



# Good Manners STILL MAKE SENSE

PEOPLE NOTICE IF YOU HAVE GOOD MANNERS

By Kaye Terry Hanson

Jenna doesn't like parties because she feels like everyone is watching her. Tyler is uncomfortable at the family reunion because he has to meet too many strangers. Jenna and Tyler and maybe you would have a lot more fun at gatherings large and small by following these three suggestions:



1. Know that good manners make good sense.



2. Try meeting and greeting and talking to people.



3. Say thank you and other nice things.



### 1 Know That Good Manners Make Good Sense

At a backyard barbecue, dinner before the big dance, or your cousin Amy's wedding, people may make judgments about you by how you eat. To make a good impression, try this:

- Learn mealtime manners by watching someone with good manners and copying what they do.
- Wait for the host or hostess to tell you where to sit at a table.
- Put your napkin on your lap.
- Sit up straight.
- Don't talk with your mouth full.
- Wait until everyone at the table has been served before you begin eating.
- When asking for something to be passed to you, say please and thank you.
- Alert the host or hostess before you arrive if you have allergies. They will likely be glad to adjust the menu to make you feel welcome and comfortable.

*Two young boys I know are allergic to peanuts. I have watched their mother carefully teach them to ask when they arrive at a birthday party, "Are there peanuts in the ice cream or the cake?" Those boys are learning early to be responsible for managing their own allergies.*

- When serving yourself, take small portions the first time at a buffet or the first time the food is passed around.

*I know a senior missionary couple who invited two elders to eat breakfast with them. The senior sister cooked four times as much as usual for her and her husband. The first elder took all the eggs from the plate and said, "I hope these are for me." He should have taken a small amount and waited to be offered more.*



### 2 Try Meeting and Greeting and Talking to People

Nothing convinces others that you have good manners more than the way you talk. Learning to meet people and carry on short conversations is a valuable skill. Like all skills, what you say gets better (and much easier) with practice. Try this:

- Stand when an outsider—man or woman—enters the group.
- When you are introduced, shake hands, make eye contact with the new person, and say their name, "Hello, Tiffany," or "Hello, Mr. Roberts."

- Learn to introduce people to each other.

*The concept behind introductions is simple: remember to say the name of the most important person first. What makes someone important? Age, gender, or title. So, say the older person's name first: "Grandpa, this is my friend, Jason." If people are about the same age, say the woman's name first, "Lucy, this is my friend, Tyler." Or, first say the person with a title, "Bishop Manwaring, this is my uncle Max Johnson."*

- Stop thinking about yourself. Think about making the other person comfortable.
- Prepare three harmless questions to start a conversation, like "Tell me about [your work, your vacation, your hobbies, your family]." Or, "What do you like best about [living in Cincinnati, winters in Colorado, the first half of the play]?"
- Avoid saying "I," "me," or "mine" all the time.
- Remember, being interested is more important than being interesting.
- Watch for people nearby whom you can include.
- Choose language that portrays courtesy. Offensive words are insensitive to everyone.

### 3 Say Thank You and Other Nice Things

Handwritten notes are treasures. A thoughtful teenager will learn how to dash off a note of substance that is both gracious and charming. A phone call, a typewritten letter, a text message, or an e-mail are also great methods of thanking people, but none of them carries the weight and the personal touch of the handwritten note. Here are some ideas about thoughtful thank-you notes:

- A thank-you note should mention the gift or service specifically and include a sentence or two about how that gift or service is valuable to you.

*Dear Aunt Alice,  
Thank you for the book about sea creatures that you sent for my birthday. This book will be great for a report I'm working on for school. I'll think of you every time I read the book.  
Love, Darrin*

- When someone does you a favor, however small, you should thank them. You will gain a reputation of being well-mannered, because you are.
- Consider thanking someone you don't even know for a speech you heard, a fireside they organized, or a book they wrote.
- Write a note of congratulations on a promotion, an achievement, or reaching a milestone.

- Learn to accept compliments by smiling and saying thank you.
- Learn to say "You're welcome."

Your friends and neighbors will be so amazed at your newfound skills that they will start watching you to learn how something is done well. You'll be welcome at gatherings of every kind. So try it! **NE**

#### IT COSTS YOU NOTHING

“Kind words and good manners will cost you nothing and will add greatly to the happiness of those around you.”

President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98), *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham (1946), 267.

