

Taking the Cake

Written by L.A. Plume

Tuesday, 01 November 2016 14:59



Dear Ms. Plume,

Neighbors, friends, and a few strangers helped us clear tree branches that fell on our roof during the hurricane, and also helped us with the immediately needed repairs. They are not people who do this for their profession so offering them money seems inappropriate and perhaps slightly offensive for an act of goodwill. However my husband and I would like to acknowledge their efforts, which were greatly appreciated, in some way. Can you offer some suggestions?

Safe and Sound

Dear Safe and Sound,

There are a number of ways you can show your gratitude. Invite your friends and neighbors over for a meal to thank them, or see what it looks like they may need help with as a result of the storm. For instance, if it looks like their yard or garden sustained damage, or even just lots of debris, offer to help; or take them a few plants or a new bird feeder to replace what might have been lost or damaged, or could just make a cheerful addition. As for the strangers, if you don't know who they are, then pay it forward to someone else.

L. A. Plume

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Dear L. A. Plume,

We are celebrating a friend's birthday and I volunteered to make the cake. This morning I realized that I didn't have any birthday candles so I emailed three friends who are also attending the party to see if they have any. Not one of them responded. So I called J and asked her if she had received my email and had any candles. She said she hadn't responded because she didn't have any candles. What is wrong with these people? Am I supposed to guess if they didn't respond because they didn't have candles and couldn't bring them, or did have candles and would bring them? So I emailed all three of them again and basically said that; and one of the others, C, responded by calling me and asking how I could be so rude! Let me ask you this – just who was rude here? Certainly not me! I was right because they didn't even respond. I just wrote to them again and said to be sure to let me know if they ever needed birthday candles because I had some and would be sure to let them know right away and would be pleased to bring them. Do you think they will talk about me at the party? Can I just leave the cake on the porch and not go to the stupid party? And just who doesn't have some birthday candles in their kitchen drawer even if they've been used? Well, I don't because I'm visiting and it isn't my house. What should I do?

Meg

Dear Meg,

Take the cake and tell the birthday girl you didn't put any candles on it because those three other people said she was too old to have candles. Tell her that before she cuts the cake and maybe they will be offended and leave and you can send another email letting them know that they can't have your cake and eat it too.

L.A. Plume