



Whose Rules Are Your Sons Following?

What passes for being “the man” today is an insult to the legacy of great men whose truly high moral standard once set the bar on what it meant to be a man.

Today’s boys live in a culture that judges their manhood on how athletic they are, how “good” they are with girls, how “funny” they are and as they grow older, how much money they make. This is pathetically shallow and evokes profound insecurity and confusion in boys. In fact, the most common issue boys share with me in private, is how hard it is to find true male friends due to the endless competition, teasing and pressure they put on another and do to one another. Very few of them have anyone whom they trust completely. *Many of today’s boys - even those who on the outside are popular - are in fact lonely and disconnected.*

I was in Washington DC a few weeks ago and spent an afternoon wandering around The National Mall. Monuments to Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, FDR, Teddy Roosevelt & George Washington surround Memorials honoring the soldiers who fought for the US in WWI, WWII, Vietnam & Korea. I’ve never heard anyone praise these men for how many touchdowns they scored, girls they hooked up with, people they could insult and wealth they hoarded. The words “courage, service, integrity, self-educated, Faithful” are typically the qualities most commonly used to describe them.

The contrast between those standards and the popularly accepted standards of today are so dramatic as to be unfathomable!

They lead many parents to find themselves in a battle against hidden enemies of modern society that compete to corrupt the values of our youth and convert them into self-absorbed, shallow users and consumers. Many even battle to get their kids to take school seriously as these sons score many more points socially for being funny in class, than they ever will for being perceived as smart by their teachers. Being short sighted, as teens tend to be already, only further exacerbates this dilemma. That so little of what is taught in school has even the slightest relevance to their lives now or in the future certainly doesn’t help.

This has become the norm in our society. Those who do not subscribe to these standards and these values are the exception. This puts extraordinary pressure on boys who are different and extreme odds against others becoming different.



**So, whose rules are your sons following?
Who defines what it means to them to “win”?**

Here are a number of these “rules” masquerading as truth, and then the truth that the wisdom of the ages seems to consistently teach:

A Few Of The Rules Modern Boys Follow	The “Rules” Life Teaches Through The School of Hard-Knocks (and that I teach them in my practice)
If a girl will do something sexual with you, do it	Anything worth having is worth waiting for... Thousands of years of true love stories teach this, because it reflects what it takes to build true intimacy. It is always nobler to go at one’s own pace, than to rush at someone else’s.
When there is the opportunity to get a laugh, take it, regardless of whose expense it comes at..	A real friend always honors and respects other’s dignity. They always consider the impact they have on others and act to ensure it is positive. When it isn’t they take responsibility to repair things, if they still can. Ultimately guys who act this way are the ONLY ones anyone really trusts
If it feels good, try it sometime	If you have any doubt about it - even the slightest amount - say “NO”! <i>Better safe than sorry.</i>
If a teacher sucks, it’s further evidence that life is unfair	If a teacher sucks, it is your responsibility to do something about it so that you can learn/get what you want.
The faster you can get it done, the better	How slow are you willing to go to get it right? It takes years to become excellent at something, and typically 20 years minimum to develop mastery.
Looking good, being perceived as confident and cool is critical	Better to build a shack with a deep, rock solid foundation than to build a mansion built of hay. <i>A shack may get knocked over but the foundation is already there to rebuild upon... the mansion of hay becomes cow food.</i>
Adults are out of touch, often becoming obstacles to avoid and/or “put-up” with... The only cool ones are the ones who are more like “friends”	True Adults are the keepers of the knowledge and wisdom you need to be happy and fulfilled in your life. Finding the right ones to bond with and learn from is critical to happiness and personal success

It was never meant for parents to raise their kids to adulthood on their own. It was always the role of community - especially of wise elders - to help ensure boys become young men of true character: who have humility, discipline, moral responsibility and a deep sense of value. Given the pervasive negativity and global trouble we now face, the need for boys to hear these messages, learn these lessons and have the critical experiences it takes to truly learn them, has never been greater. The personal, emotional, psychological and spiritual health of this generation depends upon it.

Jeffrey Leiken, MA offers Sophisticated & Innovative REAL-LIFE Training and Mentoring for adolescents & young adults around the world. The kids he works with consistently become personally successful, confident, deeply fulfilled adults. Contact him to learn more about his services.