

A Few Unspoken Rules that Possibly Shape your Business Family Life

1. Confusion Rule	No dominant definition of what is the real problem - and defining it is part of the ongoing battle.
2. Dependency Rule	Reliance on [Dad, Mom, Sibling, Cousin..] is required to receive his/her approval.
3. Loophole Rule	Things that could produce change evoke immediate threats.
4. Distraction Rule	Any attempt to focus gets derailed by other problems.
5. Entitlement Rule	Attempts by anyone to take away divine right privileges, influence and rewards are met with hostility and/or avoidance.
6. Pessimism Rule	Anything that might make things better is rejected on the grounds that it has already been tried.
7. "Golden" Rule	Dad [Mom, Sibling, Cousin...] controls the "gold" and makes the rules.
8. Ambush Rule	Attempts to connect and share are confused with provocative and confrontational interventions under the guise of ...helping [and is sometimes combined with a seagull management style].
9. Past Rule	Attempts to deal with current problems are defeated by assumptions that the "real" problem is in the past.
10. Identity Rule	The business consumes my life, no matter how hard I attempt to change it.
11. Enmeshed Rule	Attempts to separate contribution, management and ownership are met with resistance because it's too personal.
12. Lifer Rule	No one receives their legacy prior to death - if they do [see entitlement rule], then there are strings attached.
13. Success Rule	If the business is successful then I must have innate talent.
14. Closeness Rule	It is unsafe to get close emotionally so fighting maintains the required safe distance to protect my needs, priorities and me.
15. Wellness Rule	Maladaptive and destructive behaviours are allowed to thrive privately in an attempt to maintain stature in the community.
16. Knowledge Rule	Decisions should rest with only one person and its OK to act independently even though it adversely affects everyone.
17. Leadership Rule	The top job is linked to male share ownership and is maintained by a sustained determination to isolate would-be competitors.

18. Altruistic Rule	Use "the golden rule" with everyone but family members.
19. Harmony Rule	Any attempt to sustain harmony is countered by habitual anger.
20. "My Way" Rule	Little attempt is made for permission, and apology and forgiveness is not easily performed.
21. Power Rule	Any attempt to make things better or change is seen as an attempt to gain control over others and is resisted.
22. Rigidity Rule	Attempts to consider alternate ways of acting and/or doing are rejected as inappropriate.
23. Sacrifice Rule	My life is my work in order that the family may benefit.