

CHETAN BHAGAT

**11 RULES
FOR
LIFE**

SECRETS TO LEVEL UP



HARPER

NON-FICTION

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INTRODUCTION

I still remember that day in 2014. I was walking around Bandra, which is where I live in Mumbai. I passed Globus, a theatre that was screening *2 States*, a movie based on my book of the same name. The movie was a hit, the third one in a row after *3 Idiots* and *Kai Po Che!* Five thousand theatres around the country were screening the story that had once randomly popped up in my head. The country's biggest movie stars had worked for years, enacting characters I had created. Directors and other crew members had worked tirelessly to bring my story to life.

Continuing on my walk, I passed a bookshop. Many of my books were on the bestseller list; they had been there for years. It had been a decade since my first book had been published. The publishing industry, experts said, had never been the same again. My next book, *Half Girlfriend*, was also ready for release. Flipkart, a new online retailer at that time, had already booked the full front-page jacket of *The Times of India*, announcing my new book. The cost of the ad: a whopping two crore rupees! No book in India had ever had such an announcement.

I also wrote editorial columns on national issues in the same newspaper. I had brand endorsement deals, TV show offers and marketing tie-up opportunities—all unheard of for an author. In a country where one is lucky to sell a few thousand copies of a book, mine had sold millions. *Time* magazine had included me in the list of 'The 100 Most Influential People in the World'. Massive success had come my way, far beyond what I had ever imagined. I had had a tormented childhood and grew up in adverse circumstances in a country where few made it. Yet, as some would say, I had 'arrived'.

At that point, when my fame and success were at their peak, I was on a high. I didn't even fully realize how it had all happened. Today, ten years later, as the high has subsided, I have had a chance to reflect on my life. I have now lived for nearly five decades on this planet. That's a lot of life to study from. I have also had a chance to interact with many people who have

'made it' or 'arrived'. These include engineers, bankers, professors, movie stars, writers, media stalwarts, publishing industry heads, politicians, CEOs, businessmen, start-up founders and billionaires. I have had a chance to study these successful people across different fields, as well as reflect on my own life. I have had time to observe and understand what works in life and what doesn't. This book is my way of giving back, my chance to share all that knowledge, wisdom and gyaan with you. This isn't just a quick motivational Instagram reel you swipe up and forget about. This is the distillation of everything I've learnt through my life.

Most people in India don't read any more. They are lost in their screens, watching mindless content day and night. The fact that you have picked up this book already puts you ahead of them. My only request would be to take what I say here seriously. (But don't be all serious and brooding in life—I can't imagine my readers like that!) This book has the power to transform your life IF you let it. Apply this knowledge. Take actual, concrete action after reading this book. Change something. I want you to do extremely well and be super happy. That's the only reason I've written this book. I have achieved enough, and I will keep doing more. But today, what gives me real joy is sharing my knowledge, using my writing skills and leveraging my popularity to reach you and help you go ahead. I want you to live an amazing life, become the best version of yourself, and reach your own massive success moment. I want you to be in the top echelons of society in terms of status. I want you to be one of the happiest people on earth.

It's not easy to achieve this, but it's possible. I did it. You can as well. You just need to unlearn a few things and learn some new ones. You need to understand that life isn't about what they taught you in school. Nor is it what your well-meaning mom and dad told you at the dining table. The world isn't a napping, cuddly, loving place waiting to support you. No, that's the world your parents gave you as a child. As an adult, the real world is harsh and tough. India is more competitive than most other places in the world and hence it is even harder to make it here. It requires two things. One, a lot of work, and two, knowledge of some life secrets that nobody tells you in school, college or at home.

Let's make a deal. If you are ready to do the work, I will tell you these secrets. There are eleven in all.

Do we have a deal? Cool! Let's go!

Welcome to **11 Rules for Life!**