THE RULES OF THE REAL WORLD

34 laws grown-ups learned the hard way, so you don't have to.
Tick a box every time you spot one in real life.

Part 1: Deadlines and Projects

- ☐ **1. Murphy's Law:** Anything that can go wrong will go wrong, so plan for it.
- ☐ **2. Parkinson's Law:** Work grows to fill the time you give it.
- ☐ **3. Hofstadter's Law:** It always takes longer than you expect, even when you allow for this law.
- ☐ **4. The Planning Fallacy:** We plan for the best case, not the likely case.
- ☐ **5. Student Syndrome:** Extra time gets wasted; we start at the last minute anyway.
- ☐ **6. The Pareto Rule (80/20):** About 20% of the effort brings about 80% of the result.
- ☐ **7. The Eisenhower Matrix:** Urgent isn't the same as important.
- ☐ **8. Brooks's Law:** Adding people to a late project makes it later.

Part 2: Measuring and Improving

- ☐ **9. Goodhart's Law:** When a number becomes the goal, it stops measuring what matters.
- ☐ **10. The Dunning-Kruger Effect:** Beginners often feel more sure than they should; experts often feel less.
- ☐ **11. The Sunk Cost Fallacy:** What you've already spent shouldn't decide what you do next.
- ☐ **12. The Peter Principle:** Being great at one job doesn't mean you'll be great at the next one.
- ☐ **13. Kaizen:** Small daily improvements beat big rare efforts.
- ☐ **14. Survivorship Bias:** We see the winners, not everyone who tried and failed.
- ☐ **15. The Post-Mortem:** Look at what went wrong without blaming anyone.

Part 3: People and Teams

- ☐ **16. Hanlon's Razor:** Don't blame on meanness what a mistake can explain.
- ☐ **17. The Mehrabian Rule (and Its Limits):** Tone and body language carry feelings, but not facts.
- ☐ **18. The Ringelmann Effect:** The bigger the group, the less each person puts in.
- ☐ **19. The Abilene Paradox:** A group can agree to something nobody actually wanted.
- ☐ **20. The Halo Effect:** One shiny trait makes everything else about a person look shinier too.
- ☐ **21. Reciprocity:** When someone does something nice for you, you want to do something nice back.

Part 4: Decisions and Risk

- ☐ **22. Occam's Razor:** The simplest explanation is usually the right one.
- ☐ **23. The Pre-Mortem:** Imagine it already failed, then ask why.
- ☐ **24. Second-Order Thinking:** Always ask "and then what?"
- ☐ **25. Opportunity Cost:** Every yes is a no to something else.
- ☐ **26. Confirmation Bias:** We look for proof of what we already believe.
- ☐ **27. Anchoring:** The first number you hear sets the deal.
- ☐ **28. Choice Overload (Hick's Law):** More options make it harder to decide.

Part 5: Growth and Bouncing Back

- ☐ **29. Kidlin's Law:** Write a problem down clearly and it's half solved.
- ☐ **30. The Matthew Effect:** Small early advantages grow over time.
- ☐ **31. Diminishing Returns:** Past a certain point, more effort adds less.
- ☐ **32. Fail Fast:** Small, cheap failures beat one big, late failure.
- ☐ **33. The Streisand Effect:** Trying to hide something draws more attention to it.
- ☐ **34. The Peak-End Rule:** People remember the best (or worst) moment and the ending.

Bonus law

- ☐ **35. The Spotlight Effect:** People notice you far less than you think.