pay the price ... OR ...*
2. *There are some things they've either never heard of or just forgotten about, and they pay the price.*

Either way, there is a cost for either avoiding, ignoring or not knowing WHAT WORKS!

Because, just think about it ... it only takes ONE of these things to possibly make a HUGE difference in your love relationship.

The reality is that you don't know what you don't know ... and what you don't know (forgetting might as well be 'not knowing') can hurt you!

So, I want to help you today out with this little eGuide.

As a happily married man, dad, and relationship coach who sees a lot of couples in a year, I've learned, seen and experienced quite a bit about what WORKS (or can work) and what does not.

Sometimes you simply need a little more than the standard "listen well" advice ... even though that's pretty good advice 😊!

So, I've put together 10 relationship "rules" you need to consider seriously IF you want to create or improve your love life.

And you ignore these at your own risk.

Now, it's not up to me to tell you what to do, but I can show you what to seriously consider, at least.

After that, what you do with, or not, is on you.

1. Choosing the right partner (for you) is an important matter ... probably the most important one.

Most people fail spectacularly to appreciate the gravity of choosing the right partner. This is especially true when it comes to marriage.

Just consider for a moment the amount of time and energy any partner requires.

Now, consider spending that amount of time and energy on someone who doesn't make you happy at all.

Now, consider the damage done to your life should you end up having kids together and the whole thing ending up in divorce.

There is an old saying that I quote all the time that goes:

"No amount of therapy can overcome the wrong choice in partner."

I love it so much because it's so true!

Listen, when we UNDERESTIMATE the reality of INFATUATION during the early stages of a new relationship, but make life defining, irreversible choices during that period – like falling pregnant – we can really end up regretting a LOT of things later.

I spoke to a guy recently we just came out of an abusive relationship (yes, guys can also be in abusive relationships – I was...), and one of the things we talked about was the importance of choosing to be (and stay) with the right partner.

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Now, again, during the early stages of any relationship is increasingly harder to make good decisions because our brain is hardwired to make us overlook certain red flags when it matters most ... At the start of a relationship.

The brain's purpose isn't to find us happiness and love, but rather survival of the species. It's about procreation. It's about existence. So, sometimes, we end up staying with someone for far too long, even after we've come to realise that we should end it.

And the unfortunate reality is that none of us is exempt from this. We can all fall under the spell of "love" and do stupid stuff.

For me, creating a happy relationship really comes down to making the right choice upfront. When you rush things during the early stages of any "in love" period, you run the risk of disappointment and heartache sooner rather than later.

So, rather than avoid or ignore this reality, embrace it ... But do so with your eyes open, listening to those who know you best, and heeding their advice.

Therefore, as a first rule among the top 10 relationship rules that everyone forgets, here it is: Make your decision with care.

And to help you out, I've created a short online quiz that can help you think through some of the more important aspects to consider when deciding whether a person is right for you are not.

Take the quiz here:

- [Is he the one?](#)
- [Is she the one?](#)

2. Learn from your past.

Even though we cannot change our past, we can use it to learn from.

The past is filled with wisdom and valuable lessons we can learn from if we are open to do so.

The fascinating thing is that we often either ignore or just forget the lessons we've learned before. And consequently, we make the same mistakes repeatedly. Especially when it comes to relationships.

We keep going for the same type of person.

We keep ignoring the red flags when they show up.

We keep ignoring our inner voice when something doesn't feel right.

We keep playing deaf to the concerns of our best friends or family.

We find ourselves justifying or defending someone yet again even though the patterns seem vaguely familiar to those from before.

But, what if instead of ignoring your past (because somehow this time will be different from before), you decided to make learning from the past a rule in your life?

How could that change things?

How much time, effort, and even money with that save you moving forward?

Personally, I believe, a heck of a lot.

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And, by the way, this applies to anyone.

Not just those who have broken up with someone or have gone through a divorce.

Even if you've been married for quite some time, and still is, you can still learn from the past to change things in the present order to potentially improve the results of the future.

We can ALL learn from the past.

So, instead of ignoring the lessons from your past, look back on your past relationships (or times in your current relationship) for guidance in your current and future relationships, or situation.

Ask yourself:

- *What do you want to change about yourself to be more successful in the future in your love life?*
- *What type of people are you regularly attracted to? Do you have a type? Is it a type that's good for you? What does your relationship past suggest?*
- *What were the challenges in your past relationships, or in the past of your current relationship? What can you do to avoid them in the future? Are you better equipped to deal with those challenges if they happen again?*

And depending on your answers to the above, take up a piece of paper and start devising a plan on the things you need to put in place to start achieving those results you want.

If you need help with that, please feel free to reach out to me anytime.

But, just start by thinking about it and committing to something at least.

3. It takes years to REALLY know someone.

I've said this earlier already, but when it comes to relationships, it's important that you are careful about jumping in with both feet.

Now, again, I need to be completely transparent here because I got engaged to my (now) wife after only three months and we got married in eight. That could seem like a contradiction to what I'm saying to you.

However, even though our relationship seemed very short on a timeline (1 to 8 months), it also happened within a very specific and unique context. A context that makes all the difference, even though not completely.

When I met my wife I've come out of a five year relationship (with about a year in between), during which time I've done a lot of personal reflection, introspection, soul-searching, listening to my friends and family, figuring out what I truly wanted in life and in life partner, and what I definitely did not want.

Interestingly enough, my wife went through a similar thing by the time she met me.

And so, when we ended up meeting each other it was like the stars aligning. It was perfect timing and things worked out perfectly.

Now, that didn't mean that we instantly knew everything about each other because that can only happen with time.

But what I'm saying is that we knew enough about ourselves and about what we wanted in a relationship, that we instantly recognised it when we found it. And we acted on it. There was no need for wasting time.

Top 10 Relationship Rules That Everyone Forgets

But again, I want to emphasise that no matter how much self-knowledge you have or clarity about what you want in a relationship, it still takes time to really get to know someone else.

That doesn't mean that you need to necessarily wait 10 years before making a commitment to someone. But it's still important to understand that you'll still be learning new things about the other person for at least a decade. There's more there than you can learn in just a year or two.

And if you're comfortable with that, then go for gold. Just make sure that you understand that certain knowledge of the other cannot happen in a year or two – definitely not in a month or two.

Committing to someone else doesn't happen because you know everything there is to know about them. You commit to someone because you decide to. But you also understand that any decision comes with a certain amount of risk. There is always something you will learn after-the-fact. That is just how it is.

4. No one can read your mind.

Another reality that many couples often seem to forget is that no one can read your mind. Unless you're married to the Mentalist of course.

So instead of having the unwritten rule that your partner should always know what you need or want, rather live by the rule that no one can read your mind.

Avoid saying stuff like, *"I shouldn't have to tell you what's wrong."*

That is unreasonable and stupid. There, I said it.

Top 10 Relationship Rules That Everyone Forgets

Rather, take responsibility for helping others (like your partner) to satisfy your needs and wants. It only makes sense to make it as easy as possible for someone else to make you happy.

Why wouldn't you want or do that?

5. No one can fulfill all your needs.

On the topic of needs, another thing a lot of couples seem to forget is that no one can fulfil all your needs. There is no person that can satisfy every need you have.

Yes, our partners should be able to fulfil most of our needs as that is a huge part of being in a relationship. But it's not their sole responsibility.

You're going to have to rely on yourself (and others or other things) from time to time to meet all your needs. No single person is a one-stop solution to your life.

If anything, when it comes down to it, YOU are solely responsible for your life.

So, instead of living like a victim in your relationship when your needs aren't being met, either discuss this with your partner and work it out or find other positive, constructive ways to meet your needs (or both).

The moment you make it a rule in your relationship that YOU are responsible for your own happiness, you make it a lot easier on your partner to help fulfil your needs.

6. No one is perfect.

But as long as it's an unwritten rule or expectation that your spouse needs to fill you up, you will be left disappointed and frustrated.

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If you want to be happy in a relationship you need to adopt the mindset that no one is perfect. Make this a rule you live by in your relationship. Doing that will help you avoid unrealistic expectations, disappointment, frustration, and unhappiness.

When your spouse or partner cannot disappoint you because you know they're not perfect, there's no reason to ever become disappointed. Someone cannot become imperfect when you know from the start that no one is perfect.

And believing that about yourself will also help you be less tough on yourself. You're not perfect either.

Now, that doesn't justify toxic behaviour, but it does help you be realistic about your strengths and weaknesses. Having weaknesses is not a weakness, it's simply reality. And when you accept that you can work on it rather than use it as a rod to beat yourself with. Because no one likes a pity party.

Let me share with you a truth I have learned in life – **If you want someone perfect, you're either going to be disappointed or alone!**

To create a happy, healthy and intimate relationship, you will have to accept some flaws in your partner, and they in you. Because, at the end of the day, if you've chosen the right person, their positive qualities will far outweigh their bad. You must trust that.

7. Avoid getting into a relationship to solve your problems.

This is a big one.

Make this a big rule in your life when it comes to relationships.

Top 10 Relationship Rules That Everyone Forgets

I've seen this happen so many times with my coaching clients and people I know personally.

When you go into a relationship to solve your problems, you end up creating a bigger problem.

This idea kind of goes with the previous idea about wanting someone else to make you happy.

The same way you cannot expect someone else to make you happy, you cannot use a relationship to solve a problem in your life.

The only other idea that is more stupid than these two, is when people decide to have a child together to solve relationship issues and strengthen their bond.

Yet, it happens all the time.

And not only is it stupid, it's also unfair to the child.

A relationship should NOT be based on solving your challenges. Get your life under control before getting involved with someone else.

8. It's impossible to take back unkind words and actions.

Having this rule in your relationship, that a lot of people seem to forget, can make a huge difference in the overall quality and long-term success of your relationship.

Think before you speak.

You must remember that it's impossible to take back unkind words and actions.

Yes, we can always ask for forgiveness and reconcile, but we can never undo the past.

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Now, that doesn't mean that we should try and undo the past as that is impossible. I believe that working towards a better future is a wiser and more practical strategy but, nonetheless.

Not creating an unpleasant or hurtful past in the first place, is perhaps an even better strategy.

I also appreciate that our emotions can oftentimes get out of hand and lead us to do or say things we later regret. But again, it's important to understand that these things that happen in the heat of the moment will never be completely forgotten.

Of course, we can always think about things differently later on. We can always give things a new meaning. We can always get over things. We can always heal.

But, I'm not sure if completely forgetting is that easy.

Now, of course I'm not talking about suppression of traumatic events here. I'm simply referring to the type of "normal" things that happen between two people in a relationship.

Making it a rule for yourself (and as a couple) to think before you speak, bite your tongue from time to time, and to control your emotions as much as you can when it counts or can hurt the most, is a good idea.

Because at the end of the day it is impossible to take back what is done.

This by the way is a rule that applies to all of life.

9. Your partner's friends and family matter.

When we enter a relationship we often have this romantic (but unrealistic) idea that it's going to be us against the world.

Top 10 Relationship Rules That Everyone Forgets

Now, even though I believe that a couple should function as a unit and be very protective of its boundaries, you are never truly an island. You're never truly completely isolated.

Yes, you might spend most of your time together, alone, but chances are there are still people involved in your life in some way or another. It could be family or friends. It could be people you only see on Skype or once a year. But they are there.

And what I have learned in my own marriage is that your partner's friends and family do matter. At least to him or her.

You might not like the other important people in your partner's life or spend a lot of time with them, but they are still part of your partner's life ... and therefore yours.

So, it's important to try to get along with them. You don't have to like them, but it's not about liking anyone. This is about being committed to your spouse or partner, and therefore, trying to embrace those who are important to them.

10. Always remember to treat your partner like they're the most important person in your life.

Because they may well be.

I've met so many couples just in the last 12 months where one or both of them have started prioritising other things outside of the relationship. And they were paying the price.

When we prioritise something or someone else above our partner, in other words the person we are committed to, chances are we're gonna run into trouble. Our relationship will suffer.

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No person wants to feel like a burden or something on a to-do list in someone's diary. Not only does it feel bad, it's actually offensive.

Now, I understand that life is busy and things get in the way, but at no point should our loved one feel like they have to fight for our attention and love. That is ludicrous.

No business venture is that important. No project is that important. No friend is that important. No hobby or sport is that important.

I've come across a few clients now who have tried to convince me otherwise, but with no success. Because if what they believed or were doing were true and working, they wouldn't have ended up in my office seeking relationship advice.

Make it your rule to always (as far as you're able) show your love in your thoughts, words, and actions. Even when you disagree with your partner, make your opinion known in a loving and respectful fashion.

Choose to treat your partner as the most important person in your life, not the worst or like an afterthought. Make it a rule that you live by.

Final thoughts

Sometimes rules are meant to be broken.

But other times rules can help us stay on course and create the results we want.

Either way, there are consequences for our choices.

And Neglecting our partners and relationship can have catastrophic consequences.

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The reality is that love relationships require constant monitoring and maintenance to survive, let alone thrive.

If you want to thrive as a couple you need to go above and beyond.

You need to do more than what's required.

You need to stay consistent in the smallest of things.

You need to stick to the rules that work.

And the top 10 rules I've shared in this short guide are definitely that.

So, dust off these forgotten tips and start putting them to good use your relationship.

Because when you do, chances are your relationship will be(come) stronger and more satisfying for both of you.

The difference between those who are successful and those who are not, is that the successful are willing to do what the unsuccessful are not.

I think that idea applies here as well.



Do you need more help?

When people get quality RELATIONSHIP COACHING ...

Couples align and improve (and save) their relationships.

Children live with happier parents, which impacts their entire lives.

Whole families discover a way to get along in peace, enabling each member to be stronger and more successful than ever.

And individuals get to free themselves from negative relationship histories – and finally be the kind of spouse, partner and parent they always wanted to be.

But ...

If you are afraid of truth, directness, scared of being challenged, or someone caring about you and your happiness, then this is NOT the right thing for you! But, if you're good to go, then let's do this!

[LEARN MORE HERE >>](#)