FINALLY!
THE UNWRITTEN RULES OF E-MAIL

1. Your subject line should always be descriptive. "Intro" is not descriptive enough. "Intro: Alex (The Muse) // Jennifer (XYZ Co)" is better.

2. Keep every email as short as you can; it saves you time and, more importantly, respects the recipient's time.

3. The faster you respond, the shorter your response is allowed to be.

4. Always include one line of context if the recipient isn't expecting this email. This is as relevant for first-time emails ("This is where we met") as it is for emails to someone you work with regularly ("This email is about the next phase of that project we're working on together").

5. Put your "ask" or "action items" first in the email, not last, and make them explicit. It should be immediately clear to the recipient what you want.

6. If there is a deadline, say so. If the request is not urgent, say so.

7. If you don't need a response and an email is FYI only, say so.

8. Make any questions as specific as possible. "What do you think about the proposal?" is not a good question. "Can we go ahead with the vendor's proposal of $20,000 by Friday?" is better.

9. Use bullets or numbered lists when possible. These are easier to skim than blocks of text.

10. When something is really important, bold it.

11. Do not overuse bold in your emails.

12. Use legible fonts. Comic Sans is not a legible font.

13. If you receive an ask from someone else but can't respond right away, answer letting him or her know when you'll get to it. This will save you check-in emails and help the other person plan.

14. Always CC the minimum number of people necessary to get the job done. The more people on the email chain, the lower the feeling of responsibility to answer.

15. Use "Reply All" only when truly needed. No one likes that person who clogs the whole department's inbox.

16. If someone is on an email thread he or she no longer needs to be on, move that person to BCC in your next reply, and say so in the first line of the email. ("Sam, thanks for introducing Mary and me—I'll move you to BCC and take it from here.")

17. Always do double opt-in intros. If you don't, people will start to dread hearing from you.

18. Don't hijack a thread on one topic to discuss another topic. Start a new email thread instead, with the relevant subject line and recipients.

19. Don't pile on. No one needs a 20th "This looked great to me, too!" email.

20. If you are emailing for business purposes, have your contact information and title in the footer. The simpler, the better.

21. If you are emailing a very busy person, it is totally acceptable and somewhat expected that you'll forward the initial email back to him or her with a follow-up message after a week or two. Most busy people require at least one of these. Don't do more than three.

22. It is not acceptable to follow up on an email within 48 hours unless it is truly urgent. Many people treat email as a form of correspondence and may simply have higher priorities than answering you right away.

23. If you receive or want to send an angry email, wait on it. If it's urgent, get on the phone instead.

Anon