



The 8 Best Etiquette Rules We Learned From Grandma

There's a reason these old-school manners have stood the test of time.

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We live in a hurry-up world, but that doesn't mean you have to abandon all the niceties of polite behavior that Grandma believed in. "Being kind and respectful to each other helps us feel connected," says Cindy Grosso, owner and founder of [Charleston School of Protocol and Etiquette](#), Inc. in Charleston, South Carolina. "Knowing how to act in any situation also projects self-confidence and sets the stage for how you expect others to treat you." These simple yet gracious gestures would make Grandma proud:

1. Welcome a new neighbor.

Introduce yourself and bring a small gift, such as a plate of cookies, flowers, or a potted plant. "Your effort will go a long way because people don't forget a good first impression," says Grosso. "You don't have to become best friends, but you live by these people. It's nice to know their names, chitchat occasionally, and watch out for each other's kids or pets." Suggest exchanging phone numbers, or offer the names of good dry cleaners, restaurants, or other services if they're new to your town.



2. Teach your kids to be good guests at someone's house.

Kids often behave better out of your sight if you explain cause and effect—that is, good conduct yields rewards. "Teaching manners gives your child the skills and confidence to build relationships," says Lizzie Post, cohost of the *Awesome Etiquette* podcast. "And it helps them understand that good behavior is what gets them invited back." Emphasize the rules before they head over to a friend's house: Say please. No phone at the dinner table. Thank the host for snacks or meals. Clean up after games and make the bed after sleepovers.

3. Hold the door for people behind you.

In a world in which we're often distracted as we rush through a long list of errands, holding the door might not seem like a big deal. But it's a reflection of a larger issue. "Holding the door is not an action. It's an attitude," says Grosso. "It shows you're friendly and thoughtful, which elevates you in the eyes of the person behind you. Do people like it more when they get pushed aside and you go first, or when you take an extra minute to hold the door and let them go ahead?"

4. Write letters and thank you notes.

While texts and email thank yous are better than nothing, a real note is infinitely nicer. "When someone takes the time to send a gift or do something for you, honor the gesture," says Post. "A handwritten note shows a level of personal contact that's significant in the digital age." Your grandma probably had her own personalized stationery, so set up a caddy on your desk with pretty engraved note cards and a special pen to make the experience enjoyable for you as well.

5. Take care of someone in need.

Whether it's an elderly neighbor who lives alone, someone who is sick, or a person who has experienced loss, reach out to someone. "Making an effort doesn't have to be monumental," says Grosso. "The smallest gestures stand out nowadays." Don't simply say, "Let me know if there's anything I can do." They'll likely never ask. Instead, drop off a bouquet. Bring take out or homemade soup. Mow the lawn. Offer to pick up groceries or babysit. Or spend an hour sitting with the person because sometimes the best thing you can do is simply be present.



6. Remember people's names.

Do you know the name of the barista who makes your cappuccino every morning? The mail delivery person? Your child's classroom aide? Knowing someone's name is empowering because most of us truly enjoy hearing our own names, and it shows respect for that person. "This is not so much about etiquette but more that it's meaningful because someone acknowledged me and remembered my name," says Post. "Everyone likes to feel he or she matters."

7. Look people in the eye (not at your smartphone).

Whether you're out to dinner or chatting with your kids after school, look at the person who's speaking with you. "We miss a lot of meaning when we're not making eye contact," says Grosso. Whether intended or not, staring at your phone also says, "You're not as important or interesting as my phone right now." Tuck it in your pocket or handbag if you're easily tempted or shut off the dinging so you can concentrate on the real, live person in front of you.

8. Always say please and thank you.

When you're in line at the coffee shop or being waited on in a restaurant, use the magic words. "It's about showing an attitude of gratitude," says Grosso. "It also models your expectations. When you're rude, you usually get rudeness in return. In that moment, you have taught the person that it's okay for him or her to speak disrespectfully to you, too." Instead, use please and thank you with abandon. It requires little effort but yields big results. Most of all, Grandma would be proud of you.

