



faith west events

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What's Out is In -----Etiquette is the New Black

Years ago I attended business etiquette training at the prestigious Protocol School of Washington®. I thought that by understanding the brilliance of a good handshake and the power of making a proper introduction, I would dramatically improve my skills as an event planner, business professional, and ultimately the way I serve my clients. While this did happen, I never anticipated the unforeseen benefits that would come from a greater awareness of the “soft skills.”

Etiquette or the word “etiquette” is so outdated that when I say it, I’m even sometimes uncomfortable. When I tell someone I’m an event planner – they say “ Oh, how fun!”, Then, when I tell them that I also teach a business etiquette class, they look at me like I have just sprouted another head.

Most think etiquette is an outdated concept, once practiced by aristocrats of days gone by and made proficient by a select few of uber wealthy Manhattanites. To most, etiquette is seen as a rigid, archaic, stuffy set of rules that has no place in our fast paced world of immediacy and light-speed need for familiarity.

Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Etiquette and civility are alive, thriving, and an essential part of who we are and the way we interact with one another. It does not require money, social status, or a prestigious title. It has only one requirement – you should be human – at least most of the time. The big secret to “etiquette” and “civility” is that while the terms may be a little outdated, the sentiment lives deep within us. Etiquette is kindness in its simplest form. It is the natural state of the human condition. Professionals, college students and even

my 10- year-old can value from its teachings. It is time we get back to the basics and embrace the power of being more civilized.

At its core, etiquette lives in the realm of compassion and consideration of others. It teaches us that showing courtesy and deference is actually a powerful skill that fuels the human spirit. The wise come back to a question or the *“Let me tell you what I think”* mantra that exists today does nothing to develop who we are – and that’s really what it’s all about anyway.

Let me further proclaim that it is simply unnatural for us not to exercise our *inner* etiquette. We all have it. It is unnatural for us not to show respect for another person. It is unnatural not to be kind to one another- it’s just not who we are or what makes us so unique, talented, and gifted. We all know that when we go against who we really are, when we refuse to exercise etiquette, civility or whatever you want to call it, we miss the opportunity to design the life we want, the business we want, and the world we want. Every day, we are all put in situations that allow us to start a conversation and inspire others. We strive to create major impact, and provide major value, to our employers, our clients, our community, and ultimately ourselves.

In a world where most of our news is delivered in 30 second clips, email replaces a phone call, and social media replaces a visit with a friend, it’s no wonder why we think etiquette is outdated. Face book, Twitter, and all the rest do have value – but we need to be mindful that our desire to keep safe within our bubble has not just jumped, but bullied it’s way in front of who we really are deep down to our core. We are social beings who must interact in a civilized and mutually respectful manner to make a difference. Interaction requires a little less of telling everyone *“What am I doing right now?”*, and a little more about how we can work together to empower each other by employing simple methods like a handwritten thank you note or a kind email expressing gratitude.

The next time you have an opportunity to have a conversation about how to make a positive impact in the world, remember your etiquette.