

Manners Matter on Social Media

Written by L.A. Plume

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Dear Readers,

Just because you can, should you use social media as a platform to hurt or embarrass someone? It is one thing to promote yourself, state your opinion, share your pictures, etc... But to use it as a free-for-all to air your grievances against a person seems petty and shameful.

Believe it or not, there is etiquette for social media – Google it and you see that there are about 11,400,000 results. Consistently you will find that you need to take care of what you say before it quickly goes public. Brian Martucci, in “10 Social Media Etiquette Tips for Personal and Business Accounts,” says “Social media has tremendous power, so it’s important to follow social etiquette when you engage with other users. From avoiding extensive self-promotion, to maintaining a respectful sense of humor, most best practices are simply a high-tech version of old school etiquette. But the social media world moves far faster than the offline world, so it’s critical to think about the effects your words, pictures, and videos have before sharing them with

hundreds of thousands of your peers.”

Designsponge.com’s “Modern Etiquette: Social Media Do’s and Don’ts” says: “Comments will follow you. Much like comments on a website, comments, responses, likes, rants, pictures and hashtags are, for better or worse, forever...”

There are single words that change our world - big words like love, or even diagnosis; simple words like hello, good-bye, yes, or no. There are times to listen to words, and times we cast them into the wind like dandelion fluff.

If we don’t use the words at our disposal, they slide into some other place where they dance together and we are left without the music. I think this is an amazing fact – that not one of us has any idea of how many words we know. Unlike the jellybeans in a jar or the pennies in a fountain – our knowledge of words is not quantifiable. Isn’t that astounding – that we have something so great and vast that even we don’t know what we have? Thousands, tens of thousands, maybe even millions of words at our disposal, to use however we choose. Words with which we can pick up and create something seemingly effortlessly, not with hammers or nails or rocks and wrought iron. Words which will last longer than the tallest building, the biggest ship, the most forceful dynasty.

Words bind us together, and words tear us apart, and somewhere in between lies the silence that is the mortar. Whoever said: "Sticks and stones can break our bones, but words can never hurt us" was completely delusional. Words are more effective weapons than anything else that man has created; we can hurt people with our words, or humiliate, embarrass, and bully them. But words also form prayers and songs, lullabies, and poems; we can also use them to seduce, cajole, humor, compliment. We have a great responsibility with words, because once we put them out there, we can’t take them back.

So, please everyone, in 2015, resolve to take good care with the words you use, they are one of your greatest sources of power - use them wisely.

Happy New Year!

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Love,

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