

Petiquette, Scentuality, and Other Delicate Issues

Written by L.A. Plume

Tuesday, 02 March 2010 10:37



I have been asked by the Coastal Companion Bird Sanctuary to say a few words on bird etiquette. If you are approaching someone with a bird, please don't touch the bird without first asking permission as birds can be finicky/fearful/and may bite – hard.

This advice applies to dogs, and other pets, as well. Ask the owner if you may pet their dog before doing so. Rescue dogs, in particular, may see an outstretched hand as a threat. Always extend your hand for the dog to sniff before touching the dog. Pat the dog on the shoulder, chest or under the chin, not on the top of the head. Do not put your face next to the dog's face – and do not make direct eye contact with a strange dog as this may be interpreted as an act of aggression.

Dear L. A. Plume,

I love to entertain and often do. My problem is that I dislike the scent of many perfumes and colognes. How can I discourage guests from wearing scents when they come to my parties; and also from bringing those horrid scented candles as gifts?

Loves Fresh Air

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Dear Fresh Air,

A gift is a gift, just say thank you and re-gift it or donate it to a thrift shop. If you are going to re-gift, attach a sticky note with the name of the giver so you don't give it back to her. I, however, love scented candles; you could send them to me.

Perfumes can be a problem if they are put on too heavily, and I can't think of a tactful way to tell someone they've over-applied. Perhaps you could employ the tactic of the little white lie and cite allergies at the time of the invitation.

When I got married to my now ex, my dream wedding bouquet consisted of all white flowers, including gardenias. When he happened to mention that gardenias made him sick, I, of course, had the bouquet rearranged without them. That was my first mistake.

Aroma wise, my personal pet peeve is "stinky hors d'oeuvres breath." There isn't much worse than someone who has just eaten a deviled egg, or salmon with chopped onion, getting in your conversational space with egg or onion breath.

L.A. Plume

Dear LA Plume,

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My college – age daughter came home to visit for a weekend. Knowing she was just here for a short while and had several friends she wouldn't have time to see, I planned a surprise brunch and invited them all. I went to a lot of trouble and expense. But afterwards, when I expected her to be pleased and thank me, she said she didn't ask me to do it and didn't need to thank me for something I had done for myself. I think she's ungrateful; what do you think?

B.L.

Dear B.L.,

I certainly think she was ungracious. However, I have learned the hard way that people are not always grateful for things for which they haven't expressed a desire. Perhaps she had a reason for not wanting to see some of those people, or had other plans for that time, but she still should have thanked you for your thoughtfulness and effort. Next time she visits, go out to brunch with your own friends and leave a box of cereal on the counter for her.

L.A.Plume