

Good Manners

Think things out before speaking, especially if you are poor at finding the right words. Don't start sentences with awkward 'ums' and 'ers' in between. Practice speaking to a mirror, it works! It increases confidence in speaking, and it sounds much clearer; you may find you'll be using fewer 'ums' and 'ers' next time!

Choose your words wisely and don't rush to comment on things you don't know much about. Being a good listener is better than speaking. You don't need to have an opinion on everything.

Don't speak loudly. You will quickly lose respect if you do, as this is seen as overbearing and rude. It can also make others angry and upset before you even establish a relationship with them. They will think of you as a 'big mouth'! Practice turning your volume down.

Speak with respect to and of others by avoiding negative or insulting remarks. Avoid expressions or theoretical examples implying disrespect, degradation or that invite people to imagine offensive scenarios, like "What's up your butt?" or "How would you feel if someone..." followed by a description of violent or degrading acts. You may not intend this as offensive, but it is. General rule: if you don't want someone to speak about you that way, then don't speak this way to others.

Don't ever speak of bodily functions, such as using the bathroom or telling crude jokes. Even in casual conversation, this indicates immaturity and often makes bad impressions.

Always respect all elders, and listen to them and learn. They have been around, and can teach you plenty.

Using the terms 'Thank you', 'Please', and 'You're welcome' indicates good manners. People lacking in manners avoid these terms.

Hold open a door for anyone, male or female, following you closely. This is good manners and will never change.

Speak highly of your parents and show respect for them, even if you don't always feel that way. If you can't, avoid speaking about them at all. It's tacky to insult those who brought you into this world or raised you. Don't air family dirty laundry: it's tacky and rude.

Do not swear or use filthy language. It can make you sound cheap and disrespectful sometimes. People doing this are usually very immature and lack self-control or respect for themselves and others! Curse words not appropriate and you'll begin to feel more comfortable avoiding them. Profanity indicates an angry person and it puts people off immediately as it's distasteful and offensive. Using decent vocabulary gives the impression of intelligence, self-respect and character.

Greet others appropriately even if you know someone well. If you are a man, you do not want to greet a woman by saying, "Hey baby, what's shaking?" Instead, try something like, "Hello, good morning or evening," anything making you appear respectful.

Try showing you are interested in others by asking questions about them. Don't steal their spotlight by just talking about yourself. Don't come off as selfish. Continually talking of yourself is boring and others will avoid you.

Pay attention to how you carry yourself. Have some class, which is the same as manners. Don't slouch; have a neat appearance; shake hands firmly; be and smell clean; hold your head high and don't hide behind sunglasses inside or wear other "trying to be cool" looks at the wrong time; it gives the impression of arrogance and immaturity.

Don't put others down, belittle them or spread gossip. Never criticize someone in an attempt to demean or to elevate yourself. If you wouldn't like it done to you, then don't do it! Be complimentary and positive, for example, avoid criticizing an article someone has written. Their grammar and spelling may not be as good as yours but they tried. Having an opinion is fine, but being insulting reflects bad manners. Never tell secrets, especially those about your close friends. If someone is gossiping or belittling another, show you understand in a neutral way (a small nod to show you comprehend or an "mmhmm" should do).

Don't interrupt, cut off or override others, unless they are insulting or swearing, etc. Give others respect and try letting them finish; be a listener! And practice being a good one!

Ask for clarification properly. If you missed something someone said, or if you need clarification, ask "Could you say that again for me, please?" or "I'm sorry?" " Pardon?" also sounds polite enough. Avoid solely using the word "What?" as it's often brash and unrefined.

'Never use a phone when entering a bathroom, as some things are meant to be private. No one cares to 'hear' you doing your business. Regardless of why you are there, stay off the phone! No exceptions!

Think about phone manners and observe appropriate phone etiquette at all times.

Phone Etiquette

Don't phone before 7:00 am and after 9:00 pm [unless in an emergency or an important overseas call]. Also avoid calling people during mealtimes. People don't expect you to drop in and visit at these times, unless it is arranged. This includes texting, though you would obviously not text for emergencies.

Ensure the number you have is correct. If you do disturb someone and it's the wrong number then 'please' have the decency to say, "I'm so sorry! I have the wrong number!" That individual may be ill, in a wheelchair, or elderly, etc, so you should show respect and apologize for their inconvenience.

Check your voice! It carries much more than just a tone, and reflects your character and personality even on the phone! Remember: your listener cannot see you, so your phone-voice becomes your facial expressions, gestures, personality and character. Always check your voice when speaking; speak in a pleasant tone and very clearly.

Smile through your voice! What they hear will make a positive or negative impression.

When someone answers the phone don't be harsh and abrupt by telling them what you want first. This confuses them and makes them wonder who you are. You also appear very rude, which is bad if you need a favour from them. It gives the wrong impression before you start! And don't say, "Who is this?" You phoned them, so introduce yourself and state who you are and what you want – politely! For example; say "Hello, my name is Mrs. Peppermint, I'd like to speak to Mrs. Sally Lemon. Is she available?" Or if you are making inquiries, state; "Hello, this is Mrs. Peppermint. I saw an advert in the local paper for a shop assistant; is that position still open?" When finished, say, "Thank you for your help. Goodbye" and be genuine! Now ensure you give them time to say 'Goodbye' too!!

Give people a chance to answer their phone! They could be outside in their garden, knitting, baking, washing the car or at another end of the house. Don't just ring three times and hang up! It's annoying when you stopped doing something, go into the lounge to answer and just as it gets to your ear the caller hangs up!! Grrrrh!! :o)

Don't spend an hour [or hours] chatting to someone. Don't waste people's time or disturb the household! It's one of the biggest turn-off's to having a friendly chat! They will not want to talk to you again.

Answering your phone: Again – don't forget to check your voice! Just be pleasant and polite and say, 'Hello'. Never give your name or other personal details unless you know who called; it's too dangerous today. If you are alone and you don't know who the person is, don't tell them no-one is home or your husband is working, etc. Always pretend someone else is there. Use wisdom and good old-fashioned common sense! Be safe!

If the call is for someone else, say something like; "Would you wait a moment please? I'll just go and call them for you." Put the receiver down gently. If who they want to speak to is unavailable, say, "I'm sorry, Sally isn't available right now. May I take a message for her and ask her to phone you as soon as she can?"

If you must carry on two conversations at once you should always excuse yourself from one and resume it later. Say, "I'm sorry, can you hold on a minute; my boss is telling me something", and wait for the person's answer. If the personal conversation will last more than a minute, it would be better to ask, "Can I call you back? My mother needs to talk to me and it may take a few minutes".

In case of needing a restroom break, say something to get off the phone, without sharing too much information.

When talking on the phone in a public space, keep in mind that everything you say is no longer just your news. Keep your voice at "indoor voice" level, or lower.

Generally, people with good manners don't talk about potentially embarrassing private issues in public.

When on the phone, don't talk with others in the room. What's worse than having a phone conversation with one who chats, perhaps not listening to what you're saying, and you can't tell if they are speaking to you or others.

Avoid using the computer while on the phone unless it's part of customer services. It is extremely rude and unpleasant when someone makes you listen to a clacking keyboard.

Turn off your phone in films, don't text while pretending to pay attention to someone else, and never call during meals, or important ceremonies, where mobiles SHOULD be always switched off at all times.

Refrain from using your cell at check-out counters it is bad taste and horribly rude to talk on your cell while having an interaction with other individuals - particularly those people who are handling your money, be it in the grocery store, the mall or at a petrol station. It is unacceptable to treat cashiers as ATMs. Get off the phone, do your business, and then resume your call at a more appropriate time.

When with others in a social setting, try to refrain from using your cell phone. It implies you'd rather be somewhere else, with someone else, and that who you are with is less important.

Make meaningful introductions. If someone tells you their name, either by shaking your hand and saying their name or by saying "Hi! I'm John!" etc., do not just say "Okay!" or "Hi!". State your name too! This may seem obvious, but people overlook this and come across as not wanting to know the other person.

If you are visiting a friend's parents' home, offer the parents help with anything needed there, such as taking out trash or preparing the table for dinner. Don't forget to thank them for their hospitality and opening up their home, as well as allowing you to eat with them. Then they will be sure to have more respect for you when you return.

Address older adults and professional seniority with the title of "Mr.", "Mrs.", "Miss", or "Ms." until you are asked by them to address them by their first name.

Make certain the person prefers you to use their nick name before you use it. Ask, if uncertain. Don't assume that "Michael" prefers to be called "Mike" or "Sandra" prefers "Sandy".

Improve your manners when speaking. Here are other common etiquette mistakes and their solutions:

Never say "Yeah". It's "Yes" or preferably "Yes, please".

It's never "Huh?" or "What?", it's "Pardon?"

Instead of "Nah", say "No, thank you."

Always use "May I...?" instead of "Can I?"

Don't send letters or notes written in red ink or pencil. It's a sign of disrespect. You can use red ink for lists, or notes to yourself. It's different when it's part of the job, like teachers who may use it for grading.

Give gratitude and be thankful. If someone gives you a gift, goes out of their way for you or provides an appreciated service, write a thank-you note. Not an email unless you are at work, and you should still write a thank-you note for a gift. Saying "thank you" is just not enough. Always keep thank-you cards in your office and home. Be thankful for what others do or have done for you.

Some people think spelling things wrong is normal. It's actually a sign of bad manners and poor intelligence. If you don't care enough to spell it right, you're insulting the recipient.

Use proper grammar and spelling. Use a dictionary when composing a note, letter or email. It's essential. Your words and the context of your message will be understood and not require re-reading.

Never use IM, SMS language or computer jargon when sending a note as a 'Thank you' or other communication. Using jargon, in general, makes a person appear self-centred if others don't understand it. It also makes the listener feel ignorant.

You should never assume everyone knows what LOL or TTYL means.

"Cuz" should never be used instead of "because"

"2" should never replace "to", "two" or "too". It can cause confusion, in some cases.

Know the difference between you, your and you're

Use a dictionary or thesaurus if you aren't sure of the spelling, meaning or usage of a word.

Proofread! Don't assume spell-check catches everything. Re-read everything.

Not taking the time to spell simple words may be seen as disrespectful.

Unless you're chatting with close friends and the grammar is usually horrible, you should never use jargon or abbreviations unless they are commonly recognized (Mr., Mrs., dates, etc.)

Understand when IM and chat room language should be used. Avoid using it outside of IM, text or chat situations. It makes you appear lazy and ill-mannered.

Avoid generational jargon and slang. When communicating with someone of a different generation, make sure terms used are those familiar to all generations (use English grammar). You wouldn't like it if your boss or grandparents sent you a letter using a strange code or with phrases in a foreign language. Older and younger generations use different jargon.

Treat to speak to others as you would like to be spoken to and treated. Having manners is like the Golden Rule of social behaviour.

Tips

Manners are little rules that help us all act with respect toward one another. If you are unsure what to do in a particular situation, remember that manners strive to make everyone around you feel comfortable, and take action based on this thought.

Some people feel that being "mannered" is "fake" or unauthentic. Instead, realize that manners are normal and healthy social conventions that make interactions easier and more pleasant. Not every interaction is an opportunity to correct others or set them straight.

Start your day off by smiling and feeling positive. Treat everyone you come across with respect. That way their day may be a good one; and maybe they'll pass that smile and positive attitude along to someone else.

Smiles are contagious. Greet your co-workers when you arrive. Say goodbye when you leave.

If someone else is speaking, try hard not to be domineering or overbearing by taking over the story or subject matter at hand, even if you feel that you can tell it better. Try to let them finish what they are saying, before adding your two cents worth.

If you are talking to someone on the phone, be sure to pause every once in a while in order to allow the other person time to speak - and take a genuine interest in what they have to share with you. It may be more important than you think and It shows that you care.

Start showing your manners with your parents. They'll be overjoyed that their children are speaking to them with respect, for respect shows that you have good manners.

If you are in school, make sure that you behave so that your teacher can speak highly of you - pay attention in class and do your homework. Treat your teacher with respect. They did not train to be your teacher to be abused by you. See your teacher as your friend not your enemy, they are there to teach and train you so that you can have a good future.

Avoid annoying others with your cell phone. Be sure to turn it off in movie theaters, and don't drive with a cell phone stuck to your ear (this is illegal in some places anyway). It is not only dangerous, but will cause others to think that you are rude, especially when you are cutting in front of them in traffic and so forth.

Good manners will never go out of style, so practice having good manners. It can only help you in the long run.

If you are receiving an award shake the giver's hand.
One of the easiest ways to appear good mannered is to be silent and only talk when you have something important to say. This adds weight to your words.

Always use the essentials - ma'am, sir, miss, pardon, thank you, please, you're welcome, my pleasure etc.

Manners are often dictated by good sense. If you would be offended by an action, that action is likely to offend others too. Check yourself often to see if your talk, conversations, and treatment of others is respectful or

rude. Would you like to be spoken to or treated the same way? Then correct whatever needs correction.

Do not talk with your mouth full. Do not stop mid-sentence to eat, chew, swallow and then continue - your well-mannered companions will of course not interrupt you, and they should not have to wait and watch you eat. Eat or talk, but do not do both at the same time.

When asking someone about a touchy subject, keep your voice the same that you would if you were asking about the weather. This shows that you're taking them seriously and will allow them to be more comfortable about answering.

Pardon bodily functions. Say "excuse me" if you belch or cough (or make any other unavoidable noise with your body). Laughing at a belch is poor manners and makes a person seem crude. It may be funny to your friends but others around you see it as poor character. Remember, though, that just because you say "excuse me" that does not mean you can belch at any time you like. Avoid doing it in front of anyone.

There are a variety of books available on the subject of manners which can be useful for fine tuning.

Check used book stores or library sales for books on etiquette. The books are updated from year to year and older editions are replaced with new.

The advice from the 50's seems archaic today. If you can find one released within the last decade you can at least get the majority of common etiquette rules.

There is a book available titled "How to Be a Gentleman". This will make an excellent gift for any man and especially those in high school or college. The rules are geared towards contemporary male etiquette. Most other etiquette books will have a largely female perspective.

Warnings

Good manners doesn't mean that you can't joke and cut-up, and have a sense of humour, don't confuse good manners with being a stuffed shirt and reserved, so to speak. Manners are the stitches that hold the fabric of society together. So let's keep them that way!

Do not get intimidated or feel ashamed if your friends make fun of you for opening the door for a girl or helping an older person do something they cannot do alone. Being good mannered may seem out of fashion and even silly to some, but it only shows how mature and bright you are, because in the long run, that good you did to others will be returned. (Even if it isn't, you still did the right thing.)

Having bad manners can be associated with having poor character.

Don't be overly polite with your peers unless you're in a business setting or you may come across as a weak, spineless, people-pleaser.

Keep in mind there is such a thing as being too polite. You should be kind, but don't be uptight with all the "polite" rules. As with everything else in this world, there is a happy medium between the two extremes.