

*Rules to Live By, But Not Believe invites readers to loosen their grip on the stories shaping life and step into conscious authorship. With wit, insight, and emotional intelligence, it offers philosophies that spark curiosity and power.*

## **Rules To Live By (But Not Believe)**

By Thomas M Jones

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# Rules to Live By

(But NOT Believe)

**Practical Wisdom for People  
Who Don't Do Dogma!**

THOMAS M JONES



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## DISCLAIMER

This book is built from real moments, real conversations, and real emotional journeys. To honor privacy and confidentiality, some names and identifying details have been changed or blended. While certain elements have been altered, the insights and lessons shared are genuine.

Select definitions throughout this book are inspired by standard English dictionary sources, including Cambridge Dictionary and Merriam-Webster, and are adapted and expanded in the author's voice for reflective and educational purposes.

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## **PART ONE: INTRODUCTION OF PHILOSOPHIES & RESOURCEFUL STATES OF MIND**

Let me be clear when I say, “But Not Believe.” I don’t mean that you can’t believe these rules, or even that you shouldn’t. I’m saying that your belief isn’t required in order to use these guidelines. Each of these principles is a lens through which to see a given problem or situation. Looking through this lens will focus your point of view in a different, more revealing way. When you look through the camera, you have choices: “Do I want to see through a wide angle? Do I want to focus on one central point? What do I choose to highlight in order to see the image in a different, more revealing way?” You don’t have to ‘believe’ the narrow focus or the wide angle, you simply allow it to feature different aspects of what you see.

Any doctrine or persuasion that demands your belief immediately compromises your objectivity. These philosophies merely offer different views, as do a microscope and a telescope. You can look at an object through either instrument and it will reveal very different aspects of that object.

Imaginary numbers, when combined with real numbers to form complex numbers, have significant real-world applications primarily in fields like electrical engineering, signal processing, and optics, where they are used to model periodic motions like alternating

currents, sound waves, light waves, and analyze complex systems by representing amplitude and phase effectively; essentially allowing for calculations involving oscillations and rotations that can't be easily done with real numbers alone.

Without imaginary numbers, many modern technologies and scientific fields, particularly quantum mechanics, would not exist, as they rely heavily on imaginary numbers to accurately model and describe phenomena like wave functions and electrical circuits; essentially, our understanding of the behavior of light, electricity, and other wave-like systems would be significantly limited. Many technologies and discoveries would not be possible without them.

What is the point of all this technical jargon? Simply this: Imaginary numbers do not exist! We made them up as a device to test different models and create alternate scenarios. They are, essentially, untruths. As I introduce you to the Functional Philosophies, I offer a similar construct and a similar idea. These philosophies are merely tools to reveal different, more powerful and constructive interpretations of your life and your situations. No one believes that imaginary numbers exist, they just use them. I'm inviting you to do likewise with these ideas.

The beauty of a Functional Philosophy is that you are not required to believe it, only to use it. What does that mean? Too many disciplines and belief systems require that you buy into their ethos and their story. The Paradox Process\* makes no such requirement. We are only interested in you getting to your truth in the most

empowering ways. If any process demands faith or hope from you, something is lacking in their approach. We at The Paradox Process only require an open mind and a willingness to change.

Each statement is a way in which you can look at your life's circumstances and upsets. For instance, if you are struggling in your relationship you might decide to pick a philosophy and see it through number 23, *"We choose everything and everyone in our life. Every interaction is an act of love."* Now, when you look at your partner and the difficulty you are having, you have an option. You can choose to see that upset as merely a lesson, one that you have decided to learn. In addition, according to this statement, your partner is cooperating perfectly to deliver this lesson.

This new point of view brings with it different emotions and perceptions which may empower you. There is great freedom in the knowledge that there is nothing you are required to believe or embrace, merely a tool for you to use when you need to reframe your reality. To use these philosophies, these viewpoints properly, choose an issue in your life that you may be stuck in, or that could benefit from a fresh point of view. Now pick one of these perspectives and see the issue through this filter. Notice what you must change and what you see differently when you do so. You will find a point of resistance as you hold this. This is the worksite.

If you are a student of The Paradox Process\* you will begin to process this resistance. If not, sit with it and get curious. "Why do I feel the way I do? What do I need to let go of in order to resolve this issue?" These are good

questions to ask in order to solve the issue. As you continue to practice with these prompts, you will begin to master your life with broader and more empowering points of view.

## **RESOURCEFUL STATES OF MIND**

A Resourceful State of Mind is one in which we see clearly, we are at ease with ourselves and reality, and we feel empowered. It is a state that takes you from fight-flight-freeze of the sympathetic nervous system to rest-receive-allow of the parasympathetic nervous system. When holding the upset you want to work on, in addition to choosing a philosophical point of view, look for a useful Resourceful State of Mind that allows you to see the situation through clarity. You may “try on” different states until you arrive at the one that works for you. With the previous relationship example, you might choose empathy. Empathy will cause you to reach for an understanding of what your partner is going through. This shift alone will empower you to make different choices and resolve the situation. The combination of one philosophy and one resourceful state will change your point of view and put you in a position of power.

There are five major areas for human beings where issues come up the strongest.

1. Love (relationships)
2. Money
3. Career
4. Social Circle
5. Family

Take each of these areas in your life, one at a time. If you pick career, maybe you are experiencing disappointment. Gratitude and confidence are useful states to dwell in. Let yourself feel those states of mind. You can fill your mind with pictures and images of what that would look like. Once you have connected with the state of mind, look for a philosophy that seems to address the situation. Maybe you choose number 16: ***“You are exactly where you are supposed to be and right on time. There is no wasted time or activity.”*** Use that idea as a filter to look through the situation. As you embrace this idea, it should bring you some emotional relief and a new way to look at the situation. In addition, you might embrace: ***“Everyone is doing the best that they can.”*** That includes you! How does this affect your point of view?

The mind is not fixed and set with the beliefs that you now have. It has been programmed since childhood. The identity that your mind has arrived at is not who you are. It is a set of adjustments and beliefs you have formed based on your experience. These beliefs and defenses are designed to protect you. Unfortunately, the “you” that they are designed to protect is the child that you were. These outdated protections keep us from the very things we want.

Remember, you are not obligated to believe any of these rules: they are merely a lens to reframe your reality.

\*The Paradox Process is a simple, practical method for shifting your emotional state by gently challenging the assumptions behind your

thoughts. Instead of focusing on thoughts, it works directly to change the feelings. This, in turn, eliminates the negative thoughts and stories.

When your interpretations soften, your emotional charge drops. Clarity returns. From that calmer, more resourceful state, better choices become obvious – without force, struggle, or self-judgment.

This process isn't about believing new thoughts; it's about creating space. Space to think clearly, respond consciously, and experience life with more ease, freedom, and emotional intelligence.

Scan the QR code below to explore The Paradox Process, guided exercises, and deeper resources at **[paradoxprocess.org](http://paradoxprocess.org)**.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas M. Jones is a psychotherapist, musician, and author whose life's work explores the hidden architecture of the human mind. As the creator of *The Paradox Process*<sup>™</sup>, he has spent more than four decades helping people to discover that the very thoughts and emotions they fear are often the doorway to their strength.

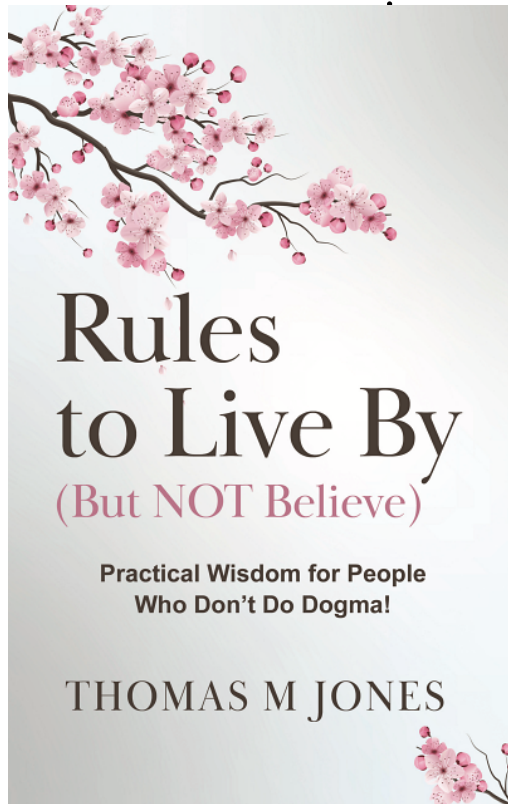
In *Rules to Live By*, Thomas does not offer commandments imposed from the outside. Instead, he invites readers inward—to examine the quiet agreements they have made with fear, ambition, love, and doubt. With clarity and warmth, he illuminates how resistance forms, how identity hardens, and how transformation becomes possible when we stop fighting ourselves and begin listening more deeply.

Over the course of his career, Thomas has worked with leaders, artists, executives, and seekers of all kinds. Yet beneath titles and accomplishments, he has always been interested in the same question: What allows a human being to live freely, creatively, and fully?

His writing reflects the same presence he brings to his work—thoughtful, grounded, and quietly provocative. In these pages, readers will find not rigid doctrine but living principles—rules not to confine life, but to liberate it.

Scan the QR code to sign up for a *free 30-minute session* of The Paradox Process. Experience it for yourself! [paradoxprocess.org](https://paradoxprocess.org).





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