

Etiquette. It's a nine-letter word. It's like 2 swear words and a raised eyebrow.

But unlike *those* "bad" words, this one is one you can't get enough of. And most of the time, the "rules" I'm about to set forth (in no particular order) do not get violated with enough regularity to warrant so much as a verbal warning, never mind dismissal and a note in your permanent file. Still and all, it never hurts to review once in a while. Right? These "rules" apply variously to auditioning, rehearsal, performance, and even going to see a show.

1. Bathe before you leave home, and use unscented deodorant. No scented hair products, colognes, perfumes, etc. Don't dine at "*Garlic GARlic GARLIC!*" Nobody needs to smell you, good or bad.
2. Arrive on time. This means that you will be ready to start at the starting time. If rehearsal starts at 7:00, and you need to find a parking space, walk to the theatre, get to where you can drop your stuff safely somewhere, take care of any "necessities" (ahem), warm-up -- whatever you have to do -- you may need to arrive at 6:30. Be ready to work when the job starts.
On a side note to all directors: with the exception of breaks in the middle, rehearsals are for the actor. Turn your cell phone off. Meet with your designers before or after. Have your stage manager prepared. Nothing worse for an actor than to show up ready on time, and have to wait for the "boss".
3. When you're late (and you will be at some time) apologize to everyone, not just the director. If you are five minutes late, and you have kept eleven other people waiting, you have cost the production one whole hour of lost time. Be sorry, be sincere, and project. And don't do it again.
4. Be prepared. You should have already worked on the evening's section, incorporating all notes from the director and SM. You shouldn't have to ask any questions, you should have already found the answers. If you have questions, though, ask them. The only "stupid" question is the one you don't ask.
5. Have a couple of sharpened pencils with erasers handy, not pens.
6. If, in lieu of a bound script, you have been given loose printed pages, the best approach is to punch a single hole in the top left corner (right, if that works for you) and secure them with a single binder ring. You can flip the top page off and let it roll over the ring and hang down to expose the next page, until you can grab it up underneath, and so on as the pages pass. A stapled page won't flip as easily, a binder clip is worse, and trying to hold a three-ring notebook is just more trouble than it's worth, especially for everyone else.
7. Cell phone off, pager off. You can check messages at break. If there is an issue that warrants your attention, alert the director at the beginning of rehearsal in case you do need to take a call. Hopefully he can work breaks or scene changes around it, if it comes.
8. If you smoke, don't. Chew gum, drink water, do pushups, meditate, whatever it takes. If you smoke, you stink. I know. I used to. Trust me. Don't.
9. If it's not your turn on stage, go sit quietly out of the way but nearby so that if you are called, you don't need to be called twice. Review your lines, meditate, whatever. Do not sit in the back (or anywhere) chatting with someone. It's not social hour, it's rehearsal.

10. If it *is* your turn on stage, give all your attention to your scene partners while the scene is active, the director or SM while it is not. Even if he or she is talking to another actor, it might affect you. Pay attention. Give your absolute best to your fellow actors, the director, SM, stage crew, and most especially the person you may need to ask to get you a cup of tea or bottle of water when you can't get it yourself. Everyone is important, some more so than others, but all deserve your respect. If you want theirs, give yours first.
11. When backstage, stay in character, stay focused. Anyone else back there should only be there because they have a job to do, either as part of the crew or an actor waiting to enter. If you just exited, get out of the way. If you're waiting to enter, focus on the stage, alert for your cue. With the exception of intermission, and perhaps long sections where you do not appear on stage, you are "on the job" from the five minute call to the final curtain. Talk about your rotten day at work after the show.
12. Don't touch anything that isn't yours. If something seems to be a danger to the safety of the cast and crew, bring it to the attention of the backstage manager. Don't move it yourself. Someone may come running off stage expecting to find it right there so they can run back on stage with it. Trust me. Voice of experience talking now.
13. Put your props, costumes, etc. where they belong. It may be the prop table, or in the prop master's hands. It may be the clothes hanger in the dressing room, or the wardrobe mistress's hand. Don't be a ten-year-old expecting mommy to come pick up after you.
14. When you get a note from the director or SM, listen respectfully and quietly, write it on the correct page in your script, say "thank you", and your job is done. Don't try to explain, rationalize, apologize, argue, justify, or anything else. If you want to take it up later with the director or SM, ask for a few minutes of their time after notes are over. They may say "sure, come early tomorrow and we'll talk about it then." Say thanks and be there. They want to go home too.
15. If a note contradicts a previous note, put a single line through the old one in your script, and write the new one in. The director can change her mind, too.
16. Listen to all the notes. It may be for someone else, but it may affect you. You may learn something anyway. If you don't think you can learn anything more, you've got a lot to learn.
17. Keep your behavior and conversation above reproach. No potty mouth, sexual innuendos, street talk, etc. No imitations of those you (and perhaps others) may deem less enjoyable to be around. Be the one everyone else thinks of as "the nice one". You never know who in the room knows whom, or who will be your next director!
18. Take your trash with you. I'm going to say it again. Take your trash with you. If it came in with you, it goes out with you. That styro coffee cup is the same one you were drinking out of when you came in. The only difference is it's now empty. If it's only "trash" to you now, that means you were drinking your coffee out of trash!! You didn't mind having it in your car before, when it could have spilled and made a mess, so now that it's empty it should be less of a burden. Same goes for the bag of chips, fancy bottle of mineral water, or whatever. Clean up after yourself. Take your trash with you. I don't have to say it again, do I?