

Gadget Addiction
By Jill Evans Kryston
Etiquette Consultant

Q: When my sister occasionally visits from out-of-town, it seems she's connected at the hip to her Blackberry and constantly text messages others while we're spending time together. She doesn't seem to understand why her behavior hurts my feelings.

A: For better or worse, we live in an age where technological gadgets abound. Many who use Blackberries and cellular phones for text messaging are addicted to being "connected" twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The use of these gadgets to conduct business and pleasure has become a new way of life, especially for the younger set. It's hard to recall a time when we didn't have instant access to one another.

Your hurt feelings are perfectly understandable. Not only is your sister's behavior inconsiderate, it's simply rude. She's demonstrating that she doesn't value your company very much.

No matter how technology changes, respect for others, and the use of common courtesies and self-control remain the same. Taking regular time-out from gadget entrapments to focus on face-to-face relationships has the reward of improving friendships and the added benefit of promoting a relaxing environment.

The next time you see your sister, steer the conversation away from lectures about her discourteous behavior. Instead, try a little flattery. Explain how much it means to you to have quality, one-on-one time with her on the rare occasions you are together. You can tell her you care too much for her to have "uninvited guests" on your outings. If she still doesn't understand, try sending the message in a text.

Do you have an etiquette question you want Jill to answer in her monthly column? Visit: www.DefiningManners.com and click "In the News" to submit your questions or mail to: P.O. Box 1703, Shavertown, PA 18708.

Defining Manners: A School of Contemporary Protocol teaches good manners to last a lifetime, offering certified etiquette instruction for all ages. Private, group and open enrollment classes are available. For more information call 696-3209.