

GOOD MANNERS

There was once a young man who was strong and healthy and enjoyed his work. In every way he felt on top of life, and had no sympathy for the uninteresting folk who seemed to form such a large proportion of the population. One day he got an attack of influenza. He had had it before and paid little attention to it but this time he developed pneumonia and was dangerously ill. When he recovered he could only move slowly. He was easily tired and life became difficult for him. When he was well enough to go to work he found the journey home very tiring. He looked at the strong young men sitting comfortably in the train or bus, and then, feeling tired himself, noticed how tired some of the older people were who were standing beside him. Gradually he got strong again, but when he was in a train or bus he now looked round to see if there was any older person in need of a seat, and if there was he gave up his. "I've got my strength back now," he said to himself; "these older people will never have their strength again."

When you are cycling and see an old man hesitating on a crossing, don't call him an old fool. He may not hear very well, or he may not see clearly, or he may have become tired with walking. Perhaps he was a famous soldier in the War and his wounds are still painful, or perhaps he had an artificial leg. One day you may go to a war and be severely injured. What will you think if schoolboys make fun of you because you can only move slowly?

One of the things all boys and girls are going to learn before very long is that they are fragile little things in a dangerous world. Your parents and your teachers and all older people have had some severe blows already. They get more severe blows every year. Most of them would give all the money they have to get your health and strength, your good teeth and nice hair. You have no idea how tired they are at times, but because they do not complain you think everything is alright. Well, try to make life easy for them so far as you can, and when it is your turn to suffer you will feel happier for having helped when you could.

Good manners are also important when you are with your own friends. When you speak to anyone, speak clearly and sufficiently loudly for the person to hear. It is an insult to a person to ask his attention and then speak so that he does not understand you. And remember it is your responsibility to make yourself understood.

An American writer called Thoreau said, "It takes two to speak the truth – one to speak and another to hear." This is a very important saying, and it would save a great deal of argument and annoyance in life if people paid attention to it. "It takes two to speak the truth". You have to express it differently for different

people. To some people 'socialism' means taking money from those who have money and giving it to those who have none. To other people 'socialism' means State control of industry and commerce. To others we cannot tell a man 'the truth about socialism' until you know what he understands by the term. If you say, 'I believe in socialism', and he understands that you mean you believe in robbery, you must not be surprised if he takes a dislike to you; and if that is not what you mean, you did not speak the truth. If a man says to a friend, "Good morning, Mr. A" and the friend replies "It's not a good morning at all", is that the truth, even if the morning is bad?

Sometimes people ask very tiresome questions and we like to make a joke about it. "Are you a boy Scout?" said a lady to a boy wearing shorts, a jersey with badges, a Scout's hat, and carrying a Boy Scout pole. "No," said the little fellow, "I'm two eggs on toast." The lady only meant, however, 'How nice you look in your uniform; that is the Scout uniform, isn't it?' and there was really nothing silly in her remark.

It is only stupid people who take remarks too literally, as we say; that is, who do not look for the real meaning in the statements people make. Thus, when a friend says, "You will not be going past the post office, will you?" he may mean, "I should be grateful if you would post a letter for me if it is not too much trouble." If you say "No" to the question because you are not going past the post office, it means to your friend that you are not willing to go out of your way even a little to oblige him.

It is not always easy in company to speak frankly, and if you don't want to be considered a bad mannered person, you have to watch constantly for signs. It is not easy, for example, to listen for long to any person. Try in company to take only a fair share of the conversation. If there are two of you, take half of it. When you have said a little, keep quiet, and give your friend a chance to say something. If he does not talk, he probably does not want you to talk either. Many a young man or woman talks away, thinking the company is delighted to hear him or her, and everyone is really exhausted and angry.

Don't think you can say unpleasant things about someone behind his back and not be found out. It is surprising how the remarks usually find their way to the person with your name attached, so to speak. Whatever you say, always assume that the person may overhear, and adjust your remarks accordingly. All experienced people act in this way.

Now here is one of the most surprising things in life: no man really understands himself. What a lot of argument and anger we should be saved if people would only understand this! Suppose, for example, you saw a motor accident and were giving evidence about what happened. You would feel

perfectly confident, perhaps, that the car which knocked the boy over was a blue car; another person would be equally confident that it was a grey car; and someone else that it was black car.

Experiments are sometime made by experts to find out how many errors people do make in their statements here is one experiment which was tried. Some students at a university were shown on a screen a picture of a bull-fight. They were then asked to write a short account of what they had seen. When this was finished they were told to put a number on every statement made - 1. If they thought so; 2. If they were fairly sure about it; 3. If they were quite sure and 4. If they were prepared to swear to the statement on oath. Every student had at least ten per cent errors in the statements he was prepared to swear to an oath, and considerably, more than ten percent in all the other groups.

Now how does this happen? Here, for example, was one mistake. A student saw the bull having its tongue out. He was quite sure about it. Yet when he was shown the picture again, he saw that the bull's mouth was closed, but that, because its head was turned to the side, the ear looked like the tongue.

So whenever you are arguing with someone about a point remember that there is quite a good chance that you are wrong, however confident you feel about it.

Good manners come from having sympathy with others and from understanding our own limitations. 'The truth' is too big for any one of us to understand. 'The truth' as we see it is only our truth and part of a larger truth. We should always realize that we are humble, unimportant little people on this earth and try to help the world as much as we can in our short time here. "I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

- J. C. Hill

About the Essay

The essay 'Good Manners' is adapted from the book *An Introduction to Citizenship* by J.C. Hill where he says that values are the link between need and action and form the basis of our feelings and behaviour. In the essay, 'Good Manners', the author lays emphasis on the need for good manners so that fellow feelings can be brought back into society that seems to have been overtaken by callous, selfish principles. In a very intimate and friendly tone, Hill brings home his argument in favour of good manners by alluding to the young man's weak physical condition, when he is suffering from influenza and how he wakes up to

the awareness of the ill manners of the youth, in the treatment of the sick and aged members of society.

GLOSSARY

folk	:	common people
little attention	:	no attention
fragile	:	easily broken or damaged
severe	:	very hard or strong
blow	:	powerful stroke, an unfortunate happening
socialism	:	a political theory advocating state ownership of industry
tiresome	:	boring
exhausted	:	tired
knock	:	hit
swear	:	to promise publicly that you are telling the truth
humble	:	modest, low or inferior in station or quality
defer	:	delay

Activity 1: COMPREHENSION

A. Tick the correct alternative :

1. When the young man recovered, he could move slowly. Here ‘recovered’ means:
 - (a) covered again
 - (b) covered completely
 - (c) to get well after illness
 - (d) all of these
2. The young man realized the problems of the older people --
 - (a) after his illness.
 - (b) before his illness.

- (c) when he was very young.
 - (d) when he was very old.
3. When we are cycling and see an old man hesitating on a crossing, we should not call him tomfool because-
- (a) he may not hear very well.
 - (b) he may not see clearly.
 - (c) he may have become tired with walking.
 - (d) all of these.

B. Answer the following questions not exceeding 30-40 words each:

1. What is the significance of the story of the young man at the beginning of the essay?
2. What happened to the young man and what change did it bring in his outlook?
3. Why are good manners important?
4. What does socialism mean to different people?
5. What is the underlying meaning of the sentence 'I shall not pass this way again'?

C. Answer the following questions in 60-80 words each:

1. Why does one have to express truth differently to different people? Give reasons for your answer with suitable examples from the text.
2. Bring out the significance of good manners in life.

D. Say whether the following statements are True or False. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false in the bracket:

1. The young man in the beginning was very happy and cared for everyone. []
2. After his illness a change came in the young man and he started helping older people. []
3. Wise people take remarks too literally while talking. []
4. Good manners are important even when we are with our friends. []
5. The writer is curious to help people because he expects to pass through this world but once. []

Activity 2: VOCABULARY

A. Match the following words in column 'A' with their meaning in column 'B' as used in the passage.

A

fragile
tiresome
oath
exhausted
defer
folk
confident
limitations

B

delay
easily broken or damaged
boring
common men, people
tired
make promise to do something
restrictions
feeling sure about abilities to do something

B. Use the following expressions in your own sentences to bring out the meaning clearly:

Feel on top of life, make fun of, it takes two to speak the truth, a great deal of, make allowances

Activity 3: GRAMMAR

The word 'tense' refers to the different forms of a verb which tell us when the action referred to, happens—before, at the time of or after the moment of speech. There are two main tenses in English: the present tense and the past tense. Each of these is divided into a number of sub-tenses. The complete system of tenses is as follows.

- ÷ simple present
- ÷ present progressive (or present continuous)
- ÷ present perfect
- ÷ present perfect progressive
- ÷ simple past
- ÷ past progressive (or continuous)
- ÷ past perfect
- ÷ past perfect progressive

In English, verbs have two different tense forms that indicate whether something occurs in the present or in the past. For example:

We *go* to school every day. (Present tense form of 'go', indicating an action taking place at the present time)

We *went* to school yesterday, (past tense form of 'go', indicating action in the past)

But if we want to talk about an action that is expected to take place in the future, there is no separate 'tense', or form of the verb, that can be used. For example:

He *will go* to school tomorrow.

Although there are several different ways of indicating future action in English, we do not make use of any special 'tense' for this purpose. We use some other means instead. Therefore, instead of talking about the 'future tense', we will refer to the 'different ways of showing future action'. These are listed below.

- a. future action shown by 'will' or 'shall', together with the simple present tense form of the main verb
- b. future action shown by 'going to'
- c. future action shown by the use of the present progressive tense
- d. future action shown by the use of the simple present tense

You will read more about Tenses in the following lessons.

Activity 4: SPEECH ACTIVITY

You are Rajesh. Recently you visited the fort of Chittorhgarh. The historicity of the fort impressed you very much. What displeased you was the crowd's unintentional annoying manners. Form a circle of your friends and tell them how we can observe good manners at a public place.

Activity 5: COMPOSITION

Your grandma must have narrated to you some story dealing with the thought as to how our unintentional discourtesy may also lead to dangerous results. Write the story with its moral and read it out in your cultural programme held at every weekend.