

# Why we should follow the rules



\* We should follow the rules so that we can maintain peace and organization within our society, economy, and even our country. Without rules no one would be able to work together. \* Two different kinds of people can be heard to utter that question, " Why have rules? " One of them does not believe in rules; the other believes in rules and adds a few more words to the question, " Why have rules, if you are not going to enforce them? " I would like to examine both sides of this argument.

Many people say that if we had no rules, there would be total anarchy and chaos. Some say that if there were no law against murder or theft, normal good people would murder and steal. I agree that there would be more murder and theft. But, I cannot imagine that normal people would murder and steal. Wouldn't you be repelled by murder and theft? Wouldn't there be implied constraints (implied laws, if you will) against murder and theft? Wouldn't the Golden Rule apply, even if it weren't given to us in the Bible? Aren't there always implied rules? Sixty-nine percent of students who obey the rules say that the rules are there for guidance and protection, with 20 percent feeling that the rules are there to scare them into obedience. \* We follow rules because they are necessary to coordinate individual actions in a social setting. Some rules are self-enforcing, i. e. , it is in each individual's interest to obey them. For example, once more than 50% of car operators drive on the right side of the road in a particular area, more and more drivers will notice that adapting to this rule reduces their risks of accident, and the rule will become more and more accepted.

A driver who decides to break the rule will risk incurring a high cost. \* A related reason why we follow rules is that we don't know the consequences

of particular decisions: rules are, as Hayek says, " a device for coping with our constitutional ignorance. " \* In certain instances, we follow rules because we want to guard against particular decisions that may, on the spur of the moment, bring satisfaction, but have long term consequences we wish to avoid. You may use a loud, or repeating, alarm-clock, or put it out of reach, because you know that you may be tempted to stay in bed when the time comes. \* Rules are indispensable, but there must be ways to challenge them by trying new ones. Much of the art of social, and personal, life is about knowing which rules to follow and which rules to disobey. \* Most of the time we put people into one category or the other. You either accept the rules and play by them or you're a rebel who likes to break the rules. \* A third variety that we often forget about is the rule questioner.

And the rule questioner is in a better position to learn and succeed than the pure rule followers and rule breakers. \* Why you shouldn't follow all the rules \* The rule followers believe that rules are in place for a reason and that we should follow them all. Groups of smart people created laws and company procedures and social norms and school policies so we should accept them and follow them. \* Blindly following the rules doesn't require you to think much. You accept rules the way they are even if they don't seem to make sense. The problem is that circumstances and environments and people and societies change. We learn better methods. Technology changes our procedures. Rules become outdated. \* If you blindly follow all the rules, you don't account for these changes. \* Why you shouldn't break all the rules \* While some of us like to believe we're rule breakers, most of us realize that

we need rules to have a functioning society. (That is, unless you're an anarchist. ) \* Rule breakers really aren't that different from rule followers.

Instead of blindly following the rules, they blindly break the rules. \* Why? \* Maybe you think you know better. \* Maybe you like the feeling of rebellion. \* Maybe you want to be different. \* Maybe you think the rules are absurd. \* The underlying problem with both rule breakers and rule followers is that they don't use their brains to think about whether they should follow or break the rules. \* Question the rules \* Instead of following all the rules or breaking all the rules, we should become rule questioners. \* Do the rules make sense?

If so, then follow them...if not, think about about how you might be able to change them. \* Most people believe that if you don't question the rules, you'll get farther in life, but success awaits those who are willing to break the right rules. \* Painting inside the lines \* I'm definitely a rule follower. \* I was reminded of my tendency to follow the rules last weekend when I attending a Paint By Wine Class with some friends. A local art shop provides paint, a blank canvas and an artist to teach you to create a painting while you sip wine and chat with friends. Everyone is supposed to follow the instructor's guidance to create the same painting. I didn't really like the colors in the painting, but I followed each of the artist's instructions and recreated something that looked exactly like her painting. She complimented me on how straight my lines were. \* It wasn't until I looked around, that I noticed that other people weren't following the rules (gasp! ). Some of my friends used different colors. Others put their flowers in different locations. Others were going even more rogue and painting roses instead of daisies. I blindly

followed the rules without even thinking about how I could put my own touch on the painting. I didn't even like what I was creating, but I found myself proud that I had followed the directions so closely (although certainly not perfectly). \* What was I left with at the end of the night? Besides a fun time hanging out with my friends, I had an exact replica of a painting I didn't really like. (Yes, the featured image in this post is my "work of art".) \* Use your brain to question the rules Whether you're more of a rule breaker or a rule follower, we can all improve by questioning the rules before following or breaking them. \* I'm not suggesting that you pick only the rules you feel like following. Please don't drink and drive because you think the rule doesn't make sense. Don't steal from the grocery store to feel like a rebel. \* But do use your brain to ask reasonable questions. \* Rules are important because without rules there would be chaos. Everyone would be doing whatever they want and no one would agree and bad things would happen. Rules are important because it lets society know what is expected of them. If you break the rules there are consequences and you are aware of that as well. Rules keep us in order. \* We should follow the rules so that we can maintain peace and organization within our society, economy, and even our country. Without rules no one would be able to work together. \* Rules are needed to stop anarchy and to provide order. People need to be accountable for their actions so rules are needed. Without rules, no one would own up to any responsibility and things would never get accomplished. \*