



THE
ETIQUETTE
SCHOOL OF BIRMINGHAM

On Being A Gentleman

Regardless of which career path you have chosen, there are skills you must use to achieve your goal. There are also what we call “soft” skills—these are the traits that are often not taught in schools—which each of us must have to succeed.

These skills help us stand out in a crowd and must be learned early in our lives. They help us in elementary, middle and high schools and, as we become adults, must always be with us. They all deal with showing respect to others and they’re what define a gentleman.

What do think makes the difference between a man and a gentleman?

The soft skills we’re talking about fall into what we have many names for—manners, kindness—but they are fall under the general category of etiquette. And that’s a fancy name for simply saying *gentleman*.

A gentleman...knows how to make a positive first and lasting impression.

- He always knows how to talk with people, even those he doesn’t know well.
- He is a conscientious worker and treats the company he works for as if it was his own.
- His manners are impeccable, leading to a reputation that makes others want to know him.
- He always dresses well, whether he’s going to a football game or taking a lady to dinner. He remembers to remove his hat indoors.
- He responds to invitations promptly and is a thoughtful guest.
- He never fails to say thank you and always writes a thank you note.
- He can set a proper table and has excellent table manners.
- He’s a great host, always putting the comfort of his guests first.
- He treats friends and those he doesn’t know equally well.
- He treats animals with respect.
- He is never rude to another person, even if they seem to deserve it.

- He always looks for something positive to say about others who are not present and keeps things he knows about others to himself (maintains privacy and never gossips).
- He is never heard swearing in public, at school or the office.
- He shows the same respect for himself that she shows others.

Section One—A Gentleman Talks

When a gentleman meets another person, there are two things that happen:

- There's an introduction and
- He shakes hands, looking the other person in the eye and smiles.

A gentleman can always start and continue a conversation with individuals.

Topics a gentleman never discusses include religion, politics and anything that will make another person uncomfortable or embarrassed.

A Gentleman at the Table

A gentleman can be counted on to seat a lady at the table. He knows proper table manners, not to order messy or inappropriate foods, how to properly eat his food (and what to do if he doesn't) and always shows respect to the server as well as his dining companions. A gentleman knows how to use his napkin and what to do when the meal ends.

At home, he knows how to properly set a table for the foods that will be eaten and is considerate of dietary restraints of his guests.

A gentleman never drinks to excess and never lets a friend drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

A Gentleman Attends

A gentleman enjoys an active social life because he's a wonderful guest. He knows to respond to invitations promptly, knows how to dress and how to mix and mingle with other guests and hosts. He is a thoughtful date and knows how to conduct himself at a wedding or funeral.

A Gentleman Says Thank You

A gentleman always seeks out the host/hostess of a party to thank him or her before he leaves a party. He also makes a point of thanking others who played a part in something special he has

taken part in. He knows that saying “thank you” to members of his own family is just as important as thanking friends and others outside the home. And he never forgets to greet people whom he sees on a daily basis.

Gentlemen not only know how to say thank you in person for a gift, they send thank you notes following any kindness they have been shown. If they do not have note cards pre-printed with their names, they have standard black note cards and stamps always available for a quick thank you note.

A gentleman remembers that a small gift for his host/hostess is always appropriate.

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