

Colin Powell's rules to live by



Few men in politics have been admired by both sides of the aisle. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell is one such man. In his memoir, he offers up rules to live by. A few of them:

- 1. It ain't as bad as you think.** Try to keep your optimism, no matter how difficult things get. "Things will get better," he writes. "You will make them better."
- 2. Get mad, then get over it.**
- 3. Try not to let your ego become too entangled with your position.** Also, loyalty means disagreeing strongly, but executing faithfully.
- 4. Don't let adverse facts stand in the way of a good decision.** Leadership often requires leaning on superb instinct.
- 5. You can't make someone else's choices,** and you shouldn't let someone else make yours. "Since ultimate responsibility is yours, make sure the choice is yours and you are not responding to the pressure and desire of others," he writes.
- 6. Success ultimately rests on small things.** "Leaders have to have a feel for small things—a feel for what is going on in the depths of an organization where small things reside."
- 7. Share credit, because people need recognition just as they need food and water.** "Share the credit, take the blame, and quietly find out and fix things that went wrong," Powell writes. "Whenever you place the cause of one of your actions outside yourself, it's an excuse and not a reason."
- 8. Remain calm.** In the heat of the battle—whether military or corporate—kindness and calmness will reassure followers.
- 9. Have vision.**
- 10. Learn to be aware when fear grips you.** If we don't understand that "fear is normal and has to be controlled and overcome, it will paralyze us and stop us in our tracks," Powell writes. "We will no longer think clearly or analyze rationally. We prepare for it and control it; we never let it control us. If it does, we cannot lead."
- 11. Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier.**

— Adapted from *It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership*, Colin Powell.