

Cataloging Your Inner Rules

We all have rules that guide our behavior on a daily basis. We might not be able to clearly articulate all of them, but they hang around in our subconscious and nudge us towards behavior that is consistent with them. Many of these rules might be good (e.g., “Good people don’t badmouth others behind their back”) but some of them might not be adaptive or helpful (e.g., “If you make one mistake, you are a bad person”). Use this worksheet to help you identify a questionable or harmful rule you have and challenge it.

The Infraction		
What did you do that broke one of your internal rules?		
The Rule		
What rule did your behavior break? Why did you feel bad after engaging in that behavior?		
The Rule’s Origins		
Where did it come from? What makes you think the rule is right, or a good rule?		
Advantages of Keeping This Rule	Disadvantages of Keeping This Rule	
How does this rule <i>help</i> you?	How does this rule <i>hurt</i> you?	
What to Do with This Rule:		
Keep It	Trash It	Modify It
The Rule Going Forward		
What is the best possible version of this rule?		