

“There is nothing noble in being superior to our fellow man; true nobility is being superior to your former self.” – Ernest Hemingway

★ RULE 1

Realize that nobody owes you nuttin’. Not only does no one owe you anything, you owe the world everything. Once you accept this truth, you will be forever free to pursue your future as you wish.

It’s never too late to start.

Most of us grew up under the watchful eye of our mothers. We quickly learned some simple rules in “her” house. “I’m not your maid.” “Get your butt in here, now!” “Elbows off the table.” “Don’t do anything stupid.” And, “Nobody owes you nuttin’.” If you wanted to eat breakfast, have a cookie, or have fun outside with your friends, you first had to follow the rules and do a few chores. This included helping do the laundry, clearing out wasp nests (my favorite), making the bed, taking out the trash, and sweeping the house. Both boys and girls, no one was exempt, and there were high expectations. You followed the rules, or else! There were no safe spaces or trophies for trying. You quickly learned to follow the rules.

“Realize that nobody owes you nuttin’” is one of the most valuable rules of life because it sets the conditions for everything else we do. Orient yourself to this idea and your world will instantly look brighter. You can only be free if you give up on the idea that people owe you something. It may seem corny to point this out, but there is no free lunch. Someone pays. Most of us have figured this out; taking a handout makes you beholden. I didn’t like that one bit, and neither should you.

We are bombarded with television, movies, and social media that tell us we are worthy people and entitled to live a prosperous, healthy, and wonderful life where we are beautiful, have great careers, get free education, and have a low-stress, comfortable life. Unfortunately, they are teaching us terrible life lessons. And not only are they wrong, but they are helping create a generation of people who are routinely disappointed and unhappy because they didn’t get what they “deserved.”

Politicians are first in line to tell us that we are owed something just because. Just because we are alive, or we are citizens, or we meet their definition of a particular victim group. We are told if you want it, you should have it. It’s your right, they tell us. It’s a fact that all those folks who line up to get their goodies will inevitably leave disappointed.

This disappointment turns to bitterness and resentment. Those same people who tell us we are entitled are the ones who also tell us we are victims and now deserve some form of government assistance or compensation for the unfairness of life. That pity party never stops, and the results are awful; high suicide rates, increased crime, random muggings and violence against people. Bitterness and resentment are a negative feedback loop that repeats without end.

Count your blessings. People don't owe you a lovely home, an education, fashionable clothes, a modern cell phone, good health, or immunity from tragedy. And it's a good thing that is not so. Perhaps our government does owe us some level of blind justice and safety, but it is up to us all to work hard together to bring this about as a reality. My cousin Billy (not his real name) still believes the government is chalked full of experts who have all the answers. After High School, he moved into his grandmom's trailer. One day, this little muscle-free child adult, sporting the obligatory mullet haircut, asked with tears in his eyes and a choking voice, "The gubmint, they take care of youse, right?" It's an infectious attitude, and there is no honorable life relying on the government. Billy still lives in a trailer.

Nobody owes you nuttin'.