

Where are Your Manners!!?

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(article from the book, “Get Along with Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere” by Arnold Sanow and Sandra Strauss)

“The way you see people is the way you treat them and the way you treat them is what they become” Goethe

Research from a number of sources has revealed that manners are increasingly missing in action, with uncivil behavior on the rise. This is leaving people feeling angry, irritated, and disrespected. A survey conducted by Public Agenda, called Aggravating Circumstances – A status report on Rudeness in America, revealed that more than one-third of the 2013 people questioned thought about moving to some kinder, gentler place! Getting along with people requires extending courtesy. Civility matters.

We bring a whole list of expectations into our relationships, particularly in reference to how others treat us. If our greeting or parting statements (such as “Hello!” or “Good Morning!” or “Good-bye”) are ignored, we may get confused, angry, even outraged. We expect an exchange of these customary social graces; they acknowledge our very presence. We may interpret their absence as disrespectful, wondering why we’ve been overlooked or made to feel invisible.

For instance, if we pass someone in the hall and are not acknowledged by them, our brain might kick into the “wonder” gear. “Why wouldn’t he say “hello”? What’s wrong with him? Is he really that busy to just ignore me? What nerve! Did I do something wrong? Was it something I said earlier? Am I invisible?” In reality the person might just be self absorbed in faraway thoughts; however, even such little things left unspoken can trigger wild imaginings, big misunderstandings, and a loss of respect, so mind your manners, for lots of good reasons including to keep you “out of hot water” or on the “outs.”

Phone courtesy (or lack thereof) is another area that is striking a discordant chord with many today. Telephone technology has plugged people in to having immediate access to others, and that ability is infringing on having uninterrupted access to others, and that ability is infringing on having

uninterrupted or quality connections with them. Here are a few telephone taboos:

- Not returning calls
- Taking and making unnecessary calls during meetings and social occasions.
- Abruptly putting callers on hold
- Interrupting a conversation to take a call
- Multi-tasking when on the phone (such as eating, simultaneously talking to others not intended to part of the three way conversation, or carrying on different phone conversations with multiple phones)

When your attention is diverted or you're focused on other conversations, people get the clear impression that you do not consider them to be as important because your priorities are obviously elsewhere. Direct your attention to those who you're with, refrain from making or taking calls unless they're urgent, and be sure to return phone calls as a sign of courtesy- all of which win high approval ratings.

Arnold Sanow, MBA, CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) is a speaker, trainer, coach and facilitator. He is the author of 6 books to include, "Get Along with Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere" and "Present with Power, Punch and Pizzazz." He was recently named by successful meetings magazine as one of the top 5 best "bang for the buck" speakers in the USA.

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