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*From pages 21-22*

## Appearance of Children

“It’s annoying to see nicely dressed parents with poorly dressed kids.”

—Fashion savvy people

This scenario generally occurs when well-dressed, well-mannered parents are at the stage when they are teaching their children to dress themselves. Picking out clothes for the child normally stops in most households around age eight or nine. It would be a great favor to the children however if the parents had set standards and expectations for the child’s wardrobe when leaving the house so that the general public wouldn’t assume they don’t care about their children’s presentation. The Solution: Don’t be so quick to judge the well-groomed parents when you see sloppy kids with them. It was probably one of those “pick your battle” situations in their home that day.

“I’m annoyed by women who dress in name brands while their kids wear junk.”

—Anonymous

I venture to say that this pet peeve came from someone who doesn’t have their own children or someone to whom money is no object. I actually understand the reasoning for this since my children grew, and continue to grow, quickly, right out of the brand-name clothes we just bought last month. In the name of thriftiness and good sense, parents should ignore labels until the child will be able to wear the item for at least one year without growing out of it. The

key to getting away with this kind of thriftiness is buying inexpensive but sturdy clothes so they don't look like rags after two washes.

I'm annoyed with kids wearing pants that show their underwear.”

—Anonymous adults

I was driving today and noticed on the sidewalk a teenage boy with jeans on, the waist around the middle of his thighs and crotch at his knees. He was on a manual scooter and having great difficulty maneuvering it with the restriction of his pants on his legs. His underwear was blue. This was entirely too much information and he looked absolutely ridiculous to this child of the 1970s. Of course, have you seen the clothes coming back into style that mimic the ones we wore then? Oh my God! How could we? At least no one knew what color our underwear was. The Solution: Just shake it off. You can't go around trying to change everyone's sense of fashion. Just chuckle and move on. . But if *you* have kids that age, do us all a favor and don't let them dress that way!

*From pages 37-38*

General Restaurant Annoyances

“[It's awful] finding a hair in my food after eating most of the course!”

—Grossed-out diner

I only received a small number of these types of complaints, but it is definitely on my personal annoyance list. If you find a hair in your food, before you start a tirade towards the restaurant manager, make certain that the hair didn't fall from your own head. If it is definitely a different color or texture than your own, you probably have a complaint. The Solution: Please be a gentle person. The hair is only in your food, not every other diner's. Either call the waiter to your table and quietly inform them what happened or get up from the table and tell them away from the other diners.

“When someone does not push in their chair after eating dinner, [I get annoyed].”

—Several disgruntled diners

The Solution: If the offender is with my party, and I don't have to go fully around the table to push the chair in, I take it upon myself to follow through with this consideration for the others around us. If I would be in the way of the waitstaff or other diners by attending to this, I ignore it, assuming the waitstaff will take care of it as part of their job and let it go. Sometimes there are just bigger fish to fry.

“[I detest it when] people use toothpicks in a restaurant.”

—Harry P. of Nebraska

In the United States, this is a common practice in some parts of the country. However, there is a proper way of handling a toothpick if you do use one in a restaurant. Cover your mouth with one hand while using the toothpick with the other. And please, if there is a difficult scrap caught take it to the bathroom or outside where people at the table cannot watch the food dislodge from your teeth. And don't be shy of asking others to practice this common courtesy either.

“[It’s annoying] when I eat out and see men or boys wearing their hat at the table, even in the company of presumed ladies; it drives me nuts.”

—Annoyed diner

This is one of my personal annoyances when I eat out, but I am not alone in my concern for the lack of respect men of all ages have for the others who are dining with them. Hats are not part of the outfit—they are meant to cover your head when you go out of doors. Besides, they just look tacky at the dining table. However, it is also good to learn that you cannot always change the behavior of others. Though this certainly is annoying, it’s not worth getting worked up over. Just remember that not everyone was raised knowing the proper rules of table etiquette and leave it at that. That being said, if I choose to fill out a comment card provided by the restaurant, I usually include one about not allowing men to wear hats inside the restaurant. I have seen this taken to heart by few restaurateurs during my life, so I don’t get my hopes up.