

Manners... Outdated Or Not?

Though the kids in my generation probably grew up with more stringent rules and ideas about manners, I don't think these same manners totally went to the wayside. Most are not outdated, but just as relevant to teach our children and grandchildren in the present day.

their mouth open is a big pet peeve of mine; my stomach turns seeing someone do this. Not only is it impolite, it's rather cringe-worthy. Teach your children to take smaller bites – which will actually be better for their digestion – and to finish the bite before opening their mouths to ask questions or to respond with an answer.



Monadnock Family
with Lori Catozzi Cook

Please and Thank You

The first manners taught when we are toddlers are using the words "please" and "thank you" – which I think (hope) will never end up being a fleeting memory when it comes to politeness. These words are the most basic ways to communicate respectfully to others. "Gimme that" or taking something that someone graciously gave you without saying "thank you" is a big faux pas.

Yes Ma'am, Yes Sir

We also used "yes ma'am" and "yes sir" as a sign of respect when addressing adults. I'm always impressed with children who communicate with adults this way. And, if not teaching a child what might seem like "old fashioned" manners, at least teach them not to give "yup" for an answer and teach them to meet the person's eyes with their own when speaking with them.

Interruptions

Not to interrupt is another one that is taught at a young age. This can be hard for the little ones who just need to blurt out whatever they are thinking whenever they have that thought. Teach them to "hold" that thought instead of interrupting. The best way to start is at home when parents are talking together or you are discussing something with one of their siblings. It might be hard for some at first, but they'll catch on and eventually learn.

Chewing With Mouth Open

People chewing food or gum with

Elbows Off The Table
This one I never understood, though when I see someone slouching with their elbows on the dinner table while they eat, I automatically think of the word "uncouth" (yes, I know I sound like a proper etiquette snob!). I did a bit of research and the "elbows off the table" seems to date back to the Middle Ages. The great houses of England did not have dining tables, but rather had "tables" made from trestles and covered with cloth. The diners sat only on one side, and if they leaned heavily with their elbows on the table it would tip over.

Use Your Inside Voice
Again, taught when they are toddlers, children should learn to not shout inside the house, when visiting others, or out in public. At home, teach your children to go to Mom and Dad or one of their siblings to ask a question, rather than shout from the other end of the house. Make sure they understand that shouting in public could be disturbing to others who are trying to just have a peaceful time out.

Using "Excuse Me"
We all commit faux pas – an embarrassing act or remark in a social situation. When this happens, the polite thing to do is to say "excuse me" and then move on. Besides constantly reinforcing the etiquette rules you choose to teach your children, make sure to let them know how proud you are when they are well mannered. Good manners never go out of style.

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