

Napkins and Flowers and Art . . . Oh my!

Written by L.A. Plume

Tuesday, 05 November 2013 12:40 - Last Updated Wednesday, 06 November 2013 07:27



Dear Ms. Plume,

We have invited some business associates to our home for dinner and I want to make sure I set the table correctly. I found a book that has a diagram of where and how the silverware is placed, but I am unsure of where to put the napkin; does it go to the left of the plate or on the plate? I've seen it done both ways at people's homes as well as in restaurants. Thank you.

Patricia

Dear Patricia,

The formal way to set the table is with the napkin folded on the dinner plate or charger plate; a napkin ring is fine, however fancy napkin folding is passé. The napkin goes to the left of the plate only if food has already been plated on the dinner or charger plate before the guests come to the table. If, for instance, you are serving a salad course first, and the salad is on the salad plate to the left of the dinner plate, then the napkin goes on the dinner plate; if the salad is served on the salad plate and is placed on top of the dinner plate, then the napkin would go to the left.

L. A. Plume

Dear L. A. Plume,

I have a friend who says that she doesn't like cut flowers, which are my forte and favorite hostess gift. I saw on a blog that she had thanked a man for bringing her flowers. What am I, chopped liver? Why she would accept flowers from a man and not a woman? Should I be offended?

Rose

Dear Rose,

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Don't you think it's a nice, time-honored, gesture for a man to give flowers? Perhaps he was just being polite, perhaps he didn't know that she doesn't prefer cut flowers, or maybe he is in the plant business and was bringing her a cutting that he thought she might like to grow in her garden. You should not be offended, and she should have thanked him privately.

L. A. Plume

Dear L. A. Plume,

I'm one of those people who don't have much imagination when it comes to home decorating. I'm comfortable with only a few colors and I like everything to pretty much match. Some friends came to visit one evening and brought me a bright piece of modern art; they said they had purchased it for me because I need to change my "drab to glad." This art is not my taste, I don't like anything about it, and they are hounding me to hang it on the wall which I have no intention of doing. What can I do?

Beige

Dear Beige,

Well this could go a few different ways, but one is to just keep the piece somewhere that it doesn't offend you, such as under a bed, and tell them you will hang it when you find just the right place for it. Another is to find a place where it doesn't offend you on a daily basis, and will remind you that you have friends who were nice enough to buy you a piece of art; how about the laundry room? Telling you that you need to change your "drab to glad" isn't exactly a compliment in my book, so I think you could also ask them if they would like to have it back, and if not, tell them you would like to donate it to a charity.

L. A. Plume