

On Tips & Triangles

Written by L.A. Plume
Tuesday, 07 October 2014 14:20



Dear L. A.Plume,

This is a comment on a letter you printed in your column recently. The letter was from "Ernest" and it read: "Dear Ms. Plume, Everywhere I go to listen to music, I see a tip jar by the band. Don't they get paid to play? Under what circumstances, and how much, should they be tipped?" My comment is that I am always in a quandary about tipping. I DON'T BELIEVE IN IT!! Why does the onus fall upon us, the consumers, to pay the people who should be paid by their employers??!! I needn't create the list here. Any business where a tip is expected would be part of that list. If you're in business for yourself, make your prices higher. If you depend on employees, also make your prices higher and/or pay your own employees!! With tipping, we consumers are paying higher prices anyway!

Also, it used to be that proprietors did not accept tips. Whatever happened to THAT "courtesy"?!

Sincerely,

Irked & Perturbed

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Dear Irked & Perturbed.

I hear you! However, I can only borrow from Alfred, Lord Tennyson here: "Ours is not to reason why/ Ours is but to do or die..." The etiquette of the matter is that we tip; once upon a time, a long time ago in an enchanted forest, we tipped to show our gratitude for service performed over and above; it was sort of like a gift. Now, we are the people paying the wage, as you point out. Servers have run down sidewalks after customers when they consider the tip not up to snuff; restaurants print tipping guidelines on the receipt in case we can't do the math of 15, 18, or 20%, even with a calculator in our phone.

However, and I'm going to stick my neck out here – tipping, in some instances, is still a gift and where bands are concerned; they are not expecting you to pay their wage, they are asking you to show appreciation if they play a request that might not be a part of their set list that evening, or if you thought they did a particularly good job. Just like tipping used to be back in the enchanted forest.

L.A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

What is the etiquette when it comes to three-way friendships and an issue like the following? I have two friends – well actually I have a few more than that but I'm referring to these two in particular – and the first friend often interprets my words incorrectly, then repeats that incorrect interpretation to the second. Example: She asks if I've seen friend #2 lately; I reply that I'm having lunch with her at Joe's Grill on Friday; I mention that I'm looking forward to lunch but not so keen on Joe's Grill. So #1 goes to #2 and tells her I really don't want to have lunch with her on Friday but am only going because I love Joe's Grill. I can't fact check everything I say to #1 with #2, and it causes some confusion and hurt feelings. Since the three of us are friends, it's common to chat about what each of us is up to, and I'm sure these misunderstandings happen in reverse as well. How can I address this issue? ☐

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Monkey In The Middle

Dear Monkey,

What a wonderful configuration the triangle is! Either sit down with both of them, or if that won't work, send an email to both. Explain what you think is going on, paint the picture in the most flattering light for all – i.e. you know #1 has both of your best interests at heart – and suggest that you all address your questions directly to the person involved from now on. You can only hope for the best; it is a bit of a sticky situation and hopefully everyone knows that everyone else means well.

L. A. Plume