

Business and Social Etiquette

(Part III)

How to succeed in business and social life have many principles in common. Appropriate behavior plays an important role in the success of relationships, individuals, or corporations. Dale Carnegie, author of “How to Win Friends and Influence People” once wrote that 85% of business and social success is due to human engineering; only 15% of one’s financial and professional success is due to one’s technical knowledge. As in an interview, in the first few minutes, the rapport between the employer and applicant are of paramount importance. Remember, the first three minutes are the most important.

- **Thank- You Notes:** Thank you notes show appreciation. Always write Thank- You notes or make phone calls for gifts, meals, or any kindness. Emails are acceptable for family members, if this is the normal method of communication. For business situations, Emails are acceptable. Nothing however replaces a hand-written note.
- **Punctuality:** It is important to keep your time commitment as it shows consideration for others. Call to let the person know that you will be late, but don’t let it be a habit. Others may consider it disrespectful, and they may have a tight schedule that will be interrupted.
- **Being Discreet:** Holding confidences in secret is being discreet. Spreading gossip at work or among friends is unkind and can compromise relationships. Confidentiality is essential in a company, particularly if the information can fall in the hands of a competitor. Before sharing information, ask yourself if it could be harmful to that person or to others.
- **Solution-Orientation:** Challenges are problems that may arise in business or social relations. One can be part of the problem or part of the solution. Concentration in getting toward the solution can remedy many situations. Decisions are often made based on the information given at the time. Lamenting the past serves no positive good. Immediately planning how to create a positive outcome, without using blame, can create a more positive solution, without wasted energy.
- **Courtesy, Empathy, and Sensitivity:** A positive attitude toward others, whether it is for friends, clients, or companies can go a long way to the success of everyone. A person who is positive and supportive, who is willing to lend a helping hand sets an example for others to follow. Be humble, and open to the ideas of others and their experiences.

© Diana Olson, 2006