Context: In these crazy times, communication is so very important. We need clear messages. We need things that don't overwhelm us. We need effective meetings as our energy can wane - especially when our world is mainly virtual. While always important (even in the best of times), we are using this moment in time to launch Practical Best Practices for Rotary District 7090 when it comes to meeting and email etiquette.

On Meetings:

1. **Every meeting** (even with just 2-3 people attending) **needs to have some written objectives and an accompanying agenda.** The objectives should clearly answer what it is that we want to accomplish by the end of the meeting.

2. **Each item should clearly denote if it is "for your action", "for your information", "for your input" or "for your decision".** If it is "for your input" or "decision" - the question should be stated clearly. Perhaps you are not looking for input to all elements of the report but you do want input on "what obstacles might we encounter if we try to implement this new program in July?"

3. **An effective meeting should have the vast majority of items as "for your input" or "for your approval".** People just coming together to share reports and updates is not an optimum use of people's time.

4. **One person needs to be appointed to capture the decisions and actions agreed upon coming out of the meeting**. This should be circulated within 24 hours of the meeting ending. When meeting virtually, these can be captured in real time and shared on the screen at the end of the meeting. Two additional categories you might consider beyond decisions made and agreed upon actions would be a list of items "for future consideration" and "notes" - other for your info items that should be captured for all to read.

5. **Emails are for sharing information or exchanging documents.** It was not designed to be used as a way to problem solve. If the email is starting to get passed around and around with different ideas being written on each email, it is time to pick up the phone or call a meeting.

6. **The only people who are expected to do anything upon receipt of the email are those in the TO line.** Ideally the task you ask each person to do should be clearly noted in the text as well - using their name and noting their task. If you are in the cc line - you are not expected to take any action.

7. **Minimize those in the cc line.** It is best to keep those people to a limit. Have a clear rationale as to why you are including them in the cc line. Use the 4-way test - "is it fair to all concerned" and "does it build goodwill and better friendships". Minimize the number of times that you use the "reply all" function.

8. **Subject lines are critical -** it should convey the key message and type of response needed - e.g. for your information or for your input. Deadlines should be in subject line as well.

9. **If you are forwarding an email and adding another twist to the message, then edit the subject line.** The subject line should always communicate the intent of the message to those in the to line.

10. **There really are very few reasons, in the world of Rotary, to use the bcc line.** It does not typically line up with the four-way test for it is often "not fair to all concerned". It is not fair to the person on the bcc line who has to pretend they don't know this information. It is not fair to the people in the TO line as they think the message is confidential when it is not.