

Christina Lu / BuzzFeed

1. You DON'T need to: Let women off the elevator first.

It's not "chivalrous" to let women off the elevator first, as if it were the sinking *Titanic*. It's just annoying, and a little condescending, especially when the women in question are at the back of the elevator. Besides, waiting for them often just slows the exiting process down. **"The basic rule with elevators (and subways, buses, and trains) is to let people off before you get on. Letting women off first does not apply here,"** said sex educator and therapist Jo Langford. "If a guy is standing in an elevator full of ladies, but he's closest to the door, [he should] get the hell out of the way."

2. You DON'T need to: Send a thank-you card after a job interview.

The importance of following up a job interview with a brief thank you can't be stressed enough, but it no longer has to come in the form of a handwritten note. ***Business Insider* Managing Editor Jessica Liebman speaks in strong support of the thank-you email, especially if the position is in the media industry.** The main benefit is speed: While the handwritten note might seem more personal, it inevitably comes with a delay. "I'm a firm believer in following up with a thank-you note less than 24 hours after the interview, while you're still fresh in the interviewer's mind," Liebman [wrote](#). It's also guaranteed to arrive in their inbox, and more likely to get a response. "Sending a handwritten note just feels ancient to me [...] Be current."

3. You DON'T need to: Remove your hat when inside.

There are a lot of [very passionate declarations](#) floating around that A MAN MUST NEVER WEAR A HAT INDOORS, but none provide any compelling reasons to support that claim. Is it because [the hat is tracking in all of the dust, soot, and dirt from these new industrial cities](#) (which, miraculously, avoided the rest of the body)? Or is it because the wearer is [speaking with someone who resides in a higher social class](#)? Or is it because he is speaking to *a woman* (who, incidentally, can leave her hat on [as long as it isn't a baseball cap])? Even Emily Post acknowledges [“these customs are now historical footnotes.”](#) Who needs them? **Unless you're going to an event with a specific dress code or you're visiting a place of worship that calls for the removal of hats, you can feel free to keep it on.** Just don't be surprised if you get a couple of raised eyebrows in response.

4. You DON'T need to: Keep elbows off the table.

If you're eating at a tiny table and you find yourself crowding your fellow diners, you obviously shouldn't take up more space with your arms or elbows on the table. **But the rule is meant mostly for the comfort of those around you, and only ever applicable while you're actually eating — not during conversational time in between courses.** As far as table manners go, breaking this rule would be one of the lesser transgressions, but be sure to read the room. Your boss might expect more of you than would your best friend.



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5. You DON'T need to: Always RSVP.

This one isn't as much of a hard-and-fast rule as it used to be, especially with blanket invitations being shared across social media platforms. Etiquette and relationship expert April Masini of [Ask April](#) opts for erring on the side of courtesy. “A head count is necessary for dinner, drink — whatever the event is,” she says. **“It's respectful to respond to invitations in the manner requested (email, phone, or**

written response card).” But if it’s the going-away blowout your acquaintance mass-texted about? Don’t stress about a response, especially if you won’t be attending.

6. You DON’T need to: Send professional emails during business hours only.

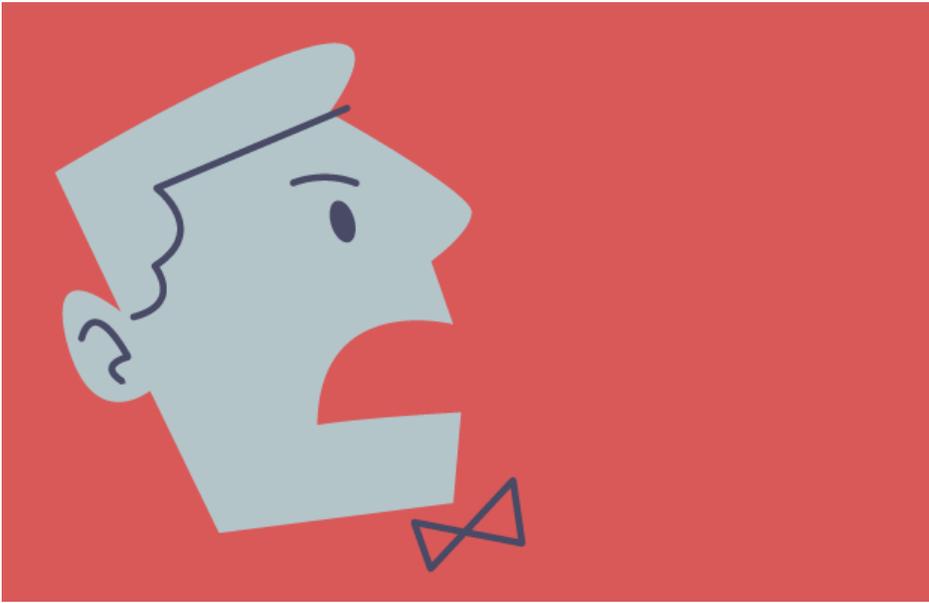
Emails are not texts, which are not phone calls, which themselves seem a little less restrictive than when we had landlines and no one could call anyone during dinner or, like, after 9 p.m. The rules have gotten more lax. **“It should not feel invasive to get a work email at midnight,”** said Langford. **“Emails, in contrast [to texts], get acknowledged and handled when they get acknowledged and handled.”** So, as long as you understand that the person you’re emailing isn’t on the clock and therefore isn’t obligated to see or respond when he or she gets it, you can email your colleagues or boss to your heart’s content.

7. You DON’T need to: Sit with your ankles crossed (if you are a woman).

This rule is firmly planted in antiquated ideas of femininity, which is more than enough reason to toss it aside. **Etiquette Daily says that the ankle- versus knee-crossing ruling is unspecified, and that “the focus remains on sitting up straight without slumping, slouching, or leaning so as not to convey laziness, disrespect, or disinterest,”** and even that, in our estimation, is at times a bridge too far. As long as you’re not sprawling into someone else’s personal space, slump and slouch away.

8. You DON’T need to: Eliminate swearing from your workplace dialogue.

This one is all about knowing your audience. We wouldn’t necessarily suggest, for example, greeting your boss Monday morning by saying, “Heyyyy boss, how the fuck was your weekend?!” or anything, but neither is an occasional f-word the end of the world in every office anymore. “In general, swearing indicates you’re at a loss for better vocabulary word, said Masini. **“However, if you use swear words to make a point, and not because you can’t come up with anything better to say, they can be used appropriately.”**



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9. You DON'T need to: Always wear black to a funeral.

The all-black rule is theoretically a show of respect, symbolic of your mourning and acknowledgment of the gravity of the affair. But this varies by culture and, of course, per the desires of the person being mourned. If you're unsure of either, black is still a pretty safe bet. **“Bottom line is that this is a tradition you can lean on if you're looking for guidance, but any color — navy, grey, brown, hunter green — is entirely appropriate,”** Masini says, adding: “Not showing off too much skin is also a good idea. The focus of a funeral should be on the deceased and his or her family, not on your fabulous cleavage or well-toned legs.”

10. You DON'T need to: Stop wearing white after Labor Day.

This is a silly rule — you can wear whatever you want, color-wise especially — and a confusing one. If you're supposed to stop, when are you allowed to start back up again? It's never been clear! Besides, **wearing white looks great all year.** “Winter white is incredibly chic,” said Masini. “White cashmere, white suede, white wool, white down parkas — stunning.” Everybody go get a white down parka!

11. You DON'T need to: Keep your phone off the dinner table.

Though it's likely to cause intergenerational conflict, keeping our phones on the table — especially at informal hangouts with friends/significant others — is an increasingly commonplace practice. **And as long as you're able to keep 95% of your attention on the person/people you're with, and you're not breaking any**

public decency rules by letting it ring or chime loudly, don't sweat having your phone within view. Apparently, some restaurant managers are even folding the table-phone into their dining experience: Il Covo in Los Angeles [offers diners](#) special small plates to put their phones on, to protect them from “dinner debris.”



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And three rules you *should* follow:

1. You DO still need to: Offer your subway seat to the elderly, pregnant, and/or anyone obviously burdened.

It's hard to imagine a world in which this *won't* feel like relevant, commonplace courtesy. **If it's easy enough for you to stand, and there's someone near you who might like that seat more than you, offer it to them.** Langford agreed: “Offering your seat to someone older, pregnant-er, or otherwise burdened by, say, small children, heavy packages, or any device designed to make walking easier (walkers, canes, etc.) is just polite.”

2. You DO still need to: Bring something (small!) to a dinner party.

There may be a few notable exceptions (dinner parties among college kids, and other situations in which it's commonly understood you're all broke), but generally speaking, it's polite to show up to a party at which you're being given a meal with something to contribute. **“It doesn't have to be expensive, and in fact it can be very inexpensive as long as it's lovely and respectful,”** said Masini. “Flowers, some local honey, a small pot of jam or a scented candle are lovely gifts to supplement the traditional bottle of wine, flowers, and candy.” At the very least, ask

the host beforehand if there's anything you can bring.

3. You DO still need to: Let someone know you're not interested in another date.

Letting dates disappear into the ether has become such a problem that there's a horrible new word for it: "ghosting." It's more than OK to lose interest in hanging out with someone you've been seeing, but **even if you've only been on a few dates (or even one!), and that person asks you out again, you need to respond, and clearly. And don't worry! It'll go better than you think!** "It was one date, not a deposition — no one is going to demand an explanation," said Langford. "There is a typical, sitcom-fueled script that nervous young people sometimes fall into where they say things to each other, like, 'We should do this again,' or 'See you soon,' or some version of 'Not THIS weekend, I have to wash my hair...' All of these things leave the asker with hope, even encouragement. A vague 'no' is nobody's friend, and it's much more humane to cut the cord in a clear way rather than leave [someone] hanging."

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