

Manners - Transcript

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Intro: In the past, a lot of importance was placed on having good manners. There were even special schools devoted to learning what was polite and proper. So what about today? Are we letting our manners slip? Or have we developed a different idea about what it means to be polite? Tash looks into it.

CHUCK: Oh boy, ham!

MUM: Chuck, could you serve yourself in a less athletic manner?

CHUCK: Is this better?

DAD: Don't talk with your mouth full!

NATASHA THIELE, REPORTER: For forgetting his manners this badly, Chuck was probably in for a clip behind the ears back when this was filmed in the 1950s. But would a kid get in trouble for this today? Well in most families, maybe not. But is that a good thing or a bad thing? In a survey about manners 3 out of 4 parents thought kids' manners were slipping. So, why the change? And are manners still as important as they used to be? Let's find out.

Life isn't as formal now as it used to be in Chuck's day. So we've developed a different idea about how we should behave. Dinner isn't always served at the table. Doors aren't always held open for others. At some schools, students no longer have to call their teacher Sir or Madam and some teachers even prefer to be called by their first name! But is that such a bad thing?

Well, here is one woman who certainly thinks so. Carolyn is a bit like a modern day butler, although she might not look quite how you'd expect. She works alongside a Governor and knows all about manners.

CAROLYN SLADDEN, AIDE TO THE GOVERNOR OF SA: Manners are very important 'cause it's all about respect, being polite, considerate to others. And it's about saying please and thank you and treating people like you'd like to be treated.

REPORTER: Okay, so in a real formal setting like this, what are the main things I need to know?

CAROLYN SLADDEN, AIDE TO THE GOVERNOR OF SA: Okay, once you sit down and you know your meal is about to arrive, always place your napkin on your lap and when your first course is ready to be served and placed in front of you, you always sit and wait for the host or the guest of honour to start eating and then you can pick up your cutlery and it always starts from the outside in. Once you have finished your meal, you just put your knife and fork together, side by side.

So why are some of these manners not being taught as much? Well, there are a lot of different factors people blame for the change. Some people blame new technology like computers and the internet, because we spend a lot of time using them which is time we're not spending around other people. Or we're finding some manners aren't that relevant to our society anymore, some people may even think seating a woman at a table is sexist! And we're even making up our own rules about manners, like not using phones on public transport or not writing emails with the Caps Lock on, because some people think it means they're being shouted at.

So it doesn't necessarily mean kids today are mannerless slobs, but maybe the way you show your good manners has changed to the way Chuck should have 60 years ago.

Manners - Homework Questions

1. Briefly summarise the *Good manners* story.
2. What did a recent survey about manners find?
3. How have expectations about manners changed over the years?
4. What are Carolyn's views about manners?
5. What should you do with your knife and fork once you have finished your meal?
6. What reasons are being given for manners not being taught as much?
7. Give examples of manners that are not relevant today?
8. Which manners do you think are important and should be taught?
9. Who should take responsibility for teaching manners? Why?
10. Has this story changed the way you think about manners? Why or why not?