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## Dear Parents,

For the past twenty-five years I've led focus groups and coached adults and children who want to improve their communication skills. Whether the goal is to get a job promotion, find a marriage partner, overcome shyness, or hold a lively conversation, I've helped clients achieve greater success in reaching their goals. Often, a skill I've seen lacking is manners, whether at the table or in everyday social situations.

Why is teaching manners to children so important? Studies show that children who develop good social skills early, including manners, are significantly more successful at making friends, getting into schools, and getting higher-paying jobs than those who don't have these skills.

Since manners are interwoven with good *middos* and are therefore an essential part of every Jewish child's character development, I believe there is a need for a book about manners specifically written for Jewish children.

As Jewish children learn about being created in the image of Hashem, teaching manners and etiquette is a direct way to instill respect, kindness, and consideration for others. The practice of good manners serves as a constant reminder that human and animal behavior are distinct and different.

This book is aimed at children between the ages of nine and twelve. The first priority in teaching manners is to motivate the

children themselves. I have tried to make learning manners fun and easily digestible. The writing is plain and direct, the pages are filled with fun facts, and children not only learn about manners but why manners are important. Many of the examples in this book came directly from feedback I received from interviewing children.

Lengthy lists of dos and don'ts have been pared down to the essentials for becoming a "manners mensch." In a few instances I have also tweaked some traditional rules to give children more choices, with each option still adhering to good manners.

Learning to communicate effectively is woven into the text. Age-appropriate communication skills are inseparable from the physical forms of good manners, and every Jewish child can learn to use them.

Parents play critical roles in modeling good manners for their children and rewarding improvement.

Change takes time and practice; it isn't linear. No one should expect a child to master all of the manners and etiquette explained in this book. If children are excited about learning some, and can apply what they've learned consistently, they will be rewarded with improved self-confidence and further develop a core trait in the Jewish personality: refinement.

Barbara Tuckel, PhD



## TO ALL KIDS STARTING THIS BOOK

Please take this short quiz to test your knowledge of manners.

 Circle the letter next to the answer you choose.

1. Manners are:
  - a. Silly rules for older people
  - b. Only for people whose great-great-great-bubbies and zeidies were on the *Mayflower* with the Pilgrims
  - c. For everyone
  
2. Manners are mainly about:
  - a. Really hard ways to hold a knife and fork
  - b. Making me say hello to my parents' friends
  - c. How to speak and act in everyday situations so I can show more consideration for others

3. Manners were invented:
  - a. By parents and teachers from a lot of schools
  - b. In the last one hundred years; before then, people pretty much did what they wanted
  - c. A very long time ago
  
4. Etiquette is:
  - a. A French word that has something to do with cats
  - b. The strictest manners you're supposed to have when you're a guest at someone's house
  - c. Another word for manners

How did you do on the quiz? To find out the correct answers, check the bottom of the page.



*(The correct answer to each question is C.)*

## WHY ARE MANNERS IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO HAVE?

**M**anners are for everyone. Manners are important in order to show respect for others and yourself.

Respect is one of those words that are hard to define. Manners have everything to do with respect, so let's figure out what it means. Respect is caring enough about others that you treat them with consideration and kindness. Here are some things to keep in mind about respect:

- Everyone deserves your respect.
- You don't have to know someone to give that person respect.
- You don't have to agree with someone to give that person respect.
- Caring about how you act and speak adds to your self-respect — the respect you have for yourself.



*Respect is caring enough about others that you treat them with consideration and kindness.*

You show respect to other people when you use good manners. Manners help remind you to be sensitive about how you treat others with your words and actions. You can choose to make good manners a habit.

We separate ourselves from animals by practicing good manners. Dogs can do tricks, but you can't teach a hungry dog to save some

delicious meat for others when a giant platter of meat is passed around.

There's an added bonus to having good manners. Studies show that kids with good manners make better friends, are great to be around, are more self-confident, and get what they ask for more often. That's pretty awesome.

***Manners and etiquette tell you what to do in many situations. As a result, you'll be more confident, and people will like being around you even more.***



Manners and etiquette are connected. That's because learning to follow etiquette rules is a part of having good manners. But it's also important to know the difference between them.

- Manners are good habits that show kindness and consideration whenever we're around others. For example, you show good manners when you listen closely while someone talks or when you give up your seat to a stranger on the bus. In order to develop great manners, you have to think about other people before you act. That's because manners have less exact rules than etiquette.
- Etiquette rules tell you exactly what to do and not to do in certain situations. Think about eating supper with your family. In countries like ours, we usually eat at a table, sit on chairs, and use plates, knives, and forks. There are etiquette rules for meeting and greeting people too.



When you learn proper etiquette, you'll know what to do. For example, there are specific ways to hold a fork and knife and cut your food.



You'll learn both proper etiquette and good manners in this book. Only the really important rules will be covered so that you can master them with a little practice. You'll see how much more confident this learning will make you around your family, friends, and new kids and adults you meet. Get ready!

Once you start using the etiquette rules and manners in this book, the compliments will come flying your way.



*Good manners and etiquette are teammates. If you score a home run with your great manners but strike out because you don't care about etiquette, you'll be less pleasant to be around than you could be. But if you ignore manners and only pay attention to etiquette, you'll be less concerned about others' feelings than you should be.*

*We all need to practice both.*