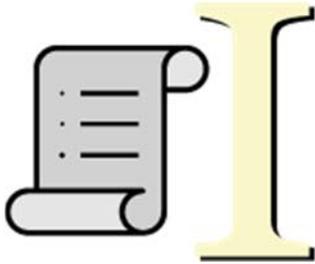


Insights from 12 Rules for Life by Jordan Peterson

Over the course of my career, I've experienced long periods of uncertainty and self-doubt. To prevent these chaotic periods in my work life, I picked up Jordan Peterson's book to find rules I can rely on to regain order and a sense of certainty.

Here are two rules that I find to be the strongest antidotes to chaos:



Compare yourself to who you were yesterday

You and I have an innate need to compare ourselves to other people.

If you notice that you're more skilled and successful than others around you, your brain will release a hormone called serotonin. When you have serotonin in your blood, you feel confident and in control of your life.

But the instant your mind notices someone who threatens your status in society and makes you look incompetent, your brain restricts serotonin. You start doubting yourself and feel a low sense of self-worth.

Now that you are connected to billions of people online, it doesn't take long for your brain to notice ways in which you compare unfavorably to other people.

You think you're a good guitar player? There are dozens of exceptional guitar players on YouTube that will make you look completely incompetent...You're proud of graduating from that local college with a business degree? Your friend just posted a photo on Facebook of him graduating from Harvard with an MBA.

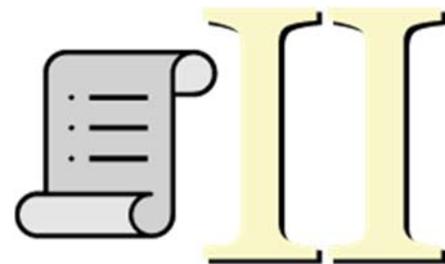
When you're exposed to so many people that are better than you, and the gap between you and someone else is huge, you're more inclined to lose hope, stop taking action, and let your life slip into chaos.

The best way to prevent this from happening is to stop comparing yourself to who someone else is today and start comparing yourself to who you were yesterday.

I like to see every day that I've lived as a different version of myself (like a separate person living out each day), isolate who I was yesterday and ask myself: "Was I the best possible version of myself yesterday?"

I then rate yesterday's version of myself on a scale of 1-10 (10 being my ideal self). If I'm slightly better than who I was yesterday, I'll know that I'm improving my skills and increasing my status in society. This realization will provide me with a steady dose of serotonin and stop my downward spiral into chaos.

"Even a man on a sinking ship can be happy when he clammers aboard a lifeboat! And who knows where he might go, in the future. To journey happily may well be better than to arrive successfully..." - Jordan Peterson



Tell the truth - or at least, don't lie

The amount you can improve on yesterday will be limited by how truthful you are willing to be today.

Until you face the truth, any improvement you make on who you were yesterday will be meaningless. Instead of moving forward, you'll just be moving sideways. To make forward progress you need to acknowledge what truth you're avoiding and what uncomfortable conversations you need to have with yourself and others.

Author Tim Ferriss once said, "A person's success in life can usually be measured by the number of uncomfortable conversations he or she is willing to have."

Having an uncomfortable conversation is like having a controlled fire to burn off the deadwood in a forest so that the deadwood doesn't build up and lead to a larger fire that destroys all the trees in the forest and ruins the soil.

After reading this chapter in Peterson's book, I now ask myself a second question when assessing who I was yesterday. Each morning I ask myself: "Did I do my best to tell the truth yesterday?"

If I agreed to do something just to avoid an uncomfortable conversation or pretended to know something when I, in fact, didn't know what I was talking about, I'll rate myself a 1 or a 2 on a scale of 1-10.

Enough 1's or 2's in a row provide me with the motivation to speak up, have uncomfortable conversations, and stop my downward spiral into chaos.

"If your life is not what it could be, try telling the truth. If you cling desperately to an ideology, or wallow in nihilism, try telling the truth. If you feel weak and rejected, and desperate, and confused, try telling the truth. In Paradise, everyone speaks the truth. That is what makes it Paradise." - Jordan Peterson

"So why not call this a book of "guidelines," a far more relaxed, user-friendly and less rigid sounding term than "rules"? Because these really are rules. And the foremost rule is that you must take responsibility for your own life. Period." - Dr. Norman Doidge, MD