



GOOD MANNERS & ETIQUETTE FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

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The difference between etiquette and manners is especially true for the 1990s. Etiquette is protocol. It includes rules of behavior that you memorize; it seldom allows for personal variations, individual concerns and needs. Manners, on the other hand, relate to kindness and caring about others. Having good manners goes beyond socially acceptable behavior and relates more to how you treat others because you care about them, their self-esteem and their feelings. Good manners are under your control because they come from your heart, not a formal etiquette book.

Good manners form the basis for good human relationships wherever you are—at home, at work, at the grocery store, in church, in an airport or on the golf course. Having good manners allows us to change with the times because the basis for manners is a genuine concern for others. When we're faced with new circumstances, such as whether second- (or third-) time brides wear white or the correct way to introduce members of blended families (stepmother, stepchildren), manners help us deal sensitively with the situation.

More and more business people are faced with the challenges of knowing acceptable or expected etiquette for today's business world. In fact, business etiquette is big business, with special courses being offered for those who are entering the work force as well as for those who want to gain extra skills as they move up the corporate ladder. Spouses are often invited along and taken into consideration when job interviews include receptions, dinners and other special occasions. A gracious, etiquette-savvy spouse is just as important in many situations as the person who is actually applying for the job.

Real manners are instinctive. You don't turn them on and off like a switch. Real manners include such things as:

- *Becoming comfortable at making introductions and being introduced—and making others feel good while it's happening.*

- *Starting the conversation again and helping to rescue someone who has just said something embarrassing.*

- *Buying a small bouquet of flowers or other thoughtful gift to take home to your spouse or child.*
- *Taking a picnic lunch to a neighbor on their moving day.*
- *Clipping out a magazine or newspaper article and sending it to a friend who would be interested in it.*
- *Buying some concert tickets and arranging transportation for a lonely elderly friend who loves music. (Better yet, attend the concert and enjoy it with them.)*
- *Providing transportation for a friend whose car is being repaired or for an elderly neighbor who needs a ride to the doctor or the store.*
- *Rising to the defense of someone who is being unfairly criticized.*
- *Noticing the "wallflower" at a social event and helping to bring that person into the group.*
- *Becoming comfortable with good table manners and the art of "small talk" so that you can concentrate on others and what they are saying.*

Don't forget that your own family is important, too! Setting a good example and practicing good manners within your own home helps make all family members feel better. It also helps them to be more aware of their own behavior. They'll also feel more at ease with their social skills when outside their home surroundings.

Good manners can be contagious. When you're nice to someone else, that person is nice back to you. Two people then feel good about themselves and each other and spread this good feeling to others. We should never be too busy for kindness and caring. Ask yourself:

- *When was the last time you wrote a newsy letter to a good friend?*
- *When was the last time you called someone who is home alone and probably feeling lonely?*
- *When was the last time you took time to write a congratulatory note to someone who performed well in a committee meeting or conference?*
- *How often do you say "please" and "thank you" to your family members for doing everyday tasks, such as clearing off*

the table, dusting, taking out the trash, etc.?

- *How often do you actually sit down and talk face to face with other family members or a good friend?*
- *When was the last time you said “thank you” to your child’s teacher or to someone who was important to your life?*

With “good sense” etiquette and caring manners, you have the power to make order out of disorder and bring great pleasure into other people’s lives, in everyday living as well as on special occasions.

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Educational programs of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, C. Oran Little, Director of Cooperative Extension Service, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Lexington, and Kentucky State University, Frankfort. Issued 8-94; Last Printed 8-95, 2500 copies; 8500 copies to date

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