

Aunt Bossy

Written by Susan Murphy
Tuesday, 17 November 2015 15:04



If You Should Ever Leave Me ☐ ☐ ☐

Dear Aunt Bossy,

The season is upon us; let the parties begin! That is the easy part. Ending them is the problem.

As a guest, I never know how to leave a big party. I hate to draw attention to my departure by seeking out the host or hostess because I don't want to set an example and start the herd moving out the door. On the other hand, I don't want to leave without saying goodbye.

As a hostess, I never know how to let people know we are finished.

And, at a big networking party, how do I leave a bore?

Nervous Nell

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Dear NN,

I love first world problems, especially when they involve drinks!

The big party is easy. If the hosts are available and you can corner them to say goodbye, do. If they are surrounded, slither on out, but call the next day and thank them. Doesn't hurt to do that even if you did say goodbye.

What you don't want to do is head to the door like a politician leaving a fundraiser. No need to glad-hand everyone you know between the meatballs and the exit. Just leave quietly. It helps if you didn't wear a coat.

As a hostess, it is a bit more difficult; but I figure if people are in your house, you like them enough to let them be while you retire. You can announce that or not. I announce because I don't want them to come looking for a body. Some of my best parties have gone on long after I was in dreamland.

You can also say, "I adore you all . . . now it is time for you to leave." Really. It is okay, especially if you are a little long in the tooth and need to sleep. If they view this as a micro aggression, you will save on food and beverages by not having them as guests in the future.

Networking boredom is probably the most difficult leave-taking situation. What you want to do is to avoid saying that you are going to get a drink or hitting the head. Too obvious.

Smile like crazy, put your hand up, and say – with LOTS of enthusiasm – "I'm sorry to interrupt, it has been great talking, but I just saw someone I have to talk to. I'll touch base with you later." This is not a lie. There is someone else you have to talk to. Anyone else.

See you later,

Aunt Bossy

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The Gift Grift

Dear Aunt Bossy,

I don't need anything. My husband doesn't need anything, and my friends who need things only need a spot of cash. However, I hate to be a drag on holidays and not come through with something.

It is to the point where I am embarrassed when people ask what my husband and I gave each other for Christmas or for our Anniversary. "Nothing" makes the others feel bad, but it really is all right with us.

What shall we do?

Not Mrs. Claus.

Dear NMC,

This is not good. It is important for everyone that we give. This is spiritual. When we give, we show we value the other person.

Use your imagination. Give an adventure, plan a trip – a night at City Loft or the Rhett House or one of the other wonderful places to stay in Beaufort. Give dinner gift cards, which all the restaurants will sell you. Give a day at the beach with a picnic, a kayak experience. Give

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books or music. Make a donation to a favorite charity, or donate some time to a favorite charity in your giftee's name. Give massage or a health club membership. Give food, fancy soap, candles, flowers – all things people can use.

The secret is to pay attention to the other person to get the information you need to find the right thing. It needn't cost much.

And, yes, continue to give money to those who can use a little extra if you know them really well. Just be sure to tuck it in a book or a box of chocolates.

Just in case you are wondering what to get me, I've buried the hints above. Duh.

Merry, Happy!

Aunt Bossy

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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