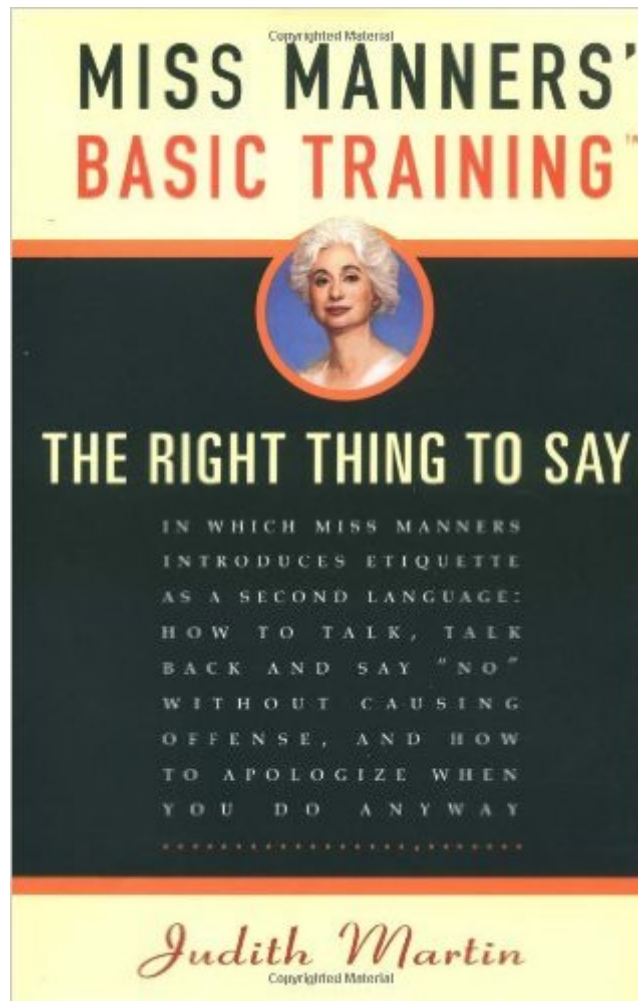


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# Miss Manners' Basic Training: The Right Thing To Say



## Synopsis

Miss Manners hereby declares that "You look terrific -- did you have a facelift?" is not an acceptable compliment. For this and the other myriad rudeness that nowadays pass for consolation, congratulation and other forms of verbal communication, Miss Manners provides politely pointed comebacks, as well as the gracious and proper thing to say in any situation. Miss Manners feels compelled to do so because saying the wrong thing -- whether in the name of originality, self-expression, honesty or instant empathy -- has become all too common: To a Bereaved Person: "You must realize it's all for the best." To a Newly Engaged Person: "Are you sure you know what you're doing?" To a Pregnant Woman: "You can still do something about it, you know." The Right Thing to Say is a refresher course in etiquette as a second language, filled with the practical advice and sly humor that make Miss Manners such "good wicked fun, and helpful too" (Cosmopolitan). Including useful phrases for dealing with life's special occasions and mishaps, The Right Thing to Say explores the subtleties of saying "no," conducting a conversation without causing offense and the art of the apology when you do anyway.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

. . . Miss Manners, a.k.a. Judith Martin, is the cure for the more fundamental illness of which those feelings are symptomatic. Young people do sometimes think they are being "idealistic" in holding that there is something phony and delusive about etiquette. (One is tempted to imagine them with battered and dog-eared copies of J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher In The Rye* stuffed into their back pockets.) Unfortunately they could not be more mistaken. Civility and politeness (which derive respectively from the Latin and Greek words for "society") are absolutely necessary in order for

human beings to live together with a minimum of social friction; there is nothing whatsoever "idealistic" about supposing we can dispense with them. On the contrary, this supposition will probably, in practice, defeat every ideal you hold. Again, the best cure for this disease is to read Miss Manners herself on the subject. Those who have not read her books may not realize that in her hands, etiquette is not a completely dreary affair involving nothing but superficial mannerisms and polite phrases. But it will take only a few pages for even the skeptical reader to realize that etiquette is simply the conventional means by which we maintain, and convey, genuine respect for one another as human beings.

As time has gone by, Miss Manners has been a one-woman navy fighting the rising tide of rude behavior. I've enjoyed all of Judith Martin's previous books on manners and this one continues the tradition. This brief, yet entertaining book explains why manners are vital and how to clearly express yourself to individuals and groups. She points out how 'inventing' your own set of manners can have exactly the opposite effect that you desire. She is also careful to explain the adverse effects of lack of manners. This book contains many examples of what to say in most social situations. For example: have you ever had the urge, when someone dies, to tell a survivor, "It's all for the best?". Miss Manners explains how that remark could burn you for life. And there's plenty more examples just as important. Read this book, and take its information to heart, and you will avoid many potentially embarrassing situations. Both you and those around you will be glad you did.

This book was highly entertaining and I found myself using the lessons Miss Manners taught me almost immediately. This book was referred to me by a friend who had read it in her book club. I have a DREADFUL father-in-law and she told me this book would help. She was right! He came to visit shortly after I read this book and I found myself being able to POLITELY let him know that I thought what he said or did was inappropriate. It not only helped my relationship with him but with my husband as well- who, in the past, was always forced to keep the peace. For a book about manners I really thought this would be a chore to get through. I was wrong! Miss Manners is very witty and I found myself laughing out loud throughout this book. I'll be buying some more of this wonderful author's books in the future.

Yes, this book is absolutely unnecessary for those who understand the principles of consideration and tact (which follows from consideration, actually). I don't know when honesty seemed to have become the principal virtue of life -- many people seem to think that the "honest" bit of "brutally

honest" outweighs the "brutal" part. Guess what. It doesn't. And Miss Manners tells you why. This slim volume would probably not stop the tactless person from informing a young, grieving widow, at her husband's funeral, that her mother-in-law must feel this more deeply than her, for the death of a child is worse than the death of a spouse. Any person who thought for a moment would realize this is an extremely thoughtless thing to say. However, this may come in handy for the parent who is trying to come up with arguments for =why= their teenagers shouldn't say certain things. And it's definitely helpful for the people who are trying to be polite in the face of unbelievable rudeness (like the event I mentioned above.) Miss Manners can be extremely cutting to those who deserve it -- those so self-centered that they care not what effects their words will have on others.

This is an extremely practical and useful resource guide to daily situations. Everything is in this book! There are fabulous descriptions of the differences between Rudeness and Honesty with tact. In a society that has become so ME based, I feel everyone needs to read this book. **THIS BOOK MAKES A GREAT GRADUATION GIFT!**

While this book is moderately entertaining and serves as a reminder to anyone who has forgotten how to stay out of other people's business and how to nicely keep other people out of their own, it's substandard for Miss Manners. There's a great deal of repetition and narrowness of approach, and because of this, the book is not as funny or as useful as it otherwise might be.

Pros: This book does a fantastic job of illustrating what not to say and why. Miss Manner's takes extra care to enumerate the worst of the things to say in the worst situations. Her list of things not to say to a person who is grieving the loss of someone close to them is especially thorough. As is her list on what to say to babies. Cons: Miss Manner's suggestions for how to deal with rude people... or unkind people, are very passive-aggressive. They are sometimes so passive-aggressive that they are really mean and subtly (or not so subtly) rude. Overall: A very good manner book for the bookshelf.

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