

ETIQUETTE



MIND YOUR WAYS



WHEN SHOULD WE CALL?

Before calling, the best thing to do is to send a message. Asking "Good morning/ afternoon/ evening, is it or what is a good time to call?". This gives the other person time to get into the mental framework to expect our call. Please call exactly at that time. Then we will find the other person receptive and responsive. The exception to this rule is for close friends or those in an informal relationship. Second, if the call is to invite somebody, then the other person will not mind because we are not calling for any specific work or help, but only to invite them.

Need to/want to call anyone on a Sunday or a Holiday for inviting? The best time to reach out is either 11.30am to 12.30pm, before lunch, or in the evening between 5.30pm and 7.30pm.

In case you are missing each other's calls, it is best to fix a convenient time beforehand for the call and then talk at that time.

When calling someone, make sure you have at least 15 minutes time in hand in case that person misses your call and calls back. Also, do not call just before entering a meeting or condolence prayers, or a lunch/dinner party where you can't take the call back.

Do not eat or drink anything while on a call with anyone. Nobody likes to hear the sound of slurping liquids or food being chewed.

Call from a quiet place where there is minimal background noise.

To respect others' time, avoid sending non-urgent messages during late hours/ on weekends/ their time off. Knowledge explosion is happening exponentially because everybody wants to forward the just-received forwards without even thinking about the trauma/ torture the other person is going through for these unsolicited continued encroachment on their privacy. When someone gives access to their mobile number, please do not bombard them with services photos incessantly. For example, I made a new friend who sent me her clothes pictures every two-three days. After a few months, I blocked her. She sent me her birthday invite, but, of course, I did not get it as she was blocked. I got to know about it when she called. By then I had committed to be elsewhere. Missed her party! Similarly, greetings on all festivals throughout the year have become more of a PR exercise with the company or self name imposed or even otherwise. Greetings from very near and dear ones on one/two occasions are welcome, but not this rampant liberty of the loose cannon! This is a sure-shot for getting our calls blocked by most, otherwise at least put us on archive!

Avoid multitasking during calls. It is respectful to give full attention to the person on the other end.



In the season of parties and festivities, **Minu Budhia** points out a bunch of social dos and don'ts

PAUSE FOR A PURPOSE

When should you switch off your phone?

When you know for sure that you cannot take a call, it is better to switch off the phone than keep it on silent mode and keep looking at it and not respond. This includes doctor's appointments, during a flight, a very important meeting, or any place where you have to give 100 per cent focus to the situation. **If the phone keeps ringing and is not picked up,** the caller may/will get offended thinking they are not considered important, hence their call is not being received. So, why take that risk and the added tension of looking at the phone and feeling uncomfortable? If the phone is switched off, the heavens will not fall unless there is a medical emergency with close relatives/ friends who we really care for, or similar cases.

GUESTS GAL#ORE

Congratulations to the family on a marriage being fixed! You have a guest list that has to be invited, but for God's sake, **do not tell our event manager/ office colleagues to call the proposed invitee for their address.** This is very annoying and is to be avoided strictly. Most shocking is to get wedding invite for the first time itself from the wedding planner! Normally, at least the first intimation or invitation is directly from the parents of the bride or groom or the bride or groom themselves. But to get from the event management company is neither amusing nor appreciated. Similarly, **do not share someone's mobile number** with someone else without permission. We generally

get calls or texts "(XYZ) has shared your number, so I am calling with their reference".

For parties/ get-togethers, please let us not tell our secretaries/ colleagues to ask the invitee directly for an RSVP to confirm/ check if they are coming. It has to be from secretary to secretary, unless we are calling ourselves.

Never write the mobile number of the recipient on top of the courier packet. This is a complete invasion of privacy. This rule should be strictly followed.

Avoid sending invitations during festivals like Diwali, Christmas, New Year and so on, when people are bombarded with WhatsApp greetings and there is a likelihood of our invite getting lost. If invites can wait for a day or two then it would be definitely a better option to avoid these days.

SMALL GESTURES, BIG IMPACT

If hosting a small group for lunch/ dinner, find out the dietary preferences and food allergies of the guests. This ensures that our efforts do not go to waste and the gesture is well appreciated too. If we have a big party and we know our close relatives/ friends' food preferences, try to accommodate them. People who have come to attend out of love and respect for us should not go without eating or feeling cared for.

Do not over-dress at someone else's party and overshadow the host.

For guests invited over for tea, lunch, or dinner at home, we should know approximately how many drivers/ security persons/ attendants will be accompanying them. It is appreciated to offer them snacks or

food packets and a bottle of water. These are small gestures, but they make all the difference. Some drivers/ security personnel even say that there are very few houses where they too are taken care of.

Arrange for food for musicians, photographers and other vendors at your events. This will make them feel respected and cared for.

MAKE EVERY MINUTE SPECIAL

When one is a host, one should act like a host. **Make the guests feel cared for and welcomed** and not start eating and enjoying ourselves before everyone else. After all, everyone has come to meet you.

Try to talk to and take care of each and every guest — after all, they have made the effort to attend the party for you.

If inviting a small group with new acquaintances, read their short profiles, Google them, or try to find out about them from common acquaintances.

If inviting very important people, depute family members or colleagues to be with them individually to take care of them. This allows you to meet your VVIPs briefly and ensure full attention to them while you host everybody.

Do not play host at others' parties, until and unless specifically requested by the host. **Avoid praising another person's party at the current party** in the presence of the host and others who were not invited. It's embarrassing for the other person, and offensive for the host.

MEETINGS

When you've called someone for a meeting, right from the security to the reception to the executive assistant should know the timings and be briefed on a need-to-know basis. **They should not be clueless when the person arrives.**

Ensure that the visitor's/ guest's car is parked in an appropriate place.

Depute someone at the door to receive them.

After the meeting, **escort the person till the gate/ the lift.** If it's personally not possible, assign someone to escort them.

If late for a meeting, one cuts a sorry figure and also loses face/ respect. Do the reverse of the distance, add some extra time for traffic, calculate accordingly and reach before time. If very early, wait in the car, but don't be late.

GREETING SERVICE PROVIDERS

Every individual, every job deserves respect. Do not be rude to those who serve us; talk politely.

Always greet the security guards, drivers, waiters, helpers, any service staff who greet us. Smile back and maintain eye contact. Let us not ignore them by being lost in our own world or mobile when we are greeted.

Depending on the occasion/ event, **tip service staff appropriately.** **When in an unknown city, drivers are the best guides** to tell us about the culture, the city, the whereabouts, the things to do and so on. Converse with them during the time in the car. Give them respect and get respect.

Calling them by their name. Read the name tags or simply ask, "May I have your name, please?". There's magic in this as everybody loves to hear their name.

GIFTING

If someone has sent a gift, a proper acknowledgement message is expected. Half of the time people don't bother to say thank you, taking it for granted. Sometimes people only thank when asked if they have received the gift.

To be remembered well and fondly, a personalised thank you is very appreciated. It need not be long, but should have emotion.

When you get a gift, take the trouble of seeing it properly. Acknowledging *ladlos* when we have received *rajbhog* is really insulting to the sender; it shows our casualness and indifference.

A gift is a gift. Even if you don't like it, at least thank the sender.

When composing a thank-you message, it would be nice to always mention the specific gift and how the gift has made us happy.

Thanking someone for their gift in front of someone else is embarrassing.

ON WHATSAPP

If in a WhatsApp group, a) Avoid discussing details about invites and invitees in groups. Some members may not be invited and they will definitely feel bad about it.

b) If we have separate plans with one or two group members, please avoid discussing those plans in front of the others. It's highly impolite and rude. Imagine, if we were in their place, and people were discussing plans in which we were not included.

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