

Rule Number 6

Two prime ministers are sitting in a room discussing affairs of state. Suddenly a man bursts in, apoplectic with fury, shouting and stamping and banging his fist on the desk. The resident prime minister admonishes him: “Peter,” he says, “kindly remember Rule Number 6,” whereupon Peter is instantly restored to complete calm, apologizes, and withdraws. The politicians return to their conversation, only to be interrupted yet again twenty minutes later by an hysterical woman gesticulating wildly, her hair flying. Again the intruder is greeted with the words: “Marie, please remember Rule Number 6.” Complete calm descends once more, and she too withdraws with a bow and an apology. When the scene is repeated for a third time, the visiting prime minister addresses his colleague: “My dear friend, I’ve seen many things in my life, but never anything as remarkable as this. Would you be willing to share with me the secret of Rule Number 6?” “Very simple,” replies the resident prime minister. “Rule Number 6 is ‘Don’t take yourself so g—damn seriously.’” “Ah,” says his visitor, “that is a fine rule.” After a moment of pondering, he inquires, “And what, may I ask, are the other rules?”

“There aren’t any.”