

Aunt Bossy

Written by Susan Murphy
Tuesday, 25 August 2015 13:38



Knock, Knock

Dear Aunt Bossy,

I can't figure out the rules for dropping in to see people when I'm in the neighborhood. I have friends who are obviously not happy when I do this and others who are thrilled. I also have friends who say drop by any time, but sometimes when I do, they are not so happy to see me. I almost always love it when people drop by and am willing to inconvenience myself once in a while if someone comes by when it isn't an ideal time.

What are the rules on this? I'm asking because I recently dropped by a friend's house who had told me to come use her pool any time, and I felt so embarrassed because it was like I was the you-know-what in the punch bowl.

□ *Advice please.*

Thank you,

Who's there?

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Dear Who's there?,

Engage your tongue and ask. Bring the question up in conversation where you declare you love unannounced visitors and see how others respond. If they don't offer an opinion, ask for one.

The people who hate uninvited visits are the easiest because they make it very clear. The dilemma arises when people enjoy spontaneous visits, but, given that life does get in the way sometime, not always.

Since we have mobile phones, it really makes sense to call first and say, "I would love to see you and am in the neighborhood, is this a good time?"

The head's-up isn't necessary with next-door or close neighbors. They tend to be more spontaneous, and I happen to love it. Of course, I have no problem saying, "Great to see you. I'm busy, let's get together later." I've never lost a friend by being that honest.

If you are the visitor, use common sense and caution, and try to call first. Make it easy for the other person to say "no." If you are the visited, be bold, be honest, and be loving about it. After all, this "drop-in" is a fan.

Aunt Bossy says, "Y'all come, and if you can't come, call. (See, I am finally a Southerner.) Once you arrive we will sit a spell and visit. And drink.

Sweet Poison

Dear Aunt Bossy,

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I was recently forced because of business obligations to work with a woman I know despises me. There doesn't appear to be a reason as I have never had a conversation or worked with her until now, but over the years, she has gone out of her way to sabotage my work and turn people against me.

She is very cute looking and has a sweeter than sweet personality. However, I am truly not paranoid and have concrete evidence that she has tried to do me in on several occasions and even succeeded at least one time that I know of.

I have to see her at meetings, and she is often with people whom I would normally greet with great enthusiasm, hugs and kisses. What should I do? I don't want to be a hypocrite, but also do not want to be rude and leave her standing there like a lone pony in a full corral.

□ Leona

Dear Leona,

Obviously your last name isn't Helmsley because Leona Helmsley would have cut this gal off at the knees.

You really have no choice but to act stupid and cheerful around her. If you hug and kiss everyone within hugging distance, you at least have to give her a half-hearted, chilled hug and peck on the cheek. (No teeth, please).

If you see her in a room and she is alone, go the other way. No need to put yourself in a position where you have to embrace hypocrisy.

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In the meantime, feel sorry for her. This dislike of you couldn't make her happy.

There is never any reason to be rude or to treat someone in a way that might humiliate him or her, especially if that is the way she has treated you. Rise above it.

Another thing to remember is that you couldn't possibly be the only person on the planet she has treated poorly.

Good luck.

Aunt Bossy is Susan Murphy, an internationally known Communication Skills Coach who adores spending every winter and spring in Beaufort. Ask for advice at bossymurph@mac.com

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