

Chapter 6 : Showing Appreciation, How to Say “Thanks”

Showing Appreciation, How to say “Thanks”

A well-expressed thank-you is an art form. Most of us think we don't have the time or the talent to play the artist. Perhaps, we put off writing because it's not a habit we've cultivated. Or we feel awkward about finding the right words, or we don't have a convenient space to sit down and write.

As with so many other creative acts, the secret of writing a successful thank-you lies in finding the right tools, learning a few simple rules to get started, and then getting into the swing of it (i.e. practice, practice, practice) until it becomes natural.

Today we live in a 'need it now' society where a simple text, email or phone call has taken the place of a proper handwritten note. Think of the last time you received a handwritten note from a friend or relative, and how special it made you feel, knowing that the sender took time out of their schedule to sit down and write to you.

Etiquette For Stationery

When was the last time you expressed your thanks or gratitude to someone with a handwritten note? Having your own personal stationery used to be a staple for every household. With the growing popularity of email, texting and instant messaging, the traditional hand written note is becoming less common, but we feel a revolution coming on. In this day and age of hectic schedules, a hand written note shows the recipient that you care enough about them to take a moment to personally communicate your thoughts to them. Make a statement about yourself and express your thoughts with your own personal stationery.

If you stopped what you were doing to help someone you know and he or she did not acknowledge your assistance, how would you feel about repeating that effort again, the next time they needed help? Would you consider that action or lack thereof as selfish? Are you expecting too much from your friend/acquaintance? Are they so involved with their own needs or what they were doing that they forgot to say a simple “Thank You?”

If you gave money to someone in need that you have been acquainted with for over a year, someone you would see around

the Post every week, and then suddenly realized it has been nine months or more since you last saw them...would you give them money again any time soon? Would you consider that action selfish?

Each situation is different, and sometimes it is exactly as you perceive, sometimes not. If the situation were reversed, would you have the good habit to acknowledge the efforts of others? Good habits require effort to embed in our general nature, to naturally be inclined to say or express gratitude is a learned effort. How much



effort did you exert to acquire this good habit? The good news is... it is never too late to start.

Generosity is giving both time and money. Don't let the opportunity slip by to show your appreciation.

Etiquette For Stationery *continued...*

There are many reasons why people give their time and money to our causes. Time and money are not the sole results of fundraising. Friendships have been forged under the mutual efforts and assistance during efforts to accomplish goals at the Squadron, Detachment and National Levels. The common thread of such a diverse membership is the effort and time we put into supporting The American Legion and the Four Pillars. We care, but we also appreciate the acknowledgement that comes as a result of the efforts put forth.

Two

If you are a leader, an Office holder in a Squadron, the Detachment, or National position, be prepared to acknowledge the efforts that support the organization. Create a kit or purchase a kit from Emblems Sales to print and create award certificates. Identify when a certificate should be printed and ceremoniously presented.

Three

Say Thank you in a very personal and professional way. Do it immediately. Time elapsed diminishes the message and the

impact. This is why you have a thank you kit prepared for use before you really need it.

Make sure you use their correct name and write it right. If they go by a nickname or their middle name and you use the wrong name, you're defeating the purpose of the note, which is to make a connection and build a relationship. Take the time and do your

research.

Now this may sound counterintuitive, but give it a try. We're used to typing and allowing our thoughts to flow freely. When we immediately start to write out a note many times we don't do it because we think, 'what if I mess up'. By typing out your thoughts, you can cut and paste, reword, spell-check and rework your sentences before transferring them by hand to the note.

Hint: Take a few thank you cards with you when you travel. When the need arises to say and send a thank you card, have it with you and give the envelope (with a stamp on it) to the Front Desk at the hotel before you check out. Be sure to request the letter go out in the U.S. Mail! BY doing so, the circumstances for writing the thank you note is fresh in your thoughts and easier to complete.



One

Invest in your "Thank You" Kit now. Purchase thank you cards and personal note cards with matching envelopes and keep close at hand. Crane papers offers many options for masculine quality products that may suit your needs. Additional manufacturers also carry products that may suit your needs and cost concerns. Prepare to say thank you for the many times someone has done something to make your efforts easier, life better or graciously given to your effort that you would have found more difficult to achieve had they not. Personal stationery of quality is a statement. When putting your thank you kit together, consider using a quality pen with ink that flows smoothly, doesn't smudge and doesn't skip. Black or blue ink or something in between is acceptable.

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Etiquette For Stationery *continued...*

Four

Keep the message short and direct. Connect the person to the kind act or effort or gift and why you appreciate the gesture. Open with “Thank You” and end with “Thank You.” Think sooner sent and shorter note length as the best way to accomplish this task.

Make sure you write in the present tense. Don’t be wishy-washy and say something like, “I just wanted to write to say that...” Be specific and straightforward. Highlight a point of conversation from the previous encounter, or certain skills you’re thankful the person taught you.

Take ownership of your thoughts...avoid saying “I would like to thank you for...” or “I just wanted to thank you...” Taking ownership of the sentence is presented this way: “Thank you for...” or “Thank you.”

Five

Write about them, not yourself. When you connect the thank you to something the recipient did or gave, the message is genuinely and graciously received. You took notice of them and took time to let them know it was of value to you. If you explain why you are sending a thank you note in a lengthy writing, the message will be diminished with the length of the note. Say thank you, connect to them, show appreciation and end with “thank you.”

Be specific, don’t exaggerate, and be sincere with any compliments. And don’t blivate. You can mention how what they shared with you will be beneficial to you moving forward, how you have already researched or applied what they told you or how their donation will make a difference. Make sure to maintain your focus on the person you are writing and on their generosity. This isn’t about you.

What the written note does not say directly on paper it is said by your actions: You appreciated the person and what they did and felt it was urgent enough to quickly take time out of your day to craft a personal note, locate their mailing address, place a stamp, find a Post Office and say “Thank You.”

Make it a habit of saying “Thank You” in writing and make it a personal note with your handwriting.

Addressing Envelopes

- Always address envelopes with black or dark blue ink.
- Do not use abbreviations in your social stationery with the exception of non-professional titles such as Mr., Mrs., Jr., etc.
- Professional titles such as “Doctor” should be spelled out.
- Refrain from using symbols for “and.”

Address:

- Write all house numbers in numeral form (1, 2, 3...). The number “one,” is the only exception—spell it out when it stands alone (e.g. One Panther Way).
- Write apartment numbers, suite numbers and zip codes in numeral form.
- Avoid state abbreviations.
- Do not abbreviate common address words like “Street,” “Boulevard” and “Avenue.”

Return Address:

- Print your return address on the closed back flap of the envelope.
- Center the recipient’s address on the front of the envelope.
- Use the same color of ink and font style on the envelope that you used for the invitation or announcement inside.
- Exclude your name from the return address.

Stuffing:

The printed side of the “personal note” or “Thank You note” should be the side facing the recipient when he or she opens the stationery, so be sure to stuff your envelopes with the printed side of your thank you note facing the flap of the envelope.