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# *International Domestic Placement Group*

[www.DomesticPlacementGroup.com](http://www.DomesticPlacementGroup.com)

## **American Protocol & Etiquette** **John Robertson**

Etiquette – the informal rules of society. If broken you will be excluded. Behavior, manners, speech, bearing, ... all leave an impression.

Origin of the word ‘etiquette’ – it was a tag/ sign / label. You were not allowed to walk beyond the ‘line of etiquette’. Like ‘Keep Off The Grass’ in today’s terms.

There are rules of etiquette for every aspect of life. Ones manners/ etiquette are with you where ever you go.

### **Dine Like A Diplomat**

- Place Settings: 2 feet wide is the most comfortable space allowance.
- Show plates/ chargers can be left on straight through dinner, or at least through the first course.
- Eating is not an executive skill, but it is especially noticeable when protocol and etiquette are not put to good use.
- Bon Appetite Magazine – Knife/ Fork/ Spoon identification.
- Children should be given luncheon-sized cutlery, it is easier to handle and therefore encourages the practice of good manners.
- Using bread to mop your plate is wrong. Only exception is the garlic butter from snails.
- Fish is never served or eaten with silver utensils; there is often a chemical reaction, use stainless steel.
- Private homes – not necessary to use special fish or pastry cutlery, too genteel, not popular.
- Fruit knives are incredibly sharp – be careful.
- Soup should be sipped from the side of a spoon; the spoon should never enter one’s mouth. Round spoons are for cream soups, oval for clear, chunky and broth soups. There are 4 types of soupspoons.
- Tip a bowl away from you to get those last few spoonfuls.
- Only drink from a soup bowl that has 2 handles on the sides, and only once the pieces are gone – only broth remains.
- With the cheese course, a butter knife can be added into the place setting.
- Soup bowls always have an under plate. Formal dinners use a large soup plate (a large flat, shallow bowl), rather than a bowl. Spoons are left on the soup plate or the under plate when finished.

- “I am Finished” silverware: when in the US – position your cutlery at 10:20, UK – 6:00 and Europe – 3:00.
- “I am Resting” cross your utensils in an ‘X’ on your plate.
- The UK and Europe use 2 utensils for everything (except maybe soup and ice cream).
- Napkins: NEVER on the table until the meal is finished. Always wait for your host to finish first. If called away from the table, lay your napkin on your seat or the arm of the chair. Fresh napkins may be laid on the table by a server if needed. When finished- casually lie your napkin on the left side of your couvert, not folded. In France – it is a huge insult to fold a used napkin, expresses displeasure in the service or meal.
- Sorbet would be served between the starter and main course on a plate with a spoon on the side.
- Using Finger Bowls: Dip only the fingertips of one hand, take below table level and wipe on your napkin, then do your other hand. Do not ‘Wash Hands’.
- Do not blow to cool your food – stir to help release the heat.
- Salad served as it’s own course uses a knife and fork, a side salad uses just a fork.
- You do not have to ‘clink’ glasses to a proposed toast – this came from the comingling of beverages to prevent poisoning.
- Formal dinner – NEVER have your elbows on the table – not even after the meal.
- WAIT for host/ hostess to lift their napkin; begin eating; drink anything besides water until the toast or host drinks; don’t lie down your napkin until your host dose so.
- Pace yourself. Once your host drops his/her cutlery, the meal is finished. Don’t rush or eat too slowly.
- Lunch napkins are 12-18”, dinner napkins are up to 22”.
- Formal Toasts – are with desert. ONLY from the HOST to the guest of honor. Host -> Guest of Honor, GOH cannot drink to the toast, BUT MUST return the toast, then the Host does not drink.
- Toasting Rule: 4-6 people - all stay sitting, 6 or more – all stand up.
- Wisdom: At a dinner party, one should eat wisely but not too well; should converse well but not too wisely.
- NEVER discuss religion, politics or health (yours or others).
- You are responsible to speak with the guests on either side of you and possibly those across from you. Do not monopolize one or two people. Always use low tones – don’t bother others.
- Occasionally acknowledge your server, but not every time.
- If there is something you need to remove from your mouth (bone?), be discrete but DO NOT bring your napkin up to your mouth.

#### Tricky Foods:

- Bacon – knife/ fork, no fingers.
- Asparagus – fingers or knife/ fork.
- Chicken on bones – follow host.
- Bread on table – offered to others before you help yourself, break off a BITE SIZE piece then butter/ dip.

- Corn on the cob – only at a casual meal; butter, s&p, eat a small part at a time.
- Salad – leafs are to be folded and pierced, not cut.
- Lobster – NEVER at a formal meal.

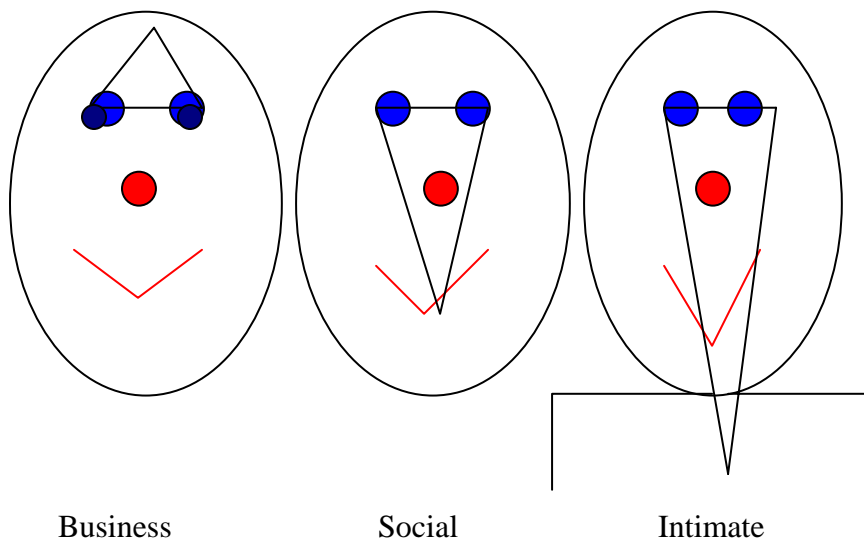
### **Business Intelligence (Manners)**

- 15% of getting/ keeping/ moving up in a job is technical skills – 85% is how you present yourself.
- Choose the least comfortable seat (or edge) for interviews or important meetings. Sitting in the middle of a comfortable chair may be fatal.
- It won't matter if your performance is perfect if your manners or attitude are bad!
- A person with an appointment is more important than a ringing phone – let the machine get it!
- Complimenting achievements rather than physical appearance/ attributes/ attire is preferred.
- When attending a meeting, introduce yourself to everyone present and if from 'outside the company' tell where you are from.
- Never place handbags, eyeglass cases, cell phones or briefcases on the table of a boardroom or restaurant.
- Cell and landline phones – answer another's phone only if asked to do so.

### **Introductions:**

- Introductions: introduce the less important person TO the more important person (Joe Doe, I'd like to introduce King John); a CLIENT is always the most important – they are spending their money!
- 'May I introduce \_\_\_' children to adults, friends to relatives, men to women, client to colleagues.
- Don't introduce someone as your friend, others may feel slighted.
- 'This is my mother, Mrs. Brown' indicates how I should address Mrs. Brown.
- Addressing people – first by title (Mr. President), then by job description (Rabbi Green) and last by name (Mr. Green/ Tom Green).
- Self-Introductions – 'Hello, I am Natalie Asper.' Hello Ms. Asper. 'Please, call me Natalie.'
- The only proper formal response is 'How do you do?' said matter of factly as in 'Hello.' No response should be made. Other responses are too informal and casual.
- Miss-Introduced? 'How do you do? Actually my name is Natalie.'
- PRACTICE! Eye contact, pecking order, similar titles, stance, order of protocol.
- Women STAND for all introductions today.
- Don't shake hands over a barrier (desk), walk around to the side for a proper handshake.

- Don't extend your hand to shake to someone above you, however, a man never offers his hand to a woman... evaluate the situation.
- Indicate to your guest where they should sit. If you are not asked as a guest, ask prior to sitting down. Always sit on the edge of a soft seat.
- Wait to sit down until all introductions are made.
- Don't hand out your business card to someone above you. You may ask for theirs. You may refuse to give yours – say 'Gee, I just gave out my last one. So sorry.'
- Be careful who you give your business cards to. It is a good idea to have different cards for different situations. Keep in a case and have enough at all times.
- Do not exchange cards during private meals. After dinner, discretely exchange cards out of view of the host.
- Compliments: simply say 'Thank you', don't return the compliment immediately or downplay the compliment 'Oh, this old thing?'
- Handshake – should be firm but not too strong. Always make eye contact when shaking hands.
- When introducing yourself say your name very slowly and give something to remember you by (rhyme, profession, hobby, anything positive). Do not use gestures.
- It is permissible to ask someone how to spell their name – this will give you more time and information to connect their name and face.
- Eye Contact: know what forms of eye contact is appropriate for the situation:



### **Titles:**

- 'Miss Lee' is the Lee's eldest unmarried daughter; younger daughters are referred to as 'Miss Sarah' and 'Miss Jane'.
- 'Master Lee' is the Lee's eldest son; younger sons are referred to as 'Master John'.
- Miss is a young single girl to woman.

- Ms. is any adult woman – marital status is irrelevant.
- Mrs. is any married or elderly woman (even if unmarried).
- Esquire- once was a man who didn't work but had no title. Now used by lawyers.
- S.N.O.B. means 'sans nobilitè' used by someone who was wealthy with no title.

### **Making an Entrance – Working a Room:**

- Pause and analyze (but don't stop) who's in the room.
- Be confident but not pompous.
- Shoulders back, head held high, hands at your sides (don't fiddle w/ anything). Arms folded are a signal to others that you are not interested in talking to them.
- DO NOT run off to the bar or to chat with someone you know.
- DO what you have come to do. Talk with whom you've come to talk with.
- Anxiety – 40% of people are anxious with people they already know, 75% with strangers. Suck it up and do what you are there to do.
- Body Language – self control, confidence, intelligent but not pompous.

### **Business Functions (conferences, etc.):**

#### Prior to the event:

- Know in advance who will be in attendance. (You are not invited for a drink and a snack.) What is the event? Who is the host? Ask for a list of guests 'I'd like to know the others names – so I can introduce myself to you and your guests'.
- If planning or Toastmaster of the event, insist from the organizer a list of attendees.

#### At the Function:

- Prior to helping yourself to a drink, speak to your host/ hostess A.S.A.P. Thank them for inviting you. If they are a few people around the host, say 'Excuse me, I just wanted to thank you for inviting me' shake hands.
- Seek out peers and colleagues – not just important people.
- If two people are in close conversation do not interrupt them.
- If there are 3 or more people, pop in and say 'Excuse me, I'd like to introduce myself.' Shake all hands and introduce to all.
- It is permissible to say to a new acquaintance 'I'd like to meet \_\_, could you introduce me?'
- Do not hold drinks in your right hand, leave it warm and dry for shaking hands.
- Avoid social kisses and affection in professional settings. Step away and offer a hand.
- Men and women may (equally) initiate a handshake.
- Name badges/ tags are to be placed on your right shoulder. This draws a person's eyes from your hand to your name to your face. Aids in remembering names and faces.
- People with disabilities – if someone does not have use of their right hand you can offer your left hand or shake their arm if there is no right hand.
- It is permissible to say 'Hello' and shake hands with a business acquaintance you may meet on the street.

- A woman should never touch a man's tie or untie a bow tie – considered a sexual advance.

### **Attire:**

- Make sure that your props (card case, pen, watch) and your clothing/ shoes are of quality materials and kept polished/ good condition.
- No perfume or rings on your right hand, for pain-free shaking.
- 3 brief cases – large for books, med/ small for a few items, portfolio for a few pages.
- American's traveling for business should leave their blue jeans at home. Business attire is the norm (expected) both in and out of the office.
- Casual = sport coat, slacks/ skirt. NO Jeans
- Informal, the lowest form of formal = tie, business attire for women and men. After 6pm, still a suit.
- Formal, Day = Morning suit; dark business suit with a white shirt.
- Formal, Evening 'Black Tie' = tuxedo, folded down collar w/ bow tie, tails or short jacket. Silk shirt is permissible in a private home. Cocktail dress, long dress or pant suit for women.
- Formal, Evening 'White Tie' (Most Formal) = Black tuxedo w/ tails, wingtip shirt with white bow tie and white vest. Gown with gloves for women.
- No fake bow ties with wingtip shirts. (OK for staff)
- IF Royalty is present AND you are married, you may wear a tiarra

### **Four Secrets Of Being A Great Butler**

1. Be mannerly to get what you want/ need.
2. Develop presence to earn respect. Conduct yourself with confidence.
3. Details – they are everything. The Lanesboro Hotel they say 'We will always be one step ahead of guest's expectations'. Countless small details are the difference between mediocre and excellence. The difference between 100% and 110%. (ie: when ordering a martini, you are served with hot/ fresh savory biscuits rather than a dirty bowl of peanuts).
4. Treat EVERYTHING as a Performance. Do everything with great style (the morning tray is not a cool cup of stale coffee).

Remember Names! Repeat or ask how to spell. After 3 times you should remember the name.

To get what you want you need to be mannerly. Authoritative is pushy and forceful.

Small talk – establishes rapport (5 minutes is normal), puts you at ease. Weather, current events, news headlines, magazines, big movies, history of the home or family.

Don't respond out of context to surprised guests 'I've never seen a Butler before!' say 'Good morning, ma'am.'

Courtesy makes even the most difficult of times possible.

Conversations – ask open-ended questions. General (not personal) questions about a person's life & interests. Use the alphabet to help you through topic ideas.

Encourage/ advise American employers planning a business trip to another country to travel there on a holiday prior to business. This will let them experience the cultural differences, protocol and etiquette when it doesn't matter if they act like a tourist.

When in someone's office, don't invade someone's desk space. Don't assume you will have a place to spread out your belongs. Never comment on family photos, personal or achievement items. Professional achievements may be appropriate – use good judgment.

### **Telephone Etiquette:**

- When answered you must identify yourself.
- The Call – even if you are on hold, this call has priority over call waiting and human issues.
- Other's Phones – answer (only if directed to do so), identify the owner's name then identify yourself. Children only say 'Hello'.
- Voice Mail – brief message that sounds like a memo. "I'm calling to tell you that tomorrow's meeting is canceled. My assistant will phone you next week to reschedule." NOT: a long story or 'Hi this is Nat, give me a call when you get a chance.'
- Outgoing Message – confirm my name or phone #; I am not available; please leave message, name, #, best time to call. Do not end with 'Have a nice day'.
- Speaker Phones – do not put someone on a speakerphone without their permission.
- Cellular Phones – do not carry on private conversations in public; do not talk loudly; if expecting a call – leave your phone with the matradee and ask to be interrupted.