

THE FIFTH RULE FOR LIFE

by Sally Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

Rule 5 from Bill Gates to teenagers:

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

This rule is similar to the sentiment in rule number three which indicates that you will NOT automatically fall out of College into a \$60,000 plus salaried job. You have to work up to it.

In today’s economic climate there is no room for a negative attitude about performing tasks for less pay than we might have got in an earlier job or think we are worth. My husband had a pay reduction of \$61.00 per day this year, but he kept the job because we have to live! Even if we have to do menial tasks for a season of time we should be prepared to do that so we can eke out a living. I have known people who flatly refuse to work any job that is not to their liking or at their level of expertise. Listen. Answer the question, “Do I want to go hungry, or do I want to swallow my pride and do what it takes to feed myself and/or my family. Yes or no? No buts! You would think the answer was obvious. We find this situation over and over again. After advising unemployed friends to just go and find ‘something’, they would rather moan and groan and cast themselves on the Government or rely on friends and family to prop them up.

Where do kids get such a negative attitude towards ‘flipping burgers’? I suggest that the root is the sense of entitlement that is fed to them from several sources. Kids who have been given much and have not been expected to pull their weight doing chores around the home develop the attitude that they are the center of the universe and that menial tasks are for other people...anyone else but them. They have never had to worry about any food supply or other resources so they have no sense of satisfaction in working towards achievement. They think success just mysteriously arrives in their lap.

If we are told from childhood that we are part of the strongest and greatest nation on earth, then it is very easy to fall into the trap of thinking we are invincible, that our ‘walls’ cannot be penetrated, and that we are totally protected. Wrong! Bad things happen to even the best people, so we need to teach our children strategies for managing threatening or stressful situations that are beyond our control. These might be situations such as not being able to get the job we want, losing a job, having to wait for what we want, coping with competition and coping with failure.

We need to encourage our children to see simple tasks as an opportunity to learn different skills and to appreciate how the little things make a big

difference to individuals as well as to the society around us. Imagine no burgers?

We need to teach our kids that menial tasks that don't pay well are still very worthwhile. We also need to show them that working for no money at all can be very satisfying. There is nothing wrong with being ambitious and teaching our kids to work hard for high salaries. It is just not a realistic expectation for many in the current economic climate.

There is a very important value in understanding that it is not always about us. It's not about what we want and how quickly we can get it. We need to be happy doing the little things because we will not always be in control of every situation.

We need to teach our kids to land on their feet, but more importantly to STAY on their feet no matter what it takes. Self-sufficiency needs to take the place of the term 'entitlement' in our society today. The Government or others don't owe us anything for lying around on pity-party blankets.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.