

Life Lessons in Personal Conduct

By: National Association of Health Underwriters

Introduction

The purpose of this brief presentation is to remind us all to fine tune our skills and understand how these skills can work in all aspects of our professional and personal lives. It is about the basics, everything you need to know that you learned by kindergarten.

These thoughts are based on collaboration with our grandchildren, who are now looking for leaders.

Introduction cont.

They are old enough to understand the impressions they make and recognize the impressions others make on them. They have strong opinions about the people that impressed them the most, trained and taught them, and changed their life's course. They have all had extraordinary opportunities on national stages and paid close attention to teachers, other parents, and their friends. I include this to remind us all that you never know who is watching.

Let's take a few moments to remember some of the wonderful writing of Robert Fulghum: *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. Things are fast and furious these days, and it behooves us to take a few moments to review these very basic principles.

- Share Everything
- Play Fair
- Clean up your own mess
- Say you're sorry when you hurt someone
- Wash your hands
- Flush



Categories for Discussion

- Your Image
- Your Behavior
- Actually Leading
- What You Need to Know
- Translating Lessons



#1 Your Image

- Look the part. Understand what “business casual” actually is, and expect that from your team.
- You never get a second chance for a first impression.
- Your attire is a nonverbal statement of the importance of your meeting.
- Remember that first 20 second window you have for eye contact, a hand shake, and posture.



#2 Your Behavior

- A recent study indicated responders felt an 80% increase in rudeness in business.
- Act what you believe.
- Open books are easily read and followed, be the same at all times.
- Be “on camera” at all times.
- Manners still count.
- The Golden Rule works.
- Know your business etiquette quotient by going onto Test your Business Savvy Quiz and the Business Etiquette Quiz.



#3 Actually Leading

- NAHU provides you excellent training material covering policies and procedures, agendas, positions, and other items critical to leading and participating on your board. I think it is so important, however, to note that all these tools, thoughts, and observations on personal conduct can make or break your effectiveness. Productivity of a board and a chapter is DIRECTLY related to the etiquette, courtesy, and respect in the board room.
- Set expectations and Rules of Conduct at the outset.



#4 What You Need to Know

- Manners are simply a method of showing respect inside socially accepted protocols, a strategy in a business' ability to perform, compete, and profit.
- Business etiquette includes understanding protocols during business dinners and events that may be business related, but are social settings.
- Social media has caused a tremendous blurring of the lines between what has been personal and what is shared on business fronts.



#4 What You Need to Know cont.

- Speaking loudly on your cell phone in public settings is painfully annoying. True etiquette goes well beyond the fundamentals, it is a consideration for those who are around us. This is probably the most profound statement in the whole presentation.
- Know your client, prospect, or board members.
- No complaints without proposed solutions.
- Be aware of time and fairness.
- Be able to articulate the mission of your business and yourself.



#4 What You Need to Know cont.

- Roberts Rules
- The budget
- Business continuation means you make your predecessors look good
- Mission statement, vision statement
- Policies and procedures
- Positions
- Know your board, your client, your prospect, your community



#5 Translating Lessons

- Most of these basics apply to running a business, establishing a relationship for a sale, and running a smooth board and chapter.
- Exercise your citizenship.
- Be accountable and hold others accountable.
- And lastly: Hand written thank you notes work!! And NOT the new APP that does it for you. Small touches make enormous differences.



Signing Off ~

I can honestly say my 30-year ride in professional association chapters allowed me countless opportunities that vastly improved my professional skills. Take the time to understand these basics and they will provide you an incredible foundation in every aspect of your life.

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "Thank you", is written across the bottom of the slide. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

References

- Fulghum, Robert. *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten: Uncommon Thoughts on Common Things*. New York: Villard, 1988. Print.
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- Wagner, Eileen Brill. "Good Manners Are Good for Business." *Bizjournals.com*. The Business Journal, 28 Jan. 2001. Web. 9 Feb. 2014.