

Please and Thank You!

Growing up, my mother would consistently utter the same saying every time any of us kids left the house, "remember to say please and thank you". It didn't matter if we were just going to a friend's house or a family gathering we would always hear the same reminder from her. In this day and age, I find myself wondering if anyone else heard those simple words of wisdom. It seems like good manners are hard to find.

In our house, we were required to send thank you notes after birthdays or even when someone went out of their way to help us. Today, I send gifts to distant relatives and don't even get an acknowledgement phone call. Have people become ungrateful? Or are they just too busy to show appreciation?

Good manners are something you should teach from a young age. Even before kids can write you can let them draw a picture and write the words thank you. As they get older, work with them on key phrases of appreciation and have them mention the gift and use a few adjectives to describe it. Even something simple as thanking a person for thinking of you would suffice. Make it a habit every time they get a gift to follow it by sitting down and writing or drawing a thank you note.

Teach your children that each time they ask for something it should start or end with "Please". Once this habit is formed it will come naturally, which is much easier than trying to reverse a bad habit.

Here are some tips to help make "Thank You" notes more convenient;

- ◆ Always keep a box of beautiful blank note cards in the house. When someone sends you a gift or does something nice for you, drop them a note.
- ◆ Don't get hung up on the perfect words, just keep it simple and short to show your appreciation.
- ◆ When you travel or stay at someone's house, carry a card to leave behind as an immediate gesture of gratitude.
- ◆ Purchase a note book that holds cards for special occasions, Hallmark has some lovely books that make it very handy to keep all your upcoming birthday cards, thank you notes and other special occasion cards in one place.

Thank you notes can be treasured for years to come. Just recently I came across one from my late grandmother that I had kept and it was so meaningful to know that she had touched that note and crafted the words so long ago.

I hope that 2008 fills you with a spirit of gratitude and in turn you take time to remember those who touch your life in a special way. As always, thank you for reading my column.

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