

The Seven Rules of Fly Fishing

Ron Robinson
Education Chair

(This article of Ron Robinson's appeared in the January 2006 issue of Reel Lines. It seems appropriate, at this time of the year and with so many new members, that we revisit this topic, and that we reflect upon the fundamental question: Why do we fly fish?)

The following was given to me over 35 years ago by Frank Messersmith, one of the best fisherman I have ever met. Frank fished with all types of tackle and for all types of fish. I think his wisdom holds as good today as it did then.

The following should not be confused with the usual "tackle tips" or "how to" articles so prevalent in the fishing literature today. Understand, we have no quarrel with these. It's just that the subject at hand, as the title indicates, is much more basic. These Fundamental Truths are more in the magnitude of Natural Laws. As such, they transcend minor details and deal with all kinds of fishing - everywhere and all the time.

1. Results are proportional to hours spent. If you fish more you will catch more than if you didn't. Not more than someone else, just you.
2. The best time to go fishing is whenever you can get away. Making excuses for not going will not catch fish.
3. Strikes are most apt to occur when your fly, lure or bait is in (on) the water. Walking, riding, paddling, false casting, etc. isn't going to catch fish.
4. The sun sets faster when you are fishing than at any other time. Your fishing time is limited so make the most of it.
5. Miserable weather conditions often produce excellent fishing. Remember #1, #2, #3 and #4 above.
6. Half of the success of fishing is in the telling of it. This is perhaps the most underutilized law for most beginners.
7. The single most effective fishing technique ever discovered is "One more cast, just one more cast."

Never, never forget this:

These Basic Laws can be summed up for all fisherman, for all fishing, everywhere: Go fishing as often as you can. Start early, stay late, and keep on fishing, all the time. Don't stop to rest, don't stop to talk, just keep on fishing. Don't stop to watch the sunrise, sunset, birds, deer or whatever, you can watch while you are fishing. Don't spend too much time changing flies, lures, leaders, lines, rods, reels, boots, waters, etc. Very few fish are caught while doing this. Don't stop fishing because the wind is rising, or it's starting to rain, or snow, or sleet, just keep on fishing. Don't stop because the fish are not hitting, they may start any minute, so keep on fishing. And finally when you must stop, when it's too late to keep on fishing, when it's really getting too dark to see, when you are overdue back at camp, home, or where ever, there is always time for "One more cast, just one more cast."