

Cell Phone Etiquette

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Throughout my travels, whenever the word “manners” comes up in conversation, I never fail to get a request to address cell phone etiquette. The abuse and proper use of cellular phones is one of the hottest protocol topics of our age.

Cell phones are a marvelous invention. While they help people stay in touch and put countless parents’ minds at ease, the bottom line is, they can be more annoying than helpful.

When we think about the word “etiquette,” for many it conjures up thoughts of strict rules and stuffy manners. You may be surprised to learn Emily Post defined the term this way: “Whenever two people come together and their behavior affects one another, you have etiquette.” Consequently, when you are using your cell phone in public places, you must first consider your actions and who might be affected by them. Good judgment in cell phone use is the order of the day.

There are at least three places where cell phone use is inappropriate and can actually become dangerous. Be sure to turn your cell phones “off” when: 1.) Attending performances or ceremonies in churches, opera houses, music halls, and movie theatres; 2.) Inside certain areas of hospitals where signals can interfere with some medical instrumentation; 3.) Inside a vehicle while driving. In the case of talking and driving, studies have shown even with a hand-free set, it puts other motorists at greater risk of an accident. There are reasons why there are laws pertaining to this subject.

There are times when what you are doing is more important than taking a phone call. In the following examples, it is best to either turn your cell phone “off” or place it on “silence” mode, and let your voice mail pick-up the call. Show honor and respect by not interrupting face-to-face conversations. This includes important discussions with business partners and clients, dining with a customer or a friend, and dates with your significant other.

Interrupting conversations is considered inappropriate and rude behavior. If you must take a call, let your party know in advance, apologize and excuse yourself to a private location. Then keep the conversation short. Follow the same rules if you are anywhere where people are relaxing and enjoying themselves.

For some reason people tend to raise their voices when speaking on a cell phone. There is no reason to project your voice when in fact a soft voice works quite well. Not only are you annoying those around you, you are more than likely irritating the eardrum of the listener on the other end. Be aware of your space and surroundings before accepting or placing a call. Then learn to use a voice which is appropriate to your surroundings. Remember to keep private matters private.

Mastering good cell phone etiquette seems to be hard for many. It requires an individual be aware of their environment and focus on their conversation while concentrating on voice modulation. Become a responsible cell phone user by controlling your phone instead of letting your phone control you.

