

Contact - A Plead

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“Life,” said Marvin, “don’t talk to me about life.”

People mourning the decay of society as a whole and of the long lost art of Writing A Letter in particular force me to denounce them all as dumbbells. Dummies, dopes, boobs, boobys, pinheads, to be precise. There just is no better way of communication over distance than email.

Letters? Pah! Too much effort. Too personal. Take too long, too.

If you ever need to contact me, do it via email. Don’t call. I never answer the phone, even if I’m there. I’m one of those people who happily sit right next to the phone, the ringer turned off, listening to you talk to the answering machine. I hate the phone. It’s intrusive, it interrupts me. It asks for immediate attention, it catches me unprepared.

The cell-phone is even worse, but people more annoying than me have already pointed that out. Good job. If I had a cell-phone, it would be turned off. SMS is a neat idea, but it’s major drawback is that it requires a cell-phone. An alternative would be some form of Instant Messaging, such as ICQ, for example. However, these systems exhibit a similar level of intrusiveness as the phone.

Beepers are an invention from hell: as obnoxious as a cell-phone, PLUS the additional hassle of having to run to a phone to return the call. I laugh in your face, Evil Beeper Company!

Now email on the other hand... Aaah, email! I feel inclined to place a smiley here, but refrain for the sake of credibility. Anyway, email:

Writing what you want to say forces you to think instead of just opening your mouth and letting it out. No, don’t try to be snide and object “But people *don’t* think, they just babble!”. If you babble you either are a very good friend of mine or you mail is deleted right away. So there.

Email does not jump in my face and wave it's hand and yell "Attention, attention! Answer me NOW!"; if you liked it to do that, though, that would not be a problem either. I can choose to ignore emails as long as I like. I can take my time and think about what I want to say, *how* I want to say it. I can start a draft and come back to it later. (For the paranoid: I can keep a copy of what I said and of what others said to me.)

On the other hand, I can also respond immediately, if I desire so. And generally, I do. Unless I'm asleep you usually get a response from me within 30 Minutes. If it takes longer, I'm either away, busy or regarded your business as of minor importance. Don't worry, eventually, I'll answer.

Discussions can be followed over several days, weeks, months. I can include references, quotations etc, which you may read at your leisure time. Try that over the phone.

If you ever need to contact me, do it via email. And try to observe a few points:

- Don't babble. Think about what you have to say.
- If English is not your native language, do not use what you regard as "cool". Never use "Can U help me plz? I want 2 do...". Repeat after me: *Never ever use numbers or letter to substitute for complete words.* You just look like an idiot if you do.
- Don't write everything in one long line. If you use a web-based email-service such as Yahoo, break each line after 75 characters or so. Make paragraphs.
- Don't send HTML formatted emails. I won't read them. Email is a text medium.
- Don't send me attachments in a proprietary format such as Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel. If the content of the document you need to send to me is too complex to be expressed in ASCII text, turn it into a PDF, PS or HTML file.
- Never ever forward me any mass-emails. I've seen it before. I know the joke. The "virus-warning" is a hoax. No email that was sent you with the direction to "send it to everybody you know" is of serious interest to anyone.
- Don't ask me to sign up for anything so you get "referrer bonus points". I won't.

- No matter how urgent or important your message seems to you, don't use more than one punctuation mark. If you do, you'll just look like an idiot!!!!!!

Ok, good. Now you know. The question "If I were a shoe, where would I be?", which I just overheard on the radio, shall be answered another time.