

What Are People Thinking?

Written by L.A. Plume
Tuesday, 06 May 2014 14:20



Dear L. A. Plume,

I have just received a message on Facebook from a friend of a friend, whom I've only briefly met, asking if she can come stay in my guest room for a week while she visits the mutual friend. The mutual friend has animals to which she is allergic, so she thinks it would be nice to stay at my house!!!

Seriously - a message on Facebook? I think I can just ignore it, but really, if I do respond . . . how? I cannot think of a single reason why I would want to have this person as a house guest. Confused

Dear Confused,

I'm not sure whether to be amused or appalled on your behalf. I've had lots of requests to stay in my guest rooms but none so obviously ill-mannered. I wish I could ask people like that just why they think we would want them occupying our space for days, especially when the very act of the request tells volumes about how they will comport themselves. Simply reply that it isn't convenient, you don't need to give an explanation.

L. A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

I wonder if some people actually think before they speak . . . or if they do, what their intention might be. Here's what someone said to me the other evening: "People like the idea of you. Some people may actually like you, but they like the idea of you better." No matter how I try, I just can't twist that into a compliment. How does one respond to a comment like that?

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Clueless

Dear Clueless,

That's a good question. I have no idea how you should respond because, clearly, neither of us has a clue about the speaker's intention. Try something equally oblique the next time you see this person, such as – if it's a woman – "That would be a really pretty dress you have on, if only you were wearing a dress." If she thinks that's a compliment then you may have a clue, or not.
L. A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

We received a group email invitation to an "Exclusive Engagement Party," which I think one would consider, if not in poor taste, then at the very least, casual. In this invitation we were advised how to dress, what gifts would be acceptable, etc. We aren't surprised that she isn't well versed in social niceties, but he is an old friend so we feel we should participate. We were also advised that we could arrive at a certain time, would be served a "beverage and a bite," then could depart – in order, I assume, not to run up the bar bill. Since her idea of a beverage and a bite will most probably be a warm beer and a piece of string cheese, would it be rude if we just took a cooler of good wine and shared it with our other friends in attendance?

The Goods

Dear Goods,

I have run into this question before and my answer to taking wine is always: yes, do it. Even better – present it as your engagement gift, just assume that they want to enjoy it right then and there, and then open the wine quickly before they can object; clearly everyone else will be grateful.

L. A. Plume