



Road Rules...

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The Ten Commandments of Houseguests

I RELUCTANTLY SIGNED MY NAME ON THE ONE-YEAR LEASE, ending a wanderlust life on the road. Continuing the hospitality I discovered while traveling, in just five months more than 50 road-tripping climbers were guests in my home. They brought crash pads, haul bags, Rubbermaids and dogs...leaving behind fond memories, a few yellow spots on the carpet and several reasons why the term houseguest can make a local climber cringe.

There was a rule, no houseguests on the working-class climber's school nights,

HORROR STRUCK

WHEN I REACHED THE LIVING ROOM.

A BLARING CLIMBING VIDEO

ENTRANCED A SEA OF

PRANA CLAD UNSHAVED

AND UNSHOWERED MALES.

Sunday through Thursday. Yet come the weekend's close, the visitors' food crates failed to vanish from the kitchen. By Tuesday, sleeping bags camouflaged the living room rug. Sundown on Wednesday saw several weeks' worth of dirty clothes strewn about the laundry room. Thursday, as the guests surfed the Internet, an argument erupted between the roommates for breaking the rule. After a heated debate, a light bulb began to

shine...no one actually invited these guests. They simply came for a visit one rainy afternoon...and never left.

Rule #1. Do not nominate yourself a houseguest...thou shall wait to be invited.

Beneath a towel my hair underwent a hot oil treatment and a thick layer of mud covered my face. The visiting climber had departed for dinner, so I pulled on my bathrobe to enjoy the solitude. Horror struck when I reached the living room. A blaring climbing video entranced a sea of PrAna clad unshaved and unshowered males. Were there 10, 20...100? Their stench overpowered the incense, yet the audience gazed quizzically at me. From the couch came a familiar voice, "Oh, hey, it's cold out, so I invited these guys to stay over...I knew you wouldn't mind."

Rule #2 Houseguests shall not multiply without consent.

Savoring the salmon dinner we prepared, the penniless climber sipped red wine as a fire blazed. Perhaps it was the Merlot that induced his sermon. "I am committed, I am a real climber," he said, an evangelist declaring his faith in life on the road. "I would never throw my life away working a meaningless 9-5 job...like you two do."

Rule #3 Thou shall not insult the hosts' way of life...which pays the bills to keep you warm.

I was greeted one early Saturday morning by a look of horror on my roommate's face. "What is it...are we out of coffee?" I asked. Her slender finger emerged from her robe, pointing to countertop. I rubbed the sleep from my eyes in disbelief. There, next to the French press draped over our Lenox tea set were the dirt encrusted socks of the visiting teen-age climber.

Rule #4 Thou shall not contaminate food preparation areas with dirty laundry.

A visitor's dishwashing tactic...the dirty plate passes through the cold water 2-3 times as the guest avoids making eye contact with the sink. The plate is set upon the counter top, hands are dried and the climber retires in front of the TV. Perhaps he doesn't notice the dishwasher or is highly allergic to soap. Or maybe our guest's mommy will show up and chisel through the dried refried beans.

Rule #5 Your Mommy doesn't live here. Thou shall always clean up after oneself.

Grabbing an M-80 from his bag, the houseguest proceeded to the second floor to conduct

his highly scientific experiment regarding the effects of noise. Carefully he opened the window and aimed for the patio, whose sliding glass door protected a napping climber. Success...the explosion woke sleeping beauty...and shattered the sliding glass door into thousands of pieces.

Rule #6 Thou shall not be a complete moron...leave your explosives at home.

Mr. & Mrs. Full-time Climber introduced themselves, "Hi, we're your roommate's friends." Noticing their extensive duffle bag collection and my roommate's confused expression, I asked, "How long will you stay?" "I guess we should have called," laughed the Mrs., "we're here for a month." Then she stretched back to relax in the leather recliner.

Rule #7 Thou shall call before arriving.

Rule #8 Thou shall be considered a resident after 15 days.

After bidding farewell to the old Toyota pick-up, I closed the door and began to restore my home to its natural state. When I reached the ransacked bathroom, I considered replacing the medicine cabinet with a safe.

Rule #9 Thou shall not covet the hostess' fragrant white cream in tiny glass jars with French writing...and use as an all over body lotion.

When the magic words, "come stay at our place," leave the lips of a local climber, please review the rules above. And never forget the Golden Rule!

Rule #10 Thou shall ALWAYS put the seat down. (Especially when your host is a hostess.) ▽

