Ah, youth! I remember my own youth, back before the invention of electricity. As fun as youth is, however, there are some things the old bulls have to teach when it comes to looking for a job. Here are a few tips for young professionals:

### 1. Dress Well

Even if the company is “business casual” or (heaven help us) “business grubby,” you can’t be that way. You can’t wear the uniform until you’re part of the team.

The best rule of thumb is to dress at least one step above whatever everyone else is wearing, and to wear a suit (this means with a tie, guys) if anyone at the company wears a suit. Don’t just do in with a shirt and tie. Wear the jacket, too. Look professional.

### 2. Shave

Either grow a beard or go clean shaven. Don’t go with the “two day stubble” beards Ben Affleck wore in *The Town*. Basically, anything Ben Affleck does, you shouldn’t do. (After all, you’re probably a better actor than he is.)

### 3. Don’t Text

Younger generations love to text. I’ve seen two people sitting next to one another texting instead of talking — to each other. Texting while on an interview or during the time you’re at the company for an interview is a real no-no. Turn off the fun little Android or iPhone for a couple of hours. Yes, you will live, believe it or not.

Generally speaking, texting at work should be kept to an absolute minimum. Texting while driving is incredibly stupid, illegal, and can get someone killed. Texting while at meals with another person (especially from work) is incredibly rude.

The phone/computer should be turned off during any business meetings (except for company business), any business lunches, or anytime you are supposed to be interacting with real-world people. Yes, I know you think you can multi-task. It is still rude and, in driving, very dangerous.
4. Realize Work Must Be Produced

I know school told you you’re really cute and valued you for “just being you,” but now you’re at the grown-ups table, and we don’t value you for just being you. We value you for the work you produce, not just for existing. This means you have to actually do something during the work day to get paid and get ahead.

Some of you work very hard, and some of you don’t. This is to the ones who don’t. Unemployment is not fun. Neither is living with your parents until you’re 40.

5. Be Respectful

You’re not dealing with someone who is a social equal. When you’re interviewing for a job, or working on a job, you’re dealing with someone who is your boss. Even if you have a friendship with him or her outside of the office, while you’re at the office you need to treat this person with the utmost of respect. This means not interrupting, no snide remarks, and doing the tasks you are assigned on time and within budget. If you cannot be respectful to your boss, you probably will eventually be looking for another job.

6. Understand Life And Work Are Not Fair

You may think it would be fair for you to get highly applauded and given time off because you worked 80 hours this week. Yeah.

Life isn’t fair and neither is work. Learn it. Live it. Know it. Breathe it. If you get a “good job” for a job well done, you’re lucky. If you get a “thank you,” you’re even luckier. If your boss gives you time off to go snowboarding or jump out of a perfectly good airplane, or whatever, you’re very, very lucky.

Probably what will happen is you’ll get a nod, and everyone will get back to work. Your accomplishments won’t be celebrated. You aren’t going to get a parade. Live with it. The rest of us have been living with it all of our lives.

7. Remember Your Manners

Behave yourself and remember your manners. A belch at dinner is not funny anymore. Shoving your way into an elevator before everyone is out is not acceptable. And so on. If you don’t know manners, buy one of the many great business etiquette books on the market.

These tips will help you fit into the new world of work you’re entering. While you will still have a great deal to learn, you can learn it without putting your foot in places it has no business being.

John Heckers is president of Heckers Development Group, LTD, a consulting firm based in Denver, Colorado, specializing in Strategic Executive Coaching.