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**Where Have All
the Manners
Gone?**





Where Have All the Manners Gone?

In a much more simple time, I was taught that “please” was a magic word and that “thank you” got my uncle to give me a second piece of candy.

My mother had a rule that I couldn’t eat, wear, use or spend a gift I’d received until I had written a proper thank you note that she’d proofread before helping me address.

I learned that I wasn’t ignored at the table if I sat with my hands in my lap, used my knife and fork and ate with my mouth closed. It seemed as if I always knew bet-



ter than to leave the table without asking to be excused.

As a child skiing in the fifties, I was taught to stop and help fellow skiers on the slopes and to be sure they weren’t hurt before heading down the hill. Skier courtesy was as important as learning to snow-plow or stand up on a Poma Lift.

Tennis was a gentle(wo)man’s sport that dictated wearing white, keeping our cool and quietly mouthing “deuce” to signify a tied game.

“Excuse me” came naturally if I was trying to get a grownup’s attention or if I inadvertently bumped a playmate.

I even remember dressing up in fancy clothes to take the dreaded but required ballroom dancing classes where we learned to bow, to curtsy and how to drink punch like ladies and gentlemen.

I don’t remember growing up like *Leave it to Beaver* or like *Ozzie and Harriett*, but I do remember being drilled on the importance of good manners.



Somehow, though, good manners seem to have gone the way of riding breeches,

Victorian dresses, knickers and flapper skirts.

A number of associates have expressed their concern at the lack of basic manners in business today. The increasing speed and complexity of business has somehow given some an unspoken “pass” on the need to say “please and thank you” or “pardon me.”

I would accept an e-mailed acknowledgement or a telephone call instead of a handwritten thank you note, but frequently I’m left to wonder if something I sent to an associate arrived at all.

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