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etiquette

Courtesy CALLS

WITH SUSAN FITTER

WHEN DO YOU STOP SAYING "THANK YOU"?

A handwritten thank-you note is never in bad taste. However, it's not always necessary, depending on the size and nature of the gift. Say you've received a small gift in reciprocity for a favor or as a thank-you for your hospitality: Simply tell the gift-giver how much you appreciate the gesture. Of course, if you are particularly touched by the gift or it's particularly extravagant in effort or cost, by all means send a note.

WHAT DO I NEED TO REMEMBER WHEN TOASTING?

Here's the gaffe you don't want to make: drinking to yourself when toasted. If you are the guest of honor, never drink or raise your glass in response to a toast made to you. A sincere "thank you" will do.

At some point, though, you must return the toast. Just remember the four S's: Stand, Short, Sip, Sit. Always stand up and make eye contact with the object of your toast; keep the tribute short and sweet; raise your glass, take a sip and sit down.

WHAT'S THE PROPER WAY TO MAKE INTRODUCTIONS?

A person of lower status is introduced to the person of higher status. Practically speaking, this means you should say the name of the person of greater authority first, as in, "Mr. President, I'd like to introduce your constituent, Ms. Voter." Remember that elected officials have greater authority than CEOs, guests come before members and clients are the most important people in any organization. As long as you keep in mind this order of precedence, you'll know whose name to start with.

Former Valley resident Susan Fitter, founder and managing director of Global Manners, is a certified image consultant and an expert in deportment, decorum, table manners and international etiquette. She currently co-hosts Mind Your Manners on TLC, with Clinton Kelly of What Not to Wear and Diana Mather.

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