

Rules

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A.S. I hope you don't mind that this essay is typed. I know it was to be written on a foolscap page but I prefer typing, it's neater. Whereas my handwriting can be very messy at times, I have been trying to improve since last year. I've stopped writing in cursive and started writing in print. It's far easier to read in my opinion, although it can be an awful lot slower. Typing however has the best of both worlds, you have the speed of writing in cursive and the tidiness of print. I promise you that this essay is NOT plagiarised off of the internet. I'll write six pages if I'm allowed to type. Okay? Also, you may find a small story hidden in this essay, quite near the start. In fact, the majority of my essay is made out of short stories. Don't worry, you may skip them and read the boring bits that are somewhere in there. I'm sure you'll find them.

Now onto rules, rules are very important in all aspects of life. There are rules everywhere in this community, the roads, home, family, religion, school and social clubs. Without rules, everyone would do whatever they wanted to do. I could be walking down the street, only to be attacked by someone who would feel no consequences of his action. Everyone would be walking around engaging in foul and abusive language. People would run riot. It would be a complete disaster. This is why we have rules. Remember that person a few sentences back who attacked me? Well, he'd be in awful trouble with the law. Maybe they'll even lock him/her in a prison for the vast majority of his/her life. At last, I can walk down the street and not be randomly attacked by someone. Rules are good, most of the time. The rule mightn't have prevented that random individual from attacking but it sure did prevent him from doing so in the future.

Allow me to think of another example where rules are used. Aha! It all starts in a perfectly ordinary religion class. It's Monday. Bob is feeling good about himself; he has just posted an essay off to a writing competition which he had worked hard on all weekend. Bob hadn't gotten much homework yet, so he was looking forward to

spending a nice relaxing evening at home. Bob was especially happy this particular day as Bob had gotten a note in his journal. Not a bad one, oh no, but a good note on how he had reached his merit point target, how he is an excellent student and a positive influence on the class. Bob was listening to the teacher attentively. The topic was leadership. Bob didn't fancy himself much of a leader because he wasn't very good at talking to people and could be very easily manipulated. If he was a leader, he would be a good one, Bob thought of how he could motivate the group to go above and beyond their target and surpass all odds.

Ding! There goes the bell, Bob gathered his belongings and continued out of class. As he walked into his Higher Level Irish class, Bob handed his application for the Ghaeltacht to the teacher. Bob was good at Irish but wanted to be better. He saw this as an opportunity to learn more Irish and broaden his vocabulary.

Knock! Knock! "Is anyone here in class Heaney?" Bob put his hand up and followed his classmates all the way back up to room three. He has a bad feeling about this. Someone had thrown rubbish all over the ground on the opposite side off the room from where Bob had been sitting. Bob was brought into the classroom, looked at the rubbish and left the room awkwardly. He hadn't been in trouble before and wasn't quite sure how to act. He worried about the way he walked, was it a little bit intimidating or maybe it was too fast or just a little too slow? Anyway, Bob didn't mind, he had nothing to do with it, nothing could possibly go wrong.

"A five-page essay" Bob's heart sank down to the very floor. No, how could this be? After all this time? Bob just wanted to have a relaxing evening. His sadness turned to pure anger, hatred. He almost went completely over the top, *and Bob never goes over the top*. Bob spent the entire day planning his essay; this wasn't going to be a normal essay. Bob was going to do what he had never even considered doing before. His essay would be a protest, it would be a rebellion, Bob would give into his dark side and pour the very nature of his soul into this essay. It would be fantastic. Bob stopped, he felt different, this wasn't right, nothing was right, this wasn't how Bob usually felt. I wasn't necessarily bad, just different.

“Ahem, could Heaney class go to room three at four o’ clock please” Bob plodded to room three. He heaved his bag off his shoulders and set it down onto the ground. “No five-page essay” Bob practically leaped with joy. He would be able to *relax*. Bob skipped out of school that day and trotted home. Bob relaxed before studying for a history test for about an hour. Life was good. Bob was happy.

The class received no punishment other than having to clean up room three every lunchtime for the next two weeks. Bob thought that was fair. He was back to his old self. Two boys in the class were given the job of writing out a rota for the clean-up. Bob didn’t think that they were going to do it. He decided that for the entire two weeks, he would go into room three every day and clean up the classroom. “Better safe than sorry” Bob thought as he straightened a table before restoring it to its former position, he didn’t want to make anything too tidy. Maybe the tables were organised like that for a reason.

It was Friday. Bob gets a chicken roll from the canteen every Friday and he was starving. After his music test, Bob walked as fast as he could to the canteen but he didn’t run. Bob didn’t want to break the rules. He was near the start of the queue. A person walked past him, Bob asked him to go to the back of the line. He was feeling confident after just getting an excellent result in the music test. The person walked to the back of the line. Bob felt proud.

Bob ate his chicken roll, it was nice. So nice in fact that he forgot to clean up room three. Bob realised just as he sat down in Irish. After his mini panic attack, Bob was interviewed about why he wanted to go to the Ghaeltacht. He found the questions very easy but was worried sick about the fact that he hadn’t cleaned up room three.

Bob sat down in History. He began to calm down, everything would be fine. He was sure the room couldn’t be that bad. Could it? Oh no, the door opened. Bob wanted to curl up into a little ball and never come back out again. He sat in his seat, looking solemn and serious. “A five-page essay” Bob slumped into his chair. “No, not now, not ever, now” Bob slowly began his descent into insanity. “About rules and why they exist” Well now, Bob knew lots of stuff about rules. Rules were good. They stopped random people from attacking him on the street.

Bob went home. He told his parents that he had been given a five-page essay after they presented him with a letter from the school praising his perfect attendance. They said that he shouldn't do it and Bob didn't want to. He had done nothing wrong and had in fact, taken up part of his valuable lunchtime cleaning up a mess that he had never made. Why should he have to write an essay about rules? Bob already knew how rules worked. He wanted to enjoy his weekend and he would.

Bob had an excellent idea while he was practising his piano. Bob would *enjoy* writing his essay. He could enjoy his weekend and be punished for something that he had nothing to do with. Perfect. Bob scurried up to his computer and started typing. He liked typing; it was easier to read although he was trying to improve his writing. Bob wrote about rules and how they stop people from attacking him on the street. He then had another genius idea. He would rewrite the events of the entire week and twist it into being about rules. Bob was enjoying his essay. He was writing his essay because he had apparently broken some rules. Bob got really into writing his essay. He looked at the clock. By God, how time flies when you're having fun. It was quarter to one in the morning. Bob had been writing for a solid two hours.

Bob came to the only logical conclusion. Bob broke rules. He had to write an essay. He loved writing essays; therefore Bob came to the only logical conclusion. If he broke more rules, he could write more essays. He would never stop; he would do six pages when he only needed to do five. Bob was going to start breaking all the rules. Bob would never stop writing essays. It was his life, the only thing he has ever known, the only thing he will ever know. Bob's fingers were sore. He grew weary but continued writing. "It's so late, why aren't you in bed" his parents cried. Bob kept on writing. Bob lived happily ever after; he lived a life of rule-breaking, breaking just enough rules to have excuses to write more essays but not quite enough to have anything serious actually happen. Life was good.

Bob was happy

Bob learned a valuable lesson in that story; he learned that rules were a good thing. Without rules to break, Bob had no essays to write. Rules were a good thing. They changed Bob's life for the better. He became isolated from his friends and family.

His school grades plunged. But he was happy. He loved writing. If the teacher didn't like his essay then so be it. He would get to write another one.

This was my second example of why rules are good. They truly can turn someone's life around. Let's take a look at a considerably shorter story about why rules and punishments can be not necessarily bad thing but an occasionally ineffective technique.

"Five-page essay" Jim grunted. He said and I quote "I ain't doing no essay" Jim went home. He spent the evening defacing public property and engaging in disruptive behaviour. Jim didn't care about rules. He broke them all the time being a typical rebellious teenager. Jim never did his homework. He just got the answers off Bob every day. Bob gave him the answers because he had a slightly creepy obsession with not breaking rules. He didn't like giving Jim the homework but he's easily manipulated.

Jim looked at the test. He scribbled a small scribble onto the page and handed it up. Jim didn't care about tests, he didn't care about anything. Jim walked into Religion. He flung a couple of Tayto packets onto the floor. As the class went on, he ripped apart a slice of bread and deposited the crusts onto the floor also. Jim didn't care.

Jim was called to room three. Someone wasn't happy. "Five-page essay" the teacher bellowed. Jim grunted "I ain't doing no five-page essay" Jim's life went on. Undisturbed by the punishment which was clearly intended for him and not the rest of the class Jim continued breaking all of the rules. Jim didn't care.

Jim was called to room three. "No five-page essay" Jim sighed, he had to write a rota for cleaning the room as punishment. Jim wasn't bothered. Jim didn't care.

"Five-page essay" Jim didn't care. Someone else should have cleaned the room that day. Jim wasn't doing an essay. He just didn't care.

Jim was forced to do the essay by his parents. God only knows how they found out about it. He sat down and began scribbling on his page. He got into terrible trouble on Monday and was expelled. Jim's whole future was ruined. Did he care? No, he most certainly did not.

Jim didn't care

In Jim's case, rules and punishments didn't change him. They didn't improve his life or teach him anything. He just didn't care. Jim was probably quite depressed as his attitude towards school cannot be described as a good one. I can tell you that much. Rules weren't bad; they were only trying to do their jobs. Rules just didn't suit Jim and that's okay. Maybe he should have been given a second chance. Maybe someone could have shown him how to care. Rules could not help Jim.

P.S. Well, here we are now. It's half one in the morning and I think I've gotten my point across. I believe I was to write five pages but wrote just over six. Hope you liked it. It was quite fun to write and a nice way to spend Friday night after a hard week at school. We should do this more often.

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