

"A must-read for purpose-driven leaders and a refreshing breakaway
from the traditional business book."

—ASHLEY RHODES-COURTER, *NY Times* Bestselling Author of
Three Little Words

FANNY RULES

A Mother's Leadership

LESSONS THAT NEVER GROW OLD

DR. TROY HALL

Praise for
FANNY RULES

“Fanny Rules: A Mother’s Leadership Lessons that Never Grow Old is a must-read for purpose-driven leaders. Dr. Troy’s transformative leadership principles shine through as he relates them to stories of his late mother’s wisdom. These lessons give us all a glimpse into the type of powerful leadership legacy that we can leave behind for others to use. Fanny Rules are hands-on lessons that can help leaders navigate their personal and professional lives, and a refreshing breakaway from the traditional business book. A touching tribute to a woman whose clarity, confidence, and self-awareness set an example for us all...this book is simply a joy from start to finish.”

—ASHLEY RHODES-COURTER

NY Times Bestselling author of *Three Little Words*

“Fanny Rules is an engaging tale of triumph over tribulation, happiness out of heartbreak, and love over loss. Dr. Troy brings meaning to life’s often tragic twists—honoring his wonderful mother by passing on her wisdom for generations of leaders to come.”

—MARK PETTIT

Bestselling Author, EMMY® Award-winner, & Actor

“In every book you read, you would normally ask yourself what part, what joke or anything at all that stood out. With no exaggeration, *Fanny Rules* is the real deal! It may simply be because of its practical use of life lessons, relatable to ordinary folks like you and me.”

—KONSTANTIN COMEROS

Development Educator & Cooperative Consultant for the
Philippines

“Dr. Troy can integrate the inspirational teaching of his mother with modern-day leadership needs. I loved reading the book because it’s true to life application of the skills we need as a leader. I love the ninth one—‘Finding Yourself.’ It’s a great source of motivation. It helps us focus on the positive drivers of behaviors that add value to people, especially the people we want to influence for the better. The book is a reminder that the people we lead would only value our leadership if they know we care and value them. Dr. Troy, thanks for sharing the wisdom of your mom, Fanny.”

—ELENITA V. SAN ROQUE

Chief Executive Officer, Association of Asian Confederation of Credit Unions

“*Fanny Rules* is inspiring, heartfelt, and filled with wisdom. If you are looking for a great story that teaches you timeless leadership lessons without the mundane lecture feel, *Fanny Rules* is a must read and makes me think about the one word I have always used in reference to leadership, RESPONSIBILITY! Fanny demonstrates for all of us that no matter the circumstance, when you are a leader your responsibility is to the people you lead. Leaders around the world will be endeared to Fanny as well as forever changed by her wisdom, just as I have been.”

—KENYA DUNN

Chief Executive Officer PFW Coaching & Consulting

“A touching, fun and beautiful book about leadership and life. Dr. Troy shares stories and lessons that demonstrate what true leadership is really all about.”

—MICHAEL ZIPURSKY

Co-Founder, Consulting Success®

“Fanny Rules: A Mother’s Leadership Lessons that Never Grow Old is a tool and a mentorship playbook that I have taken to heart and used in my day-to-day life. I would recommend it to everyone looking for insight on leadership training and guidance. “The truth is in the ‘I am’ not in the someday ‘I will be,’” and to be a leader you need to believe in yourself and begin the journey today.”

—DAVID S. MATEGWA, OGW, DSA, ICUDE

National Chairman, Kenya Police, Sacco

“Dr. Troy’s down-to-earth storytelling style, combined with the actionable items at the end of each chapter, have the impact of taking boyhood advice from his mom and transforming it into golden success nuggets that anyone can utilize to build their careers, their business, their brands, and, quite honestly, their relationships.”

—CURT MERCADANTE

Bestselling Author of *Five Pillars of the Freedom Lifestyle: How to Escape Your Comfort Zone of Misery*, Principal and Founder, Merc Enterprises

“Fanny Rules is a must-read for every business leader. Filled with powerful memories starting from a boy sitting at his mother’s deathbed, these stories will make you laugh, cry, and grow. Filled to the brim with parables and principles, Fanny was a leader for the ages. We are lucky her wisdom was passed down through her son in a heartfelt and remarkable way. You won’t be able to put this book down.”

—WHITNEY MCDUFF

Speaker Brand Strategist, Public Relations, Bestselling Author of *The Lollie Tree*

“Filled with practical wisdom told through compelling and relatable storytelling, Dr. Troy shares profound lessons through a lens of humor. I had a grin on my face from the first line of the book. This is a welcome break from traditional slumber-inducing leadership books. *Fanny Rules* is a must-read for professionals at all levels who are ready to smile while succeeding.”

—DOUG FALVEY

Senior Vice President of Operations, Allied Solutions

“Time-honored wisdom never changes. Although the economy, environment, and politics change the basic rules for success stay the same. In *Fanny Rules*, Dr. Troy relates those truths and lays out a path for your success. Success is an elusive concept and is different for every individual. No matter what your goal in life, *Fanny Rules* will give you direction on how to achieve your dream. I highly recommend this book.”

—COACH ROY AUSTIN, CPA, CMA, MBA

Rockwell Business Solutions, Founder/Chair Libraries For Kids Int'l, Author of *The Alligator Business Solution—Small Business Competitive Edge*

“I found that once I started reading, I could not put *Fanny Rules* down. Although I did not have the privilege of knowing Fanny, I feel as though I have known her for years through the intimate details and life lessons in this book. As a wife, mother, and leader, this book touched my soul to the point of tears. This book will be part of my treasured collection.”

—JENNIFER OLMEDA, VP

Area Sales & Service, South Carolina Federal Credit Union

“*Fanny Rules* is a poignant tale of Dr. Troy’s path to leadership. It resonated with me personally because my mom was also called “Fanny,” and she had Alzheimer’s as well. When I became a Client Manager, my late husband who was a Captain in the Fire Department, always told me, “It’s not rocket science.” The many words of wisdom will stick with you with their humor and relevance. Moms always know, don’t they, with their “supersonic hearing” and eyes behind their head! This read is not only for leaders, but for anyone just wanting to be a better person, not a “donkey,” and learn how to catch more bees with honey than vinegar. Dr. Troy’s mom, Fanny, was a wise woman. I wish I had the chance to meet her in person”

—MARIE SCOTT

Author, Speaker, & Wellness Coach

“This amazing book filled with practical advice passed down from mother to son is sure to inspire generations to come.”

—ADAM TORRES

Co-Founder of Mission Matters Media, International speaker,
Author of multiple bestselling books and host of the *Mission Matters* podcast series

“From start to finish, *Fanny Rules* is chock full of stories that capture the heart. The book is relatable and impactful. It not only highlights important lessons for business leaders, it also makes a great guide for parents, highlighting the significant role mothers play in their children’s lives and how to raise independent thinkers with integrity.”

—STACEY CREW

Author Advocate, Bestselling author of *The Organized Mom* and *Mind Body Kitchen: Transform You & Your Kitchen for Healthier Eating*

“Fanny Rules endorses two very basic principles...keep it simple and look for teachable moments everywhere! What a wonderful guide to developing leadership skills. Life lessons creating leadership lessons. If we simply follow Fanny’s “rules,” life and leadership would be so much easier, and we’d fill a leadership emptiness in today’s environment. *Fanny Rules* is interactive. You definitely should give it a try. I’ve always believed leadership is a contact sport! To be actionable, plans need to be simple and easy to execute. You need to practice, practice, practice to allow your skills to develop naturally. *Fanny Rules* shares teachable moments in every chapter and provides exercises to give you the opportunity to challenge yourself and practice new skills. Fanny also espouses that a little grit doesn’t hurt, either. How wonderful that Dr. Troy is so comfortable in his own skin that he’s willing to “bare it all” in *Fanny Rules* so we too can take advantage of the life lessons he learned from his mother. A huge thank you.”

—LINDA VERBA, EVP

Head of Service Strategy TD Bank, Retired

“Fanny Rules is a total home run. Dr. Troy brings his best leadership advice in the form of heartfelt stories that encourage and inspire us all to be a better version of ourselves. As both a business leader and family man, I found these stories charming, relatable, and actionable. This needs to be a staple of every leadership team and discussed at every kitchen and negotiation table. Bravo, Dr. Troy!”

—PAUL RUTTER

Executive Coach, Keynote Speaker, & Author of *You Can’t Make This Ship Up*

“In his latest book, *Fanny Rules*, Dr. Troy reflects upon the life of his mother, Fanny, and how her superb example takes the reader through a lifetime of boldly facing and negotiating circumstances and situations. By making the decision to appropriately face such challenges, Fanny demonstrates a perpetual learning process, reminding us that opportunities never present themselves on our terms. Decisions must be made, and consequences are guaranteed, regardless if we decide to act or remain idle. Drawing from the Nine Lessons, Dr. Troy relates how anyone can cut his or her own path of leadership by tailoring the journey for the reader. *Fanny Rules* provides a simplistic process, leading one to ultimately discover the single ingredient needed to reach the highest levels of leadership and success. I highly recommend Dr. Troy’s work of transparency, and how he shares the journey of Fanny’s difficulty, as the reader will be eager to learn how true leadership and promotion is ultimately grasped...not birthed.”

—DR. MIKE GILBERT

Consultant, Founder and Leader, The Well

“Teachable moments shape our daily virtues. Dr. Troy shares these lessons taught by his biggest mentor, his mother, in his newest book, *Fanny Rules*. The simplest lessons are the ones we forget, yet the ones we need most to guide us in making discerning decisions. The book outlines nine lessons that apply from childhood through adulthood. I hope to pass these lessons on to our daughter.”

—SARAH EVANS SPRINKLE

Strategic Planning and Fundraising Consultant

“What an amazing, uplifting and refreshing book!! It filled my heart with joy and love. *Fanny Rules: A Mother’s Leadership Lessons that Never Grow Old* is a must read to learn or be reminded of the basics of leadership AND living one’s life with integrity and a love for others. How I wish I could have met Fanny! Dr. Troy Hall is an eloquent writer who so succinctly describes the Life Lessons his wise mother, lovingly nick-named “Fanny,” taught him and instilled in him throughout his childhood. A very simple outlined inspirational guide of traits that we all should live by. These are pertinent to any age and can be reviewed multiple times throughout one’s life. An amazing, lighthearted book with many principles to live by.”

—DONNA CLERVI

Certified Parkinson’s Fitness Specialist, Owner of Rock Steady Boxing, M.E. Boxing & Fitness

“*Fanny Rules: A Mother’s Leadership Lessons that Never Grow Old* is the modest title of the new book by Dr. Troy Hall. Modest because the life lessons in this book are like a leprechaun finding the end of a rainbow—they are multitudinous and overflowing. Troy shares numerous lessons he learned from his mother Fanny and applied throughout his life. He has included many of these stories for us to cherish and perhaps recall some of the lessons we too learned growing up. If you need a guidebook of common sense, feel good wisdom, there is no better book.”

—HOWARD H. PRAGER

Executive Coach & Author of *Make Someone’s Day: What It Can Do For You and Your Company*

“It’s not often someone comes along and stops you in your tracks. Dr. Troy Hall is one of those people—he literally stops you in your tracks. Dr. Troy is an inspiration, he is infectious, he makes you want to be a better version of yourself. I have known Dr. Troy for several years now, and whilst we have an ocean between us, he still inspires. What he learned from his mother, we all need to learn and use her wisdom to make us a better version of ourselves. We are all in this together, let’s support each other, be kind, and help each other as others helped us.”

—MARLENE SHIELDS

Officer of the British Empire (OBE) & Chief Executive Officer,
Capital Credit Union

“I have worked with Dr. Troy Hall (a.k.a. “Dr. Troy”) for over a decade; therefore, I can personally attest to his extraordinary leadership qualities as an intentional and impactful influencer. This work extracts from an unshakable foundation of principles that harnesses the power to encourage its reader to dig beyond a superficial level to a deeper internal level of understanding towards leadership.”

—CRISSY ORTIZ, PHD

Professor & Founder of the Autism Platform Project

“This book is not only packed with leadership wisdom, but it’s also a fun read! I love how Dr. Troy paints pictures of his beloved mom and their life in a small town. I could even envision an impactful, heartwarming movie coming out of *Fanny Rules*! You owe it to your leadership vision to read this book.”

—THOMAS HEATH

Author, Speaker, Coach & Award-Winning Playwright

“To different degrees, we are all shaped by our childhood experiences and the lessons we learn from our parents, grandparents, teachers, and other influential people in our lives. In his new book, *Fanny Rules*, Dr. Troy describes—in a very relatable way—the lessons learned from his mother, Frances Rose Hosner (nicknamed Fanny). Fanny may not have been the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, but she understood how to lead like she was. Her emotional intelligence quotient (as we might say these days) was clearly advanced, and she understood—as Troy describes—that people respond better when you serve them honey to drink and not vinegar! She also knew a good saying when she heard one, and I took away so many sayings from this book that served as a reminder to me of what makes good leaders great, including that “the ladder of success goes both ways.” The nine lessons described in the book became the foundation for Dr. Troy’s strong leadership principles and attributes and collectively serve as a perfect extension of his previous book, *Cohesion Culture: Proven Principles to Retain Your Top Talent*. These lessons can be used to guide and develop the culture of any organization, and I am convinced that not only will you thoroughly enjoy reading this book, but you will take from it a set of leadership lessons that will serve you (and your organization) well.”

—MARK SIEVEWRIGHT

Founder and CEO, Sievewright & Associate, FinTech Board
Advisor, Author of *Digital Life*

“Fanny’s rules are more than just mere talking points. They are the cornerstones of the foundation for the incredible leader, Dr. Troy Hall. I look forward to sharing *Fanny Rules* and these principles with everyone for two reasons. First, Fanny was a remarkable lady with great leadership insight. Secondly, part of the proceeds of the book will benefit the Alzheimer’s Association. My family has spent decades caring for loved ones afflicted with this disease.”

—BEN-JAMIN TOY

Team Building Expert, Global Facilitator, Chief Executive
Officer of On Purpose Adventures

*Fanny Rules:
A Mother's Leadership Lessons that Never Grow Old*

By Dr. Troy Hall

© Copyright 2021 Dr. Troy Hall

ISBN 978-1-64663-383-8

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior written permission of the author.

*REVIEW COPY: This is an advanced printing subject to
corrections and revisions.*

Published by

 **koehlerbooks™**

3705 Shore Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23455
800-435-4811
www.koehlerbooks.com

FANNY RULES

A Mother's Leadership
LESSONS THAT NEVER GROW OLD

DR. TROY HALL



VIRGINIA BEACH
CAPE CHARLES

DEDICATION

To my dear wife, Vickie.

Thank you for the countless hours of support during many crazy work adventures and scholastic endeavors. You never complained when I left you all alone to pick up my slack of household responsibilities. You were with me through every step of my Bachelor's, MBA, and PhD programs as well as the writing of three books. I appreciate your gentleness in checking in on me when long after midnight I fell asleep at the kitchen table with my head on my laptop and my hand tightly holding a cold cup of coffee. You were so sweet in helping me to bed and diligent in making sure I was up the next morning and off to work or school. Just as you cared tirelessly for my parents, Fanny and Slim, during the last five years of their lives, you have always cared for me with that same kind spirit.

Thank you for countless hours of listening to me talk about the lessons and proofreading manuscript version after version. Although I may have authored the book, you are still an important part of it. Words are too few to express my gratitude for supporting me in creating a living testament to Mom's teachable moments. Now *Fanny Rules: A Mother's Leadership Lessons that Never Grow Old* is a mentor guide available to future generations of leaders. Because of your efforts, Fanny's legacy lives on.

With all my love,

Troy



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Just before taking this photo for what would be my parents' last Christmas card, Mom had a dark, distant, blank stare on her face while Dad sat there in the golf cart with his big, jolly smile. Before snapping the photo, I told Mom to get close to Dad and act like she loved him. Mom cuddled up next to Dad, looked at him with the biggest grin ever as if to say, "I sure do." Snap! This photo truly captures the essence of the love shared by my dear Fanny and Slim.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	1
Where It All Begins: Follow the Leader.....	5
Mom aka Fanny	6
My Hometown, the Backdrop.....	8
Life as I Know It Ends, the Rules Begin.....	10
Bedside Wisdom	13
Rule One: Teachable—	
Didn't Yo Fanny Teach Ya?	17
Have the Willingness to Be Wrong to Further What is Right	19
Learn It All vs. Know It All	24
Leaders Who “Have Got This”	
Need More Teachable Moments	27
Teachable Moments	30
Mentoring Lessons for Rule One: Teachable.....	31
Rule Two: Treat Others Right—	
Space Pants, Step Ladders & Honking Horns	33
We All Put Our Pants on One Leg at a Time	36
Space Pants: Keep It in This World.....	40
The Ladder of Success Goes Both Ways	43
Honking Not Hogging	45
Teachable Moments	47
Mentoring Lessons for Rule Two: Treat Others Right.....	48
Rule Three: Positive Mindset—	
Don't Bother Complaining, Ain't Nobody Listening.....	49
Hold the Umbrella	53
My Life is a Postcard.....	54
The Ball and Chain Conundrum	56
Teachable Moments	59
Mentoring Lessons for Rule Three: Positive Mindset.....	60

Rule Four: Choices over Circumstances —

Fanny Didn't Raise No Fool.....61
 He Who Has the Clicker is in Control 65
 Priority or Popularity 67
 The Blue Roof Principle: People Over Profit 70
 Teachable Moments 74
 Mentoring Lessons for Rule Four:
 Choices over Circumstances 75

Rule Five: Build Your Strengths —

Sink, Swim, or Just Tread Water.....77
 Remember the Dent 80
 Expend Energy on Your Strengths 82
 Confidence and Determination Build Strengths 84
 Lessons from *Gilligan's Island* 87
 Teachable Moments 90
 Mentoring Lessons for Rule Five: Build Your Strengths 91

Rule Six: Innovation and Creativity —

Smarties Candy & Superpowers.....97
 Making Something New From Something Old..... 100
 The Green Cookie Effect 103
 Imagination is Your Greatest Superpower..... 106
 Even the Best-Made Plans 109
 Teachable Moments 112
 Mentoring Lessons for Rule Six: Innovation and Creativity..... 113

Rule Seven: Discipline and Determination —

Clean Your Room Whether It Needs It or Not115
 Be Proud of Your Work 118
 Earn the Purple Ribbon..... 119
 Pinball Wizard 122
 Teachable Moments 126
 Mentoring Lessons for Rule Seven:
 Discipline and Determination 127

Rule Eight: Find Your Mentor—	
Who Is Your Jiminy Cricket?	129
Puppet on a String.....	132
The Nose That Grows	134
Don't Be a Donkey.....	136
Teachable Moments	141
Mentoring Lessons for Rule Eight: Select Your Mentor	142
Example of a Mentoring Session on Stubbornness.....	144
Rule Nine: Find Yourself—	
Who Will You Be When You Grow Up?	145
Don't Cheat the Truth.....	147
Holding the Stone	151
Mirror—Mirror	153
One Bad Apple.....	155
Teachable Moments	157
Mentoring Lessons for Rule Nine: Find Yourself.....	158
After the Rules— Actions Speak Louder Than Words.....	159
Final Thoughts	160
Epilogue: A Note to Caregivers.....	163
Biography.....	167
Additional Books	169

FOREWORD

THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE to Alzheimer's is one of the most difficult experiences a child can go through. Dr. Troy and I share the magnitude of this loss: Dr. Troy with his mother Fanny, and me with my father, Richard. We are now both allies in the fight against this disease and the devastating impact it has on families.

For the last six years, I've served as an Appointed Ambassador for Congressman Cunningham for the Alzheimer's Association. I serve on the Disabilities Board of Charleston County, regularly meet with members of the General Assembly to educate legislators about state policy, and serve on the Governor's Council on Aging. Reading *Fanny Rules* was a touching reminder of how impactful amazing leaders are in our lives and how important our advocacy is.

I am a child of the 1950s who grew up in a large family of six children, always embracing the knowledge that my parents and grandparents would surround me to keep me safe and that my role as the oldest daughter would only be rewarded by their glowing pride in everything that I accomplished. My parents raised me to be independent, self-sufficient, and impressed upon me the importance of giving back and taking care of others. I must admit, though, I could never have imagined how the role reversal that Alzheimer's would place on me would change my life and the lives of my family members.

Prior to 2003, I don't think that I had ever heard the term Alzheimer's, and I know that if I did hear it, I certainly didn't know what it meant or how it could change lives in such a fierce way.

I knew people whose family members had what they described as lapses of memory, which they suggested were due to their advancing ages, forgetting little things such as names, events, etc. When my mom told me that my dad was having some trouble, I think that I thought the same thing except he was an active sixty-eight-year-old with an unmatched zeal for life. It didn't make sense.

My family and I suggested that perhaps Dad should go to MUSC hospital in Charleston to be evaluated by the Alzheimer's Center. This is when life began to change. My mom was suffering from COPD, using oxygen most of the time, and my dad was her sweetheart, the one who took care of her every day.

Being told that Dad did show definite signs of having a disease that would one day take even his oldest memory was more than I could wrap my head and heart around. I learned that one day, even on the two drugs that were approved to handle the disease, he would likely forget my mom, me and my siblings, and our children—those he treasured—and one day he would even not know his name. I then searched everywhere to find what we would need to do to keep him safe and happy as his disease progressed and as our roles would begin to reverse.

My dad passed away in early 2018.

He was diagnosed with Alzheimer's at the age of sixty-eight, and every day we lost a little bit more of him, including the last five years when he didn't recognize his children, grandchildren, or other family members. Though he didn't know us, he continued to express love to each person he encountered and showed gratitude when things were done for him, and we were so happy to have him with us as long as we did. I think that I am like him in many ways, and I still smile when I remember that.

My dad was an enormous icon and leader in my life. The lessons he taught me resonate daily, and much of my success comes from the wisdom he bestowed upon me throughout his life.

Fanny Rules is a touching tribute to Dr. Troy's late mother, Fanny. As a business and community leader, I can tell you the lessons she shared with him ring true for everyone who wants to grow both personally and professionally. I never knew Fanny personally, but I know I would have loved her. She, like my dad, was full of wisdom, and Dr. Troy perfectly captures Fanny's brilliance in these memorable stories that are just as applicable in the backyard or the boardroom.

Alzheimer's is a cruel disease. I am happy that there are people like Dr. Troy Hall who are committed to seeing the end—the day when our friends and family members will not walk such a cruel walk. We should all be as dedicated to this effort for the memories of those we love, and for the hope that our families will not have to become the parents in their relationships with us. God bless all who fight the fight every day.

Cheryll Woods-Flowers

Alzheimer's Association Ambassador to the First District
Congressman

WHERE IT ALL BEGINS

FOLLOW THE LEADER

“Mom believed the way you do anything
is the way you do everything.”



MOM AKA FANNY

WHEN I WAS TWELVE, I was told my mom was going to die. The news shifted my entire world on its axis and changed the course of my life.

I am a mama's boy. Yep, that's me. I make no apologies and fully accept all the rights, ridicule, and benefits bestowed as such.

It was a blessing to have a loving and caring mom in my life. In my heart, I believe one of the greatest commands is to love one another as you would love yourself. And with that, the most significant personal sacrifice is when someone lays down their life for another. Mom commanded this depth of loyalty and sacrifice. Not from a position of power, but from a place of love and influence.

My mom was fondly known by her nickname, Fanny.

Sounds unusual?

Well, it is.

Born Frances Rose Hosner on May 12, 1927, she earned the nickname Fanny while attending Lost Creek High School in Lost Creek, West Virginia. By the age of sixteen, Mom was all of ninety-eight pounds soaking wet. Her girlfriends were quite flirtatious in their day. Mom was shy, saving her affections for her beloved beanpole of a man she affectionately named "Slim." I called him "Dad."

As her friends explored their teenage sexuality, Mom remained conservative and committed to her dream of being with Slim. Gloria, Mom's best girl gal, suggested Frances "up her game" and expand her horizons beyond Slim. This, of course, required Frances to show a little fanny. The girls quickly decided the only way this ninety-eight-pound woman would ever *have* a derriere would be if they *gave* it to her. The name "Fanny" was born, and Frances Rose proudly wore the moniker until the end of her life.

Before we get too far along in the book, let me set the record straight because there is a lot of talk about Mom, and I don't want

you to believe Dad had any less influence on my life. I had an incredible relationship with him, too. He was a remarkable man and the love of Mom's life, who adored and cared for her throughout their beautiful marriage. He was there right up until she took her last breath on September 12, 2012, after suffering a decade or more with Parkinson's Disease and dementia.

My parents chose the traditional roles, as did most couples married and living in the 1940s. Dad was the protector and provider. Mom served as the nurturer and caregiver. In that role, Mom imparted many life lessons—her rules for how to be a leader and conduct oneself.

For me, they live as “Fanny Rules.” In this book, I have captured nine lessons that were life-changing in my world. It seemed appropriate to share these with others, particularly purpose-driven leaders, regardless of their task, title, or tenure in an organization. These lessons are for anyone who wants to be a better person and take their leadership to the next level. *Fanny Rules* reflects a common-sense approach to making each of us an exceptional person and a great leader. You may think of these rules as a form of practical leadership advice that has application from simple to complex. These rules go from the backyard to the boardroom.

In the purest form, leadership is the ability to move others into action, shape one's thoughts, and provide resources while removing obstacles. This is how a leader motivates, influences, and enables others to succeed. Mom's wisdom flowed through every inch of her small and unassuming frame. She could pack it into every square inch of anyone who got to know her and spend time with her. I was fortunate to be the recipient of Fanny's wisdom that she wanted to instill in me when her very survival was on the line.

As you read the text, “Mom” is used when I describe what she did or refer to her relationship with me. “Fanny” depicts those moments when she was in full teaching mode. Regardless, Fanny is and always will be Mom, wife, Grandma Frances, or Gma Gee to

multiple generations. My purpose is to share her inspirations with a new generation that may need a little *Fanny* in their own lives.

MY HOMETOWN, THE BACKDROP

I GREW UP IN A SMALL, rural town in central West Virginia. Grandpa Hosner bought a piece of property along the main road, and the two-room house became their home. It was where John and Mary welcomed and raised their only daughter and star of this book, Frances “Fanny” Rose. Over time, the two-room wooden shack with a tin roof was expanded, and the outdoor toilet was eventually brought inside when running water was finally pumped into the house. The house oozed luxury.

With a promise for grandeur, this sleepy little village did not quite live up to being a coal mining mecca that was promised during construction. It became a lonely, forgotten town absent of commerce and manufacturing. The central hub of the town, near the one and only railroad stop, no longer housed the diner or convenience store, and even the railroad tracks were removed. I guess you can’t be “from the other side of the tracks” when the tracks themselves go missing.

Our town was about 250 people deep or 251 if you count the old man who wandered up and down the streets looking for bottles or tin cans he could collect to recycle.

Small.

Rural.

Hometown America.

Only homes along a main stretch of blacktop and several dwellings “down in the hollers” remained once the coal and railroad companies pulled out. Hollers are the hillbilly version of what suburban folks call cul-de-sacs. Once you travel down the dirt road, the only way to get back out is to turn around and head out the same way you came in. Not sure why we called them hollers other

than I can recall Dad's mom, Grandma Goldie, saying that back in the 1920s, folks didn't have phones and to get their attention, the first neighbor had to "holler" to the next and so on until they got the attention of the person they wanted to see. I am convinced this is an urban, er...hillbilly legend for sure.

Some of the most wonderful people I know today still live in this small, homogenous community. Of those in my little hood, education was not always top of mind. Although Mom finished high school, Dad only completed eighth grade. He earned his street smarts and mechanic skills serving as a grease-monkey Army private during World War II.

These quirky and well-grounded people created a wonderful bond of belonging that made my home safe and welcoming. It was special. With some exception on Dad's part, they believed in following the Golden Rule and treating people kindly and with dignity. Everyone knew my parents, which made it extremely difficult for me to get away with anything, even if I'd wanted to.

We had a post office that placed our mail in individual boxes with number-lock combinations. The local fire department had one truck and was in a building next to a big field perfect for the annual carnival. But our town lacked a public library. Sadly, even the local gas station, grocery store, and school that housed all grades from K-12 closed just after I completed sixth grade. We could have really used a library with all the closings, as everyone suddenly had a lot of free time on their hands.

We can't forget the two main buildings in town. On Saturday, people frequented the local beer garden (West Virginia slang for the pub) to drown out their sorrows after a full week of working or hoping to work. On Sundays, the Methodist church offered refuge for people asking God to drown out the sorrows the liquor had missed.

Like any true southerner, we got gussied up and sat in our favorite pew on Sundays. Mom would whisper to me when the

collection plate passed, “Boy, just remember poor is a condition of the pocketbook, not the heart.” And with a bow of the head, she would ante up this week’s offering and thank Jesus for the blessing.

Yes, some roughnecks loitered, looted, and lived it up just a little too much. For some reason, these rough housers didn’t bother our family. Even though I did not understand it at the time, I now know it was because my parents treated them with a level of respect. They didn’t try to make them wrong when holding them accountable for their actions. The guys still liked to hang out with Dad in his favorite retreat: the garage. Dad would tinker with their cars and motorbikes, finding some way to get them back on the streets again. Mom would often join them and offer some freshly baked treats. We didn’t have a lot to eat, but somehow Mom seemed to find something to offer anyone who stopped by to visit. I think one of the best leadership qualities I learned was to see the good in people.

To try at least.

Well, not always.

Mostly.

LIFE AS I KNOW IT ENDS, THE RULES BEGIN

I WILL NEVER FORGET when Mom and Dad shared the heartbreaking news with their two children. My twelve-year-old ears could hardly comprehend the words.

It’s not good.

It’s cancer.

It’s breast cancer.

To say the news was devastating is an understatement. My sister, nine years older than me, had run away from home, and if she had known what was going on, she would have surely hurried home. When she did return after Mom’s recuperation, her guilt was so

grave that after that, my sister never missed a day talking to Mom from her return until the day my sister died in 2003.

My brother, three years younger than me, was sheltered from what was happening. However, he must have known something was going to be different. My focus remained solely on Mom. All I vividly remember about the night they told us Mom was sick was crying in my bed, thinking, “Mom is gonna die.”

In the 1960s, the primary and recommended treatment for cancer was radical surgery, meaning her surgeons would do their best to extract anything (muscle or tissue) that was possibly affected by the cancer spreading through her body. From my perspective, the hospital was a lonely place. A cold place where people usually go to die.

It was scary.

It was not a place for a mom.

It was not a place for MY mom.

Although this horrible situation was looming over her head, Mom made it clear that with each and every day, we have life.

We have opportunities.

We have choices.

Those choices have consequences.

People can look for the good in others or dwell on the bad. Fanny had a positive outlook on life, and very little got her down and out. Even a cancer diagnosis didn't keep her down.

Because Mom was the nurturer, she made the choice to delay treatment until the school year ended. During the months preceding her surgery, Mom taught me how to clean, wash clothes, shop for food, cook, and write checks. As my training progressed, her health declined. I handled many of the household chores after school, as Mom was simply too weak.

During one trip to the grocery store, I can vividly remember Mom instructing me to write my first check at the checkout counter. The young clerk immediately told Mom that I wasn't allowed to.

Mom smiled at the cashier, didn't argue, and nodded to me to continue. When I got to the signature line, she took the check, signed it, presented it for payment, and asked, "Did he fill it out correctly?" Sheepishly, the clerk accepted the check, bagged the groceries, and called for someone to walk us to the car.

This is how Fanny taught me to be a leader. She would often tell me that people responded much better when served honey to drink than vinegar. Fanny said, "There's no pride in telling other people they are wrong, shaming them in public, or making them feel small. Help them be better. Stand tall, and they will stand with you." That's just how she lived her life. Always thinking of others and how they would feel, even though she had every reason to be nasty or angry.

Cancer sucks.

Cancer is the ultimate excuse to become the worst version of yourself.

Cancer hadn't heard Fanny's rules yet.

Mom was battling for her life. I don't know how she did it. Somehow, somehow, she would consistently make the choice for character regardless of circumstance.

Mom may not have been the leader of a multibillion-dollar company, yet she knew very well how to lead like she was the Chief Executive Officer. With clear conviction, Mom knew that the actions and behaviors of a person defines who they would become and how others would see and relate to them.

Reflecting back on this lesson as an adult, that is when I first recognized the level of my mom's resilience through leadership. Maybe the shock of hearing the news and translating it to death prompted me to grow up a little faster than others my age. One thing I know for sure was that Fanny refused to be defined by her circumstances. She believed in the power of choice, and today it is why I tell my grandkids, "Choices define your character, not circumstances."

BEDSIDE WISDOM

IN THE MONTHS following Mom's surgery, it was my responsibility to handle all the tasks she had trained me to do. Friends of the family took care of my brother, so I only had to tend to the house, Dad, and Mom.

Cleaning meant more than sweeping the middle of the floor and dusting around objects. It meant cleaning the surface of the furniture both around and underneath whatever was sitting on the tables. It meant getting on my hands and knees to find those hidden dust bunnies in the corners. Detailing those corners shaped my discipline, attention to detail, and accountability. Mom believed that the way you do anything is the way you do everything. Fanny taught me that anyone can sweep in the middle. It's the easy part. Fanny would say,

“A person who cares about their job will do what's needed even if it's hard.

These folks know how to take it to the corners.”

I liked taking care of Dad, too. Earlier in my childhood, I can remember often waking up to the sound of Mom and Dad sitting at the kitchen table whispering and sharing an occasional laugh. I tried so hard to hear from my bedroom but never quite made out their conversations. I would just lay there, quiet as could be, never wanting to let on that I could even faintly hear them. It was a comforting time and a wonderful memory to cherish. Before too long, I would hear the front door latch. The next thing I knew Mom was calling my name to wake me up for school.

Getting up early and spending time with Dad was so special. Every weekday was like clockwork. He would awake around six a.m. and in thirty minutes be ready for the day and sit at the kitchen table. I still have fond memories of sharing dinner with lively conversations around the shiny chrome table with a yellow laminate top and brightly colored yellow, plastic-covered chairs.

Dad ate his breakfast: a single sunny-side-up egg, two pieces of

buttered toast, and a cup of hot, black coffee. We would talk until it was time for him to leave for work. At the door, I handed him his lunch pail packed with all his favorites, just like Mom taught me to do.

My time with Mom was spent by her bedside. I helped her to the restroom, made sure her bandages were clean, fed her, and tucked the covers up to her chin. Sometimes she would shiver, and I would add another quilt to warm her up. Cancer is cold.

Although Mom never traveled internationally, she has unknowingly been a source of global impact through her legacy. Fanny taught me about cultural diversity and inclusion while at her bedside. She taught me why it is important not to make rash judgments about people based on their outward appearance. She told me to wait until they revealed the inside, then I would know what kind of person they were and whether I would include them in my trusted counsel of wise voices.

Mom nurtured and cared for me in ways I never expected and certainly at times did not deserve. She beat the odds that were given to her with her diagnosis and went on to live another forty- three years. Mom was a humble servant of God who instilled in me daily doses of life lessons, a process that was accelerated when her diagnosis was given.

Fanny was wife to Slim for sixty-five years, mother of three, Grandma Frances or Gma Gee to seven, and great-grandma to eleven. My parents loved nicknames and wore the names Slim and Fanny as badges of honor. In fact, most people either didn't know or had forgotten their real names, Troy and Frances. They were so good about relationships, too, that people could be formal and informal with them at the same time. I can remember Dad saying, "You can call me anything you like, just don't call me too late for dinner."

Slim and Fanny celebrated people, life, and created the perfect home of cohesion before I even knew what that word meant. In that space, I felt the truest sense of being loved—a special place where I knew I belonged. They honored me with value and respected my

contributions to finding solutions for even the simplest of decisions—what to have for dinner, how to rearrange a room, or what we could make for Grandma Goldie at Christmas—all included my input. We shared mutual respect, dignity for all humankind, and banded together in adversity and good times. These life lessons, *Fanny Rules*, have carried with me through the course of my life.

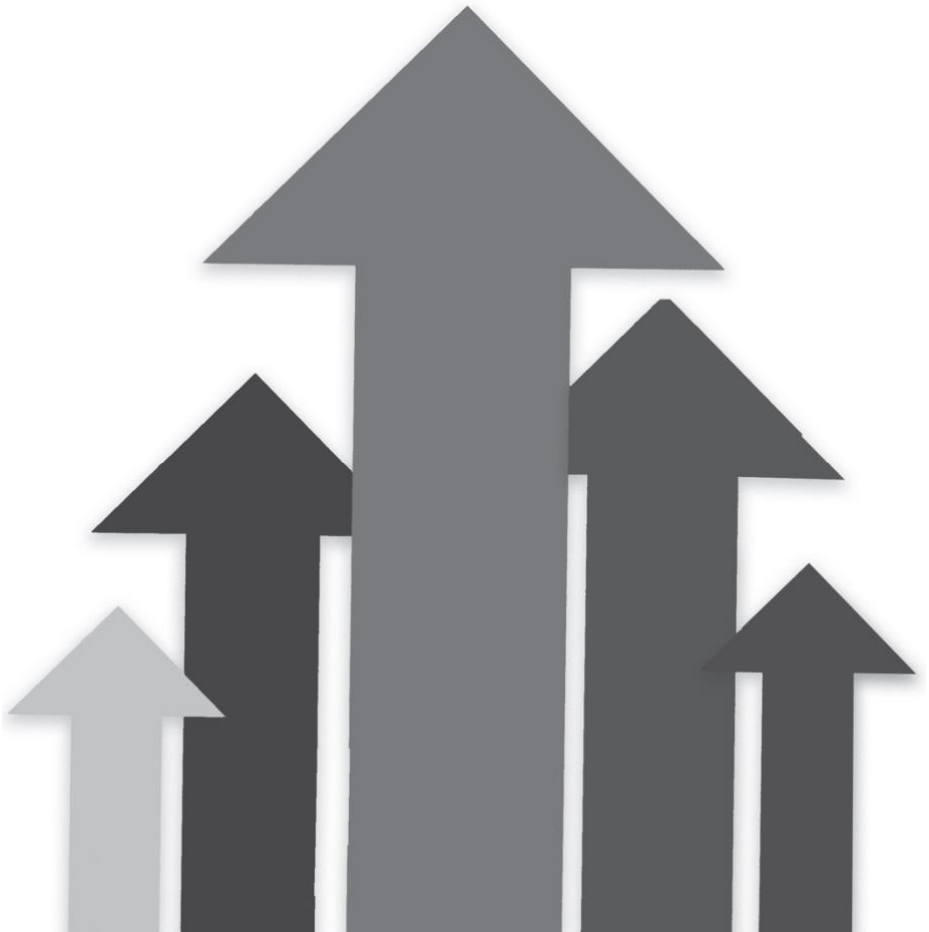
Through these great tidbits of wisdom, her teachable moments, Fanny instilled in me the value of investing in others. She helped me understand the importance of not judging others too harshly or quickly when they did not look or act like me. I can still hear her voice, “Give people a second chance.” Her bedside wisdom gave me a first glimpse into the real value of mentoring and how it would shape me and the choices I would make in my personal and professional life. Parents have this wonderful opportunity to be our teachers, nourishers, caregivers, providers, and protectors when they choose to be. Some children are not so lucky to have a “Slim and Fanny” in their lives, but for me, my parents were the first mentors I ever had. For that, I am eternally grateful.

Mom never lost sight of her plan to make her own choices, not based upon circumstance, but based upon will. Not sure if she would survive, that woman spent hours and hours pouring every ounce of Mom wisdom into me that she had the strength to handle. From bedside to armchair, these nine *rules* are the nuggets of wisdom that changed the course of my life.

RULE ONE: TEACHABLE

Didn't Yo Fanny Teach Ya?

“You don't have to know everything. You
just need to be teachable.”



WHEN LEADERS THINK THEY KNOW EVERYTHING, THAT'S WHEN THE TROUBLE STARTS.

LEADERS WITH A KNOW-IT-ALL ATTITUDE have missed out on what “yo’ mama” (in this case yo’ Fanny) should have taught them. It’s simply amazing to witness people failing to practice even the most reasonably expected forms of common sense and common courtesies. Fanny and Slim gave us strict instructions when we were playing in the front yard, or sitting on the porch, to be the first person to speak when others walk by. This would show respect and extend trust.

Back in the early 1960s, people in these parts of West “by God” Virginia didn’t even lock their doors at night. It was a simple, laid back time when trust and honor were more common than trying to get over on someone else or “cheat them out of their due,” as Dad would say. The screen door and all the windows would be left open to let in the cool mountain breeze that blew after the sun went down. You slept unencumbered from the worry of unwanted intruders while nestled deep under the handmade quilts passed down from generation to generation. The beds were a little lumpy, but Mom held to the mantra of being grateful and showing gratitude in all ways for all things big or small. Fanny would say, “If you don’t like what you have, then just remember: What the good Lord giveth, He can easily take away. And, if you’re not respectful, I’ll be sure to claim the rest of what he leaves behind just to make sure you remember to count those blessings.”

At times, I wish to retreat to those simpler days. There was this air of informality and unbridled trust. It was a simple time of welcoming strangers into one’s home and sharing lemonade and a homemade sugar cookie topped with green-colored buttercream icing. Like many of life’s little treasures, no one knows how good they have it, until it’s gone.

I would often ask myself, “Why was it so important to be first at speaking to those who passed by?” I wasn’t allowed to be first in line for ice cream treats—I had to wait my turn. It seemed silly to wait if you could hurry up and beat the other kids to the front of the line. Besides, it was fun to jump in front of Greg and Pam. They were my friends and surely didn’t mind. It was just a game.

With Fanny, every opportunity was a life lesson—a teachable moment—those special times when you provide insight and let folks in on the secret of what is behind Door #2. It wasn’t a lecture as if you did something wrong. It was more of a mentoring conversation with a tweak. Just enough of a slight change in my thinking that gave me a new perspective. You could think of it sort of like making an adjustment to a high-performance engine running on a race track. When it gets to the pit stop, the goal is for the pitsters to make minor changes to allow the engine to optimally perform when it goes back on the track. It’s not about breaking down the engine and rebuilding it. It’s about fine-tuning and operating with finesse.

Speaking first was a sign of respect. Fanny said it was how people should be treated. Fanny excelled at cultivating, nurturing, and sustaining long-term relationships. She knew it is important to be teachable, too, because that mindset fuels one’s desire to learn and grow. The real magic in being a leader is how you apply the knowledge you gain along the way with how you treat people. It’s not one or the other.

HAVE THE WILLINGNESS TO BE WRONG TO FURTHER WHAT IS RIGHT

THE BEST WINS ARE WON with passion and not position. As a young boy, it took quite a while to wrap my head around this concept. How in the world does that even make any sense? Who wants to be wrong? Of course I want to be right. Who doesn’t? Certainly, this

ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Cohesion Culture: Proven Principles to Retain Your Top Talent
Best-selling Title (2019) Koehler Books

*Mission Matters: World's Leading Entrepreneurs Reveal Their Top
Tips for Success*

Best New Release (2020) Mr. Century City, LLC

What is the most important life lesson

to pass on when faced with our own mortality? What leadership attributes do you want to instill in your children?

Fanny Rules: A Mother's Leadership Lessons that Never Grow Old contains

a lifetime of principles broken down into nine lessons passed on to a twelve-year-old boy from his mother's bedside.

Affectionately nicknamed by his peers and colleagues, Dr. Troy grew up to be

an international speaker, author, consultant, and executive coach in the areas of culture and leadership,

strategy, and change. Here, Dr. Troy shares his memories of his late mother,

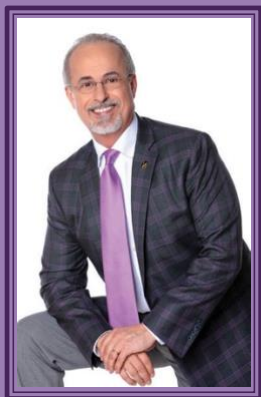
Fanny, and her remarkable common-sense life view. Her teachable moments

became the foundation of his revered leadership teachings around the world.

This practical leadership book offers lessons cloaked in heartwarming and

hilarious stories. Just as Fanny passed these valuable leadership lessons on to

her son, you can do the same for the next generation of leaders.



"Dr. Troy brings meaning to triumph, happiness and love—honoring his wonderful mother by passing on her wisdom for generations of leaders to come."

—**MARK PETTIT**

Bestselling Author, EMMY®

Award-winner & Actor

"I loved reading the book because of its true-to-life application of the skills we need as a leader. I love the ninth rule—'Finding Yourself.'"

—**ELENITA V. SAN ROQUE**

Chief Executive Officer, Association of Asian Confederation of Credit Unions

BUSINESS & ECONOMICS:
Leadership



9 781646 633838

\$16.95

 köehlerbooks™