

TONI'S RULES



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They are strict.
Listen carefully.

a) If you are on the phone with her and your other phone rings, dont even think about answering it.

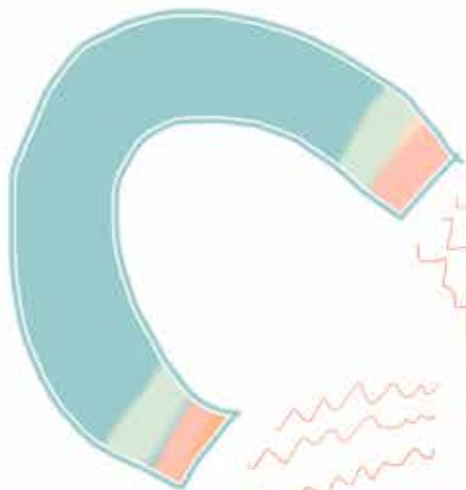


b) If you send an e-mail requiring a response for a political cause or

c) If you send an e-mail about a personal matter, dont wait up even if its good for the Jews it ain't gonna happen fast.

d) If you call her cell phone... on second thought don't— just don't do it.





e) If you call the house phone it's courteous to book a massage or order a Nikken product before leaving a message.

f) If you want to log on to Toni's computer at the farm do not move the 1978 Farm Camp Lowy bills in your quest for the buried mouse.

g) At Passover do not bring bagels or watch TV or try to shorten any part of the ceremony.



h) Recycle absolutely everything.

This includes lint from the dryer and hairbrush hair, all of which can be woven to make a wonderful comforter to be worn while freezing in front of the Grekins' wood burning stove.





i) Use gobs of butter on everything all the time, gobs really— on everything, all the time.

j) When foraging through the Grekin freezer have both EMS and the American Museum of Natural History Archeology Department numbers at hand. There are vicious rumors afloat that certain items in that appliance date back to Peter's bris.

k) Do not, I repeat, do not try to substitute ingredients, amounts or in any way alter a recipe Toni is making. It will not be pretty. Trust me on this.

l) ... allow touch healing, massage, oxygen water and magnets to annoint your body. If you must reassert your atheism or devotion to Western medicine find a corner and do it quietly.

*Obviously there is an art to nurturing this friendship which is impossible to summarize.
This is an Epic. It cannot be shortened.*

*Start before birth.
Introduce two little Jewish girls in a Brooklyn elementary school.
Name them Ida and Rose.
Have them become friends for life.*

*Then somewhere along the road commence commuting from Queens to Brooklyn
and Brooklyn to Queens (and include Coptake Lake) so that the kids are no longer sure if Ayres,
Steinhauers and eventually Grekins and Salzman/Paliers are family or friends.*

*Then create a spectacular camp for kids. Introduce and share beloved Auerbachs into the mix
and use a young psychiatrist as camp Doctor.
Sprinkle in another generation of kids that adore one another.
Spice with traditions that embrace and nurture.
Add a few weddings, funerals, illnesses, birthdays—joys and sorrows—
write countless songs to AHCYA YAYAI.*

At the head of the tribe place a woman of amazing imaginative talent and unstinting devotion.

One last rule:

*Do not ask me if she is a sister, a friend, a mentor,
or ask me to define this relationship.
She is a part of me, you figure it out.*