

Manners and Etiquette

Manners, etiquette, politeness are the oil that makes the machines of our relationships run smoothly. The relationship could be with your spouse or parents or friends or with the checkout clerk at Publix. Life is hard and often full of frustration and friction. ALL relationships have challenges. But good manners and proper etiquette can help interactions and communications go more smoothly.

Manners, etiquette, and politeness are very practical ways to show love to other people. God in His Word has clearly commanded us to love others. Most days we do not need to lay down our lives for another or go to some great sacrifice to feed or cloth someone in desperate need. But every day we have the opportunity to hold the door open for someone, speak a kind word, or simply be the patient guy in line at Walmart. All of these things are acts of love.

John 13:34-35 *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

Ephesians 4:32 *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

Colossians 3:12-14 *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

Everyday Good Manners

- 1) Do not talk negatively about other people. Before speaking to/about others consider what effect your words will have. *To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!* Proverbs 15:23 Do not gossip about others. Do not criticize or pass along bad news about others. It makes you look petty and peevish. If something negative needs to be said, go directly to the other person. Give them the chance to explain themselves. It is common decency not to talk bad about people when they are not present.
- 2) Do not grumble and complain - a person with good manners is above complaining about circumstances. *Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God.* Philippians 2:14-15.
- 3) Always greet others with kindness. Speak when spoken to. Respond in kind when greeted. When shaking hands grip firmly, look them in the eyes, and smile. Guys shake hands with girls only if they offer their hand first.
- 4) Stand to greet others: A gentleman stands when a lady near him stands or approaches. He always helps a lady with her chair when she sits or rises. He always helps a lady with her coat and retrieves items dropped by a lady or older person. He should always offer the woman to enter a room first. A gentleman offers his right arm to a lady and seats her to his right. Stand when an elder or guest enters the room and don't sit until you've offered them a seat. Always greet the elders and the women first. Never shake hands while seated.
- 5) Give appropriate compliments - a fundamental rule of good manners is to give. Never compliment in an overly familiar way.
- 6) Be careful about potentially awkward topics. Conversations about **religion, politics, health, age, and money can make people uncomfortable.** Don't put people on the spot about their finances or diet, for example. There is a time and place for these conversations. These subjects should be dealt with privately –and only with those whom you've earned the right to talk. Never say anything about someone's weight or appearance or age or money or political affiliation or religious affiliation –unless you know that person well enough that the conversation won't make them uncomfortable.
- 7) Always assume you pay your own way. Don't be the freeloader who shows up without any money. That person is a leech. If you invite somebody to coffee or dinner at a restaurant, it is your responsibility to pay for them. The one who invites pays. If they offer to pay for themselves or even pay for you, you should still insist that you pay. There may be exceptions, but you should always go into these situations assuming "If I invited, then I pay." If you intend for people to pay for themselves while out to dinner, be clear beforehand that you don't intend to pay for them before going out.

On the flip side never assume that somebody will pay for you. If someone invites you to coffee or dinner, make sure you can pay for yourself and always offer to pay for yourself. If they insist on paying for you, then it is polite to allow them.
- 8) Call ahead before you visit. Just showing up when the person might be unprepared is rarely a good idea. Never just show up unless you've been given the greenlight to do so ahead of time.
- 9) It's rarely okay to be "fashionably late." Always be on time. Being late is nothing but selfishness. Everyone is late occasionally because of something outside their control. Nobody likes to wait for people who are chronically late.

Also, it's important to realize when it is time to leave. Good times always need to end at some point. Don't be the last person to leave the party.

- 10) Be the type of guest your host wants to invite back. If somebody invites you into their home, especially for the first time, it is always in good taste to bring a gift. Flowers, candy, or even a dessert can be appropriate. Always make sure to not give anything too flashy or that would be an inconvenience.
If your host invites you to play games or wants to talk with you, be a good sport/guest. Offer to do favors but try not to overstep boundaries.
- 11) If you borrow something (ladder, car, mower) return it in better condition than when you got it. Never make someone regret they loaned you something.
- 12) Always be social when people are around. If you are in public or if there are other people around, stay off your cell phone. Being on your phone too much makes other the people feel insulted or neglected if you focus too much on it.
- 13) Always learn people's names. We all know people who are not good with names. That said, not remembering a person's name can make them feel unimportant. Even mispronouncing somebody's name can be insulting.
- 14) Always hold the door open for others. Guys walk on the street side when you are walking with a girl. Always offer your seat/chair to a woman or someone older than you. Always stand when a woman walks into the room.

Professional/Business/Academia Manners (from the *Curmudgeon's Guide*, Charles Murray)

- 1) Don't use first names with people considerably older than you until asked, and sometimes not even then. The trend is toward being too familiar and chummy, but you must resist the trend.
In professional settings and situations outside your family call people older than you by their title and last name until clearly invited to do otherwise.
- 2) Excise the word *like* from your spoken English. Do you use the word *like* as a verbal tick? I mean, like, do you insert it in, like, random points in your, like, spoken conversation? If the answer is yes, this is the single most important tip in the entire lesson: STOP IT. This makes you look less mature and less intelligent.
- 3) Respond positively and joyfully to requests.
In response to a request never say, "no problem." Respond positively and say, "I'll be happy to help," "my pleasure," "glad to help."
- 4) Office/business/academic emails/communications/letters are not texts to friends.
 - For salutations, start formal and work down.
 - Some acronyms are okay, but cute spelling abbreviations (as in texting) are not.

- Always use correct syntax and punctuation
- Always acknowledge receipt
- Be careful with words and phrases like *share*, *reaching out*, and *be there for you*. They are too chummy and causal. Use more professional and straight forward language. "I am telling you" (not *sharing with you*) or "I am contacting you" (not *I am reaching out*)

- 5) Like it or not, if you have visible tattoos, piercings, or hair of a color not found in nature, many employers will not hire you except for positions where you will not be visible to the public. Fair or not, people/employers do make judgements based on outward appearances.

Most older people assume (truthfully) that while tattoos might be mainstream today, in the past they were common among savage tribes and then, more recently, among the lowest classes of Western societies.

- 6) Dress appropriately. Dress to make others feel comfortable. Don't dress primarily for your own comfort or to draw attention to yourself. Dress modestly, neatly, and professionally. Never be the best or worst dressed person in the room –at church or at the office. When going to a job interview, find out how the workers dress every day and dress a notch better for the interview.

Understand various levels of dress codes: White tie, black tie, black tie optional, semiformal, festive, business formal, business casual, dressy casual, casual.

Hats/caps off indoors unless it is a large public space (airport, hotel lobby, athletic arena).

- 7) The unentitled shall inherit the earth. Do not ever think that certain tasks are beneath you. Don't ever think your boss, especially if he is significantly older than you, doesn't understand how hard you work. Chances are he worked twice as hard as you do when he was your age. Don't complain about the type of work or its difficulty -especially when you are young.

Good help is hard to find. Really hard to find. Sure, there are lots of people with the right degrees and résumés, but the kind of employee employers yearn for stick out almost immediately. Be the employee who is the first in line to do whatever needs to be done. Be the guy who goes above and beyond with routine menial tasks. It is not hard to stand out.

- 8) Eighty percent of success is showing up. Ninety percent of success is showing up on time. Whatever the event, family, work, community or church, just showing up, greatly enhances the likelihood that you will deeply and meaningfully engage and benefit from the relationships.