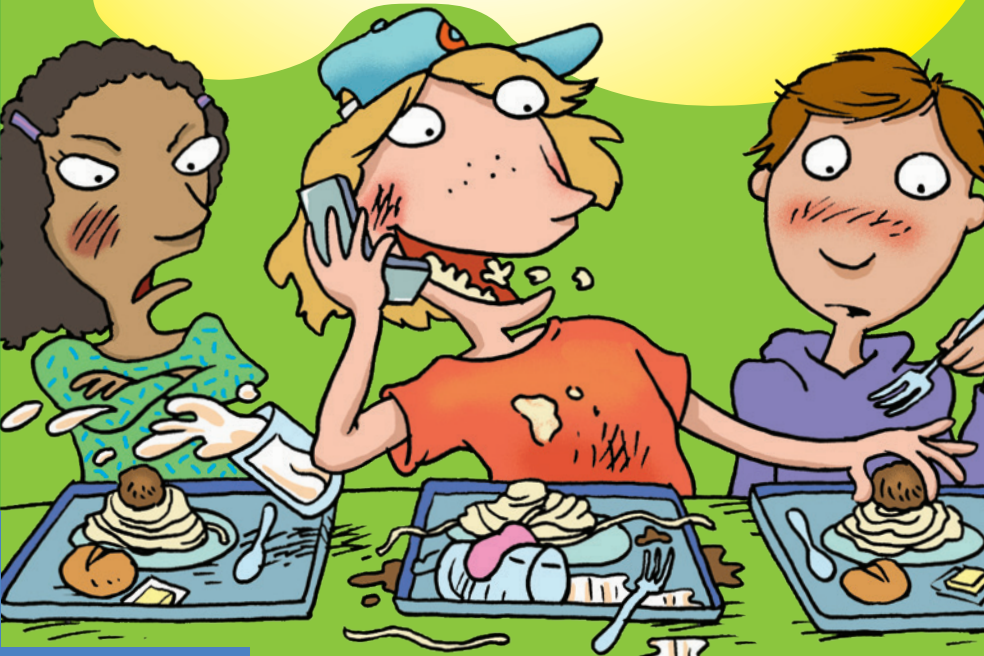


Laugh & Learn®

# Dude, That's RUDE!

(Get Some Manners)



free spirit  
PUBLISHING®

Pamela Espeland & Elizabeth Verdick  
Illustrated by Steve Mark

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by Pamela Espeland & Elizabeth Verdick

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## Quick Quiz

Manners are:

1. A. a secret code only snobs know  
B. good behaviors anyone can learn
2. A. silly things you'll hardly ever use  
B. skills you'll use for the rest of your life
3. A. signs that you only care about Y-O-U  
B. signs that you care about other people *and* yourself
4. A. rules invented to make life miserable  
B. rules meant to make life more pleasant
5. A. old-fashioned—no one needs them anymore  
B. as important today as ever, maybe even *more* important

Answers: All Bs for B-have.

# Manners: Who Cares?

Does it seem like we live in a rude, rude world?



8 out of 10 American adults say a lack of respect and courtesy is a serious problem.



6 out of 10 say things are getting worse.



More than 4 out of 10 admit they sometimes behave pretty badly themselves.

And they're *really* concerned about the rude behavior of children.



What's the big deal about manners, anyway? So what if people sneeze on you, kick your seat during a movie, cut in front of you in line, hog dessert, or spread nasty rumors? Who cares? Well, *you* care. Because it feels bad when people are rude to you—and it feels bad when you're rude to them.

You might not think so at first, but it can sneak up on you later. Like when you remember the look on your friend's face after you dissed him. Or when you think about how you *still* haven't written your thank-you notes for your birthday last year.

When you have manners, you know how to act in all kinds of situations. You don't have to guess or wonder if you're doing something "wrong." That can build your confidence. When you're polite at home, at school, and everywhere else you go, people will notice. They'll see that you're thoughtful, great to know, and fun to be around.

Manners make life easier and nicer for everyone—and that's why manners matter.

**P.S.**

We are not the Manners Police. We're not here to tell you that from now on, you have to be Miss or Mister Perfect. The fact is that wet willies, armpit farts, ding-dong ditch, and other rude noises and tricks are part of being a kid. Don't stop being a kid (at least, not right away). There's a time to goof off and a time to get some, you know—manners. They really do come in handy.

If you don't read anything else in this book, read this page.

## Power Words

These words are your manners vocabulary. In a world where many people grab, grunt, shove, and snarl, using these words will set you apart and make you shine.

### SAY WHAT? WHEN?

Please

When you want something

Thank you

When you get it

You're welcome

When someone thanks you

Excuse me\*

When you burp, yawn, fart, interrupt a conversation, bump into someone, etc.

Yes, please

When you want something being offered to you

No, thank you

When you don't

I'm sorry

When you mess up

\*Excuse me is an all-purpose courtesy phrase. You can use it in lots of different situations. Like when you're in a hurry and need to get by someone ("Excuse me!"). Or you want to escape a boring conversation ("Excuse me."). Or you're trying to attract someone's attention ("Excuse me . . ."). Or you don't understand what someone just said ("Excuse me?"). Or you want to show how shocked you are by someone else's bad behavior, but in a polite way ("Excuse me?"). For extra points, say it in French: *Excusez-moi* (Ek-skyoo-zay-mwa). For fun, try "Ex-squeeze-me."

## P.U. Words

These are words and phrases to avoid, unless you want people to think you're a clod.

Shut up  
Get Lost  
Big deal  
So what  
You suck  
Whatever



Other P.U. words include swear words, often called *four-letter words*, though some have more letters than that. Go to page 80 for more on swears.

## In the House



You're watching a cool show and it's right in the middle of the good part. From another room, your mom calls your name. You ignore her the first time—because *you're right in the middle of the good part*. She calls your name louder. You turn up the volume on the remote. She calls again. In the back of your brain, you have unmannerly thoughts like “Can’t she figure out I’m busy?” and “If I pretend not to hear her, maybe she’ll leave me alone.”

Next thing you know, she’s standing in front of the TV, and she doesn’t look happy.

“Mom, you’re blocking the screen.”

“Didn’t you hear me calling you?”

“I’m watching something!” (You’re not exactly lying.)

“Not anymore you’re not,” she replies, turning off the TV. “I asked you an hour ago to take out the trash, and it’s not done. No more TV tonight.”

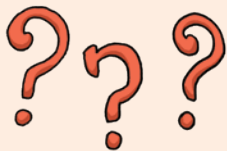
“No fair! Thanks a lot for making me miss the best part of the show!” You stomp to the trashcan and grab the bag—too hard—and accidentally spill a bunch of garbage on the floor.

Your mom watches with her arms crossed, shakes her head, and walks away. Now you’re picking up smelly garbage by yourself, and both of you feel bad.



Could a little etiquette have changed things here?  
Well, yes.

**who Knew?** *Etiquette* (EH-tih-ket) is another word for *manners*. It comes from a French word meaning *ticket*. Long ago, when people visited royal palaces in France, they were given little cards (tickets) with instructions for how to behave. That's so they wouldn't do something stupid and get in trouble with the king.



## Manners Make Life Better

A wise person\* once described manners as “the happy way of doing things.” The key word here is *happy*. That whole scene with the TV and ignoring your mom? Totally could have been avoided. All you had to do was take out the trash when she asked.

What if you forgot and sat down in front of the TV? The first time your mom called your name, you could have hit the mute button and answered, “Yes, Mom?” When she reminded you to take out the trash, you could have said, “Wow, I’m sorry, I totally forgot!” Then you could have said, “I’ll do it now.” Or maybe, “I’m watching a show and it’s right in the middle of the good part—can I please take out the trash when it’s over?” Because you asked so nicely, she could have said yes.

And now a few words about family. They’re the people you wake up with, share a bathroom with, and come home to. They know your history, your favorite foods, your worst moods, and what you’d ask for if a genie popped out of a bottle and gave you three wishes. How many people can you say *that* about? So they’re more than just Dad, Mom, Grandma, Sis, Bro, or Uncle Bob—they’re the people who take care of you and care about you. You may not have chosen them, but they’re *yours*, and they love you.

\*No, it wasn’t Yoda. It was Marjabelle Young Stewart, an expert on etiquette.



And that's why (big surprise coming up . . . wait for it . . .  
**wait . . .**)