

LAURA ON LIFE

Cold weather is back, Rule 1603 initiated

There I was, standing outside my front door in the freezing cold, in bare feet, wearing nothing but a bathrobe. Obviously, something was wrong

with the cosmos.

Like many moms, I have rules for my household that no other family member understands.

I have rules about the dish cloth being rinsed out and hung on the faucet after use. I have rules about how to stack towels after being washed and folded. I have mealtime rules intended to expedite the vegetable eating.

Anyone who makes the rules, has reasons for those rules, even if they are not immediately apparent to the average human.

I don't like my dish cloth soaked in milk, coffee, and soggy cereal when I retrieve it from the bowels of my kitchen sink.

My mealtime rules are: If one doesn't clean ones plate, he must clean the littler box. Well, he would if we had a litter box.

The towel stacking rule was put into effect simply because I like the way my linen shelf looks with all the towels stacked fold-side out... So sue me.

Rule #1603 has recently been enacted: The front door is for guests only. Everyone else must go through the garage and



Laura Snyder

use the back door.

I have perfectly good reasons for this.

Shoe Chaos. In order to comply with rule #857, my family must take off their shoes when they enter the house. The collection of shoes at my front door looked like a half-off sale at the Goodwill store. Thus, the back door rule.

Drop-off Zone. Whenever anyone comes in my house they are immediately and unexplainably to eject their burdens. Whatever they are carrying at the time seems much too heavy to carry further. I think there must be some sort of physics phenom-

non having to do with a sudden increase in gravity as you enter my house. You can't fight physics, so I'd rather the phenomenon occur at my back door rather than my front door.

There is a crack in my wall near the front door that gets wider every time the door is slammed. My children don't do anything halfway. The door is either slammed shut or they don't close it at all. Nothing says trailer-trash like your front door left wide open.

The lock on my front door will allow one to leave the house, but not enter. This isn't ideal because I can only control the comings of my family through the front door, but not the goings. At least, if a guest knocks on the door, I don't have to unlock the door to open it.

This morning before school, my eight-year old remembered that he left his backpack in the car. He went out the back door to retrieve it. This boy is my youngest and like many youngest children, he exudes an air of authority that is not backed up

by his short stature. Instead of coming back through the back door, he came to the front door and pounded on it until he persuaded someone to come and open it.

My fourteen-year old went to see who it was. Because he knew the rule, and because he relished a chance to annoy his younger brother, he refused to open the door and told him to go to the back door.

The youngest was still in control mode and started ordering the older one to open the door. I told the son inside the house that he needed to walk away and ignore him, because I knew that if there was nobody to argue with, the little rule-breaker would eventually stop beating on the door and simply use the back door.

Five minutes later, my husband had to leave for work. I remembered a last minute item I needed to give to him and I ran out the front door in my bathrobe and bare feet just as he was rolling out of the driveway. I caught him just in time. Relieved, I tiptoed through the cold, wet grass back to the front door and realized I had locked myself out.

I knocked, but I knew it was in vain. I had just told the only one left in the house to ignore the knocking. I stood there, my bare toes frosting over, shivering in my bathrobe at my own front door.

Rule #1603 might have to be revised.

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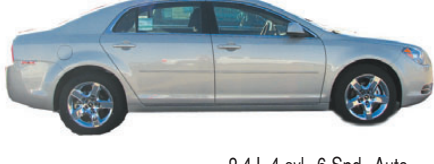

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