

# **The Seven Laws of Highly Miserable People**

**The essential guide to leading a powerfully  
dysfunctional life**

**by Ann Swanberg ©**

*The reviews are in for...*

## **The Seven Laws of Highly Miserable People**

**"Through the grace of Ann's writing I found the courage to reclaim the correct spelling of my name."**

--Orpah Winfey

**"This book taught me self-love. Now I don't have Richard Nixon to kick around anymore."**

--Richard Nixon

**"Ripping through page after page, I jumped with the joyous abandon of a three-year-old."**

--Tommy Sanguini, age three

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## **Introduction**

You've read 83 books telling you how to create love, meaningful work, and great sex in your life. Aren't you tired of trying to do it right? Enough self-help already. It's time to embrace self-helplessness! Taking charge of your life is a big job. Why not let your fear do it? This tiny booklet contains simple, painful techniques for maintaining the alarming dysfunction in your life. All aboard the Pain Train!

## LAW 1

### IGNORE THE WISDOM OF THE BODY

To retain your powerfully miserable state you must commit to shutting yourself off from your body. Things to watch for and prevent: emotions, physical sensations, intuition, and dreams. In other words, all internal correspondence. The problem is that truth (the aforementioned natural flow of information from your body to your consciousness) cannot be stopped. The good news is that *it can be painfully avoided for a long time*. By understanding that your body is not designed to lie, you can commit to doing it yourself.

For example, if your gut tells you, "No!" to something that someone asks of you, simply let your eyes glaze over, open your mouth and say "Yes! Sure! Great!" Ignoring your body takes focus and willpower. Therefore you must cultivate and practice daily avoidance techniques to keep yourself safe from the joy of aliveness. Common favorites:

1. a. Eat.
  - b. Notice you're full.
  - c. Ignore that.
  - d. Eat more.
2. Exercise on a machine, like a machine, whenever you have unscheduled time.
3. Smile vacantly when someone says or does something you don't like.
4. TV. TV. TV.
5. Start an argument (great for avoiding vulnerability!)
6. Work. Work. Work.
7. And, last but not least, for those times when a life-changing truth does manage to sneak past your numbing strategies: Simply use your mind, or a bad friend, to *talk yourself out of it!*

Through exhausting personal research, this author has learned that the truth will always respond to avoidance techniques by getting stronger.

Affirmations are a great tool that can be used to engage your conscious will to override the wisdom of your faithful body. Each chapter concludes with powerful affirmations for you to repeat daily, as loudly as you can, in a public place (standing in line at the bank is good.)

### AFFIRMATIONS:

*I have the right to be on this miraculous planet and feel absolutely nothing*

*A good body is a numb body a good body is a numb body a....*

*Something really doesn't feel right...**nevermind!** Something really doesn't feel right...**nevermind!** Something really doesn't feel right...**nevermind!***

### BONUS:

"PANTING DOG BREATH":

1. Stand in front of a mirror in your tightest clothing.
2. Stop breathing.
3. When you can no longer hold your breath (*signs to look for: red face, bulging eyes, dizziness*) breathe in and out as quickly and shallowly as you can.
4. Faint.
5. Repeat.

## LAW 2

### PRESERVE A PAINFUL SELF-IMAGE

Underneath your controlling armor of self-criticism and habitual doubt, you will find a uniquely magnificent human being made of love. Better not go *there!* Sounds like a free-fall. Look, you created your false self-image decades ago in order to make sense of an overwhelming situation that was out of your control as a child. *So what* if you're an adult now and it's obsolete? Just because your world changes doesn't mean *you* have to. You have a right to *stay the same and then die.*

#### AFFIRMATIONS:

*I was, am, and always will be bad (even though I'm not quite sure why)*

*Every chance encounter is an opportunity to come up short*

*If I can just criticize myself well enough everything will be okay*

## LAW 3

### LEARN TO FORGIVE...NEVER

Forgiveness truly is the portal to grace. In order to keep it closed, remember that whenever someone has hurt you (especially a loved one) it is a statement about YOU. Forget your innate understanding that their actions were born of their own fear, and instead *weld their painful behavior to your own self-image forever*. (A lack of boundaries is essential to any quality dysfunctional tool kit!) Feed your fear of abandonment and hold fast to your decades-old pain -- *it* will never leave you! You are *not* powerless! If you are truly committed to maximizing suffering for yourself and others, then choose to forgive...*not*!

#### AFFIRMATIONS:

*Dammit, I'm a victim. Keep your hands off my identity!*

*If I can't control you with my pain, then what the heck are relationships for?*

*Tell it to the hand!*

## LAW 4

### CULTIVATE A CLOSED MIND

If you open your mind, your heart could be next. You don't want *that*, do you? Your self-destructive behaviors (that disconnect you from yourself, others, and a deep sense of peace) are depending on you to keep the false beliefs that hold them in place. Don't let them down. Keep your *mind firmly shut at all times to another point of view*, especially one that would allow you to feel good about yourself and enjoy another's company. For example, when you discuss important issues in your relationship, refuse to allow room for your partner's perception of reality to differ in any way from your own. This will ensure that you continue to create those "only room for one" arguments that are the cornerstone of boldly dysfunctional relationships.

. Your commitment to a closed mind allows you the luxury of never having to listen to a single word anyone else is saying. Be proud! *Wear earplugs* if you like. Just because it took millions of years to evolve a brain doesn't mean you have to use yours!

Added bonus: Heated arguing – with yourself or another -- gives you the illusion of passion in your life! It's the perfect (and clean) alternative to sex!

### AFFIRMATIONS

*If I see things as you do, even for a second, my head will fall off*

*My mind is a concrete slab my mind is a concrete slab my mind is a concrete slab*

*Evolution is fine, up to a point*

## LAW 5

### WIN THE POWER STRUGGLE!

We've all heard the term "passive-aggressive." Well, in the spirit of using our relationships as *opportunities to control*, why not perfect both of these behaviors – passive AND aggressive – for your powerful unhappiness? When you find yourself entering deep emotional territory with the person you want most in the world to be close to, ask yourself, "Would I rather be invisible today, or be a raging bull?" If you choose the "passive path" then simply regress to a pre-verbal state. Don't use your words. Let your mind become white noise. Be a million miles away. Go ahead and drool if you want to. If you go for "aggressive bull" then your words are your swords, use them sharply! Engage the miraculous human gift of imagination to see your loved one as a piece of bright red cloth and yourself as an enormous enraged bull (Distorted perception is an art!). Flare your nostrils if it helps. Remember, this is an opportunity for intimacy and that leads to love, which, as noted previously, will totally mess up your beloved illusion of control.

#### AFFIRMATIONS (Passive)

*This carpet needs cleaning*

*When we're done here, I'm going to make a sandwich*

*La la la la la la la la la la*

#### AFFIRMATIONS (Aggressive)

*I'm loud, I'm pissed, I'm right*

Note: These affirmations are best when repeated during conflict.

## LAW 6

### NIGHT-SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF

We all know what really matters in life. To be miserable you simply need to forget it. Take everything precious – your eyesight, the night sky, the loving people in your life – for granted. Don't smell roses and don't count your blessings, dis-count them. Anything good that occurs in your life can be made bad, and anything bad can be made worse, simply by *focusing your mind!* Using your mind to create all kinds of unnecessary suffering is the hallmark of a brazenly dysfunctional person. Keep yourself under the illusion that you can control things that you have no control over by running anxiety-producing scenarios in your mind day and night. Why have real relationships and experiences in your life when you can have scary fantasies in the safety of your own head?

### AFFIRMATIONS

*Gratitude, schmatitude*

*Seen one child's face, seen them all*

*Life's short, let's worry about it.*

*God grant me the power to obsess about the things I cannot change, the willpower to ignore the things I can, and the fear to totally obscure the difference.*

**LAW 7**

**HAVE NO SENSE OF HUMOR**

**AFFIRMATION**

*Life isn't funny and neither is this book.*

## **Postscript**

Okay, so I'm kidding. But you won't make it through all those other personal growth books and intense workshops without laughter. I'm serious.

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