

Making mum feel special



AS Mother's Day is creeping up, I'd love to buy my dear old mum the perfect present. But due to a recent car accident, I am now flat broke. My husband is of no use; he suggested simply making a card out of cardboard! How do I make her happy on her special day?
Edwina

In your entire life, has your mum ever

said, "Dear daughter, you need to buy me something to make me feel special on Mother's Day?" I'm sure not. Of course, if you are loaded, it will be a sin to just send her some roses, while she sways gently on the rocking chair longing for your return.

If have no money, give her the gift of YOU - Your time, your hugs, your kisses, your love. Mother's Day is the one day out of the whole year whert mummies must

Surprise your mum on Mother's Day with a gift from the heart. She'll appreciate the gesture; the size of the present doesn't matter.

be guaranteed a few hours of relaxation. Make her feel like the queen of the day! You can surprise mum with a meal you know she will love, pamper her with a

DIY foot bath or go down memory lane with her at her favourite spots. All you need is just a little effort. No fat angpows required.



MISS BEHAVE

In her fourth column, Miss Behave columnist Wendy Lee tackles queries on Mother's Day gifts, black dresses and toilet etiquette.

Lee, the founder of Chapter One - Colour, Style and Image Consultancy, enjoys helping men and women refine their image through wardrobe, communication and protocol skills.

Do you fret about manners in modern society? Direct your burning questions to Lee at wendy@chap-one.com.

Who doesn't love freebies?

My boyfriend thinks I am invisible

WHEN I am out with my boyfriend, he frequently forgets to introduce me to his friends or acquaintances. I'm not sure if he is shy, or heaven forbid, embarrassed to be seen with me. Anyhow, this results in all kinds of awkwardness. It would be rude to introduce myself without giving him a chance to do so, but when he forgets, introducing myself interrupts the conversation's flow. Is there any way to politely initiate introductions?
Cassandra

Is he for real? It's truly tempting for me to just tell

you to bat your eyelids and sweetly comment, "Am I in your blind spot, honey?"

But he may be just the love of your life, and it is never my intention to create any friction between the two of you. So instead of confronting him, just take the lead and introduce yourself right from the start.

Don't hide and peek meekly from behind. Instead, stand beside him, extend your hand, smile, and say, "Hello, pleased to meet you, I'm Cassandra." You will be seen as both friendly and confident. And of course, hopefully, he gets the message too.

WHAT is your advice on appropriating the free toiletries usually provided in hotel bathrooms? My mum, who travels a lot, has a habit of collecting bottles of shampoos, conditioners and body lotions. So much so, that our bathtubs are filled with miniature bottles from hotels! Isn't this bad etiquette and a bit of a cheapskate mentality?
Nur Qistina

Well, I know of people who obsess over toiletries from the airplane and amass free miniature pencils and papers from casinos! Welcome to the world of hoarders! Personally, I absolutely adore those cute little soap bars. Most housekeeping staff expect you to take them. So, etiquette wise, it is perfectly fine. You don't have to feel guilty about it. But clothes hangers, TV remote control and bath robes are not for keeps. And don't even think about packing those toilet rolls into your suitcase!

Her presence without a present

AT dinner parties, all my guests except one always bring a gift. She routinely comes empty-handed and apologises with an excuse about how busy her day has been. How can I subtly hint that this is so rude when everyone else is bringing items to share?
Sue Ann

Is this a pot luck affair? If it is, then yes, it is rude of your friend to play dumb.

But if this is an initiative from your side, then you should not feel irritated by your friends, let alone drop hints at her.

Hospitality is about giving. It is not about hoping for any reward. Be grateful for the generosity of your other friends, but forgive her for her unpolished behaviour.

If you are still uncomfortable, you are then left with two choices. The first is to organise a gift exchange dinner event for each and everyone to participate. Make it compulsory and hope she gets the hint. The second is to develop selective amnesia and conveniently forget her name on your speed dial.

Bathroom break

BEING faced with the choice of waiting in a queue for the ladies, or using the vacant toilet for the disabled, I opted for the latter. Upon leaving, I was greeted with looks of disgust from women in the lengthening queue. Was I out of order?
Catharina

I am with you on this. I'd rather be frowned upon

than to have my bladder explode standing in the middle of the queue. However, one is supposed to make the cubicle available immediately to a disabled person if she is somewhere around.

And if you do use it, this is not the time for you to rush through the last chapters of Twilight. Be quick, be discreet and do check to make sure there are no residuals left behind.

When black is bad

IN a few weeks' time, I will be attending a relative's Chinese wedding ceremony in a hotel. I have just returned from Australia and it has been difficult to find anything to wear. However, on a recent shopping excursion, I came across a beautiful dress that suits me very well, but it is black. Is it acceptable, in today's day and age, to wear black to a wedding if it is brightened up with colourful accessories?
Kayla

If my grandmother was alive today attending the same wedding, you'd have given her a heart attack.

In Chinese culture, black is still a big taboo. Black signifies death and tragedy. You can dress up your LBD with lots of bling-blings, but it is still black. If nothing happens to the bride and groom, then all's well.

But if the bride were to break a nail, then all fingers will point at you for bringing in the misfortune. So, I'd think thrice before slipping into that dress.