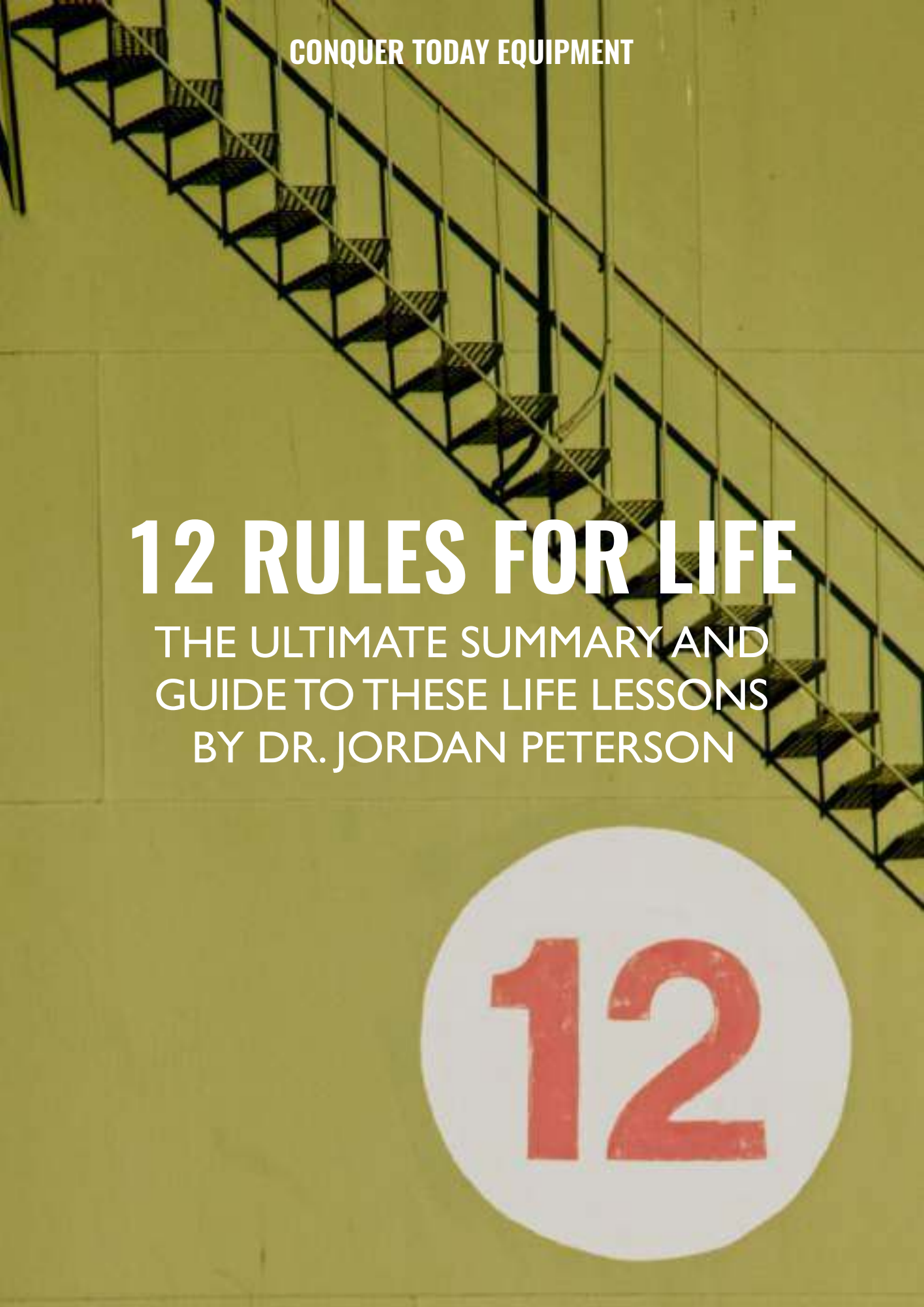
CONQUER TODAY EQUIPMENT

12 RULES FOR LIFE

THE ULTIMATE SUMMARY AND GUIDE TO THESE LIFE LESSONS BY DR. JORDAN PETERSON



There is knowledge in this book that every single human being could benefit from hearing. But for better or for worse, the parts most impactful to you personally will be mixed in with large, in-depth psychoanalytical theories, entertaining stories, and philosophy on the darkest secrets of humanity.

Dr. Jordan Peterson is a Canadian psychologist with over 500 hours of filmed lectures on YouTube (His official channel is here, but a great introduction video is here). His focus on personality, responsibility, and the true meaning behind religion is hitting the mark. These videos are going viral, being consumed by young adults looking for some sort of guidance in a world filled with chaos, rejection, and guilt.

You might find it difficult to press through the large tome until you discover the right passages that scream out to

you, so we developed the ultimate summary guide and book review of "12 Rules For Life" by Jordan Peterson. Even this outline can seem overwhelming, take just 15 minutes of quiet time to read it all the way through. You'll be happy you did.

(A side note: bookmark this post and return to it in about a week, as we will release a downloadable PDF of these rules for later reading and sharing, as well as a printable 11 x 17 poster of these 12 rules as a constant reminder.)

THE 12 RULES OF LIFE

There are so many great quotes and lessons we must leave out of this summary to keep it as simple as possible. Some of the explanations below are language taken directly from Mr. Peterson, and some of it is our best interpretation. All of it is meant to help. Let's go through the summary of each rule, as well as the moving Q&A Dr. Peterson has with his on conscience at the end.

1. STAND UP STRAIGHT WITH YOUR SHOULDERS BACK

Our brains are constantly manufacturing a chemical known as serotonin. It helps us regulate things like mood, confidence, and energy. There's an interesting relationship between serotonin and status. As you climb

up the social or self-esteem ladder, your serotonin will increase.

So, should we work to increase serotonin first, in order to make positive progress? It can't hurt. One of the most fundamental and primitive ways to show you hold yourself in decent regard, and improve your serotonin output, is to simply stand up straight with your shoulders back. Before you dive into all the other hard work of building a successful life, you can start here for a quick win.

> *"You're not only a body. You're a spirit. Standing up physically implies and demands standing up metaphysically. It's voluntarily accepting the burden of Being. Your nervous system responds in an entirely different manner when you face the demands of life voluntarily."*

2. TREAT YOURSELF LIKE SOMEONE YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR HELPING

Did you know that people are better at filling and administering prescription medications to their pets than themselves? Why is that? The problem might lie in our worldview, and how we secretly and even consciously live in shame.

When we grow up, we begin to notice things like cruelty, unfairness, fear, and our ability to participate in all of it. Why would anyone in their right mind want to keep a system like that going?

Instead, focus on the incredible productivity and achievements of humanity. Believe in your own ability to care for others, and the role you will play to make this world a little bit better. Treat yourself like someone you

are responsible for helping (so in turn, you can help the rest of us.)

> *"You need to determine where you are going, so that you can bargain for yourself, so that you don't end up resentful, vengeful, and cruel. You need to articulate your own principles, so you can defend yourself against others' taking advantage of you. You must keep the promises you make to yourself, and reward yourself, so that you can trust and motivate yourself."*

3. MAKE FRIENDS WITH PEOPLE WHO WANT THE BEST FOR YOU

I think we all have that one friend we love dearly, but they struggle. And perhaps you try and help them over and over again, but the one thing they cannot do is help themselves. It's a sad fact that sometimes, people choose to stay in a place of low-grade misery instead of putting in the hard work to change. We're all probably guilty of that somewhere in our own lives.

It's not easy to surround yourself with healthy people. It's not easy to distance yourself from those who can be deadly to your growth over the long term. But a good friend will not tolerate your own destructiveness. They will encourage you when you do good and punish you when you do not. They won't offer a former smoker a cigarette. Make friends with those who want the best for you.

> *"Loyalty is not identical to stupidity. Friendship is a reciprocal arrangement. Choose people who want things to be better, not worse. It's a good thing, not a selfish thing, to choose people who are good for you. It's appropriate and praiseworthy to associate with people whose lives would be improved if they saw your life improve."*

4. COMPARE YOURSELF TO WHO YOU WERE YESTERDAY, NOT TO WHO SOMEONE ELSE IS TODAY

We all have internal critics, and they can be brutal. But critics, internal and external, are necessary. We can't have doctors who think they're amazing but can't stitch a cut together. The problem is, we tend to categorize every aspect of ourselves as either a success or a failure. There's so much more to it than that. There's not just one game to play here.

If you're not a good athlete, then be a good writer. If you're not a good writer, then be a good parent. You're one singular being out of billions. To take one frame of comparison, like wealth or power, and put yourself up against the world is completely unfair.

Judge yourself only on your attempt and impact on making this world a little bit better of a place. Compare yourself to who you were yesterday, not to who someone else is today.

> *"What if it was the case that the world revealed whatever goodness it contained in precise proportion to your desire for the best? This doesn't mean you can have what you want merely by wishing it, or that everything is interpretation, or that there is no reality. The world is still there, with its structures and limits. But you can dance with it, and maybe even lead, if you have enough skill and grace."*

5. DO NOT LET YOUR CHILDREN DO ANYTHING THAT MAKES YOU DISLIKE THEM

With or without children, we are all affected by the public meltdown of a toddler. Adults are worn out, some children are insanely difficult, but still the all-important job of parenting must be done. It hurts to discipline your child, to assert power over them, to fight for hours over something as simple as eating dinner.

But there is something that will hurt much more: a forever poorly-socialized and adjusted adult. A misbehaving and obnoxious child at a party is ignored by everyone and doted on by the parents. That's not a good sign for the future.

By focusing on setting simple rules, using minimum necessary force, and parenting with a partner (so you avoid burnout and your own ability to be quite harsh to your child in return), you can become a caring proxy for the real world. Do not let your children do anything that makes you dislike them, so they receive the ultimate blessing of being liked by others.

> *"A child who pays attention, instead of drifting, and can play, and does not whine, and is comical, but not annoying, and is trustworthy, that child will have friends wherever he goes. His teachers and parents will like him. If he can be happily instructed, he will thrive in what can be a cold and unforgiving hostile world. Clear rules make for secure children and calm and rational parents. Clear discipline helps the child, the family, and the society establish, maintain, and expand the order that is all that*

> *protects us from chaos, where everything is uncertain, anxiety-provoking, hopeless and depressing."*

6. SET YOUR HOUSE IN PERFECT ORDER BEFORE YOU CRITICIZE THE WORLD

Some of those most terrible acts of violence on humanity have been committed by those who had undergone terrible mistreatment. But such evil experiences have the capacity to birth goodness and righteousness, not just the desire to pay the abuse forward. In your own life, you might be finding that the constant grind, endless news cycle, and the pressure of an angry society is making you bitter and resentful.

Instead of blaming the world, just consider your own circumstances. Where can you make small changes to improve your own personal experience? How can you

take more advantage of your current situation? Set your house in perfect order before your criticize the world. If we all did that, things could fix themselves.

> *"After some months and years of diligent effort, your life will become simpler and less complicated. Your judgement will improve. You will untangle your past. You will become stronger and less bitter. You will move more confidently into the future. You will stop making your life unnecessarily difficult. You will then be left with the bare tragedies of life, but they will no longer be compounded with bitterness and deceit."*

7. PURSUE WHAT IS MEANINGFUL (NOT WHAT IS EXPEDIENT)

Life is suffering. You can learn that from almost any religion, or just sit in traffic for a while. The simplest thing to do about that is to pursue pleasure whenever you can. You could relax, intoxicate, and take without giving.

But as human beings evolved, we discovered something that has built our entire society: we can make sacrifices and delay gratification in order to develop a better future for ourselves.

Living a life filled with meaning means putting aside immediate pleasures, which can often come at the expense of someone else. It means knowing you have a responsibility to yourself, and to others, to create a better place for us all. You do this by making sacrifices, and pursuing what is meaningful (not what is expedient).

> *"There are many problems that money does not solve, and others it makes worse. Rich people still divorce each other, alienate themselves from their children, and suffer from existential angst, and develop cancer and dementia, and die alone and unloved."*

8. TELL THE TRUTH – OR, AT LEAST, DON'T LIE

There are different types of lies. The first we knowingly tell maliciously, hoping to obscure the truth in an effort to avoid pain or gain pleasure. But the other type of lie is more insidious. It's the kind where we don't want to hurt someone's feelings, or we want to avoid awkward situations. It can cause all sorts of messes over time, especially to your own consciousness.

Sometimes, you'll have no idea what to do or say. Just tell the truth. Tell it with strength, confidence, and genuine caring. Taking the easy way out or telling the truth are two different pathways through life, and will lead you to drastically different places. Tell the truth – or, at least, don't lie.

> *"It is our responsibility to see what is before our eyes, courageously, and learn from it, even if it seems horrible. This is particularly important when it challenges what we know and rely on, upsetting and destabilizing us. It is this act that informs the individual and updates the state. Nietzsche said that a man's worth was determined by how much truth he could tolerate."*

9. ASSUME THAT THE PERSON YOU ARE LISTENING TO MIGHT KNOW SOMETHING YOU DON'T

Who isn't familiar with the type of conversation where you, or the other person, is just waiting for their turn to talk? It's no fun for either of you. Instead, practice a skill that will take you far for the rest of your life: active listening.

Listening, understanding, and responding well is absolutely critical for your own health and the health of your community. Assume that the person you are listening to might know something you don't.

> *"Carl Rodgers suggested his readers conduct a short experiment when they next found themselves in a dispute. 'Stop the discussion for a moment, and institute this rule: Each person can speak up for himself only after he has first restated the ideas and feelings of the previous speaker accurately, and to that speakers satisfaction."*

10. BE PRECISE IN YOUR SPEECH

So, we're supposed to listen, and always tell the truth. How can being precise help us even further? It's because when things fall apart, your world can turn into chaos. And the best remedy for chaos is language: to put into words what went wrong, how it hurt you, and what you need to do in order to recover.

Everything from our relationships to our mental health take constant maintenance and feedback. Being precise in your speech, being able to speak courageously and truthful words doesn't mean the problems will go away, but it does eliminate the crushing anxiety of an undefined and ongoing tragedy.

> *"Say what you mean, so that you can find out what you mean. Act out what you say, so you can find out what happens. Then pay attention. Note your errors. Articulate them. Strive to correct them. That is how you discover the meaning of your life. Tell those around you who you are. Narrow your focus, and gaze attentively, and move forward, forthrightly."*

11. DO NOT BOTHER CHILDREN WHEN THEY ARE SKATEBOARDING

Healthy people don't seek to minimize risk. They seek to optimize it. We are happiest in the sweet spot between safety and skill, pushing ourselves to learn and grow without going off the deep end. Being overprotected, or too agreeable, or too dependent, is a death sentence when it comes to personal success.

Take the scary risk to become competent and powerful. Be a strong man or woman. Respect and push each other. Participate in the natural hierarchies that exist within a society that seeks to move upward. Don't be afraid to be afraid. Do scary things. Do not bother children, who are learning these lessons in real time, when they are skateboarding.

> *"We feel invigorated and excited when we work to optimize our future performance, while playing in the present. Otherwise we lumber around, sloth-like, unconscious, unformed, and careless. Overprotected, we will fail when something dangerous, unexpected, and full of opportunity suddenly makes its appearance, as it inevitably will."*

12. PET A CAT WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER ONE ON THE STREET

Human beings are fragile. It's shocking that we aren't in a state of paralyzing fear at all times, with everything dangerous around us. Every one of our lives are going to be filled with pain, disappointment, and loss. Then, we die. And if you think too much about that, you're headed straight to the abyss. How do we cope?

People (you) are very, very tough. And if you focus on the simple and the good, you will be able to make it through. If you aim for the stars, deny tragedy from ruling over your life, and take advantage of the small opportunities for peace, you will be okay.

> *"And maybe when you are going for a walk and your head is spinning a cat will show up, and if you pay attention to it then you will get a reminder for just fifteen seconds that the wonder of Being might make up for the ineradicable suffering that accompanies it. Pet a cat when you encounter one on the street."*

THE FINALE

At the end of the book, Dr. Peterson attempts to put together his overarching philosophy in a moving Q&A with wherever inspired writing comes from. He does quite well, so we will simply share that "interview" below.

> ***'What shall I do tomorrow?'*** *The answer came: 'The most good possible in the shortest period of time.'"*
> ***'What shall I do next year?'*** *'Try to ensure that the good I do then will be exceeded only by the good I do the year after that.'*
> ***'What shall I do with my life?'*** *'Aim for paradise, and concentrate on today.'*

'What shall I do with my wife?' *'Treat her as if she is the Holy Mother of God, so that she may give birth to the world-redeeming hero.'*

'What shall I do with my daughter?' *'Stand behind her, listen to her, guard her, train her mind, and let her know it's OK if she wants to be a mother.*

'What shall I do with my parents?' *'Act such that your actions justify the suffering they endured.'*

'What shall I do with my son?' *'Encourage him to be a true son of God.'*

'What shall I do with the stranger?' *'Invite him into my house, and treat him like a brother, so that he may become one.'*

'What shall I do with a fallen soul?' *'Offer a genuine and cautious hand, but do not join it in the mire.'*

'What shall I do with the world?' *'Conduct myself as if Being is more valuable than Non-Being.'*

'How shall I educate my people?' *'Share with them those things I regard as truly important'*

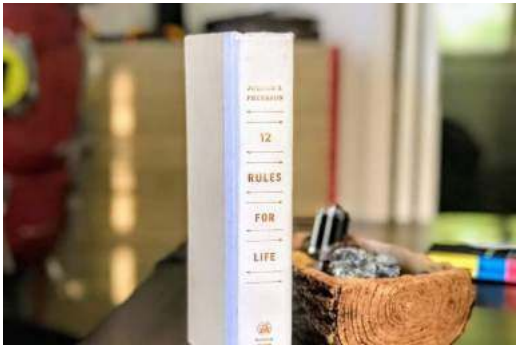
'What shall I do with a torn nation?' *'Stitch it back together with careful words of truth.'*

'What shall I do with a lying man?' *'Let him speak so that he may reveal himself.'*

'How shall I deal with the enlightened one?' *'Replace him with the true seeker of enlightenment."*

'What shall I do when I despise what I have?' *'Remember those who have nothing and strive to be grateful.'*

'What shall I do when greed consumes me?' *'Remember that it is truly better to give than to receive.'*
'What shall I do when my enemy succeeds?' *'Aim a little higher and be grateful for the lesson.'*
'What shall I do when I'm tired and impatient?' *'Gratefully accept an outstretched helping hand.'*
'What shall I do with the fact of aging?' *'Replace the potential of my youth with the accomplishments of my maturity.'*
'What shall I do with my infant's death?' *'Hold my other loved ones and heal their pain.'*
'What shall I do in the next dire moment?' *'Focus my attention on the next right move.'*
'What shall I say to a faithless brother?' *'The King of The Damned is a poor judge of Being.'*
'What shall I do to strengthen my spirit?' *'Do not tell lies, or do what you despise.'*
'What shall I do to ennoble my body?' *'Use it only in the service of the soul.'*
'What shall I do with the most difficult of questions?' *'Consider them the gateway to the path of life.'*
'What shall I do with the poor man's plight?' *'Strive through right example to lift his broken heart.'*
'What shall I do when the great crowd beckons?' *'Stand tall and utter my broken truths.'*

MOVING FORWARD

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