

Honest & Straightforward

Written by L.A. Plume

Tuesday, 22 March 2016 12:42



Dear L. A. Plume,

I recently had some surgery that has made it difficult for me to resume normal life. I have a dear old friend who is trying to help in any way she can, but she just doesn't do things the way I do and I find it difficult to not fault her, even though she is doing her best. I like my dishes stacked just so in the dishwasher, my carpet vacuumed in a pattern, and other things peculiar to a person who is used to living alone. Some of these things I can do for myself at this stage and some I can't yet, but I'd rather that they weren't done at all. So how do I tactfully ask her just to stop?

Betse

Dear Betse,

Try the honest and straightforward approach; thank her for what she has done and tell her you are able to resume doing most of these things for yourself and that if you need her for anything, you will ask.

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Dear L. A. Plume,

I have a friend who has come to visit and doesn't show any signs of leaving. He is high maintenance and vacillates between being self-sufficient and requiring large chunks of my time. I am self-employed and work from home and this is totally disrupting my schedule. He has sold his home and has been traveling around staying with friends so he doesn't really have a place to go, but my nerves are getting frayed. I have asked him about his plans, and he just says he doesn't know. I enjoy his company and I don't want to hurt the friendship. What can I do?

Frazzled

Dear Frazzled,

Perhaps you can tell him you need to know what his plans are because you're not used to having someone in your house, and as much as you enjoy his company, you find it disruptive to your work. Or, if you really don't mind having him there, ask him to be more accommodating to your schedule. Simply tell him what you need in terms of quiet hours, sharing of meal preparation, cleaning, etc. If you do want him to go, just tell him you need your house back by . . and give him a date.

L.A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

I'm going to visit some friends whom I haven't seen for a very long time. I'm not quite sure what to take as a house gift or what to do when I leave. Do I strip the bed, leave the sheets and towels in the tub, take my trash out? If we go out to a restaurant should I pay for them or get a separate check? Do I offer them money for groceries?

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Ginny

Dear Ginny,

Some of this depends on whether or not they invited you, and how long you are staying. Simply ask them what you should do with the towels and sheets; I personally don't like people to leave wet towels mixed up with sheets in the bathtub, but that seems to be what some people just do. Yes, take your trash when you leave and put it wherever they put the trash for the house. If you don't know what to take as a gift, send something after you leave and have an idea of what they would like, or pick something up while you're there if you can. As for meals and groceries, yes, you should do something – see what seems appropriate.

L. A. Plume