

More Advice for the Socially Challenged

Written by L.A. Plume

Wednesday, 22 June 2011 06:40



Dear L. A. Plume,

I met a woman at a social networking event and it seemed like we might have a lot in common, so we've gotten together a few times. Although she is very pleasant, she has the social skills of a lemming. She calls me all the time and she wants to go everywhere I go. I think I may be her only friend, and I can see why. She speaks without seeming to think, asks inappropriate and personal questions, and has strong opinions on most everything, but no knowledge of the actual facts. I find her behavior embarrassing and annoying and wish to disassociate myself from her but prefer not to hurt her feelings. What can I do??

Pat

Dear Pat,

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This is a fine example of my theory that people should come with care tags, just like clothing: i.e. wear with care, wash in cold water only, don't wear out in public, etc. Just be busy when she calls. If that doesn't work, buy a t-shirt that says: "I don't know her," or make up a language and only speak that to her. Be creative, or just be busy. Good luck!

L. A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

How do you politely ask someone if they have any food allergies when you invite them to a dinner party? Recently I served shrimp and grits and one of my guests looked at the food like I intended to poison her. She announced in a loud voice that she is allergic to shrimp and refused to eat anything, even the salad. How was I supposed to know? Everyone else felt uncomfortable eating while she sat there in silence.

Betty

Dear Betty,

There is certainly nothing impolite about asking someone if they have food allergies. An allergy to shellfish is not uncommon, nor is one to chocolate. And I have learned the hard way that many people do not like lamb, which seems inconceivable to me. If you entertain like I do, you may not have decided upon the menu at the time you issue the invitation, so it can be difficult to cover all the bases. Most people with food allergies will inform you ahead of time, or they will politely eat around the food to which they are allergic. To not let you know ahead of time that they can't eat something is rude, and more so, to make a fuss about it. Inviting people to dinner

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is like giving them a gift and they should be gracious about trying new or different things, but not at the expense of their health.

L. A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

I have a friend who is constantly borrowing things - my clothes, books, movies, etc. She never returns them, and when I ask for them she conveniently forgets to bring them back. She borrowed a dress to wear to a wedding two years ago and I see her wearing it around town all the time. It was one of my favorite dresses and I would like it back, but after two years of her wearing it, I'm sure it isn't in the condition it was when I lent it to her. How can I discourage this?

Pam

Dear Pam,

Simply don't lend her anything! Tell her that she isn't good at returning, period. I have learned not to loan anything that I can't afford not to get back - either because of its actual value or my emotional attachment to it.

L. A. Plume

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