

Etiquette is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as the “customary code of polite behaviour in society or among members of a particular profession or group”. So now that we are done with what it means, lets focus on “what has it got to do with me?”

I am guessing when you hear the word ‘etiquette’ you would think of stuffy, outdated traditions. However, etiquette does not divide cultures or classes but rather brings people together and allows you to be a better version of yourself.

For many of you as young people moving into adulthood and into the workforce or for some of you hopefully into the world of AFL, it’s important to ensure that you have some form etiquette. It could be simple table manners, the use of your mobile phone, or how to greet someone. Unfortunately in this digital age where many of you spend your whole day entwined in keeping your Snapchat streak going, ensuring you are winning your Fortnite game, or making sure the light is perfect for that ever elusive selfie, some of the many manners that your parents may have instilled in you at a young age can be soon forgotten or pushed away well and truly into the back of your brain (especially during your teenage years).

Now I have absolutely no doubt you are sitting there right now currently reading this probably rolling your eyes and thinking what has a stuffy outdated word like etiquette got to do with me? Well, using good manners could be beneficial for your future. It’s easy for us all to develop a few bad habits when hanging out with your mates, or maybe we just get a little lazy from time to time. Many of you are going to experience the merry go round of AFL club interviews in the near future, or a job/university interview, so it’s important to make a good first impression and some basic manners will help you on your merry way. *You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.* Therefore, it’s time for a little refresher.

So, here are some simple and basic forms of etiquette or manners that could help you make a great impression in the future:

You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist!

My parents always instilled in me that first impressions count; therefore, the way you greet someone is so very important. Shaking someone’s hand (using a firm grip) and looking them in the eye is by far the best way to make a good first impression and hopefully a lasting one. I know people who distinguish personalities and make an immediate judgement on the type of person they are according to their handshake. Soft personality vs firm personality, I know a little bit farfetched but it does happen.

Please and Thankyou are still magic words

Think of how many times your parents have reminded you to say your please and thankyou. Well guess what...I am reminding you once again! It is by far the most basic form of manners a human can have. It doesn’t take much to say please or thank you. The capacity to express respect, gratitude and kindness all at once, doesn’t cost you a cent and can go a long way to making a good impression.



Spit it out!

Spit out that gum, its rude to chew it in public, and even worse to chew gum in an interview. Don’t pop your gum, don’t smack it and certainly don’t dispose of it under a chair or table!



Sit up straight!

Whether you are a ruckman or a rover, wouldn’t you like to be taller especially sitting in front of a group of recruiters at an AFL club. The easiest way is to sit up straight, don’t slouch, and definitely don’t fidget! Slouching in your seat will be seen as a sign that you aren’t bothered and may even give the impression you are overconfident or even arrogant.

Use Eye contact

Your eyes can tell someone a lot about your character and personality. A failure to make eye contact with your interview may give a negative impression. You should ensure that throughout an interview you retain eye contact when answering and listening to questions. If there is more than one person interviewing you, be sure to make sure you switch eye contact and include everyone in your conversation. So, lift those eyes away from that mobile phone and practice speaking to people using eye contact.

Some of the other basic manners you should try to use on a regular basis include:

- That A word – apologise! Especially when you have done something wrong
- Wait your turn to speak in a conversation
- Try not to grunt or use the word ‘what’ when answering a question – especially from your mother!
- Say excuse me when you need to interrupt a conversation or accidentally bump into someone
- Use proper table manners when eating – nobody likes a pig!
- Refrain from texting and using social media when talking to people face-to-face
- Don’t answer your phone when you are in the middle of a conversation
- Take care of basic hygiene, including coughing/sneezing into your elbow.
- Never use rude language in front of others – it makes you look bad
- Be on time – being late is such a BAD HABIT
- Clean up after you make a mess
- When someone asks you how you are doing, tell them, then ask how they are doing – take an interest.

