Bill Gates' 11 Rules of Life

Netlore Archive: Circulating via email, the text of a speech allegedly given by Bill Gates in which he sets out 11 rules for life that kids won't learn in school.

Description: Viral text / Forwarded email
Circulating since: Feb. 2000
Status: Falsely attributed to Bill Gates (see details below)

2012 example:
As posted in an online forum, Aug. 4, 2012:

![Image of the 11 Rules of Life poster]

Rule 1: Life is not fair - get used to it!
Rule 2: The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself.
Rule 3: You will NOT make $60,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice-president with a car phone until you earn both.
Rule 4: If you think your teacher is tough, wait till you get a boss.
Rule 5: Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your Grandparents had a different word for burger flipping: they called it opportunity.
Rule 6: If you mess up, it's not your parent's fault, so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them.
Rule 7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you thought you were. So before you save the rain forest from, the parasites of your parent's generation, try deep cleaning the closet in your own room.
Rule 8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life HAS NOT. In some schools, they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as MANY TIMES as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.
Rule 9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you FIND YOURSELF. Do that on your own time...
Rule 10: Television is NOT real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shops and go to jobs.
Rule 11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one.

IF YOU AGREE, PASS IT ON. IF YOU CAN READ THIS - THANK A TEACHER!
2003 example:
Email contributed by Sarah C., July 12, 2003:

BILL GATES' SPEECH TO MT. WHITNEY HIGH SCHOOL in Visalia, California.

Love him or hate him, he sure hits the nail on the head with this!

To anyone with kids of any age, here's some advice. Bill Gates recently gave a speech at a High School about 11 things they did not and will not learn in school. He talks about how feel-good, politically correct teachings created a generation of kids with no concept of reality and how this concept set them up for failure in the real world.

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Rule 3: You will NOT make $60,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice-president with a car phone until you earn both.

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Rule 5: Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your Grandparents had a different word for burger flipping -- they called it opportunity.

Rule 6: If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them.

Rule 7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you thought you are. So before you save the rain forest from the parasites of your parent's generation, try delousing the closet in your own room.

Rule 8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life HAS NOT. In some schools they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as MANY TIMES as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.

Rule 9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you FIND YOURSELF. Do that on your
own time.

Rule 10: Television is NOT real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.

Rule 11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one.

Analysis

Even though you may regard the above as a much-needed dose of realism, the main thing you need to know is that former Microsoft chairman Bill Gates neither wrote those words nor delivered them in a speech to high school students, or anyone else. Bill Gates did not write it or say it.

As frequently happens when texts are repeatedly copied and shared over time, something written by one person has come to be attributed to another. In this case, the text is a version of a text written by education reformer Charles J. Sykes, best known as the author of *Dumbing Down Our Kids: Why American Children Feel Good about Themselves, but Can’t Read, Write, or Add*. The text was originally published in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* in September 1996. It began making the email rounds under Bill Gates’ name in February 2000, and has continued to do so ever since.

Discuss

1. Have you seen this text on the internet? When and where?
2. Is it important or not to know that Bill Gates’ didn’t write the text?
3. What do you think of the content?