

## Dan Naumovich: A refresher on common

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Etiquette columns aren't as common as they once were. People don't like being told what to do, and to dispense advice on proper behavior is to risk being labeled a scold.

Yet, I feel I must.

Because I'm clumsy on the higher-end social graces, I can profess no authority on proper cutlery selection or acceptable ways to greet dignitaries. I may, however, be able to lend decorum to some of the more common situations we find ourselves in. By spelling them out as pompously as possible, I hope to add an air of infallibility to what is essentially a list of personal pet peeves.

\* When at the drive-through, courteous consumers will consider what they're in the mood for before reaching the speaker box. Extended contemplation is unacceptable, as it runs counter to the "zip in, zip out" philosophy upon which the convenience is based. Those struck dumb in the presence of a McDonald's menu should avail themselves of the walk-in counter, where mulling is tolerated.

\* If driving through an ATM, check for the presence of other cars waiting behind. If one is spotted, promptly move forward 15 feet upon completing the transaction so the next customer might commence business. Lingering in front of an ATM while filing away cash and debit card is boorish.

\* If accustomed to speaking loudly into a cell phone — don't.

\* The smoker will know Earth's purpose is not that of an ashtray. Butts should be discarded into a flame-retardant receptacle and not pitched willy-nilly onto pavement or tundra. Seek cessation for the good of heart and planet.

\* Upon entering a store, tarry not beneath the threshold. Proceed well into the premises to avoid becoming the obtuse cork in a human bottleneck.

\* Those who choose to avail themselves of archaic payment methods at the grocer should use the time afforded during the scanning process to begin filling out the check. Waiting until the final sack is carted before "digging" the checkbook out of a purse or pocket is an egregious affront to the gentle debit-card holders waiting behind.

\* The courteous shopper will always return the cart to the designated "cart corral" to ensure that parking spaces remain accessible. Failure to do so is a mark of ill breeding. Those who excuse their sloth with the argument that the store pays people to perform this function should lose their sense of entitlement at once and consider that the extra exertion will probably do them good.

\* Should a draft be felt upon nether regions, raise and cinch the waistband until a properly fitted pair of trousers can be procured.

\* Marching more than three abreast is acceptable only for Rockettes or when advancing upon enemy lines. When wandering in packs at the mall, drop back into pairs so that faster moving pedestrians might pass.

\* While increasingly prevalent, casual swearing is not acceptable in polite society. Those with vocabularies rich in vulgarity should take haven in taverns, bordellos or the set of a Christian Bale movie.

\* Bicycling commuters should be proud of their commitment to health and conservation, while not impeding vehicular traffic on un-shouldered roadways.

\* Using a turn signal when driving should be as instinctive as flushing a commode. Failure to do either leaves the same rank impression on those unfortunate enough to be following behind.

\* If roundly impeached by one's peers, gather the last remnants of dignity and retire quietly into private life. Hysterical screams of "Injustice!" only confirm that justice has been served. Buffoonery repairs not a reputation.

Well, that's it. I feel better. If you want to contest any of my maxims or share some of your own, feel free to send them along. It's only proper that you get your say.

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