



## Cindy P. Senning

Emily Post's *The Guide to Good Manners for Kids*  
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### Why Manners?

Back in eighteenth-century France, King Louis XIV used to invite people to his palace for parties and festivals. However, he became really upset when people walked all over the lawns and gardens, squishing the grass and stomping on flowers. So before the next party, he called in his gardener to talk about this problem. They decide to put up little signs everywhere saying: Please don't walk on the flowers! Stay on the path. Be careful of the roses. The signs guided the guests so they would know where it was okay to walk and where it wasn't. The word in French for the little signs was "etiquette." Over time the word etiquette came to mean all the little signs that help us know what to do in new and different situations. And, in even more time, etiquette came to mean all the things we do to help us get along better with those we meet in our daily lives.

Today the little signs make up the set of manners we think of as etiquette. They say things like, "Say please and thank you." "Take your hat off when you come to the table, please." "Don't read your sister's mail." "Please help clear the table." "When your friends come over, remember to introduce them to your parents." Etiquette, or manners, guide you through all of your activities. Each little sign is like a tool to help you get along. And just as with all tools, you need to learn how to use them. It takes practice, practice, practice.

This book is for you. It will tell the manners you need to know and how to use them. It will tell you about manners for:

- Getting along with others. Manners are an essential ingredient in the glue that holds families together. You'll discover manners that will strengthen your relationships not only with your family but also with friends, teachers, and the other people you meet every day.
- Helping you get through the day more easily – wherever you are. You'll learn about manners that will guide you through the mall, your school, on planes or trains, at parties, in a taxi, a hospital visit, or a service in church.
- Knowing what to expect in new and different situations. If you're invited to be in a wedding or to go to a bar mitzvah, you'll find the manners that will help you know how to act and what to expect.

What happens when it seems the manners you know don't fit a specific situation? Or maybe it's impossible to learn all the manners necessary, and you're in a situation where you don't know what to do. All you need to do is apply some basic ideas. Ask yourself how you can be *respectful*, *considerate* and *honest*. In most situations, just think about how you would like to be treated, and you'll have the answer you need! Or, maybe, you can find the answer by asking someone else.

Three principles are the basis of all the manners in this book:

- Respect means caring for and understanding others just as they are – their culture, their habits, and their strengths and weaknesses. Showing respect means acting toward people with care and understanding for them.
- Consideration just means thinking about other people. It's thinking about how what you are doing will affect them.
- Honesty is more than just not telling lies. It is finding the truth and then telling it. And if the truth might be hurtful it's finding a way to put the truth in a positive light. When your mother asks, "Don't you like the carrots?" Instead of saying, "They are yucky!" which might be the truth, you could say, "Carrots aren't my favorite vegetable, but the chicken was great!" – also the truth.

No matter what the situation is or where you find yourself, if you choose to act with respect, consideration, and honesty, you will do well. Your relationships with your family and friends will be better. And while sometimes being considerate, respectful, or honest seems like it just benefits the other person, it will benefit you, too. You will feel better about yourself just for helping someone else have a better day or treating them the way you would want to be treated.

Learn to use the manners in this book, and you will have the tools you need to get through difficult situations more easily. You'll know what to expect in so many more situations, and you'll have more confidence for facing new ones. Take advantage of this gift of good manners, and you will develop a sense of self-respect and self-confidence that will make your day and the day of everyone around you just a little bit better.