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**Must Manners be Taught?**

**By Jacquie McTaggart**

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PLEASE answer the following questions honestly. (Go ahead - you won't be graded.)

Does your child... Greet you with something other than a grunt in the morning? Use the word "PLEASE" when he asks you to purchase a \$90 pair of designer jeans? Say "THANKS" when you take his forgotten homework assignment to school? Utter "EXCUSE ME" after he accidentally knocks you down on his way to the phone? Write Grandma a thank-you letter for the DVD she sent in the mail?

Chances are pretty good that a few of you answered, "yes" to some of these questions. Chances are even better that many of you answered, "no" to most of them.

During my lengthy career (forty-two years) in the classroom I observed a drastic decline in what we call "Good Manners." I have no answers (or theories) as to why this has occurred, but it has. I believe that we must make an attempt to correct the situation.

Good manners are the cornerstone of courteous behavior. They provide the impetus to say the words and exhibit the behaviors that distinguish us humans from the rest of the animal kingdom. Good manners show consideration for others.

Good manners demand that intentional sounds of physical relief such as belching and "fluffing" are saved for non-public areas. (You male readers may call "fluffing" by another name, but I'm sure you get the idea.) Good manners encompass all the things that make the people around us feel good. They compel us to eliminate words, sounds, and actions that cause others in our presence to feel uncomfortable. In essence, they enable us to be an accepted member of a civilized society.

Good manners are not automatically caught, they must be taught. A child or adolescent does not magically discover on his own the fact that common decency and politeness help to make him a more socially acceptable person. Neither does he understand that those attributes will ultimately contribute

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to his success, and help to make him a happier individual. It's up to us to teach our children these concepts.

How do we do that? Good manners, like most values, must be demonstrated and lived in the home if they are to become a permanent part of the child's character. The school should not be expected to bear the primary responsibility for teaching good manners. Seven hours a day for nine months of the year is not an adequate amount of time to instill a lasting principle or a moral value. (In one year, the average kid spends 1,253 hours in school and 7,507 hours out of school.) Teachers can force compliance ("Tell Jimmy you're sorry"), but they can't make good manners and common decency an automatic, knee-jerk response. Parents can.

How? Parents need to demonstrate good manners in the home - day in and day out. Kids hear messages that are delivered by lecture - "You should..." They internalize that which they observe. Parents must "practice what they preach," if they want the value of good manners to become a part of

the child's moral fiber. And they should begin this process when the child is very young.

Politeness and good manners open the door to a successful and happy adult life. We need to give our kids the legs that will enable them to walk through that door.

"Life is not so short but that there is always time enough for courtesy."  
– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Jacque McTaggart is a recently retired 42-year career teacher and author of, "From the Teacher's Desk." She currently travels throughout the country speaking at teacher conferences and symposiums for parents. You can find more of her teaching and parenting tips at

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### **Book Review – Manners That Sell: Adding The Polish That Builds Profits**

**By Bonnie Jo Davis**

This beautifully laid out trade paperback has a gorgeous and practical design both inside and out. I recommend you read this book with a highlighter and a pen and be ready to take copious notes in the blank pages thoughtfully provided between chapters.

Manners That Sell: Adding The Polish That Builds Profits should be required reading for high school and college students and for anyone already in the business environment. Once upon a time, good manners were taught in school and at home, but that time has long since passed. This book provides

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the perfect refresher course for those of us who were taught manners but no longer remember the finer points of etiquette.

While reading this book I discovered that the author, Lydia Ramsey, covered every conceivable point of etiquette including many that I'd never been taught. Each of the twelve chapters covers one main topic broken down into digestible bite sized chunks of rules and guidelines to enhance credibility and professionalism. Topics include first impressions, greetings and introductions, the art of conversation, dressing for business, telephone courtesy, electronic etiquette, correspondence in business, etiquette in the office, gift-giving in business, etiquette out of the office, dining for profit and doing business internationally.

The author of this delightful book, Lydia Ramsey, is a business etiquette expert with over thirty years of experience working with non-profits, corporations, colleges and universities. She is a frequently published author who presents workshops, seminars and keynotes on all aspects of business etiquette.

I recommend businesses buy this book in bulk and present one to every employee from the frontline up to the top management. In this ever changing world with so many consumer choices, the bottom line is often affected by the simple courtesies that can and should be afforded to customers. You need this book if you want your employees to succeed and your business to thrive. You can purchase Manners That Sell at

<http://www.MannersThatSell.com>

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Bonnie Jo Davis is the author of the e-book: *Articles That Sell: Use The Best Kept Secret To Promote Your Business For Free!* For more information about Bonnie her e-book visit

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