

Carrying Your Manners/Proper Etiquette

When looking for a mate, what are some qualities to look for? Some may say honesty, intelligence, and a sense of humor. One quality that does not necessarily come to mind quickly is etiquette. According to dictionary.com, "Etiquette is a system of rules and conventions that regulate social and professional behavior." It can be referred to as the "proper" way of living life.

There are many different types of etiquette. However, the most common forms of etiquette that people need to be more educated on are dating, table manners, and black tie occasions. Have no fear, Shonna's guidelines are here! By following these guidelines of etiquette, one will no longer doubt himself or herself when faced with preparing to go on a date, eating at a fancy restaurant, or being the host or guest at an elegant event.

Dating can be a nerve-racking experience, especially if one does not have any experience in the dating field. However, there are basic guidelines that everyone must follow when getting prepared for a date. The first guideline is to be on time. Being on time is crucial when going on a date. It shows respect for the prospective date if one would take the time to show up early. By being on time, one will be doing his or her date a favor, so he or she will not have to go through the stress of possibly being stood up. Women greatly appreciate when their dates are on time.

Another guideline to keep in mind before going on a date is to make sure to dress well. In this day in age with all of these fashion shows and magazines, there is absolutely no excuse for someone not to look decently. Men, take the time out to iron clothes, and women, take the time to buy clothes that actually fit! One must also consider the occasion of the date. There is nothing more embarrassing than going to play laser tag, wearing stilettos and a mini-dress. This is a big fashion no-no. Also, one would not want to be caught at a fancy restaurant wearing a sweat suit and a fitted cap. Not only is this embarrassing, but this can also create unwanted attention.

Along with dressing up and being on time, there are other things that one should

consider for a date. Most people have been on blind dates before and found that they were not attracted to their date. What does one do in a situation like this? A key guideline when dating is to give everyone a good chance. Although one may not be physically attracted to your date, this is no excuse to be rude or to run away from the date. We are all human beings, and we have feelings. Physical appearance is only one asset to a person. The more one gets to know his or her date, the more likely that there will be a common interest between the two. The saying really does hold true: "Don't judge a book by its cover." Let's say by chance that there is nothing of common interest between the two. Some men may decide to talk about themselves the whole night because they are not interested in what their dates may have to say. This will only lead to boredom for the other person, and eventually, the date will become fed-up. People should not talk about themselves the whole night

If one is not interested in the person that he or she may be with on a date, do not say those magical words of "I will call you." By saying "I will call" gives the impression that he likes the person whom he just went out on a date with. A woman will constantly wait by the phone until he calls. Drew Barrymore in "He's Just Not That Into You" says, "Maybe he lost my number or is out of town or got hit by a cab." Women are often in denial. They make excuses as to why he has not called yet. Woman should not put themselves through this stress and should just move on. He is just a guy, and there are plenty of fish in the sea.

In today's society, people are so quick to slurp up their food and burp so nonchalantly that they do not realize that it is bad table manners. Truth be told, many Americans do not have table manners. America is not even looked at as having manners through media, as well as other countries. On VH1, there are shows such as Charm School and From G's To Gents. People on these shows are depicted as having no class and are in serious need of help in being the respectable young men and women that

they should be! While I do appreciate their efforts, it is right for them to represent the American citizens.

Many do not like going to restaurants because they feel it is complicated, especially where the silverware is concerned. "Table etiquette makes me really confused because I do not know when to use what fork or spoon first.

It is a lot of work, and that's why I don't go to real fancy restaurants. I was not even taught about these kinds of thing" (Graham). Graham noted that because she grew up in the projects, she never had the opportunity to go to a fancy restaurant, so sometimes it is not that people do not want to learn proper etiquette; it is that they have no occasion to learn. For people who have never been taught table manners, it can be frustrating to go into a restaurant not knowing what to do. However, the rules of table etiquette are fairly simple. A key guideline of how to have proper table etiquette at a restaurant is to know when to use each utensil. For starters, always work from the outside in. First are the appetizer plate and then the main course. The outermost utensils to be used are the appetizer fork and then the dinner plate fork. The same guideline applies with the spoons. The outermost spoon is the soup spoon, the second spoon is for the dinner plate, and the third spoon is for dessert. If one remembers to always start from the outside and work in, one will exhibit great table etiquette.

In addition to having great table etiquette, one must also learn the basic guidelines of how to conduct himself or herself while at an event. Whether one is hosting or attending a party, one must always maintain black tie etiquette. "Model the behavior in your everyday life in a way that always reflects how you would like to be treated" (Pulsifer). At a black tie occasion, one would be upset if someone came to a party being rude to everyone and not dressed appropriately. Therefore, it is important for the host to remain in good standing and model the behavior that one would like the guests to portray. To elaborate on Pulsifer's point, take these next guidelines into great consideration. The first black tie