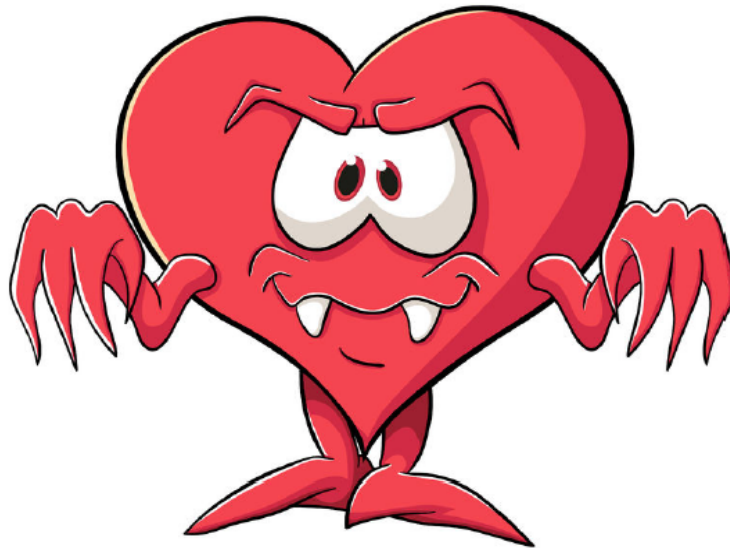


# Rules are your Friends

## A Gosmos Grow Adventure



A lot of you think of Rules as monsters,  
keeping you from doing the things you want to do.

**But Rules are really your friends.**

They keep you from doing things that might hurt you or others.

They keep you from doing things that will get you into trouble.

They make you do things that you don't want to do but are good for you.

They make you learn difficult things that will be important.

Once you get to know Rules and how helpful they are, you will realize that,

**Rules are your friend.**

# Rules are Your Friends Lesson Plan

## A. Main Focus:

**Accepting that rules are necessary and usually are the result of Good Thinking.**

## B. The Main Concepts:

It is typical for children to see rules as intrusive and as keeping them from doing things they want to do. But as the story points out, everyone has rules. They are designed to make our lives easier, safer and ultimately more fun.

This natural tendency, to see rules as the “enemy”, can be annoying in children but can be very dysfunctional and even criminal in adolescents and adults. This story is important for several reasons. First, adults spend too much time trying to enforce the rules, which are designed to make children’s lives easier. Eating a good diet and doing your homework will make children’s lives better in the long run but they don’t see it that way. Second, children can be influenced into doing things against their best self-interest, just because they are motivated by breaking a rule (seen as a good thing).

Someone who is a habitual rule breaker will find life very difficult. Learning that “Rules are your friends”, can allow them to give themselves permission to evaluate and accept “Good Thinking” rules, without negative consequences.

They will learn to determine and set “Good Thinking” rules for themselves, and increases their personal control of self (self-efficacy). Unfortunately, some children live in environments (their home) in which rules are arbitrary or not existent (the result of Stinky Thinking). They may assume that rules in other environments (school) are the same. This story can help modify some of that early life experience and begin to establish a more realistic and tolerant perception of rules.

You want to use this story to help the child understand that rules are designed to make their lives easier and safer. Most rules are the result of Good Thinking and it is in their best self-interest to obey rules all of the time, not just when it is convenient. Although this may seem relatively self-evident, all criminal behavior and much of socially unacceptable behavior is the result of disobeying a rule. One of the more difficult concepts for children and some adults to understand is that the negative consequences of "rule breaking" may occur far in the future. So it is important that they understand that "getting away with it", may be a short lived result.

### **C. Teach the Defining Terms to The Students**

### **D. Listen to the Flip Book Story**

### **E. Sample Dialogue with Students after Listening to the Story**

Just for fun, let's take just a minute and think of an example of a rule that we think would exist in the animal world. Maybe a rule for birds or for lions or something. Okay who would like to share an example? (Let them give examples and choose one or two that make sense... "Don't fall out of the nest")

Repeat their imaginary rule and use the following for discussing the "animal rule" What would happen if the animal disobeyed that rule? (Usually you want to identify the negative consequences)

With a quick show of hands, how many of you think that the "animal rule" is based on Good Thinking"? (Pause)

Now let's take a few moments and think of a couple of our class rules. Okay who would like to tell us one of the class rules?

What would happen if all of you disobeyed that rule? (Usually you want to identify the negative consequences)

With a quick show of hands, how many of you think that the "class rule" is based on Good Thinking"? (Pause)

Repeat the exercise with a couple of other "class rules" examples

I think that the Cosmos Crow is trying to explain to us that rules are mostly there to make our lives easier and more fun, and that we should not break them but should also not be afraid of them.

Cosmos states that rules do not just happen spontaneously. What does this mean? Means that rules are made for a reason or to try to solve some problem. Rules are not created just because or just to be mean.

Does Cosmos say that we are supposed to always like or agree with the rules? No, he says that there will be some rules that we do not like or may think is unfair, but that rules based on Good Thinking are rules that we should follow even when we do not like them.

If rules are your friends and are based on Good thinking, then why do we have so much trouble obeying rules? I bet you know why...Stinky Thinking.

As Cosmos has said before, he is amazed at how much human thinking is "Stinky." He says we tell ourselves all kinds of foolish stuff about a rule and then we think it is okay to disobey it.

Then when we get hurt or in trouble we get angry, now how foolish is that?

If your parent or teacher tells you to be quiet (a rule), it is probably because someone is reading or needs to study or something like that and is based on Good Thinking. But if you tell yourself, "But I must tell them something or they won't know how smart I am," or something like that, you will get all excited or upset and start talking. Because you broke the rule, you may get fussed at or punished. Now you get angry because of the consequences (punishment) and say something like, "That's not fair," or "The teacher is always picking on me."

Do these statements make any sense? No because getting angry about a consequence does not make anything better at all.

In our story, we talked about the Dodos and Unicorns and how not obeying the rules caused them some really big problems. In both cases, they broke only one rule but it caused them to disappear from the earth.

Humans don't have many such dramatic consequences, but some of you can get into the habit of being a "Rule Breaker." Because your lives are so "easy",

breaking these rules may not get you eaten by a crocodile, but in the long run it may cause you a lot of problems.

Some humans get into the habit of breaking rules, just because they can break them. They make themselves feel smart or important when they break a rule and then don't get caught or punished. They tell themselves that they are "too smart," or "too special" to have to obey the rules like everyone else. When you are young, this type of Stinky Thinking may not cause you very many problems. But as you get older, this Stinky Thinking will lead to Thumbs Down behavior and bad consequences.