

What to Say, What to Do?

Written by L.A. Plume

Tuesday, 08 October 2013 09:57



Dear L. A. Plume,

I was out with an associate the other evening and his table manners were less than sterling. In addition to that, he was loud and opinionated. I could see the questioning glances aimed in my direction, but he is an important person in my professional life so I socialize with him for business reasons when necessary. Are people going to judge me by his behavior?

Lolla

Dear Lolla,

That all depends on with whom you're socializing and under what circumstances. Make it clear with the introduction that this is a business associate, at least that takes it out of the personal realm if someone is trying to decide whether or not to invite you to dinner again. As much as we try not to, we often do judge the proverbial book by its cover. This is a question I have long pondered myself. If I bring a guest to the table, and they talk with food in their mouth, or use the back of their hand instead of their napkin, will the others think I shouldn't be invited again? However, I've decided that our world has expanded so much that the concept of "minding our manners" is but a distant memory for many and no one can hold me accountable for someone else's upbringing.

L. A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

A neighborhood acquaintance is looking for a new job and would like a recommendation and reference from me. She has never worked for me but we have served on committees together and I wasn't impressed with her work ethic. If the job she wanted was shopping for bargains and bar hopping, I could probably comply admirably, but how do I tell a prospective employer that

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she's not the not the smartest curl in the bouffant?

Knows Ditzzy

Dear Knows Ditzzy,

You can take a page from my book; I was asked to write a letter of introduction for someone I barely knew to a very nice club. The club had a long list of requirements that a member had to address when sponsoring someone. I simply wrote: "Mrs. XX and her husband have a son in my son's class at the XX School." They got the message. So you could do the same: Ms. ZZ lives in my neighborhood and has a lovely garden/a nicely painted mailbox/walks her dogs responsibly/throws a super cocktail party, etc. You run the risk of the person reading the recommendation thinking your curler may have come out too soon, but you won't offend anyone.

L. A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

I admit that since my knee surgery, I have been watching a bit of television. Lightweight reality shows are my new best friend, which is fine as long as I'm at home; but I've found recently that one of them has gotten into my brain and whenever I see women in ill-fitting tops, it makes me cringe. The other evening I attended an event where a youngish woman was wearing a fitted camisole but it was a very wrong size for her – the cups were in the wrong place, it was too high on her body, it looked like she had snatched it from the drawer of someone several sizes smaller than she. It was all I could do not to stare and speak to her about it. Is there a proper way to tell someone their clothes don't fit??

DeeDee

Dear DeeDee,

You make me smile! I love that show, Double Divas! And I agree - sometimes it's so difficult not to tell someone that they shouldn't have gone out of the house looking like that; or at least that they should have a three way mirror and get the rear view! But no, no, no. Didn't your mother ever tell you, "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all"? Okay – we didn't always listen to our mothers, but still, our days are difficult enough sometimes without having someone out that the only clean shirt we could find doesn't fit.

L. A. Plume