

Manners that Matter most

The Easy Guide To Etiquette At Home And In The World

By June Eding

With A Special Foreword
By Norah Lawlor

Part I: Why Do Good Manners Matter?

“The word “manners” may cause some of us to think back to childhood when boring lessons were enforced by a strict older relative or we were scolded at the dinner table.

In fact, manners aren't about being told how to dress, speak or act. Being well mannered doesn't require knowledge of a hundred different rules. We shouldn't worry that having good manners means “going back” to a bygone era when people were uptight, judgmental, and use decorum as a means to judge and ostracize others.

Having good manners means being kind. It means considering someone else's viewpoint alongside your own. The core of good manners is the golden rule: “Treat others as you yourself would want to be treated.”

Manners Make Life Easier
Civility costs nothing and buys everything
Mary Wortley Montagu

Having good manners means treating other people with kindness and respect. It doesn't take much, but small actions make a big difference. In the course of a busy day, simple gestures reassure the people we interact with that we are taking them into consideration and doing what we can to make things more pleasant. For those we know and love, employing good manners solidifies our relationship and shows others how much we appreciate them.

These small kindnesses make our lives easier. They take the anxiety out of living in a world where we are constantly meeting new people and encountering new faces. They help make our relationships at home, at work, and among friends more rewarding.

Manners are also reassuring. We can rely on the common language of manners in any situation. When we walk into a party where we don't know anyone, manners make us confident that we will make a good impression. Manners also help us overcome potential awkwardness when we bump into a stranger, alleviate anxiety when meeting a friend's family for the first time.

Manners are guideposts for behavior

that serve as helpful road signs on the path of human interaction.

We can't anticipate other people's needs all the time, or know with absolute certainty what someone else wants. But when it comes to social situations and spending time with each other, we share the same basic desires: we all want to feel accepted, respected, and put at ease so we can have a good time in a new situation or meet our objective quickly and efficiently. We don't want to feel rushed or bossed, put on the spot, or unappreciated or ignored.

Practicing good manners doesn't have to be complicated.

Simple actions make a big impact. Show up on time (or apologize sincerely if we're late), serve someone else before we serve ourselves at a table, or hold the door open for someone if their hands are full. These actions form a portrait in someone else's mind of who we really are: a considerate, thoughtful person.

Having good manners means understanding that we all want respect and kindness, and striving to do what we can to ensure other people are treated well. Being a well-mannered person means you have

a wealth of tools available to make any situation easier.

The Power Of A First Impression

A man's manners are a mirror in which he shows his portrait.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

When it comes to making a good impression, our most powerful tool isn't a power suit, expensive watch, or statement jewelry. Good manners cost us nothing, are readily accessible at any time, and no matter what we're wearing, guarantee we will stand out in a crowd.

People with good manners set themselves apart in person, on the phone, and online. A well-mannered adult stands out as a person with “something special” whom other people want to be around. In matters professional and personal, people with good manners are welcomed into other people's lives as friends, coworkers, trusted allies, and long-term partners.

Whether it's a job interview, first date, or meeting important family members for the first time, good manners put us on the fast-track to being appreciated and respected by

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someone whom we've only just met.

Being kind and considerate to one another, in a variety of ways for a variety of circumstances, plants the seeds of a relationship. With good manners on display, we can turn an initial meeting into a friendship or long-term relationship, and ensure that the best of who we are is visible.

A More Profound Benefit Class is considerate of others.

It knows that good manners are nothing more than a series of petty sacrifices.

Ann Landers

At first, learning to pay attention to the needs of someone else may seem like a burden. In fact, considering another person's viewpoint and striving to treat him or her with respect in turn provides an opportunity to forget our own problems and preoccupations.

Manners can liberate us from churning worries and anxious internal chatter. They can even help us to find a way out of a bad mood. They allow us to shift perspective from our own internal struggles and dramas to being in the present moment with another person. In the process, we can learn something new about someone we hadn't met before take a break from our own inner dilemmas. Often, we emerge from our interaction to discover that whatever issue or problem we were so caught up with in the first place doesn't really matter in the grand scheme of things.

How To Use This Book

This book won't tell you how to use a fish fork, or what wording to use on wedding invitation, or how to choose between sending flowers or a card, and so on. Although these pages offer specific tips and suggestions, *Manners That Matter Most* is not about providing you with strict rules for how to behave.

Rather, it is intended as a reminder of the benefits of practicing good manners. Far from a strict "do's and don'ts" list of behavior and decorum, good manners open opportunities to us, turn good first impressions into friendships, and help us experience the world as an enjoyable place on a daily basis. They provide a reassuring structure we can return to when things are hectic at home or at work. They allow us to offer the best of ourselves. This process can be incredibly rewarding. Often, making someone else's day makes our day, too.

We have many demands on our time. But cultivating good manners doesn't have to be hard work. This book covers 25 essentials applicable to any

situation – at work, at home, and among friends and acquaintances – that are easy to incorporate into your daily life. With a little bit of effort and consistent practice, they will help you turn good manners into a habit you will maintain over a lifetime.

Pg.20 Challenges To Maintaining Good Manners At Home, At Work, And In A Technological World

At Home

Maintaining good manners at home can sometimes be more challenging than practicing them in the world at large.

It's all too easy to fall into the trap of assuming that, because a spouse or partner, roommate, or family member likes or loves us, we can skip all formalities and forgo good manners altogether. We may even excuse our own behavior and write off our negative habits by calling them "quirks" that those who love us must accept as "part of who I am." Of course, this isn't true. No one is given a blank check to behave however they want in front of anyone, family member or not.

Other times, we sacrifice considerate behavior for the sake of personal convenience. This may happen without us even realizing it. For example, we may find ourselves shouting a question at someone from across the house because we're impatient to take care of something. Or, we may skip saying "please" and "thank you," and revert to issuing demands in our efforts to get everyone out the door on time.

These slip-ups are certainly understandable, but they take advantage of our relationships with others. They can also lead to hurt feelings and cause strain and negativity, causing a ripple effect of resentment. In a frantic moment, it may seem okay to boss someone around in the interest of making things happen faster, but injuring someone with a curt word takes longer to fix than being polite in the first place.

Taking the time and making a conscious effort to treat roommates, loved ones, and family members with the same respect we would give to a person we're meeting for the first time ensures that life at home is pleasant for everyone.

Furthermore, the structure provided by codes of behavior is reassuring. Everyone in the household is held accountable to the same standards of behavior, and no one is exempt. When people feel respected and are enjoying a calmer environment, they are more likely to contribute to daily tasks and

chores, leading to an efficient household. In a home environment that is prone to becoming hectic, manners keep us grounded in what really matters: being good to each other.

At Work

It is often said that, "it's not personal; it's just business."

The world of business is ever-changing. It is constantly responding to any number of outside forces, from a fluctuating world market and a shifting economy, to the pace of technology and manufacturing, to trends, seasonal demands, and even unpredictable celebrity influence and the tides of social media. Under these circumstances, no organization or company can remain stagnant. The result is change. Clients, deals, plans, proposals, assignments; all are subjected to last-minute readjustments and cancellations. In these cases, it's not personal; it's business.

However, "it's not personal, it's business" should never be used as a blanket justification for mistreating coworkers or employees. While the changing tides of business may not be personal, the workplace is. An office is a place where relationships and respect between coworkers and management make or break a company's long-term success. Maintaining harmony in a department despite big changes is vital to a successful workday and a productive workforce. In the close quarters of the office setting, where people can spend more time working with each other than they do with loved ones or family, maintaining a code of manners is essential. Passing stress down the line, so to speak, only contributes to a stymied, inefficient workplace fueled by anxiety, anger and resentment.

Use manners to keep things in check. The simple use of phrases like "please," "thank you," and/or other acknowledgements like "I appreciate that" helps to foster good will. It also assists employees and coworkers in feeling that their efforts are acknowledged, and creates a working environment where people naturally strive to offer their best and feel inspired to be a part of that environment for years to come.

Using Technology Politely

Technology is changing how we interact with each other in leaps and

bounds. With smart phones nearly everywhere, anyone can have access to a virtual world, 24/7. We are being forced to answer the question: How do we live in one world together, while simultaneously spending time in a virtual reality?

For many, the answer is: We can't. If we want to enjoy each other's company and fully experience life in the moment, our use of technology has to be structured and compartmentalized.

[...] Remember, you're in control of technology, not the other way around. In most cases, you don't have to answer a text message or email immediately. If you're hanging out with friends or loved ones, take a break from your phone. You work hard at your job to have free time, and you have a right to enjoy it. Remind yourself that you set aside the time to be with those close to you; take full advantage of that time before it's over. The time we spend with each other doesn't come back again.

If you find yourself debating whether or not jumping onto your phone is appropriate, keep this rule in mind: Modern technology does not provide you with the excuse to be late, act rude, ignore others, or distance yourself from the world in a manner that is inconsiderate. If you find yourself doing so, put your phone or head-phones away, and start paying attention to the world around you and your role within it.

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