

Questions...

Written by L.A. Plume

Tuesday, 02 February 2010 12:16



Dear L A Plume,

I know what the etiquette is for thanking someone for a gift, and of the options available I choose a handwritten note sent through the mail. My question is what can be done about people who don't acknowledge the receipt of a gift? Should I call to see if they got it/ opened it/ liked it? I sent it by priority mail so I know it has had way more than sufficient time to be delivered, and I know they have been at home.

Just Curious,

Heather

Dear Heather,

I would go ahead and assume they didn't like it – there is no other plausible explanation for not acknowledging and thanking someone for a gift.

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If you're questioning whether or not they received it – next time use delivery tracking and you'll have the answer to that, or send it registered mail so they have to sign for it and they will know that you know they received it. Did they open it? Who knows the answer to that, unless it was for a future occasion and they may be waiting for that time. Perhaps that's why you haven't heard; but a thank you, we got it and are looking forward to opening it on our anniversary, etc. would be polite. An exception would be if what you sent was a thank you gift; it is not necessary to thank someone for thanking you, although it would be nice to know if it actually arrived in their hands.

Nope, you can conclude that they didn't like it and didn't want to be rude by saying thank you for going out and choosing a gift, paying for it, presumably wrapping it, taking it to the post office and paying for it to be sent to them.

When I was little I had an "Aunt" Virginia who didn't have children of her own and she sent the nicest and most exotic gifts to me at Christmas. As soon as I could scribble I was informed that if I didn't write her a thank you note, there would be no more gifts; it's a small gesture in return for a present. However, a phone call would suffice as things do get lost in the mail; just like socks in the dryer.

Dear Ms. Plume,

I have a dear friend who lives in another state, so our favorite method of communication is to snug in for a lengthy phone chat on a regular basis. My problem is that when she calls me, part way through every conversation she starts to eat – not a cracker or piece of candy, but a bowl of cereal or a sandwich. I find the chewing noise, magnified by the telephone receiver, is most annoying. I love our calls and catching up, and don't want to be rude, but how can I ask her to eat before or after our conversations? She generally does this when she calls me so I don't understand why she doesn't simply choose a time that's more convenient.

Not Hungry in Alabama

Dear Not Hungry,

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She is obviously multi-tasking. Perhaps if she eats while talking she can spend longer on the phone. Why don't you simply ask if you can call her back in a few minutes after she is finished eating? Or tell her the thought of her snacking is making you hungry and you don't want to chew in her ear. If you're not in different time zones, perhaps you could suggest a luncheon conversation and see if you can cancel each other out. Make sure your meal has toast or something crunchy so she gets the full effect.