

## What Rules?

*By Sheila Johnson*

Rules have been set and broken from the beginning of time. Adam, Eve, and the Serpent are legendary examples of the importance of keeping the rules and not breaking them.

Federations, associations, and unions write and re-write rules for sports. They also determine the guidelines for salary, commissions, bonuses, and player trade ceilings. Rules for religions or denominations trace back to the beginning of time when God carefully penned the rules of life on slates of stone. Over time, mankind has altered, added, or deleted certain dimensions of those sacred texts. Domestically, parents have traditionally set the rules of the household, i.e., chores, curfews, meal times, and pet care. Rules for corporations are set and re-set daily by big money, collusions, and politics. Rules, rules, rules — is there no end to the governance of our human behavior?

Being a child of the 60s, I've never been fond of rules. I wondered if they were strict godly commandments, harsh demands for human suffering, arbitrary musings of fragile minds, masks for jealousy, ego pleasers, excuses used to discriminate, or ancient art forms?

Today, I wonder if they are used to override common courtesy and obstruct justice? Have rules been set somewhere other than Mt. Horeb? Are they really made to be broken? Where do rules lead, and who follows them? Rules, rules, rules — is there no end to the governance of our human behavior?

There are seen and unseen rules; written and un-written rules. For instance, what are the rules of yawning, scratching, picking your nose, smacking, sneezing, drooling, snorting, passing gas, or disciplining children — in public? Where do those rules live, and who will look for them?

Who can find the rules of talking loud, noisily laughing, hacking, staring, over-talking, gossiping, over- or under-eating, texting, hoarding, fumbling, grumbling, snatching, grabbing, pushing, or complaining? What are the page numbers on which they are written, and on which shelf in the Library of Congress do they sit?

I don't want to spend any more time trying to figure out all those rules. I won't waste time on things that are not catalysts to the Promised Land. I plan to use my time wisely and continue to try to understand the sensitive rules of compassion, the invisible rules of understanding, the grievous rules of sympathy, the difficult rules of empathy, and the delicate rules of love. Is there no end to the governance of our human behavior? I think not.