

Communication Skills

Written by LA Plume
Tuesday, 19 July 2011 14:26



Dear L. A. Plume,

I understand a bit about text messaging on cell phones - that abbreviations allow for more words, that text messages cost money so the shorter/quicker the better. But I am not of the age, nor are most of my friends, at which texting is the preferred method of communication. So here is what I don't understand and makes me crazy: perfectly well educated, grown up people, using texting "language" in emails. If they can't just pick up the phone and have a bit of a nice, chatty conversation, can't they do any better than: "How R U 2day?" (It reminds me of vanity license plates, which, by the way, have the same effect on me.) How can I get these people to write in normal words?"

Betty

Dear Betty,

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Pick up a copy of William Steig's book: *C D C (See the Sea)*, and get the hang of using letters for words. Or just make up a quirky combination of your own, like: "HapE 2 hr from U, R U OK? I M 4-2nate 2 go 2 d 4-N-Xpert 2day. 4-T-tude is gud if U 8 6 fee-S." You could end your email with "rsvp" – few seem to know what that means these days, so it'll keep them guessing.

L.A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

How can a woman ask a gentleman to be her guest for dinner at a restaurant without offending him?

Peg

Dear Peg,

Our dear Mr. X asks the same question, from the other side of the fence: "Having been taught the Victorian ethic that the man always pays, it was a little disconcerting when three

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high-powered lady lawyers threw their posh credit cards at the dinner bill. When do we share the bill, when do men insist without offending ladies' freedoms, and when do men sit on their hands and learn the art of gracious acceptance?"

When the invitation is issued, simply make it clear that you would like this person to be your guest for dinner. Do not wait until the bill is presented and the situation could become awkward. Presumably, if he is not comfortable with your taking him to dinner, he will not accept your invitation.

L. A. Plume

Dear L. A. Plume,

How can we graciously accept an invitation to go to visit friends, without offending them by not wanting to stay at their home? We have a great time with this couple and would love to visit their vacation spot, but my husband has allergies, we aren't overly fond of their dogs, they go to bed early, we stay up late, etc. A hotel or bed & breakfast suits us much better, but they seem to be hurt that we would pay to stay elsewhere when they have ample room.

G & L

Dear G & L,

Good guests know their limitations and eccentricities and are wise not to impose them on

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others. Having, or being, a less than desirable house guest, is a quick ticket to putting a dent in friendship. I say this from a position of experience in having had lovely friends who are a royal pain as guests. When you are in their home, pitch in as if you are a houseguest rather than a visitor, take a house gift, write a thank you note when you leave. The point is to have an enjoyable time with friends, not to focus on the logistics of accommodations.

L. A. Plume

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