

INTERNATIONAL
BEST-SELLING SERIES

THE RULES OF LOVE



*A Personal Code for
Happier, More
Fulfilling Relationships*

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THE AUTHOR OF THE
INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER *THE RULES OF LIFE*

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Introduction

Love. It's simple isn't it? You love your family and your friends; they love you back. You find a partner who you love, and who loves you, too. And you don't even have to try—it just happens. All true, but if you're reading this book, you already know full well that it's much, much more complex.

Love between people almost always has its complications—because people are complicated. Love can be tried and tested and stretched to its limits. Sometimes we love the wrong person. We can love too much, or not enough. We can feel it but not know how to show it. We can think love is enough, when actually it isn't. We can struggle to find it—or be unsure if we've found it or not. And sometimes we think it's still there, but we can feel it ebbing away and not know how to restore it to its full glory.

Love is often involved in our highest highs and our deepest lows. And it's almost always linked to contentment, which frankly is what most of us ultimately want in life. And so we should. It's a lofty aim. Imagine yourself in old age for a moment. You're sitting in the sunshine next to your partner (who is also your best friend, confidant[e] and lover) and you're surrounded by family and friends. Children are playing on the grass around you, and everywhere is the sound of laughter and happy voices. Yes, I know it sounds like the ending of the most unwatchable, sugary film ever. But deep down, wouldn't you like to feel you were heading for moments like that?

It all comes down to forming strong and loving relationships that will stay strong all your life—well, starting from now at least—and accumulating people around you who make you happy and who enjoy your company.

It all comes down to love. The four-letter word that has more poems, stories, and sermons written about it than any other. The

supposedly basic and straightforward emotion that so many of us find a bit trickier than we feel it should be. We're told to love our neighbor, love our fellow man, that love makes the world go round, love conquers all, all you need is love.

Yes, yes, but how do you actually *do* it? How do you get it right and make it last and keep it fresh? It may be a basic human instinct, but it's not that easy. We keep messing it up. Relationships fail, friends let us down, family isn't there when we need them, or children blame us for everything that goes wrong in their lives.

It's all very well saying that all you need is love, but it's not actually true. All you need is love *plus* an instruction manual for what to do with it once you've got it. Well, I've never tracked down an instruction manual, so I've had to do my best to assemble my own.

To begin with, I was as lost as anyone. But as you'll know if you've read any of my other Rules books, what I really do well in life is watch other people. I can't always seem to get everything right myself, but I can see what the people who do get it right are doing. So that's what I've done. I've studied all kinds of people in relationships with family and friends. It soon became clear that a few people are really good at love, but that most of us struggle. So what is it that the successful people do? Is there something they know and do that the rest of us could learn from? You bet there is. That's what's contained in this book. And here it is: *If you do what the happiest people do, you'll become as happy as them.*

I've pulled together the top 100 Rules as I've observed them in other people, plus a few I've learned for myself along the way. The people who follow these Rules most closely are the ones who find a partner who makes them happy and manage to keep that relationship fresh and rewarding for life. They are the ones who have close supportive families and whose children want to spend time with them. They are the ones with the closest and

most rewarding friendships, and with people who are always there for them. They are the world's natural Rules Players.

An instruction manual for love seems like an odd thing. It's not a sex manual—do go and buy one of those, too, if you think that'd be useful because you won't find that kind of instruction here. This is a collection of behaviors to follow all your life to be better at loving people, and to be loved better in return. There are practical Rules and emotional Rules and tough Rules and easy Rules—I've just assembled everything I think will help you come to grips with love and how to use it.

You know most of this stuff anyway, though you might not realize it. Much of it is common sense. As with all my books, these are reminders, not revelations. And that's as it should be. Love isn't so difficult that there are secrets you never knew; it's just that sometimes we lose the plot and need to remind ourselves of what's really important and what we should aim for to make all our relationships deep and lasting.

I've divided the book into sections to make it easier to use. I've included sections on finding love, relationships, parting (not too many of those, because you don't want to dwell on it), family, and friendship. Some of the Rules seemed to overlap a bit, so I've put them in whichever section seemed most appropriate—you'll have to forgive me if you disagree with my choice. And there were just a few Rules left over at the end that seemed to belong equally in every section, so I've collected them up in the final section, "Rules for Everyone."

I've spent many years collecting these Rules, but I bet there is more to learn. There always is, thank goodness. You may have come across guiding principles that I haven't included. If so, I'd love to hear from you so I can add them to my collection. You can email me at Richard.Templar@RichardTemplar.co.uk.

*With love,
Richard Templar*

Be Yourself

Isn't it so tempting to reinvent yourself when you meet somebody new who you really like—try and be who you think they are looking for? You could become sophisticated, or maybe strong, silent, and mysterious. At the very least, you could stop embarrassing yourself by making jokes at inappropriate moments or being pathetic when dealing with problems.

Actually, no you couldn't. You might manage it for an evening or two, or even a month or two, but it's going to be tough keeping it up forever. And if you think this person is the one—you know, *the one*—then you might be spending the next half century or so with them. Just imagine, 50 years of pretending to be sophisticated or suppressing your natural sense of humor.

That's not going to happen, is it? And would you actually want a lifetime of lurking behind some sham personality you've created? Imagine how that would be, unable ever to let on that this wasn't really you at all, for fear of losing them. Suppose they find out in a few weeks or months or years, when you finally crack? They're not going to be very impressed.

Let's be clear. I'm not saying you shouldn't try to turn over the occasional new leaf or improve yourself a bit. We should all be doing that all the time, and not only in our love life. Sure, you can try to be a bit more organized, or less negative. Changing your behavior is all fine and good. This Rule is about changing your basic personality. That will NOT work, and you'll tie yourself in knots trying to do it convincingly.

RULE 1

So be you. Might as well get it all out in the open now—if it's not who they're looking for, at least you won't get in too deep before they find out. And you know what? Maybe they don't actually like sophisticated. Perhaps strong silent types don't do it for them. Maybe they'll love your upfront sense of humor. Perhaps they want to be with someone who needs a bit of looking after.

You see, if you fake it, you'll attract someone who belongs with a person that isn't you. And how will that help? Somewhere out there is someone who wants exactly the kind of person you are, complete with all the flaws and failings you come with. And I'll tell you something else—they won't even see them as flaws and failings. They'll see them as part of your unique charm. And they'll be right.

MIGHT AS WELL GET IT ALL
OUT IN THE OPEN NOW.

Get Over It Before You Get on with It

We all get battered and bruised by life, that's inevitable. Some of us come off worse than others. Of course, it's the scars that give us character, so they're not all bad in the long run. In the short term, we may need to recover before we re-enter the fray.

If your last relationship or two has left you a bit of an emotional wreck, it's better to repair the damage before you start looking for a new lover and partner. Otherwise you won't be able to show them the real you, and you won't be able to focus on them if you're still preoccupied with yourself.

If you make a mistake with your new relationship (and it happens to us all), you could end up more bruised than when you started. Even if you did manage to find someone truly caring and loving, both of you could suffer because one of you wasn't ready yet to launch into a relationship.

I have a friend who came out of one relationship an emotional wreck. Then she met a man who was lovely—kind, nurturing, and protective. Just what she thought she needed. Over the next couple of years he looked after her until she was a strong, independent woman again. And what happened? It completely killed their relationship. She wasn't the woman he'd fallen in love with any more. Lots of men go for strong, independent women, but he wasn't one of them. He liked women who were fragile and needed looking after.

And that's the danger. Even if you find the perfect partner, they're only ideal for who you are right now, and that's not who

RULE 2

you'll be after you recover—the person you really are underneath. I'm not saying these relationships can never work, but it's very, very rare.

So do yourself a favor. Go away and hide somewhere while you lick your wounds. Enjoy your friends and your family, and wait until you've recovered before you start looking for a new partner. And when you do, try to pick someone whose scars are relatively well-healed, too—because this works the other way as well. In this way you both see each other as you truly are, and start your relationship the way you want to continue it.

DO YOURSELF A FAVOR. GO
AWAY AND HIDE
SOMEWHERE WHILE YOU
LICK YOUR WOUNDS.

You Won't Be Happy with a Partner Until You Can Be Happy on Your Own

I knew a woman who was always in a relationship. You know the kind—maybe you're the same—the moment one relationship ended, another started. I asked her once why this was, and she told me that she didn't like being on her own so she made sure it never happened. When I got to know her well, she was with a man who was perfectly decent but who just didn't give her the love she deserved. Why did she put up with it, I asked her. She patiently explained that she had no choice, because the alternative was being on her own, and she couldn't cope with that option.

In the end, things got really bad and he left. She braced herself for the breakdown she knew would follow. I saw her a month or so later and asked how she was coping. She told me, "Fine, at the moment. I thought I would have fallen to pieces by now, but it's obviously taking longer to happen than I expected."

I think it was six months before it finally dawned on her that she wasn't actually going to break down at all. Three months later, she met a lovely guy who wanted to get serious and move in together, but she resisted. She was having too much fun being on her own.

The point of this story is that she stayed in relationships that weren't good and put up with flak she didn't deserve, out of fear of being on her own. After she knew that she was happy on her own, she set her standards much higher and wouldn't put up with second best. She didn't have to. After all, what was the worst that could happen? Well, she could end up back on her own again—but that wasn't a problem any more.

RULE 3

So the moral of this story is that you need to learn to be happy and secure on your own. That way, you'll never stay in a bad situation for fear of being left alone. If it's not working out, you can simply leave. Far too many people stay in unhappy relationships because they're scared to be alone. Rules players learn to enjoy living alone so that when they do choose to throw in their lot with a new partner, it's for the right reasons.

After you've mastered this, you'll only ever live with anyone else because you love them and they make you happy. Being alone is great, but being with them is even better. If that stops being the case, you're free to leave.

FAR TOO MANY PEOPLE
STAY IN UNHAPPY
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THEY'RE SCARED TO BE
ALONE.

You'll Know Them When You Meet Them

To be quite honest, I'm not sure this is entirely true. Some people do know the instant they meet their future partner that this is the person they've been looking for all their life. But it doesn't work like that for everyone.

The real Rule¹ is that if you're not sure if this is the right one, don't take a gamble on it. If they are the right one, you will know it, even if it takes a bit of time.² In other words, if it's right you will be sure—either straight away, or a bit later—but you will know.

If you're absolutely sure this is the right person the moment you lock eyes on them, you're very lucky. (Unless it happens to you every time, in which case you need to stop kidding yourself.) The important thing is not to commit yourself until you're certain. How many divorced people have you heard say, "Do you know, even on my wedding day I was wondering if I was doing the right thing?"

Well, I can tell you. If you're still wondering about it on your wedding day, you are *not* doing the right thing. You are making a big mistake. Marriage and/or kids are tough enough when you are sure you are with the right person. It's lunacy to enter into it without being certain.

If you aren't sure right at the beginning, that's normal. It may take weeks, months, or even years to be sure, especially if you're of a naturally doubtful persuasion. That's all fine. It's just that

¹ Which wasn't really snappy enough to use as the title.

² See? Not snappy at all.

RULE 4

until you are sure, you shouldn't be making a permanent commitment.

Your new partner, of course, may be sure sooner than you are. We're all different. But don't allow them to pressure you into making a decision before you're ready. It's understandable that they want you to commit yourself—you're a wonderful person, why wouldn't they want to be with you? But no one will benefit if you make the wrong decision.

If this is really the right person for you to spend your life with, you won't be thinking, "I don't know. Is it me? I'm just not sure if this is right." You'll be thinking, "Yes, yes, yes, let's get on with it!" If you're not thinking that, you're not ready to commit yourself.

IF YOU AREN'T SURE RIGHT
AT THE BEGINNING,
THAT'S NORMAL.

Choose Someone Who Makes You Laugh

I nearly put this Rule first because I think it is *the* most important thing of all in a relationship. If you choose your partner for their looks, their status, even the rest of their personality, you could eventually regret it. Anyway, lots of those things can get lost along the way. Even personality traits can change—a confident person can be shattered by an emotional trauma, a patient person can become irritable and frustrated through illness or pain.

A sense of humor will last you long after everything else has gone. When you're both sitting there in your rocking chairs, decades after retirement and the kids have long since grown up, it may be all you have left. If it is, it will be enough.

Laughter is worth its weight in gold. A sense of humor is a very personal thing, and some people just make us laugh more than others. When you find the person who really makes you laugh more than anyone else, marry them. That's my advice. You're almost guaranteed to admire them more, because anyone who makes you laugh will be hugely attractive—even if they're not physically what you'd been anticipating.

Okay, I'm being a little extreme, but only slightly. Personally I married the person who made me laugh more than anyone else, and it was absolutely the right thing to do. Maybe you'll prefer to go for the second or third funniest person you meet. Just don't compromise on the sense of humor, because it really is the top priority.

RULE 5

You don't just want someone who makes you laugh generally, although that's essential. The best thing of all is to find someone who can make you laugh at yourself. That will get you through life more smoothly than anything.

I have a friend whose wife died a few years ago, and he says that one of the things he misses most is being able to laugh at himself. He hadn't realized how much she helped him to do that or how essential it was to his happiness. He says he takes himself far too seriously these days and gets stressed about things that she would have gotten him to laugh off.

So next time you meet someone with gorgeous legs, sexy eyes, or a cute smile, don't be seduced right away. See if they can first tickle you without touching.

A SENSE OF HUMOR WILL
LAST YOU LONG AFTER
EVERYTHING ELSE
HAS GONE.