

Party Rules

Written by L.A. Plume
Tuesday, 23 April 2013 12:11



Dear L. A. Plume,
I received an email invitation to a party. I'm a single person and the invitation doesn't contain information about whether or not I can/should bring a guest. Should I just assume that I can, or do I ask the hosts?
Kendra

Dear Kendra,

The first rule of assuming is – don't! As Wikipedia (and many others) explains: "Assume = Ass + u + me. Thus, by assuming we make an ass of not only others but ourselves, too."

There is a formula that pertains to entertaining. We want to have a party. We create a guest list based on several qualifications. We plan for a certain number of people. We have room in our house (or wherever) for that certain number of people. We purchase food and beverage for that number of people. We probably have a budget. We've invited those whom we want to invite. That's it. I just don't get why people don't understand that.

Let's see if you can relate to this – you have a child. Your child has two beds in his room; you invite your child's friend to spend the night. You buy two TV dinners, two cupcakes, and think you're all set. Then the mother of your child's friend drops off five or six children and says, "Thanks ever so much for including all my children - see you tomorrow." You have two beds, two dinners, two cupcakes and six or seven children. Get the picture? Should she have assumed or asked . . . or maybe just accepted the invitation as is?

L. A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,
I've been invited to a grown-up birthday party. The invitation doesn't mention gifts one way or another. Do I need to take a birthday gift and also a gift for the host?
Nelle

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Dear Nelle,

Is this the first time you've read my column? I love gifts! ALWAYS take a gift - for the birthday, the host, the dog, and the neighbors. There is not enough gift giving in this world. Unless it's the host's birthday, in which case you need to take a really, really nice gift to make up for the two-for-one factor, you need to take one of each – a birthday gift and a host/ess gift. Simple math seems to be an issue this week, so let me try to give you an analogy also. If you were a twin and had a joint birthday party, and only one of you got a gift, would that be fair, assuming you weren't co-joined?

If you've recently been to a birthday party and didn't take a gift for the host as well as the birthday person, send one or both as soon as possible with your thank-you note.

L. A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

We were invited to a friend's house for a casual dinner party. When the invitation was issued, I was told not to bring my children along. They have children the same age as mine, and they all play together. Should my children have been excluded?

Becky

Dear Becky,

Do you have pets? If I'm ever invited to your house for dinner, could I bring along my dogs and cats? Just because you have children, or pets, doesn't mean that someone else wants them at their party. If they do, they will specifically ask you to bring them; otherwise leave them at home. Would you take your dirty laundry with you just because they have a washing machine?

L. A. Plume