

Don't Brood on the Rude

Written by L.A. Plume

Tuesday, 18 January 2011 14:02



Dear L. A. Plume,

We live in a small, gated neighborhood with a common pool and community center. The center is used for meetings, parties, card games, etc. Everyone is respectful of each other except for one curmudgeon who is a perpetual naysayer and purveyor of all things negative. Needless to say, he detracts from, rather than adds to, the community spirit and events to the point where we don't even feel like attending anymore. We hate to be driven away one churlish person but it seems like he is out to spoil it for the rest of us. Do you have any helpful suggestions?

XX's

Dear XX's,

In a community where most people try to get along with each other for the greater good of the group, social misfits stand strikingly out in the crowd. Perhaps they don't know any better, are unable to assimilate, just don't care, or are doing it intentionally for attention. Think of them as fence posts wrapped in barbed wire; you're not going to disarm them, diffuse them, or pretty them up for the party. I've run across these people on occasion, and unfortunately, I don't have a good solution for you. My best advice is to treat them like a stink-bomb - keep as much distance as you can.

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L.A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

What, if anything, can be done about people who don't RSVP to invitations? It is maddening to go to the trouble to throw a party and then have unexpected people show up who haven't been included in the count for preparing food and beverages. I really don't feel that once I've issued an invitation that I need to chase people down to see if they are going to give me the pleasure of their company, enjoy my food, and drink my cocktails. Is there a better system for issuing an invitation and getting a timely response?

Wayne

Dear Wayne,

This is an issue that continually plagues party givers, and it is so incredibly rude to not *RSVP* that it makes me want to spit. I have thought and thought about it and have come up with an idea. When you issue the invitation and don't speak directly to the person you are inviting, leave out an important piece of information. If you are calling on the phone and need to leave a message say: I'm having a party and would like you to attend, please call me back for the information. Or by email, or regular mail - don't include the date, or the time, or the address, so they will be forced to call if they have any interest or intention of attending.

I've considered whether or not people who are rude even notice if you are rude back, and I've found out the hard way that they, indeed, do. But grace, and your reputation aside, you could always add a little caveat to the invitation next to the *RSVP*, such as: If I don't hear from you by

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(date/time), I'll have to seat you at the children's table, there won't be any cake for you, you'll have to drink the cheap wine... or whatever tiny threat seems like it would get your friends to let you know if they will be attending your party. Let me know how/if it works.

L.A. Plume

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