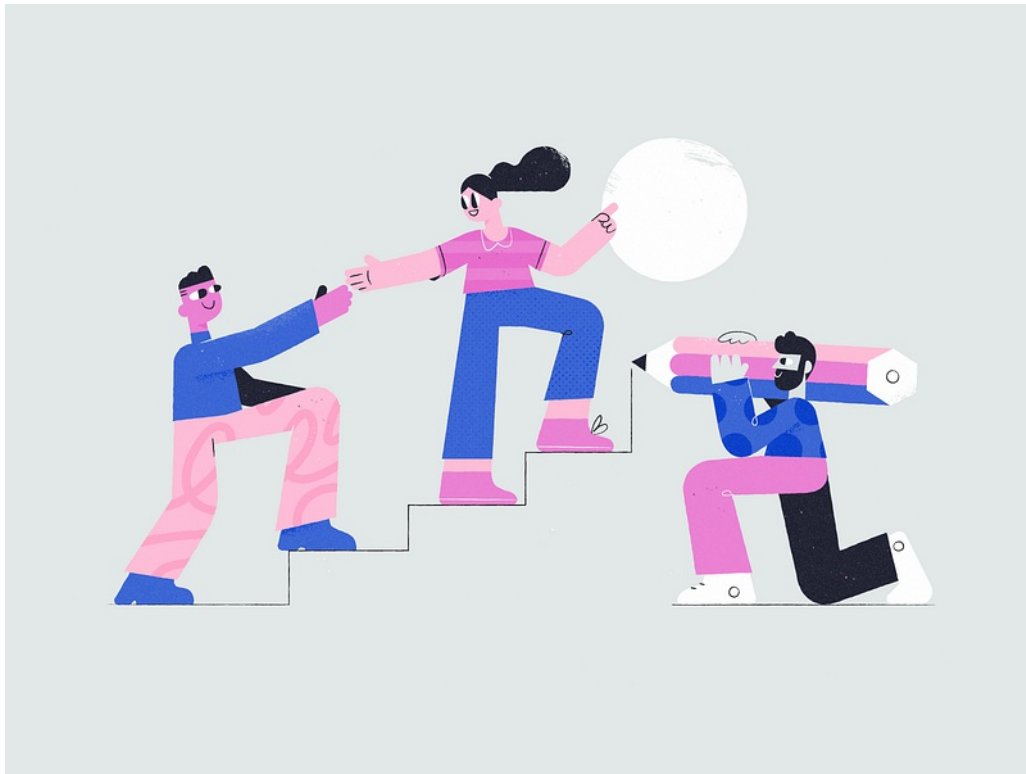

Manners matter more than intelligence

From the pragmatic point of view of a stoic opportunist



[Teamwork](#) by [Patswerk](#)

In a world where scientific feats are extra celebrated, does practicing good manners even matter? What goes around comes around; therefore, people should treat others the way they wish to be treated. That is the golden rule, an ethic of reciprocity found in the very nature of humans (Lee, 2014). In fact, [Dr. Pier Forni](#) (2011) from [Johns Hopkins University](#) likens the rules of good manners as traffic lights of human interaction. His analogy explains how good manners make it so that we don't crash into one another in everyday behavior. However, we live in a fast-paced world, and cars in a hurry usually tend to crash with each other. Nevertheless, if done successfully, this gets drivers to their destination quickly. Dr. Brazelton from Boston Children's Hospital (2002) shares the same sentiments, stating how people today may be cheated of the opportunities to think generously about others. We are in a hurry, and most families are stressed. Manners may be left out or forgotten. This is an unfortunate reality. Consequently, this led me to write about agreeing with the manner's side of the ring. Manners are important, world peace aside, people just fail to see their long-term, personal value.

On this planet, we have to be kind, lest we desire to depart immediately.

The Oxford dictionary (n.a) defines manners as a person's outward bearing or way of behaving toward others. Looking at the daily scenario in our favorite place to be: Social Media, the manners you display, even in your written text, can make or break your reputation. A hint of aggression is all that is needed for you to be receiving death threats with people accurately pinpointing your home address. Our lives are very precious, yet very feeble, especially outside of social media. Show bad manners subtly and people judge you. Treat somebody rudely, and you risk getting stabbed by a knife. As proven by a case reported by Smurthwaite of stabbing bikers in Bellingham (2021).

Even cavemen back then used manners. A point still raised by Dr. Forni. He states how manners have developed over tens of thousands of years as a key element of human society, and they might have played a role in keeping a few species survive. To further prove his point, he illustrates how early humans lived in groups in order to hunt, share food and keep one another warm. But to live so close together, Forni said, humans had to learn to think about others, not just themselves. If every person in the group looked out for only himself, the group would fall apart.



[Helping Hands](#) by [Spencer Gabor](#)

A more optimistic way of highlighting the importance of manners is in the opportunities it gives. It has its value in relationship-making. Like Clarence Thomas, the Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States (1991) says, good manners will open doors that the best education cannot. Dr. Sokolosky believes, “all things being equal in

terms of skills and abilities, the person who leaves a good, positive impression will come out on top”. In the context of a career, good manners are critical if you want to move up the career ladder. In fact, an overwhelming 95 percent of senior executives and managers surveyed by NFI research (2008) feel that good manners matter when it comes to advancing a person’s career, with two-thirds saying good manners are extremely important.

The only “drawback” this strategy has is that your good manners have to be sincere. People can tell when you’re being nice just to sell them something. If it’s all polite talk and no action, the other person only becomes frustrated and angry.

Manners are not just something your parents thought were important, nor are they some outdated social protocol. In the world of money and economics, great manners are rewarded and bad manners are punished.

Watch the people earning big money and you will see how they make business manners a regular habit (Wilson, 2015).

Going back to the small circle of people we have in life, the essence of having good manners is even more prominent. You are a different person to everyone. To some, you could be the charmer, to others, the dependable leader, and unfortunately, you could also be remembered as the weak, dependent, parasite leeching off free points from the sweat of your group mates. Oddly specific, aren’t we? This, sadly, proves the study done by Professor Nass (2010), the co-author of “The Man Who Lied to His Laptop: What Machines Teach Us About Human Relationships”. In the study, it is scientifically emphasized that people are more likely to remember the bad behaviors with the kind acts often belittled by the memories. Negative emotions generally involve more thinking, and the information is processed more thoroughly than positive ones. Thus, we tend to ruminate more about unpleasant events —and use stronger words to describe them compared to the happy ones. Unfortunately, this phenomenon can be used to the advantage of others. Leading me to the introduction of my third point.

A social currency—the social capital.

The world thrives in negotiations. How an exchange goes depends on the negotiator. Specifically, in their manners, intelligence, and a silent variable called social capital. A person’s social capital is the accumulation of kind deeds one has done to others. This social construct

can be used to ask for favors.

Think money, but instead of exchanging services with cash, you're exchanging "owed" good deeds with one another. An innate system fueled by guilt and the natural human behavior of reciprocation.

An example of this behavior in action is an old tale of how a businessman would invite and pamper lawyers in a party. Making them feel extra special. And when the said businessman arrives in a situation where legal assistance is needed, they could easily phone the lawyer. The legal worker would happily oblige. This is because of the lawyer's correlated emotions felt upon reliving the memory of the special treatment. Funny how the brain can be so powerful yet so vulnerable at the same time.

In lieu of this, arguments of how fake kindness is now ubiquitous start to surface. Melanie Greenberg (2019), Ph.D., a clinical psychologist in Mill Valley, California, and the author of *The Stress-Proof Brain*, cites three reasons behind this.

1. **Narcissism.** Some people are often wondering what the best way is to accomplish their goals without caring so much about the other person. They'll turn on the charm towards others, but ultimately, it's only because they hope to achieve some kind of personal gain.
2. **Control.** Inauthentic people often judge others as a way of gaining control
3. **Insecurity.** Sometimes, people should not jump to negative conclusions. Not everyone who is extremely kind has ulterior motives. Take an insecure person, for example, they may not feel confident asking for a favor outright. Therefore, they may "ask" by regularly demonstrating nice words and behaviors.

I, however, believe that this is a necessary compromise. By submitting to the emotion desired by the situation, people could mitigate involvements in less favorable situations in their lives. A seemingly minuscule sacrifice in fear of a larger, more complicated conflict. It is a fairly common case to act kind because good manners have an impact on obtaining and keeping a job, according to Lewis (2017) of JobCluster.com.

What is clear is that manners really do matter. Be it for personal gain or simply for a better world. The latter is preferred. Children should be learning them at home and school right alongside reading, writing, math, and all the other essential subjects needed for living a productive and satisfying life because they not only help people become educated and competitive, but they also help the world become peaceful while promoting unity.

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