

What Are the Rules of Being a Gentleman?

I've been thinking often, for the past eight months, on what being a gentleman requires and means. Oddly, as a men's blog, we've yet to write specifically on being a gentleman. Many guys have big goals and focus points on what they want to change about their lives.

Many of these thoughts on being a gentleman may seem redundant or rudimentary to you. Many are inspired by the simple observation of what many men are—and are not—doing. Being a gentleman is more than distinguished style or elegant talk. It's the best mix of your character, treating others well and presenting yourself as a man others want to follow. A big shout-out goes to Effortless Gent for much of the inspiration for this.

Ladies and gents, if you've got more thoughts to add to the rules for always being a gentleman, please leave them in the comments below.

Chivalry Isn't Dead

It may seem like it, so you'll need to revive it. This not only applies to the lady in your life, but also to other people you meet. Going out of your way to treat people well is important. Carrying yourself in an accommodating and "serving" way is rare and valuable, and it will make you stand out.

Here's what you can do: Open the door for people. Holding the door open for an old lady or a young man still makes you stand out as a gentleman. Go out of your way to be considerate of people.

Talk Gooder

Being a gentleman is more than cleaning up the cursing. It's

also about sounding intelligent without coming off as arrogant. We each have our own unique style and personal vernacular, but improving and expanding your vocabulary will make you into a better communicator. The ability to paint elaborate pictures in your acquaintance's minds is a sought-after trait.

Find What You're Willing to Die For

Don't go through life living only for today or tomorrow. Find an aim bigger than money. Seek out a purpose—like a better relationship with God—and run hard after it. I find that people I respect as gentlemen have something to live for.

Improve Your Recognition of Social Cues

Whether or not you're a social butterfly doesn't mean you can't improve. People that are extremely introverted sometimes need to take pause and read social cues. Am I stepping on anyone's toes or making people feel left out? Do I move from one person/group to another so fast that people think my substance is paper thin?

If you're of the more chill temperament, it doesn't mean you can't grow. My name, Todd, in Middle English (spoken about 1,000 years ago) means "the watcher," "watchful one" or "the fox." I actually consider myself by nature a more reserved person. But by observing others' social cues, I've been able to pick up on how to interact with a wide array of people. Most people, upon first meeting me, would think I'm pretty extroverted, whereas I'm pretty introverted to the core.

People who are awkward or come off as rude have one core problem in my mind—and it's not that they aren't able to be cool people. It's that they think of themselves and are absorbed in their own world so much that they don't listen and pay attention to people's words and body language. Learning what people mean by more than what they say will help you go further in your friendships and professionally.

Be Quick to Forgive

A man who is slow to forgive is ... well, less of a man. Be quick to show mercy. Give people grace for mistakes. Be understanding. Show compassion. Don't have a heavy hand with your kids or other family members.

Say "No" More

People respect someone who knows what they want—and what they don't. Saying no makes your yes mean so much more.

If you haven't learned to say no, you might be living as a Yes Man. Who wants to be that guy? Especially when you are so overcommitting yourself, you're known as a flake? If you find yourself saying yes to overextending yourself, it's time to summon the will to say no.

Say "Yes" More

If you're afraid of commitment, it's time to take the dive and start giving more of yourself to people. Whether that's saying yes to helping a friend move, just getting out more, spending more time with friends or gaining different experiences, it might be time to step out into the wild a little more.

Say "Hello" More

We admire people who exude confidence and aren't afraid to reach out and connect with people. Saying hello to a stranger you rub shoulders with on the train, in an office or at the grocery store is a great way to increase your social skills—and meet new people.

Have you ever wanted to introduce yourself to a cute girl in the most random of places? If you're not in the rhythm of shooting from the hip and building rapport with random strangers, it's gonna be hard to summon that off-the-cuff confidence to get talkative with a hot stranger.

Practice saying hello and showing yourself friendly. You'll be surprised by some of the cool people you'll meet along the way.

Expand Your Experiences

Expanding your experiences and where you've been gives you great stories as you grow in being a gentleman. Growing more cultured widens your understanding of the world—and others—and helps you to be less assuming or quick to judge.

And it's always nice to tell people about that one time you jumped off a moving train in India. (Yep. True story.)

Being a Gentleman

This is only the beginning on our path to being a gentleman.

Improving yourself doesn't happen overnight. It's a great aim to look better, talk well and dress sharper. But making yourself into a better man is more than just improving the physical details. It's about cultivating your core. Find what you're passionate about and run after it.

Find who you want to become and chase it. Find out where in your character you're deficient and work on it. Let's face our fears and grow into better men this year.

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