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Etiquette is Not Just for *Grandma*



*I grew up learning good etiquette for just
about every situation.*

It was part of the fabric of society at one time. Today, etiquette seems to have lost some of its place in our society, but yet, I still believe that it is a powerful tool in your toolkit, and one that doesn't add to your to-do list, doesn't cost money and multiples exponentially in the return you get.

Some of you may never have heard of *Emily Post* — dubbed “The Queen of Etiquette” of my parents' generation and thus a part of my childhood rearing. She wrote a syndicated column and people would write to her with their



The “**10 Tips on Business Etiquette**” from Emily Post has been approved for my use in this article by The Emily Post Institute, Inc.

The document (without my comments and additions of course) is available for download by [clicking here](#).

I encourage you click on the image below to visit the Emily Post Institute's website to learn more etiquette skills that will help you in your career.

THE *Emily Post* Institute
BUSINESS, WEDDING & LIFESTYLE ETIQUETTE

etiquette conundrums and she would give her best advice — which was considered quite worthy to be heeded.



Below is Emily Post's *10 Tips for Business Etiquette*. The original suggestions by Emily are in black and my additional comments are italicized in blue.

1. **Be on time.** Start out every interaction — employee, employer, colleague, business acquaintance — on a positive note rather than having to start out by apologizing for being late. — *I go one step further and say — be early. When everybody shows up “just on time” the meeting starts late.*
2. **Use “Please,” “Thank you,” and “You’re Welcome.”** Please turns a demand into a request. “Thank you,” changes an expectation into an appreciation. “You’re welcome,” acknowledges the other person’s thanks, rather than discounting it with a “no, thank you.” — *Consistently, all the time, with everyone. No one is above this.*
3. **Be prepared.** There’s nothing more frustrating than having someone tie up a meeting because he or she hasn’t done the assigned work. — *Do your homework. Don’t rely on others to carry your weight. Show that you’re in the game and you are on top of things!*
4. **Names and titles matter.** When you write to someone, double check that you have spelled his or her name correctly and have used the proper title. People don’t like it when their names are

Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. If you have that awareness, you have good manners, no matter what fork you use.

-Emily Post

NEVER SO LONG AS YOU LIVE, WRITE A LETTER TO A MAN
- NO MATTER WHO HE IS - THAT YOU WOULD BE ASHAMED TO SEE IN A NEWSPAPER ABOVE YOUR SIGNATURE.
-EMILY POST

While the reference to gender is not of today’s culture, it is nevertheless particularly wise for today’s culture.

Social media, camera phones and email have made just about everything we say and do subject to publication and scrutiny.

It is always wise to remember that.

Remember, employers today look at the social

mispronounced. Before you meet with someone for the first time, find out how to pronounce his or her name correctly. — *Be sure to double-check this information, particularly if you're going to be introducing the person. It's important! When introducing people, say their name slowly so others get it and make sure you say their title as well.*

5. Treat people equally. Be sure to treat each person with whom you interact with respect, no matter what role or position in the company they hold. Make sure your employees practice good etiquette with customers and with each other to be able to work in a friction-free atmosphere. This will improve business and encourage repeat customers. — *Treat the lowest paid person the same as the CEO. To do that means recognizing them, thanking them, talking to them. Hallway presence is important. Say good morning to everyone you pass and use their name if you know it. "Good morning Jane" is so much better than just "Good morning!"*

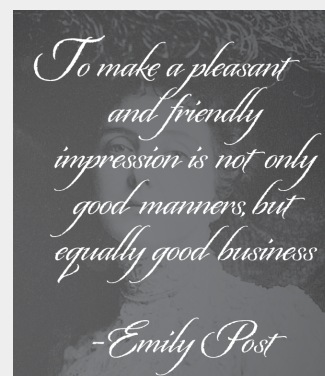
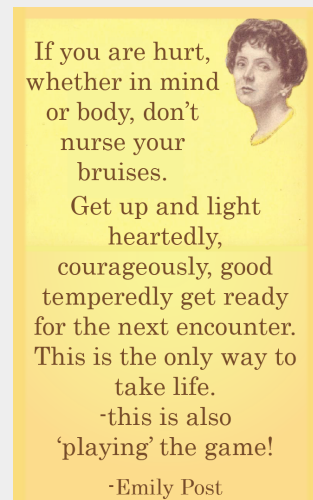
6. Focus on the people you are with. Don't let your smartphone interrupt you when you are speaking with someone or in a meeting. Take control of your phone and be willing to turn it off. — *Being present is noticed. They see that you're engaged and that they matter to you. If you're talking to someone and looking over their shoulder to the next person entering the room, they will notice that you have diverted your attention from them. If you do that, you just flunked being present .*

7. Always return calls. Be timely in returning calls, either on the same day or within 24 hours. Even if you can't answer someone's question, let him or her

media pages and google prospective employees in particular, but also current employees.

Use discretion and wisdom in what you post and know your behavior is pretty much always public these days.

Emily Post didn't just concern herself with which fork to use, but also how our behavior impacts business dealings.



know you have received the message and when you will be able to respond. — *Don't just return them, be timely! Every call should be returned within 24 hours and unless it's impossible, the same day! Maybe even after hours. This speaks volumes to your colleagues, bosses and to representing your organization to others. In our office, that was also part of team work. If we couldn't return a call, we passed it off to a colleague so at least the person received a prompt return call from our office. We gladly did that for each other and it contributed to a positive team culture and value around customer service.*

8. **Dress appropriately.** Businessmen and women have to be impeccably groomed and dress appropriately for the situation. Proper care saves a lot of embarrassment. — *What's the level of expectation? Take a cue from how your boss dresses — that's what they expect (unless your job requires different attire). Be sure you are neat, hair combed, shoes polished, tuck in your shirt (unless it's styles to be worn untucked) and avoid worn, wrinkled clothes; be sure they're clean and pressed. Even with business casual, shoes say a lot — no flip flops, tennis shoes or running shoes. If you're meeting with people outside the organization, take it up a notch. You're representing your organization! In general, if you're not sure what dress is appropriate, the rule is it's better to be over-dressed than under-dressed. If you're over-dressed for something, people will assume you're coming from or going to another event. If you're underdressed, they'll be talking about you.*

9. **Take responsibility for your mistakes.** It's not a question of if you are going to make a mistake at work, it's a question of when. How are you going to

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Speaking Topics

Is your organization looking for a professional development speaker, a webinar or a workshop?

Here are a few of my speaking topics:

Everything is Negotiable - Do It Skillfully

Handle Difficult Conversations with Confidence

Position Yourself for Career Growth

Coaching & Mentoring Skills for Leaders

Quick-Start Your New Leadership Role

Managing the People Side of Change

Managing "Up" - Working Effectively with Superiors

Enhance Your Time Management

Stress is an Inside Job

Results Through Goal-Setting and Feedback (A series)

handle it? Responsibility involves two critical steps: First, apologize sincerely. Second, offer a solution to the problem for which you are apologizing. — *Admit you screwed up! No one likes someone who “has to be right” and refuses to admit they made a mistake when everybody else knows anyway. Get ahead of it. People like you more when you admit a mistake. It makes you human and easier to like and it shows integrity.*

10. **Thank people twice.** At the end of a meeting, business meal or interaction, thank the person as you leave and then the next day send a note to reinforce your appreciation. — *Know that hand-written thank you notes are not out of style. You earn big points for those. An email thank you, at a minimum, is important.*

11. **Meeting etiquette –**

- a. *Turn your phones and pagers on silent.*
- b. *If you’re expecting a call, tell people at the beginning of the meeting, and step out of the room.*
- c. *During the meeting, don’t be looking at your phone!*
- d. *If you take notes on your computer or phone, tell people at the beginning of the meeting that’s what you’re doing. Otherwise, it looks like you’re working or who knows what on your phone and they think you are not present or worse – being rude!*
- e. *If you’re going to be late, let the meeting leader know and enter the room as quietly and non-disruptively as possible.*
- f. *Don’t interrupt others. Put your hand up and get the attention of the facilitator or leader. Wait your turn.*

12. **Entering others’ offices –**

Conflict Series

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- **Strategic Planning**

- a. *If the door is closed, knock.*
 - b. *Ask when it would be a good time to meet.*
 - c. *Don't assume you can enter now. Their door was closed for a reason.*
 - d. *If someone else is in there, say "Excuse me, I'll connect with you later." Go away quickly and either come back later or email them asking when you can talk with them.*
 - e. *If there's an administrative assistant, ask them first if you can speak with the person. Don't ignore them or walk past them – even if the door is open. Remember – treat people equally. That includes administrative assistants.*
13. ***Give credit to others.*** -
- a. *Give credit to others for their ideas. Don't take the credit if it was someone else's idea initially.*
 - b. *Share the credit, even if it was partially your idea.*
 - c. *Recognize others – particularly your direct reports. It's a way of helping to champion them and their careers as you hope people will do for you.*
14. ***Always use appropriate language – even when mad.***
- a. *You are the leader*
 - b. *You set the example*
 - c. *Offensive language, jokes, making fun of others, etc. is NEVER OK.*
15. ***Leave your personal life at home.*** –
- a. *Personal friendships, calls and conversations – even if it's a colleague, with whom you are friends, should occur before or after hours, but not during, or at least be restricted to meals and breaks. People notice if you are doing personal business during working hours. Your boss may notice and subordinates are often even more attuned to their boss conducting personal business during work hours, which then sets a bad example.*

- b. *Leave your personal problems at the door. There's a balance here. It's ok to have the support of others and for others, sometimes even your boss to know what's going on, but when your personal problems or talking about them interferes with work, then it's not ok. Take time off. Ask for help.*
- c. *Leaders especially need to demonstrate that personal matters should not interrupt work.*

Make a good impression with your polished etiquette,



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