

The Secret to Having Model Manners

One day early last summer, we pulled our [Alcuin Interns](#) out of their normal work routine at Intellectual Takeout and informed them that they would be having a professional development day. This professional development involved going to a fancy club in downtown Minneapolis and taking a course in business etiquette.

Knowing the instructor and having sat in on her courses several times, I knew the experience would be fun. But to my surprise, the looks on intern faces were anything but anticipation. Instead, they were full of nervous apprehension.

Such anxiety was soon put to rest, however, once they began learning networking aids, conversation tips, and the confusing world of which fork to use at a fancy dinner (hint: work from the outside in). Following the course, one beaming intern noted how she'd always felt inadequate in the area of etiquette, but now felt so much more equipped for navigating her future career and life.

That intern, it seems, is not alone in her uncertainty about etiquette. In recent years, many Americans have [noticed a decline in manners](#), not only at mealtimes, but in conversation and interaction with others. Thus, it is perhaps no surprise that schools and organizations have begun to take note and seek to remedy the problem.

According to [US News & World Report](#), one of these remedies is The Amazing Shake competition, which pits contestants against one another in a display of manners and people skills:

Teachers and parents have been practicing with the school's students for weeks, teaching them the basics of polite conversation and dining etiquette.

During the first round Tuesday, students introduced themselves to community members and were judged for their S.P.E.C.I.A.L. introductions, [elementary school Principal Chris] Stunson said. The letters stand for shaking hands, posture, eye contact, charm, introduce yourself, ask questions and listen.

During the second round, students met in the library to carry on a polite conversation for three minutes including everyone at the table.

As the contestants demonstrate, one of whom is fifth-grader Halee Butler, knowing such skills builds confidence in dealing with the public, while also fostering respect for other individuals beyond themselves:

After she made her way across the school's gymnasium, each time collecting points from her interviewer on a personal report card, Halee emerged with a sense of poise.

"I get to just be a whole new person here," Halee said. She liked talking to the volunteers and getting the chance to practice professionalism.

I find that last comment quite fascinating. In today's world, it has become quite popular to advance the individual, to promote one's own interests, and to make oneself stand out from the crowd. Because of this, etiquette seems like an essential thing for young children and students to learn. If one can't behave and carry himself properly, then how is he to make a strong impression on the world around him?

But what strikes me even more is the fact that while the etiquette learned for events such as The Amazing Shake Competition does benefit the individual, it only does so by looking out for the well-being of others. Students are taught to listen, to ask questions, to shake hands, and to maintain

eye contact – all gestures which seek to set the other individual at ease.

If you think about it, this is exactly what makes the models of manners – the British Royals – excel at their job. The goal is to present the family in a positive light, but they accomplish this mission by making others feel special and comfortable through smiles, handshakes, and friendly conversation.

Would we be wise to take our cue from them and learn manners not only to stand out from the crowd, but to elevate others at the same time?

–

Dear Readers,

Big Tech is suppressing our reach, refusing to let us advertise and squelching our ability to serve up a steady diet of truth and ideas. Help us fight back by [becoming a member](#) for just \$5 a month and then join the discussion on Parler [@CharlemagneInstitute](#) and Gab [@CharlemagneInstitute](#)!

Image Credit:

The White House, Public Domain