



Mistress Manners Says...

Mind Your Table Manners – Or Else!

By April Masini

If you thought that the need for social skills and table manners went out the window when casual Fridays and eating dinner in the driver's seat of your car became the norm, think again.

Proper etiquette—those manners expected and deemed required by society—is not only very much alive, but also of the utmost importance for becoming a success—in the dating, social and business arenas. In fact, there are few more visibly powerful telltale indicators of one's class, education, and training as the knowledge and use of proper etiquette...or lack thereof.



"So, you'd sooner jump the moon then take a lesson in poor etiquette?"

Among my female friends, lack of social skills, chivalry, and the like in men we encounter is an ongoing subject for complaint. The critiques may vary—from lamenting the fact that a door wasn't opened to how embarrassing it was to sit at a fine restaurant with a man who barely used his utensils—but one thing is always agreed upon: manners matter! They matter to us and they matter to virtually everyone else you come into contact with (just think of whether your boss would rather have a man with impeccable manners or a bumbling mess wining and dining important VIPs).

So yes, manners matter—a lot. But on the list of “etiquette faux pas” only one can reign supreme. And the winner is...table manners.

DIG IN

From an informal blind hook-up brunch to a romantic anniversary meal, and the casual business lunch to the all-important client dinner, eating presents a veritable plethora of opportunities to commit faux pas that at a best can cause embarrassment. And at worst? They can actually lead to being rejected by that great woman you went out on a date with, or passed over for the promotion you'd been putting in all those late hours for.

And while it's impossible to turn back the hands of time to undo the cheek-reddening you'll suffer when you realize you spent the night nibbling on your boss' bread, or stop the gray hairs from popping up after you hear (via a friend of a friend) that the reason “she” didn't want to see you again was because, as she claims, you “ate like you were raised by a pack of wild animals”, there is only one way to insure they never happen again—learn the rules of table etiquette and follow them to a Tee!

**RULE #1: LIQUIDS ON THE RIGHT,
SOLIDS ON THE LEFT.**

Your bread plate is the one to your left. That's your water and coffee cup on the right.

RULE #2: FROM THE OUTSIDE IN.

Silver is always placed in order of use, beginning with the implement farthest from the plate. So if salad is served as a first course, grab the fork that is farthest from your plate—that is the salad fork.

RULE #3: LAY SIDE-BY-SIDE.

When you are finished with each course your knife (with blade turned inward) and fork should be placed beside each other on the plate diagonally.

RULE #4: KEEP IT IN YOUR LAP.

You napkin that is! As soon as you are seated, unfold your napkin and place it on your lap. When the meal is finished, or if you leave the table during the meal, put the napkin on the left side of your place-setting.

RULE #5: STAY ERECT.

I'm referring to your posture! Sit up straight and if you can't resist the temptation to fidget. You may rest your hands and wrists on the table—but not your entire forearm and definitely not your elbows.

RULE #6: SHE GETS A RISE OUT OF YOU.

A gentleman always rises when a lady joins or leaves the table.

RULE #7: STEADY AS SHE GOES.

A gentleman always follows a lady to a table, pulls out her chair and steadies it as she sits.

RULE #8: KEEP COUPLES TOGETHER.

Salt and pepper are considered married and always get passed together, even if someone asks you only for the salt.

RULE #9: BREAKING BREAD. Yes, it really is called that for a reason! Bread and rolls are broken off into bite-size pieces and butter is spread on each bite as you eat it. It is improper to use your knife to cut your bread as well as to butter the entire piece of bread at once!

RULE #10: BEGIN TOGETHER.

At tables of eight or less people, begin eating only after everyone is served or after permission is granted from those not yet served.

NEVER-NEVER LAND

Now that you've got a good start on what to do, let's talk a bit about what not to do.

Never (and I mean n-e-v-e-r)...

- Put a piece of silver on the table once you have used it.
- Point your knife at anyone.
- Push your plate away or rearrange your dishes when you are finished eating.
- Use toothpicks at the table and or pick at food in your teeth with your finger.
- Lean back and announce, "I'm through," or "I'm stuffed."
- Put liquid into your mouth if it is already filled with food.
- Wipe off the tableware in a restaurant.
- Leave your spoon in your cup.
- Wave a food-filled spoon or fork about during conversation.
- Cut up your entire meal before you start to eat.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Now that you've got a few of the basic rules of table etiquette, you're that much closer to success, whether professionally or romantically. Proper etiquette can make the difference between a lunch with the boss where you walk away with a promotion, and one where you just get a chicken sandwich. They can make the difference between having a first-date dinner, and having a first-date dinner that leads to "dessert". And they can make the difference between you feeling awkward and unsure of yourself in social situations, and you being a man with style, class and charisma that owns the room.

For all of April's tips and (and tons of other suggestions), check out her book, [Date Out of Your League](#).

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

A former model and actress, April Masini, is a bold, fearless, highly creative and immensely persuasive, "ideas person," who in addition to being the author of [DATE OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE](#), is also the President and CEO of a multifaceted television/film/events production company, Masini Television & Film Enterprises, LLC, located in Hawaii and Masini Enterprises, Inc. in Los Angeles,

CC Note: *Gentlemen, we get many letters in from men whom have been shamed by women because they held a door or treated her like a lady. This is unfortunate; here is what is really happening.*

If you are dating a woman who is offended by manners and being treated like a lady, you are dating a child. Give her a few years; she doesn't have the self-confidence to realize you are respecting her. She sees it as you are relegating her to a 1950's stereotype, and feminism has vilified manners in her mind. Society's mixed messages do not allow her to differentiate. She thinks if she allows a man to care for her or show consideration, she will end up a welfare mom, (or facsimile) because she allowed herself to appear dependent. Manners equate with dependency, especially to women in their teens or twenties. The ultimate failure to most women is to end up on welfare. The quickest way to do this is to depend upon a man and have him abandon you. Understand this is where she is coming from. It may not be rational, but for women, the fear is very real.

With divorce and broken marriages, depending upon a man is terrifying. The disdain for manners women show is a hangover from the Feminist revolution and not your fault. You are doing nothing wrong and everything right. Realize she's immature or insecure, has yet to prove herself and move on; or if you care about her, address her fears.

If you move on, there are plenty of women who will respect your showing respect for her, and many more who will not date you unless you do. A woman, not a girl or child, only respects a man who shows respect for her. Manners are her first indication that you respect who she is and will treat her with dignity. If you are looking for a relationship with a woman and not a child, you can never go wrong by treating a lady like a lady, or showing consideration for others by being gentle. When in doubt, be a gentleman. If someone is offended, it is they who look bad, not you

