1. **Making Your Phone More Important Than People**

In this day and age, we’re so immersed in instant connectivity that it affects our face-to-face communication. It sadly looks like many of us give our phones (or other gadgets) priority over people in our presence.

The worst part is when you’re in the middle of a conversation and you hear your phone ring. There are times it’s some random call from a company trying to sell you something – but you get the urge to answer anyway. So I suggest that you set the phone to silent mode (or even turn it off) whenever you’re engaging with someone for a while.

Of course, there’s an exception if you’re legitimately expecting a call – work-related matters, family emergencies, your pregnant wife is due, etc. Remember to politely excuse yourself, keep the call brief and join back in if there’s nothing urgent. The last thing you want is to put the current conversation on hold for another one that takes just as long.

But in all other cases when you interact with family or friends, they deserve your full attention. Check out this [powerful speech](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRl8EIhrQjQ) on YouTube that sums up the downsides of modern technology – how it has made us “more selfish and separate than ever” in a way. So learn to put aside and not think about your phone or Facebook. You’re not meant to live FOR them.

**2. Saying Something Online That You Wouldn’t Say In Person**

You might think of the World Wide Web as an alternate reality, but it’s just a platform to expose yourself to the real world – and masses of REAL people. Don’t be naïve to think whatever you post online won’t come back to bite you.

Back in 2013, a woman who was head of corporate communications for a New York-based Internet company (of all things!) put out a [racist Tweet](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/22/pr-exec-fired-racist-tweet-aids-africa-apology) about AIDS before flying to South Africa for vacation. It only took the span of that 11-hour flight for her “joke” to go viral and turn her into a notorious public figure. She came back home and was fired.

Granted, that’s a pretty extreme example. Most of you wouldn’t think to do something like that. But the message there is clear: once someone else sees what you post, there’s no taking it back. It doesn’t have to be in social media – it can be any email or text that you don’t write carefully.

Here’s the golden rule about communicating with your device – always ask if it’s something you’d have the courage to say face-to-face. That rules out hateful or derogatory posts. That means when you discuss sensitive issues, you have to choose your words wisely.

Just take a look at this past presidential election and all the fights it caused online. People were unfriending each other – and that obviously affected their relationships offline. So always triple-check whatever you’re about to post (and try saying it out loud).

**3. Not Practicing Good Manners At Home**

People underestimate how much influence their habits at home have. If you’re not making an effort to stop picking your nose at home, you’re likely to unknowingly do it in public. I, unfortunately, know people who do – and I don’t like shaking their hands!

Good manners should start at home. You can’t insist on having this “switch” that you’ll remember to flip once you leave the house. Habits are either there or not there – learned or unlearned. We’re not programmed to just turn them on and off.

**4. Not Being Punctual**

My time in the Marine Corps has taught me the value of punctuality. Yes, it’s a good habit on its own and it lessens those stressful mornings when you’re in a rush. But it’s not primarily for you – but for the other person.

The truth is when you’re late, you’re wasting someone else’s time. That person has done their part to meet you at a time you both agreed on. So even if it’s unintentional – making them wait is like ripping them off. You’re not robbing them of cash but of something more valuable… their time.

I recommend being 10 to 15 minutes early to anything. That being said, if it turns out you have to be late – always have the courtesy to call or text the other person. The sooner they know about it, the better. Otherwise, it’s only going to hurt your reputation in the long run.

**5. Not Having Situational Awareness**

As big as the world is, we should still have an awareness of everything around us. Especially when we see people who clearly need help – an old woman carrying a bunch of grocery bags, or a new guy in town who looks a little lost. It’s in our nature to help out.

When it comes to situational awareness, there’s no more dramatic example than when Peter Parker’s uncle died in the 2002 *Spider-Man* film. It’s a [tragic scene](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTuRy0tmjGU) – one minute Peter lets a criminal escape out of revenge, and the next minute that criminal shoots his uncle. The line “I missed the part where that’s my problem” couldn’t have been more ironic.

But that was Peter’s turning point. He realized he had a responsibility that was bigger than himself. And like him, we all share a responsibility for our environment. Making someone’s (particularly a stranger’s) life easier out of kindness – that’s the sign of a true, well-mannered gentleman.

**6. Not Showing Respect At Work**

It’s easy to have just graduated from a top university and feel like a force to be reckoned with. But reality check – it’s completely different when you start working. It doesn’t matter how many A+ grades or achievements you’ve had. It’s not the time and place for your ego.

You’re starting from the bottom. You don’t know everything and a lot of what you learned in school won’t matter for now. So respect your managers and colleagues despite their backgrounds. They’re the ones with the experience.

And don’t try to act silly in front of the boss! Anne Hathaway’s character in *The Devil Wears Prada*[chuckled during a meeting](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ja2fgquYTCg) and called the fashion world “stuff” – only to be roasted by Meryl Streep. Don’t risk making jokes when you’re new. If your coworkers think you’re not serious, they won’t listen to you or even want to work with you. Know your place.

**7. Constantly Interrupting**

This goes in line with being respectful at work (and even everywhere else). You shouldn’t walk into a room and start spouting things while other people are talking. You shouldn’t jump in or cut them off when they’re trying to explain something.

It’s especially crucial to control your mouth in the office. By interrupting a colleague – you act like you fully understand them before they even finish. You might throw comments without the whole context in mind. And that can lead them to view you as someone arrogant or domineering.

Remember – we each have 2 ears and 1 mouth. So that probably means we should listen more than we talk, and listen a lot before we talk.

**8. Overusing Foul Language**

Curse words may sound cool in rap songs or make great punchlines in movies. But don’t overuse them. You know how the F-word can serve as an adverb (like *f—ing* stupid or *f—ing* cold)? If you use it every other sentence in a conversation, you’ll end up turning people off.

Those who have that habit are seen as classless or uneducated. And it can be uncomfortable for those who don’t hear that kind of language often. So you have to treat curse words as “special” words – they shouldn’t be abused and should only be spoken to emphasize something (not everything!).

**9. Having No Patience**

This one has a lot to do with empathy – as in putting yourself in other people’s shoes. Maybe you’re a workaholic, and that’s perfectly fine. You have the drive to make great things happen but you also rely on the help of others.

It’s very likely that those guys at home face different situations. They may have kids or obligations that don’t allow them to be as quick to respond as you’d like. That’s why you need to understand them and find a way to compromise.

If they can’t email you back by 8 p.m. on a given day, ask yourself if it’s a really big deal. It might turn out that 10 p.m. works better for them – and you actually don’t mind. Those little acts of patience make a huge difference in your professional and personal relationships.

**10. Not Making Introductions**

Lastly, don’t downgrade the value of introductions. I notice men who’ve been speaking to one person for a couple of minutes, while their good friend is just idly standing beside them. It’s clear that the two don’t know each other – so it’s up to the mutual guy to make a quick introduction and mention names.

Learn to be the “cool” one and take this initiative. That’s how you make everyone comfortable in these types of situations. And you’ll end up being thanked for an enjoyable event – or even new friendships formed.

**Manners Vs Etiquette**

Here’s a little reminder about the difference between these two:

* *Etiquette* covers the rules that are relevant to a given place or society. It’s okay if you make a few mistakes on etiquette, especially if you’re new to a country or culture (although you should try to research beforehand).
* *Manners* are basic ground rules that impact how you make people feel. You have them with the intention of making other human beings feel respected and equal to you.

Manners apply to all parts of the world. They matter for all dates, parties, meetings and job interviews alike. These are rules you can’t just ignore or give up on following. So make sure to start refining your manners NOW.