

Ten commandments for good manners

- 1. Thou shalt be thyself.**

Good Manners begin with a good sense of self. Unless you are true to yourself, you can never be true to others. You are unique. Don't try to shape your personality to meet circumstances. Be natural, and the world will respect you for what you are.
- 2. Thou shalt say "thank you."**

Thanking others is a way of praising them and is one of the keys to having good manners. Send thank-you notes whenever someone does something nice for you, or call to express your gratitude. This simple act will help build lasting relationships. When someone gives you a compliment, the best response is a simple "thank you." And don't forget "please," "excuse me," and "you're welcome," which are other marks of good manners.
- 3. Thou shalt give compliments.**

A fundamental rule of good manners is to give. Think about what you can give to others, and remember that the most precious gifts cost nothing. When you meet someone, you can always think of a genuine compliment to give. A "hello" or "how are you?" is not enough. You can also give your undivided attention and interest to others. You can be generous with words of praise, warm greetings, sympathy, love or other good news.
- 4. Thou shalt not be boastful, arrogant or loud.**

Always exercise restraint and good taste. Your voice, your behavior and even your clothing should reflect understated elegance. Only a small person brags about accomplishments; a well-mannered person has no need for self-advertisement. Let your deeds speak for themselves.
- 5. Thou shalt listen before speaking.**

Respect for others is a prerequisite of good manners. Listening to others is a way to show respect. There is no worse company than a person who does not listen. Be genuinely interested in others; learn their names, and encourage them to talk about themselves. Never interrupt. Look them in the eye and listen carefully. The listener learns and thereby gains.
- 6. Thou shalt speak with kindness and caution.**

Before speaking to others, consider what effect your words will have. Pause and weigh your words carefully and say them with a quality of softness. A slip of the tongue can inflict needless hurt. Also, remember the language of the body (your posture and your mannerisms) is as important as the language of words.
- 7. Thou shalt not criticize or complain.**

A person with good manners is above criticizing others or complaining about circumstances. Negativity in any form is to be avoided. If you hear gossip, don't join in; be indifferent to it. If you disagree with others, do so respectfully. Don't verbally attack or condemn them. You may win the argument, but lose a valued friend.
- 8. Thou shalt be punctual.**

Appreciate the value of time: yours and others'. If you make an appointment, arrive on time. If you must be late, call first.
Never arrive early for a social engagement; your host may still be getting dressed!
Don't overstay your welcome. Lingered good-byes merely cause frustration and can ruin an otherwise good time. A quick, simple exit at the proper time is usually appreciated.
- 9. Thou shalt not embarrass others.**

Treat others as you would like to be treated and think of how you can put them at ease. The feelings of other people can be as fragile as fine crystal. Never demean anyone with rude jokes or an unwelcome nickname. Be considerate. In conversation, never ask embarrassing questions such as how much was paid for a new item or about matters of the heart. It's always good manners to think of others first.
- 10. Thou shalt act and look your best.**

A gracious friend is never ruffled. Be a calming, happy influence in any stressful situation and maintain your composure. See humor whenever possible. Master self-control and have empathy for others. Always act your best with courtesy and politeness.
Each day dress as if it were your only chance to shine. A smile should top your list of accessories. Your home, car and workplace should reflect your best. They should be tidy, neat and well organized.
Table manners are important. Observe rules of proper conduct, such as not speaking with food in your mouth and not eating until the host has been seated. Eat slowly, enjoying each bite. Savor the moments when good friends, good conversation and good manners bring about the best life has to offer.