



HOLIDAY ETIQUETTE

Etiquette expert Melissa Leonard answers our toughest holiday questions. Here's how to keep the holidays happy:



Q. Who should you tip during the holidays?

A. Anyone who provides a service should be tipped...the postman, sanitation workers (the rule of thumb is usually \$20+ per person on the truck), recycling crews (same rule), hairdresser, cleaning ladies, nail salon tech (if you go on a regular basis), trainer at the gym, UPS driver (if you have lots of packages arriving throughout the year). With this said, cash is always best and most appreciated. Gift cards are a great alternative should you not have cash on hand and need to grab something as you run to pick up last minute items at the supermarket.

Q. How can you encourage family to get along during the holidays?

A. Family gatherings can often be difficult and full of drama, but during the holidays, it is always best to go into the gathering with an open mind and leave all baggage, such as hurt feelings over imagined or real slights, should be left at the door. Keep conversations merry and bright and no matter what anyone says or if gossipy chatter begins, simply smile and bring it back to light subjects. No matter what anyone else's child is doing, just smile and let someone else be "that person" when little Johnny acts out. You are responsible for you and your children only.

Q. What's the acceptable etiquette on re-gifting?

A. Regifting can be a slippery path to take, unless you are a regifting diva! This means, you have carefully marked the items given to you and know EXACTLY who sent them to you! You may always regift if you know it will NEVER EVER be seen by the person who gave you the gift. Only give a gift if you know it will fit the recipient or if it is right up their alley in taste! And of course, that the giver will never see that you didn't care for their gift and passed it on.

Q. How can you politely pass on the kiss underneath the mistletoe?

A. Ducking the kiss under the mistletoe can be one of those "AWKWARD" moments that you cringe at. Especially if the lips coming right at you belong to an unsavory lecherous uncle of your best friend. UGH! Just because a mistletoe hangs above, there is no need to pucker up. You can simply avert the kiss by giving a friendly hug or giving your hand for a shake first, then locking your elbow so the lecherous intruder can advance no further! ■



Certified Business Etiquette and International Protocol Consultant Melissa Leonard has worked with Fortune 100 Companies as well as private clients. Melissa received her business etiquette training and certification from the Protocol School of Washington. Melissa currently resides in lower Westchester County with her husband and two children.