











The Problems with Rules

-  **RULES ARE EXTERNAL**
They are made by others. They present us with a puzzle to be solved and loopholes to be found.
-  **WE ARE AMBIVALENT ABOUT RULES**
We know we need some and we want others to play by them, but we say, “Rules are meant to be broken.”
-  **RULES ARE REACTIVE**
They respond to past events.
-  **RULES ARE BOTH OVER- AND UNDERINCLUSIVE**
Because they are proxies, they cannot be precise.
-  **PROLIFERATION OF RULES IS A TAX ON THE SYSTEM**
Few people can remember them all. We lose productivity when we stop to look them up.
-  **RULES ARE TYPICALLY PROHIBITIONS**
They speak to *can* and *can't*. We view them as confining and constricting.
-  **RULES REQUIRE ENFORCEMENT**
With laxity, they lose credibility and effectiveness. They necessitate expensive bureaucracies of compliance.
-  **RULES SPEAK TO BOUNDARIES AND FLOORS BUT CREATE INADVERTENT CEILINGS**
We can't legislate “The sky's the limit.”
-  **THE ONLY WAY TO HONOR RULES IS TO OBEY THEM EXACTLY**
They speak to coercion and motivation. The inspiration to excel must come from somewhere else.
-  **TOO MANY RULES BREEDS OVERRELIANCE**
We think, “If it mattered, they would have made a rule.”