

Aunt Bossy

Written by Margaret Evans

Tuesday, 18 December 2018 15:18 - Last Updated Wednesday, 19 December 2018 06:47



Hostility and Hospitality

Dear Aunt Bossy,

I consider myself an excellent hostess and go to great lengths to provide my guests with wonderful food, a charming and competent staff to serve, a diverse and interesting group of fellow guests, and a beautiful and warm atmosphere.

However, sometimes I feel like I shouldn't even bother. I send out invitations early with an RSVP for regrets only so those accepting won't have to lift the phone or finger to accept. In spite of that, people tend to get in touch with me to let me know they will be coming. And then they don't show up, don't call, and don't apologize. Others just do not respond and don't show up.

I prepare food for a specific number of people and have a staff who organize themselves accordingly, so the no-shows cost me time and money, as well being as insult me.

The question is, should I continue to invite them?

The other behavior that creates a problem: Some guests call at the last minute to ask if they can bring their own guests, whom they have known were visiting in plenty of time to call weeks ahead. Whatever happened to manners?

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My hospitality is turning to hostility. What do you recommend?

Dear HH,

I have found that just saying what you think is an effective tool that saves a lot of time and anguish in situations like this. As a matter of fact, it works in most situations.

I would skip the traditional invitation and write up something fun and very direct.

How about this?

After careful consideration, I have composed the guest list for my party to celebrate _____, and you are included. I'm excited at the thought of seeing you and catching up and introducing you to the friends you may not know. I really want you to come, which is why you are on the list.

If you wish to stay on my invite list, but can't make it, you should RSVP so my well- trained robotic secretary does not remove you for not having the courtesy to respond. If you can make it, I am now asking you to just drop me a positive response by email or text.

If you know you are expecting Uncle Harry, his wife, and your seven cousins, I may be able to accommodate the whole family (the adult section, only, please) if you give me two weeks notice so I can be certain to prepare for the extra guests. If you were not raised in a barn, you will probably want to call and ask if that is all right before you notify me of the increase in numbers.

Once you are here, I assume you have been well brought up and know to circulate, reach out to the shy guests, and treat the staff with great respect.

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I look forward to hearing if you will be able to join us at: _____ on _____ at _____.

Your devoted hostess,

HH