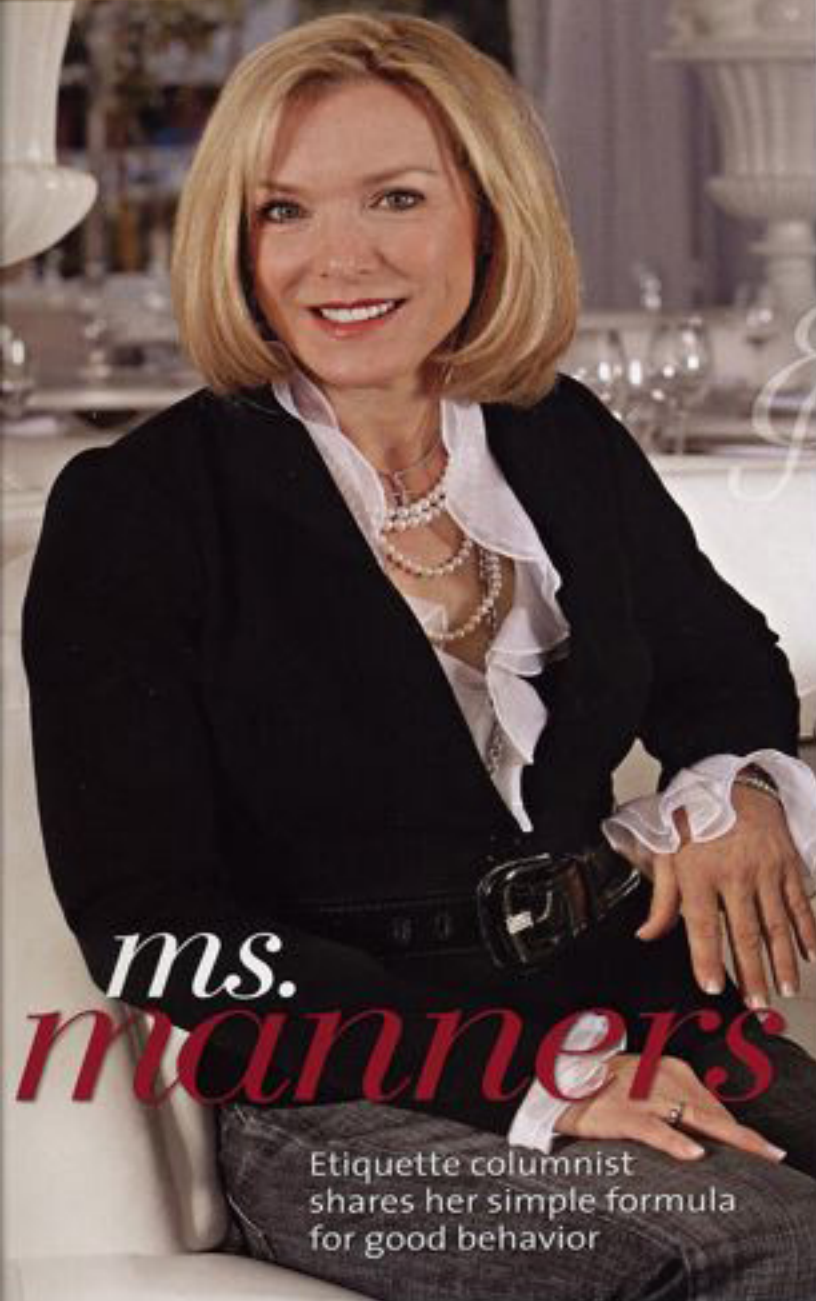


personalities



## ms. manners

Etiquette columnist  
shares her simple formula  
for good behavior

PHOTO SHOT ON LOCATION AT THE ASIA DE CUBA RESTAURANT AT THE MONDRIAN HOTEL IN SCOTTSDALE

TEXT BY EILEEN DRISCOLL BAILEY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RANDALL MICHELSON

"Etiquette is simply kindness," says Susan Fitter, AZ Society etiquette columnist and former Paradise Valley resident. "It's about making other people more comfortable."

Fitter is the founder and managing director of Global Manners, based in Washington, D.C., and Phoenix (globalmanners.com). She is certified in international protocol and as an image consultant.

How does an avid equestrian, who foxhunts at the Orange County Hunt near her home in Middleburg, Va., become an expert in all aspects of protocol and decorum?

With two degrees in psychology, she started her career as a hospital-based psychologist, specializing in oncology and grief counseling. Kindness and empathy, she observes, are critical components in etiquette as well as in counseling.

Four decades ago, in Eleanor Roosevelt's *Book of Common Sense Etiquette*, the famous first lady wrote that there are "many correct ways of behaving in almost any situation ... but the basis of all good human behavior is kindness."

Fitter's heroes in the field of "good human behavior" — etiquette in the broadest sense — also include author Letitia Baldrige, syndicated columnist Judith "Miss Manners" Martin and Dorothea Johnson, who founded the Protocol School of Washington. "Dorothea and I are close friends," Fitter says. "She is something of a mentor. She's the grand matron of etiquette."

Global Manners' clients include international professionals and the spouses of CEOs from all over the world, Fitter says. She often conducts one-on-one dining tutorials, so clients can absorb and understand the fine points of dining out and entertaining at home.

"People who come to me want the extra edge," she says. "Knowing how to dine and how to dress well elevates their performance."

What are the most valuable lessons in manners we can teach our children and grandchildren?

"Perhaps the first social skill is good table manners," Fitter says. "The second would be expressing appreciation by writing thank-you notes, not simply on social occasions but in business as well. The third, and maybe most important, is teaching respect by reflective listening: 'What I'm hearing you say is ...' and completing the sentence with what the speaker has just told you. It indicates you were paying attention and that you care."

Fitter's 18-year-old twins, Stephanie and Alexandra, attend the College of William & Mary and Washington and Lee University, respectively. The Fitter family lived in the Valley between 1990 and 2000. During that time, Fitter's daughters attended Phoenix Country Day School in Paradise Valley.

Fitter's column appears on page 68. >>>