

Foreword

Have we met? Even if we have, I probably forgot your name almost instantaneously after having heard it. I'm shy and that makes me nervous. I missed your name because I was thinking about what we might have in common to talk about next. If this is a cocktail reception, I have the added stress of knowing that I must talk to many more people yet tonight. I will not remember their names either.

My mother taught me manners. I am a master of saying "Please" and "Thank you." Why does that provide me with little comfort when it is time to network or when someone asks me to tell them about myself? Perhaps that is why I was so smitten with professional etiquette after I read Kathleen Pagana's book. This book filled in the gaps in my knowledge that I did not even know existed. Once I was armed with the knowledge of professional etiquette, I began applying what I had learned, and I became more confident. Now if I tell someone that I am shy, they do not believe it! As Thomas Merton said, "We are not converted only once in our lives but many times, and this endless series of conversions and inner revolutions leads to our transformation."

It was this revelation that motivated me to begin talking to my colleagues about teaching nursing students comportment and etiquette. Some laughed at me. When I led the creation of a professional development co-curriculum for the college of nursing, it was originally dubbed "charm school" and was viewed as antiquated and unnecessary. As nursing faculty, we prepare students to become registered nurses. However, we are not necessarily preparing future nurses for the *business* of healthcare. Ask any seasoned nurse and they will tell you that healthcare is, indeed, a business.

Students in business majors are prepared with skills related to branding, networking, interviewing, socializing outside the office, and interacting with global partners. This is not part of the standard nursing curriculum in the United States, yet it needs to be if nurses are to advance and successfully navigate the business setting in which the practice of nursing is situated. Nurses enter clinical practice believing they are 100% prepared to advance in their career. They do not even know what they do not know!

Yet, as I watch nursing students who have participated in the professional development program walk with confidence to a potential contact, shake hands, and begin to talk about themselves and what they want in their career, I see the results that knowledge and skill related to professional etiquette yields.

I got to know Kathy when I invited her to present on the topic of dining etiquette. She guided the students through a deliberately challenging three-course meal, sharing insights on etiquette as well as conversation tips. This is now the most popular portion of the professional development curriculum. Students can apply this knowledge to personal and professional settings. Students report how they have used dining etiquette when meeting their romantic partner's parents over dinner. They are applying these skills during dinners where nursing recruiters try to woo them to their health system. Did I mention that nursing recruiters are actively and aggressively recruiting these students? Kathy and I have discussed that the reason may be that professional etiquette has given these students the polish that sets them apart from the crowd.

You, too, can employ professional etiquette to obtain a position, keep it, or to advance. Kathy's content is engaging and easy to read. The question and answer format with tip boxes, charts, faux pas, and good idea sections allows you to read quickly but provides a focused and thorough coverage of each topic. It is what you need to know without a lot of fluff. Her approach is fun and informative. Kathy's guidance on presenting, leading meetings, writing an article, and successfully navigating cultural differences will assist you in developing or refining new skills. You may even develop the confidence to venture into new roles, network with others, or connect through social media outlets.

If you have picked up this book, you either recognize or are starting to recognize the importance of professional etiquette in your nursing career. Whether you have made a serious gaffe that has illustrated the importance of etiquette or simply wish to learn more, reading this book is an important step in your path to both personal and professional future success. Thanks to Kathy's book, if we meet at a cocktail reception in the future, we will both be a little better at remembering each other's names, and if we do forget, we will know how to handle it!

–Anne M. Fink, PhD, RN, CNE
Assistant Dean for College and Student Services
Director of the LEAD Professional Development Program
Villanova University M. Louise Fitzpatrick College of Nursing