The Politeness Manifesto



Back in the 90's, Australian dentist Dr. Paddi Lund reminded us of the power of politeness. That politeness is "the oil of the wheels of society."

Whether we are discussing transactions between family, friends, work colleagues or complete strangers, you may recall the observation that "Politeness is a sign of dignity, not subservience." — Theodore Roosevelt

The age of the pandemic has created its own unique challenges to politeness - fear, frustration and burn out amongst them - but there remains no excuse for bad manners.

So let's review and update Paddi's original "Courtesy System" for the contemporary reader:

- 1. Use a person's name "please" and "thank you" in any form of communication, whether in-person or digital;
- 2. Don't gossip or make disparaging comments about another person when they are not present in the conversation;
- 3. When another person is impolite to you explain to them your perception of what has happened and how it has made you feel. Ask them whether that was their intention?
- 4. If you are impolite to another, then apologise, accept 100% responsibility and offer to make it right;
- 5. Take a genuine and empathetic interest in other people at all times. Be the solution not the problem;
- 6. When things go wrong, blame a system not a person (that one is timeless thank you Paddi) and offer to learn from the mistake and fix the system;
- 7. Always explain clearly your perception of what is happening tell the truth about how things appear to you;
- 8. Be the beacon of light in conversations the person who brings a positive attitude and a breath of fresh air to every situation;
- 9. In every conversation you ever have in-person or online be respectful and considerate.

Finally:

"Treat everyone with politeness, even those who are rude to you. Not because they are nice, but because you are."

