



Dining Etiquette 101



The Importance of Dining Etiquette

People notice everything. This is particularly true in business relationships. In addition to great job performance, having good dining etiquette helps to establish your credibility and reputation. It also helps to make you an accepted member of the business group. And if you think about it, it helps build your self confidence. It's another skill to add to your professional repertoire.

Deciphering Table Manners

Forks and knives are arranged by use from the outermost being the first used. While eating, place knife, like a hat, across top of plate horizontally.



If there are two knives as part of the setting, the fish (or salad knife) will be the rightmost knife. The inner fork and knife are provided for the entree.



The water goblet and/or drinking glass to the right are yours. The bread plate to the left is yours. Use the butter knife to put a butter pat on your bread plate and then use your own knife to butter the bread.



Tenets of Good Dinner Conversation:

Don't be afraid of silence.

Read the paper or surf the internet beforehand to have current events topics in mind for dinner small talk.

If all else fails, talk about what's in front of you if you can't think of anything else (e.g., the lovely decorum of the restaurant, attractive floral centerpiece on table, etc).

Good Manners at Meals

When deciding what to order, once you have decided, close your menu. It's a signal to the wait staff that you're ready to order.



Wait until everyone is served before beginning to eat.

Turn your cell phone off.

Keep the table free of the extras like keys, portfolios and notebooks. If attending a banquet, you may keep the dinner program handy on the table.

Quick Tips on "Power Lunches"

Relax. Even if the day is filled with negotiations, the expectation for meals is relaxation and small talk. Take small bites so you can converse easily without a full mouth. Relax, but remember you're still in a business setting.



If you're the guest at a business lunch such as a meal as part of a site visit, it is understood that the host is paying for the meal. You don't have to offer to pay; just say thanks and express appreciation.

Keep it simple when ordering. Don't try to show off by ordering the most expensive thing on the menu. Business lunches are not the best place to try something exotic and new nor to try something messy or complicated. Lobster, ribs and fajitas spell trouble.



If you ordered it, eat it. It's an insult to the host. Bring any problem with the food discreetly to the attention of the wait staff.

Don't order alcohol even if your host does.



Bonus Points for Business Dining

If you have to get up to get something for yourself, ask if others at the table need anything.

If eating soup, the motion of the spoon should be away from you. If eating dessert the motion of the spoon is towards you.

Never!!!

Resting elbows on table.

Brushing hair or applying makeup at table.



Putting your purse on



Never!!!

table.

Blowing your nose at the table.

Being rude to the wait staff.

ABOUT THE BOOK:
Dorm Rooms to Boardrooms
By Victoria Pilate, Ph.D.
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References:
[Paisley Goes with Nothing: A Man's Guide to Style](#) by Hal Rubenstein.

For more information:
[Dorm Rooms to Boardrooms](#) by Victoria Pilate (Crandell & Rose, \$13)
[The Art of the Business Lunch: Building Relationships](#)
[Between 12 and 2](#) by Robin Jay (Career Press, \$14.99)
[Don't Take the Last Donut: New Rules of](#)
[Business Etiquette](#) by Judith Bowman



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