

## "The RULES of LIFE"

### Aim to be the very best at everything you do not second best

Wow What a tall order. This is a seriously difficult thing to aim for - and deliberately so. If you go to work, then do your job as well as is humanly possible. If you are a parent, be the very best parent possible. If you are a gardener, be the very best gardener you can be. Because if you aren't, then what are you aiming for? And why? If you set out to do something, anything, and you are deliberately aiming for second best, how sad is that? This Rule is really simple, really easy Let's take parenting for example. What is the very best way of parenting possible? There are of course no right or wrong answers here, it's entirely a subjective assessment. What do you think the very best parenting means? Good. Now are you going to aim for less than that? Of course not.

And the same is true for everything you do. You aim to be the very best that you think is possible. Once you become the judge, the panel of experts, it is very easy to live up to those expectations because they are entirely yours. No one else can say whether you have failed or succeeded. No one else can set the criteria for what you are about to embark on. Look, maybe this is a trick. If only you can judge whether you have succeeded, then obviously you are going to score 10 out of 10 every time. Aren't you? Probably not. It is amazing how tough we are on ourselves, when no one is looking. If we are only cheating ourselves, then we realize there simply isn't any point to it. The most marvellous thing about setting your own standards is that no one else can judge; no one else can get their sticky little fingers on what, for you, is right or wrong, good or bad. How liberating is that? Infinitely. Having established that you'll aim for the very best and you've set the standards of what that is, all you have to do is periodically check back to that standard to see how you are doing.

None of this has to be incredibly detailed. For instance, your view of being the best parent could be as simple as 'I'll always be there for them'. You don't have to provide details, even if it is just for yourself, of how many times a day you'll tell them you love them, or whether you make sure they wear clean socks every day No, your aim is simply 'To be there for them, always', and that is your very, very best. Now if you fail it is only because you weren't there for them. Failing is fine. Aiming for second best isn't. All you have to do is consciously think about what you are doing and then aim for that, the best. The secret is to be aware of what you are doing and have some sort of benchmark where you, and only you, monitor your performance. Make your goals, your aims simple and obviously attainable. Make sure you know what is, for you, best and second best.

From *The RULES OF LIFE* by Richard Templar.

## ENTERTAINMENT



### Gypsy Wedding was Channel 4's most watched show in 2011

Channel 4's top three most watched programmes of last year were all part of the My Fat Gypsy Wedding brand, the network has announced. According to consolidated audience figures the, most watched episode, which was broadcast in February, attracted 9.71m people. The Christmas special was seen by 7.24m

viewers, while 5.32m people tuned in for a Royal wedding episode in April. Embarrassing Bodies was the fourth most watched show, followed by Shameless. My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding, which follows young Irish travellers as they prepare for their traditionally extravagant weddings, has been a big hit for Channel 4. First broadcast in 2010 as a one-off documentary, the show attracted a lot of attention mainly because viewers were amazed by the outrageous wedding plans set out by the gypsy brides. The documentary also gave viewers an insight into the travelling community and how different their courting system was to the more typical way people date today. Some have accused the show of voyeurism and making fun of its subjects, a charge which the programme-makers deny. Embarrassing Bodies, which sees people seek medical treatment on TV for less-talked about ailments, attracted 4.85m people to earn its fourth place position. Another episode of the medical documentary series appeared at number 10, with 3.85m tuning in to watch. Shameless, which is currently on its ninth series, was the only drama in the top 10. The show, is set on the fictional Chatsworth council estate, had 4.49m viewers for an edition in January. The Big Fat Quiz Of The Year took sixth place with 4.35m and a September episode of Grand Designs was at number seven with an audience of 4.15m. In eighth place was a one off Cutting Edge documentary, which followed the life of one man who was struggling to live comfortably because of his obsessive hoarding. A total of 4.03m people watched Obsessive Compulsive Hoarder, which was broadcast in December. At number nine was award-winning documentary series One Born Every Minute, which features selected footage filmed on a hospital maternity ward. The June episode attracted 3.88m people. Glee, Misfits and Hollyoaks were the top three most popular programmes across Channel 4's digital channels, include E4 and Channel 4 +1. BBC

From 'TheComedians Quote Book' There are two times in a man's life when he shouldn't speculate: when he can't afford it and when he can. Mark Twain

## 'Please Explain'

### Push My Button

We all spend time waiting for an elevator to arrive or waiting at a pedestrian crossing for the traffic lights to turn green. And there's always somebody standing there trying to speed things along by incessantly jabbing their finger on the button. These people believe that by pressing the button frequently and vigorously the elevator or 'walk' sign will take less time to appear. They're wrong.

**Traffic Light Controllers** Several different types of control circuits manage traffic lights. Some traffic lights in large cities have no external detectors or press buttons at all because of the constant flow of traffic day and night. These traffic lights simply work on timers. However, in areas where there is less traffic, e.g. in the suburbs or on country roads, a combination of control boxes, car detectors and input switches is used. A control box has timers, processing circuitry and relays. Car detectors can range from rubber hoses full of air to supersensitive lasers. But the most common detection technique today is the inductive loop - coils of wire embedded in the surface of the road. When a car (which has a lot of metal in it) rolls over these coils of wire, it becomes part of the circuit which then tells the control box that a car has arrived. (By the way, some very small motorbikes do not have enough metal to set off the more insensitive inductive loops. This is why you occasionally see riders jumping off their motorbikes to press the 'walk' button.) The 'walk' button is the most common input switch. However, most city traffic lights can accept an override command from the Traffic Control Centre, e.g., to give a continuous set of green lights for ambulances, fire engines or VIPs.

**Press All You Like** In New York City the traffic lights are being increasingly controlled by computers, the buttons are becoming obsolete. Fewer than 20% feed signals to the control boxes while the remaining 80% are empty props. In Sydney's Central Business District, the buttons have no effect between 7.00 am and 7.00 pm Monday to Wednesday and 7.00 am to 9.00 pm Thursday to Saturday. However, they do work outside these hours, including all day Sunday. The rationale is that during busy periods the road traffic is relatively constant and the pedestrian crossings are in continuous use. However, Howard Scruby, executive director of the Pedestrian Council of Australia, said that the pedestrian phases were too short and that handicapped and elderly people found it impossible to cross the road before the red light appeared.

**Too Cool** A large group of pedestrians accumulate at a traffic light. The first person to arrive doesn't press the button because they don't realize that it's necessary. And the later arrivals don't press the button because they think that it has already been pressed. What will happen? If the buttons are wired into the control circuit, the lights will not turn green for the pedestrians. So don't be too cool to press.

**Timing** You have probably noticed that when you press the Walk button, the lights sometimes change almost immediately, but sometimes there's a delay of a few minutes. The long delays usually occur in rush hour when a timing program kicks in. There is a reason for this. It is better to keep one pedestrian waiting rather than hundreds of cars travelling in or out of town. However, it is important to note that it takes only one stab of your finger on the button to set the process going. Pressing it once or a hundred times will not make any difference to the control circuit. It's exactly the same with the call button on an elevator - one single press is all that you need. (Traffic authorities in the UK used to have a system that counted these 'button pushes' to regulate the pedestrian waiting time. But it was discontinued.) In general, people vastly overestimate the amount of time that they spend waiting at traffic lights and elevators. Even if the wait is just a few seconds, it feels like a minute. Of course, some people claim that the buttons are just there merely to trick the ignorant and taunt the wise, and have no effect at all because they are not even wired into the circuit. They are convinced that the green light or the elevator always follows a timing program and appears when the control program dictates. They reckon that these buttons are just a modern mechanical placebo, designed to placate the hyperactive people in our society.

**The Button** During the Cold War, the two most powerful men in the USA and the USSR were the men with 'the finger on the button' - the button that would unleash a nuclear catastrophe on the other side.

**Shabbat Elevator = No Buttons** In the book of Exodus 31: 12-17, God tells Moses how important the Jewish Sabbath (Shabbat) is: 'Keep the Sabbath as something sacred to you. Anyone doing work shall be cut off spiritually from his people, and therefore, anyone violating it shall be put to death. Do your work during the six week days, but keep Saturday as a Sabbath of Sabbaths, holy to God' There are 39 activities that are forbidden on the Sabbath, these are broken into the broad categories of baking bread, making garments, making leather and building a house. Number 37 forbids the igniting of a fire, and this is the category that covers elevators. (Elevators run on electricity, and electricity is a kind of fire.) For this reason Orthodox Jews, i.e. those who adhere strictly to Jewish law, can use only a special Shabbat elevator on the Sabbath. It operates following a preset clock, and is not influenced by the passengers in any way. It stutters its way slowly up and down the building, stopping at each floor a preset time, and automatically opening and closing the doors without any interventions required by the passengers. Another common human behavior involving button pressing is playing poker machines. There is a link to rat behavior experiments here. A group of psychologists who were studying rats that were pressing levers in the hope of getting food made an interesting finding. When they increased the time of the food delivery, the rats responded by pressing the levers less frequently. The psychologists believed that this finding might help solve the issue of problem gamblers addicted to poker machines. They suggested increasing the time delay between payouts. However, the gambling industry objected, presumably on the grounds that it would probably work.



From DR.Karl Kruszelnicki's book of the same name.

## LOCAL - GEOLOGICAL CONGRESS



The week from 16th to 20th January saw this country's first ever International Geological Congress taking place at the Mercado Lama. Opened by President Horta it brought together geological experts from Australia, the United Kingdom, and Portugal to present papers on their latest geological studies here in Timor. Supported by SERN, the Energy and Natural Resources Ministry, this was a showcase of all the latest understanding of what makes Timor tick geologically!

The event also marked the launching of a new Geology and Petroleum Course offered by the University here, in association with the University of Evora in Portugal. Hundreds of young students from Dili university, Dili Institute of Technology and many of the local high schools created an interested, attentive and actively participating audience throughout the week. Of real significance were the many papers presented by the new cohort of young Timorese geologists now working here after their studies overseas.

