

# Ground Rules ~ Men's Circles ~ Man.Academy

OR you can [WATCH them here](#)

## 1: CONFIDENTIALITY

What is said in our men's group stays in our men's group. Phrases like "I saw this on TV..." or "My friend said..." are fine, as long as no one can be identified. This is often referred to as the Chatham House Rule, and we take this very seriously.

## 2: RESPECT

Respect yourself, everyone's truth, boundaries, feelings, perspectives and stories beyond judgement and projection. Respect the space when others talk, and listen. Respect of other people naturally follows on from self-respect.

## 3: TAKE PART

Authentically take part in the group with words and in silence. Better to say "*Pass*", for whatever reason, than to resort to banter, put up a smokescreen, perform, or use any other tactics to hide from what you might be feeling, thinking, or whatever might be triggered inside. We practise authentic presence and connection.

## 4: BE HONEST

Be honest with yourself and the group. That way you can own your feelings and work them through, rather than quietly internalise, suppress, then dump them on to someone else down the line. We get to know our shadows, we consciously break limiting cycles and we set ourselves free. What a relief!

## 5: OWN WHAT YOU SAY

Use "*I*" statements, rather than "*you*", "*one*" or "*we*". What you say may not be true for any other man. Depersonalising avoids ownership of feelings, experiences, opinions and issues, making change an uphill battle. The word "*we*" seeks validation and acceptance of other men. "*My*" puts your truth before your need to fit in.

## 6: STAY IN THE PRESENT

Be clear about what is true right now and what was true of the past. Words like "*always*" and "*keeps on*" limit present opportunities to past outcomes, whereas "*sometimes*" and "*used to*" make space for change.

## 7: DON'T BULLY

This is a safe, inclusive space. Neither aggressive, nor passive-aggressive behaviour is an option here. No one's safety will be compromised. Men can learn how to better question, challenge and disagree when their buttons are pressed. Be aware of when you feel vulnerable and your defences come up.

## **8: DON'T DRAMATISE**

When someone speaks, give him space with his story without commenting on how good, bad or ugly you think it is. 'Hijacking', or making a drama of another man's story might limit him. Let him name it, have it witnessed, learn from it then let it go.

## **9: EXPERIMENT WITH WHO YOU ARE**

If you've survived life by clowning about, appearing aggressive or passive, this is a space where you can experiment with hidden parts of yourself and feel what fits. Test-drive the more authentic you and take him out into the world, beyond old playground or professional personalities.

## **10: NAME WHAT'S TRIGGERED**

One man's story is another man's emotional reaction, so best name the issue triggered, talk it through and let it pass. Carrying it home and allowing it to get a hold of you feeds it and keeps it alive. We name it; we don't shame it or blame it. Then we live beyond it.

## **11: LIVE BEYOND THE RULES**

Playing small to be 'safe' or 'liked' may keep you small and stuck. Exploring the edge of your comfort zone may bring challenges and help you grow. Live beyond your fears, fantasies and old restrictions to express a more authentic you in daily life.

## **12: REMOVE DISTRACTIONS**

Be present and stay connected with yourself and the others in online groups without reading, scrolling, fiddling or faffing. Switch off message 'alerts' and keep distractions at bay. Take part from a private, quiet, well-lit room so we can hear, see and connect with one another, with your clothes on.

*This is not a therapy group, nor an encounter group, not a w\*nk group, or a place to pick up men for sex, or to sell them something. It's not a group for or against men or women, not a religious group, not a political group, not a group of anything apart from whatever the men present make it. Such boundaries are designed to keep our circle clean and free of expectation and ulterior motives.*

**Disclaimer:** *All activities are undertaken entirely at the participant's own risk. By taking part, each participant accepts full responsibility for their own safety and well-being. (If in doubt, please seek professional advice before participating). These groups are not a replacement for professional help, including help from your doctor, therapist, or counsellor.*

Link to this doc = <https://go.man.academy/rules>

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