PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE WORKSHOP

Every contact you make should form a positive, and professional, impression. Professionals who understand how to "behave" in certain situations have a better opportunity to get ahead, rather than be left behind. Whether the situation is an interview, a reception or other special event, everyone should know how to act in a formal dining situation.

During this three-hour Professional Etiquette workshop, you will learn the "Dos and Don'ts" to dining while enjoying a 5-course dinner. Topics include: first impressions, body language, networking, handshakes, place settings, ordering, dining etiquette, toasting, and thank you’s.

The Student Professional Development Programs helps students make the transition from business student to business professional.

The Student Professional Development Program provides learning experiences that develop personal and professional skills, giving students a competitive edge within their chosen field.
What is Etiquette?

“Whenver two people come together and their behavior affects one another, you have etiquette. Etiquette is not some rigid code of manners; it’s simply how persons’ lives touch one another.”

- Emily Post

~ BEFORE THE EVENT ~

First Impressions

“First impressions do count. The image you project when meeting someone for the first time is, in many cases, the picture of you they will carry with them. If you smile and stay relaxed, make eye contact, shake hands firmly, and greet the person warmly and sincerely, you’re likely to make a positive and long-lasting first impression.” - Peggy Post

- RSVP: Respondez S’il Vous Plait “Respond so very promptly”.
- Prepare for the event, research conversational topics; avoid politics, religion, and sex. Read up on current events; browse applicable journals, newspapers, and entertainment/arts happenings. Be a generalist and know a little about a lot of things.
- People love to be asked their opinions on certain topics, prepare a couple safe topics to ask their opinion on. Be careful not to share your opinion before you know theirs.
- Learn about your host, what their interests are, pay attention to items in their office.
- Check names if possible to see who else will be attending.
- Dress appropriately; better to overdress than be too casual.
- Be well groomed.
- BE ON TIME.
- Practice, practice, practice! Practice safe conversations with people you run into, the postal carrier, the bus driver, your neighbor. The more you practice, the better you will be.

Personal Skills

According to Peggy Post, “most conversational blunders are committed by those who talk too much, not too little.” Your job skills will get you the interview; it is your people skills that will get you the job. Consider this example from “The Etiquette Advantage in Business” by Peggy & Peter Post:

“Imagine you’re a CEO who’s considering three employees for a promotion, so you invite each of them in turn for a talk over lunch. Jane knows her job cold, but can’t quite make or hold eye contact with you. Kevin is friendly and outgoing, but he eats holding his fork like he’s going to stab someone and chews his food with his mouth open. Jonathan, on the other hand, walks into the interview dressed for the job he wants, rather than for the job he now has. His table manners don’t draw attention to his eating; instead, you find yourself focused on the conversation you are having with him. He smiles, and he holds eye contact — but not for too long.”

Jonathan is who you want representing your company, and it is based completely on his people skills.
The Handshake and Greeting

1. **STAND UP**  2. **SMILE/MAKE EYE CONTACT**  3. **GREET**  4. **SHAKE HANDS**

- Today the handshake is expected, regardless of gender.
- If already seated, stand up when meeting someone, man or woman.
- Smile, make eye contact
- Greet warmly “So nice to meet you Mr. Jones” or “It is a pleasure Ms. Jones”; repeat their name upon introduction and in conversation to help you remember it.
- Extend your hand. Handshakes last about 3 seconds, clasp hands firmly, web to web with thumbs up, and shake from the elbow and pump two or three times. Remember: squeeze, pump, pump.
  - A limp handshake suggests hesitance or timidity, a handshake that is too strong can come across as overly enthusiastic or domineering.
  - The two hand-shake signals warmth but may be seen as a power move.
  - You needn’t remove gloves to shake hands.
  - Keep your right hand open for handshaking. Keep your drink in your left hand. If you also have a plate, be sure to stand near a table so that you can set it down to shake hands.

Networking

- Nametags go on your right, when shaking hands, follow the arm up to the nametag. Leave off the Mr. or Ms., and titles. At business events, you may include your position or company name.
- Approach small groups (2-3 people), introduce yourself and join in the current conversation.
- If you forget someone’s name, simply ask them to repeat it. Avoid bluntly saying “What did you say your name was?” Find techniques that work for you to remember names, associate a person’s name with a visual image such as Mr. Green/golf course; Ms. Poirier/like Foyer.
- Purpose of small talk at an event is to find something in common and create a bond. It should not be useless chatter. Articulate clearly, do not use lazy words, and do not giggle or use slang.
- Ask relevant, open ended questions that indicate interest, ask for people’s opinions. Asking “What are your plans for the summer” is better than “Are you ready for summer?” Ask about them, it’s not about you!
- Listen more, talk less! Asking questions is the best way to communicate. Being observant and asking questions is more memorable than being witty or inappropriate. Paraphrase what is said to show that you understand. Do not interrupt others when they are talking.
- Do not stay with one group for the entire time, it is expected that you work the room.
- Beware of too much alcohol, 1-2 drinks.
- When seated, your name faces out on the place cards so others can see your name.

**Tip to Remember:** If you have sweaty hands, spray them with antiperspirant. Do this at least once a day for 1-2 days before the event. You may also blot your hands with a handkerchief. Avoid big rings that may interfere with handshaking.

**Entering a conversation**

- At business events, it is expected that you will be meeting new people. Don’t hesitate to enter conversations and introduce yourself.
- Look for people who are alone, use nametags to start conversations, include and be open to others who join the conversation.

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• Enter a conversation gracefully. Wait for a break and ask, “Do you mind if I join you?” or “May I join you? I am Chris Jones, from XYZ Corporation.” Extend your hand to meet others in the group, greet each person warmly and confidently.
• Be professional at all times, do not talk shop. You don’t want to say something that may be inappropriate.
• Never say, “You don’t remember me do you.”

Exiting a conversation

• It is expected that you will work the room, so don’t feel bad about leaving a conversation. Choose a natural break in conversation to make your exit. A respectful exit might be, “It was a pleasure to meet you all, there is someone I need to talk to, I hope you enjoy the rest of your evening.”

~ THE DINING EXPERIENCE ~

Pre-dinner Etiquette

• If meeting at a restaurant, wait in the lobby for your host to arrive before sitting down. Look to your host for seating assignments.
• If hors d’oeuvres are passed around by a waiter, you may take them with your fingers and eat them directly, take a napkin to clean your fingers.
• If place cards are on the table, do not move them, sit where your place card is. If there are not pre-set place cards, ask others at the table before joining them. You might say, “Pardon me, are these seats taken?” or “Do you mind if I join your table?” Upon joining a table, introduce yourself and your partner. Shaking hands with everyone at the table is not necessary, but a handshake at the end of the meal is a nice parting gesture.
• Do not place any bags, purses, sunglasses, cell phones, or briefcases on the table. Place them on the floor, to the right of your chair.
• Keep utensils in the same order they appear on the table, do not rearrange to accommodate yourself if you are left-handed.
• Wait for all parties to arrive before going to the table or beginning any part of the meal.
• Whenever you are not sure what to do, just watch others, follow their lead.

Ordering

• Ask your server if you have menu questions.
• Allow your host to order first. Order an item of similar price that won’t take too long to prepare.
• Order food that is easy to eat, this is a “talking” meal. Do not order food you are unfamiliar with, this is not the time to try something new.
• Foods to avoid: spicy, messy or finger foods
• If you have a special dietary need, let the waiter know and they will bring you a special meal. Be discreet; try not to draw attention to yourself.
• No doggy bags for business meals.

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**Table Diagram**

![Table Diagram](http://www.monkeysee.com/play/2250-basic-dining-etiquette-the-place-setting)

**Service Plate/Charger**

The Service plate or Charger serves as an under-plate for the first course plate. It is placed one inch from the edge of the table. The Services place is removed when the entree is served.

**Napkin**

- If the first course is already on the Service plate, the napkin is placed to the left of the forks; otherwise the napkin will be on the plate or in your water glass.
- Place napkin in your lap immediately upon being seated, folded in half with the fold towards your waist. Traditionally, lunch napkins should be folded in half while dinner napkins should be opened fully.
- If you rise from the table mid-meal, you should place your napkin on your chair to indicate you will return.
- Only return your napkin to the table when the meal is completely finished and you are leaving the table (after dessert). Fold loosely and place on the left side of the plate. Never bury your food with your napkin.
- Use your napkin frequently
- Do not use your napkin as a tissue. If you have to sneeze or cough, turn your head away from the table excuse yourself.
- At some establishments, the wait staff may hold your napkin and place it on your lap, let them rather than trying to do it yourself.

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Silverware

Utensils are set in the order they are used. Handles of the flatware are aligned at the bottom. The forks (no more than three) are at the left of the place plate, placed in order of use, working from the outside in. The oyster fork is the only fork on the right side with the knives, tines of the fork placed upward, across the soup spoon or parallel with the knives.

**Tip to Remember:** If the forks have been rolled in a napkin, the smaller of the two is the salad fork.

- In North America the salad is often served prior to the main course. In this case, the salad fork is positioned the furthest from the plate on the left. One would use this fork first. In the case of French style dining, the salad would be served after the main course. In this case, the salad fork would be positioned next to the plate.

- Often times the dessert fork and spoon are above the place plate, the bowl of the spoon facing left, the fork below facing right. Leave them in that position until dessert comes. The server should pull the fork/spoon down for you, if they do not then once dessert has arrive you may bring them down to the side(s) of the plate.

**Tip to Remember:** the word F-O-R-K has four letters in it, the word L-E-F-T has four letters in it; the fork is always on the left side of the plate.

- If you find a soiled fork or any other item unclean, discreetly ask for a replacement.

- The knife is at the right of the place plate with the cutting edge toward the plate. The spoon (for a first course) is placed to the right of the knife.

**Tip to Remember:** the words K-N-I-F-E and S-P-O-N have five letters in them, the word R-I-G-H-T has five letters in it; the knife and spoon are always on the right side of the plate.

- Once a piece of silverware has been used, it should never touch the table again. If your plate has been removed, balance a used utensil over your spoon or other utensil.

Glassware

- Three glasses are generally set on the table, for water, red wine and white wine.
- Hold the wine glass by the stem not the body. The only time you would hold the body of the glass is with cognac, which is meant to be consumed warm.
- The red wine glass will have a larger bowl, this is to let the red wine breath. Champaign will be served in a flute to keep the wine bubbly, the white wine glass is wider than the flute, but narrower that the red wine glass.
- Sip the wine don’t guzzle or drink in one gulp like an alcohol shot.
- Never turn a wine glass or coffee cup over to decline a drink. It is okay to signal by putting your hand over the glass that you do not want the drink, but be discreet. If you are continuously asked by different wait staff, you may just have them poor you a cup and not drink it. This will stop the interruptions.
- Wait until dessert is served to have coffee, this is the proper time and will be served at the end of the meal.

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Stemware—Note the shapes of each type of stemware. They all have a unique shape and should only be used for their respective drinks.

**Dining Etiquette**

- For cold food or buffets, wait for the host/hostess to announce dinner before beginning. Be careful not to take an extra plate if the host is being charged by the plate.
- Wait to eat until everyone has been served, follow the lead of your host. The only exception is if some of the meals are delayed, you may begin eating if given the okay from the host.
- Practice proper posture, sit up straight with your arms close to your body, keep elbows off the table unless finished eating and leaning in to show interest in conversation.
- Always say please when asking for something. Be sure to say thank you to your server and bus boy after they have removed any used items.
- At the beginning of a meal when food is passed around, pass to the right. It is okay to offer to the person to your left, and then begin to pass to the right.
- The salt and pepper are married. If asked for the salt or pepper, pass both together, even if a table mate asks for only one of them. This is so dinner guests won't have to search for orphaned shakers. Handle them by the middle not the top of the shakers.
- Never intercept a pass. Snagging a roll out of the breadbasket or taking a shake of salt when it is en route to someone else is a no-no.
- Butter, spreads, or dips should be transferred from the serving dish to your plate before spreading or eating.
- Tuck empty sugar, creamer, and butter packets under the edge of your saucer or bread plate.
- Bring your food to your mouth, not your mouth to your food.
- Cut food into small pieces… take small bites so you can carry on a conversation.

**Tip to remember:** Food is served from the left. Dishes are removed from the right.

~ THE MEAL ~

**Proper Eating Style**

- There are two main styles of eating: American or European/Contintental.
• The correct way to cut your meat, whether eating American or continental style, is to grasp your knife and fork in a relaxed, natural manner, never with clenched fists.

• In the American style of eating, after cutting your meat, you switch the fork to your right hand, place your knife on the plate, spear a piece of meat, and then eat it. Emily Post refers to this as “zig-zag” eating.

• In the Continental style of eating, the fork always stays in your left hand and the knife stays in the right. Convey the food to your mouth after cutting each piece. The knife remains in your hand and may be subtly used to get meat or any other food.

### American vs. Continental

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American</th>
<th>Continental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fork in left hand, tines down</td>
<td>1. Fork in left hand, tines down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Knife at top of plate</td>
<td>2. Keep knife in right hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Switch fork to right hand</td>
<td>3. Keep fork in left hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fork to mouth, tines facing up</td>
<td>4. Fork to mouth, tines down</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Do not talk with your utensils and do not use both hands simultaneously to hold utensils and cups.

• Most often from course to course, your tableware will be taken away and replaced as needed.

• Once used, your utensils, including the handles, should not touch the table again. Always rest forks, knives, and spoons on the side of your plate or in the bowl.

• At the end of the meal, you should place your used silverware close together on the plate, with the utensils entirely on the plate (less than an inch of the silverware over the side of the plate) in the 10:20 o’clock position. This is a signal to the servers that your meal is finished and the dishes can be removed.

• Pay attention to others at the table, when they are all done, you are too.

• Any unused silverware is simply left on the table.

**View:** [http://www.monkeysee.com/play/2257-basic-dining-etiquette-the-main-course](http://www.monkeysee.com/play/2257-basic-dining-etiquette-the-main-course)

### Soup

• Gently stir your soup to cool it instead of blowing on it.

• Do not crumble crackers in your soup. Oyster crackers should be placed on the underplate and added a little at a time. Larger crackers should stay out of the soup; eat them with your fingers.

• Spoon your soup away from you.

• When sipping soup, do so from the side of the spoon, rather than from the front. When eating meat or vegetables in soup, you can insert the spoon “forward march.”

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• Soup shouldn’t be tipped or picked-up to eat. Do not slurp.
• When finished, the soup spoon is placed on the saucer.

**Bread and Salad**

**TIP:** Bread is on the right, Drink is on the left, look to your hands as a reminder.

• When passing the bread, offer to the person on your left, help yourself, then pass to the right. Never eat the last piece of bread.
• In the absence of a bread plate and butter knife, place bread on your service plate and use your dinner knife to get butter and place it on your plate.
• The butter plate (optional) has the knife placed across the top of the plate, handle to the right, edge of blade toward the user.
• Place butter on your plate before buttering your bread. Discretely place the wrappers from butter pads to the side of your bread plate.
• Break your bread/rolls into bite sized pieces one at a time, individually butter each piece then eat.
• If your salad is already on the table and not directly in front of you, it will be the one to the left of your fork.
• Cut your salad into bite size pieces if necessary. Do not overload with dressing.

**Main Course**

• Always scoop food away from you.
• Taste your food before seasoning it.
• Do try a little of everything on your plate.
• Do not blow on your food to cool it off. If it is too hot to eat, take the hint and wait.
• Cut only enough food for the next mouthful. Eat in small bites and slowly.
• Do not push your dishes away from you or stack them for the waiter when you are finished. Leave plates and glasses where they are.
• If you have any problems with the meal, quietly bring it to the waiter’s attention
• Pass food to the right. For bowls with spoons, pass with the spoon ready for the next person. If you are the one to reach to the center of the table for an item, pass it before serving yourself.
• Bread, fingers, or other items should not be used to move or scoop additional food onto your utensil.

**Dessert**

• You can use your dessert fork or spoon
• Use fork or knife to eat fruit, cut and eat one section at a time.
• You can now have coffee, one cream, one sugar, do not over indulge.

**Toasting**

• If making a toast, prepare in advance, practice the toast, keep your remarks short and to the point.
• The host is the first to toast. At formal events, the toaster and people toasting stand, the person being toasted remains seated and does not drink to him/herself.

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• After the toast, the person being toasted stands, bows to his host and says thank you. He/she may then toast to the host or anyone else.
• Respond by taking a sip of your drink, never finish the drink.
• At informal dinners, it is acceptable for everyone, toaster and toastee, to remain seated.
• Toasting Guidelines:
  o Stand
  o Keep it short and simple
  o Come prepared
  o Make eye contact
  o Convey a Personal message
  o Raise glass

**Tipping**

• A tip should always be earned.
• Treat servers with respect.
• When in doubt about whether to tip, ask in advance.
• Tip on the pre-tax amount of the bill, not on the total.
• Tip discreetly – “CASH” is the tip of choice.
  o **Waiters, Waitresses** – For good services, 20% of the bill. Average is 15%. Watch for built-in gratuities, this is often included in the bill for larger groups and in other countries, typically 15%.
  o **Bartenders** – at high end bars, $1.00 per drink, at small town bars $.50 per drink. If running a tab, leave a tip for the bartender when your table is ready.
  o **Hosts, Hostesses, and Maitre d’s** – tipping is not necessary unless you are a frequent patron and then offer $10 or $20 every once in a while
  o **Valet Parkers** - $1 in smaller cities, $2-$3 in larger cities. Give tip when your car is brought to you, not when you arrive.
  o **Coatroom Attendant** - $2 for the first coat, $1 per additional coat.

**Concluding a Meal**

• At a business meal, the person who does the inviting generally pays. Bring cash or credit along in case it is expected that you pay for your own meal.
• Thank the host in person and send a thank you note the next day.

**The thank you**

The thank you note should not be a chore, but rather an opportunity to set yourself apart from your competition. If the invitation was made by phone, then a phone thank you is appropriate, if by email, then email is okay, if a written invitation, then write a thank you note. Samples thank you notes from “The Etiquette Advantage in Business” by Peggy and Peter Post, p. 197

**FORMAL:**

Dear Larry,

*Thanks so much for the lunch today – and for introducing me to the Café Rouge. I can understand why it’s your favorite restaurant. The conversation was almost as delicious as the Beef Bourguignon, and I really appreciated your wise counsel about the transfer offer.*

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Yours,
Sarah

INFORMAL:

Dear Mr. Jones,

Thank you so much for the lunch today. The restaurant was elegant, and the meal was delicious. Most of all, I appreciate your ideas and guidance about my decision to transfer to the Seattle office. Your suggestions really helped me to get my priorities in order. I look forward to entertaining you on your next visit to the Northwest.

Sincerely,
Mark Dawson

Sticky Situations

- If something undesirable is in your mouth, discreetly remove it with your fork.
- If you find a bug or hair in your food, catch the attention of the waiter and ask for a replacement, try not to bring attention to yourself.
- If a guest has food on his face or in her teeth, you can subtly let them know by pointing on your face to the location the food is, or saying “Oops, there seems to be something on your chin.” Use your napkin occasionally to avoid having anything on your face.
- If you have something in your teeth and cannot dislodge it with your tongue, excuse yourself to the restroom to remove it rather than worry for the rest of the meal.

The Do’s and Don’ts

- DO dispose of gum prior to sitting down.
- DO turn off your cell phone or switch it to silent mode before sitting down to eat, and leave it in your pocket or purse. It is impolite to answer a phone during dinner. If you must make or take a call, excuse yourself from the table and step outside of the restaurant.
- DO NOT blot lipstick on a tissue or napkin before eating.
- DO NOT apply makeup or comb hair at the table. Excuse yourself to freshen up in the restroom.
- DO NOT take medication at the table.
- DO NOT bring up business until the host does. If business is not brought up, you can express your interest at the end of the meal.
- DO NOT complain about anything, the food, service, size of portions, etc.
- DO NOT talk with your mouth full, the basics…chew with your mouth closed. If asked a question, finish chewing before answering.
- DO pace yourself. Not too fast, chew your food. Your stomach does not have teeth. Be sure to talk and take part in the dinner conversation. Not too slow, if others are finished and you are not, then you should finish so others do not have to wait. Be aware you may be talking too much and not eating.
- DO NOT chomp ice.
- DO take small bites.
- DO keep your left hand in your lap unless you are using it.
• **DO NOT** clean up spills with your own napkin and don’t touch items that have dropped on the floor. You can use your napkin to protect yourself from spills. Then, simply and politely ask your server to clean up and to bring you a replacement for the soiled napkin or dirty utensil.

• **DO NOT** blow your nose at the dinner table. Excuse yourself to visit the restroom. Wash your hands before returning.

• **DO NOT** use a toothpick at the table.

• **DO NOT** reach for the check, your host should take care of it. But, be prepared if you do need to cover your costs.

• **DO** thank the host at the end of the meal.

• **DO** push your chair I when excusing yourself and at the end of the meal.

**Conclusion**

“The ultimate reason for getting your table manners down cold is that it leaves you free to concentrate on the most important task of any social or business meal, which is to participate. This means being focused on the conversation.”

Excerpt from *The Etiquette Advantage in Business*

This means relax, enjoy the dinner conversation, practice good manners and you will be fine, too much etiquette can make you appear stuffy or boring, just be aware of your behavior. Happy dining!

**SOURCES**

“Excuse Me, But I Was Next…” Peggy Post, 2006

“The Etiquette Advantage in Business” Peggy Post & Peter Post, 2005

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