

National Manners Month

By Judi, *The Manners Lady*

Inspiring Canadians to live with Civility and Good Manners—

And pulling out crime by its roots:

- Lack of respect for *others*
- Lack of respect for their *property*
- Lack of respect for *oneself*

How will your family and Community Celebrate NATIONAL MANNERS MONTH in September?

Canada... a land of beauty, opportunity, freedom and goodness. For generations, Canada has been a land where people are caring, kind, helpful, and civil. Unfortunately, these core Canadian traits are not as prevalent as they once were. Simple courtesies that not too long ago were just “givens” in society are no longer evident and common courtesy doesn’t seem to be so common anymore.

Crime is at an all time high. Drug and substance abuse is on the rise. Bullying, road rage, car theft, litter, graffiti, pornography and other mind pollution. Parents are overwhelmed with children they can’t control while defiance, disrespect, whining, complaining, and rudeness run rampant. Every one of these behaviours is a violation of good manners—the failure to respect other people and their property. The lack of controlling one’s behaviour—the lack of self control and the “do your own thing” and “look out for number one” attitude of the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s—has caused a myriad of social and economic problems.

What has happened to our society? Where did we go wrong? Where should their training have begun?

Training begins in the home—the foundational building block of society.

Our homes need to be nation’s “Boot Camps.” We would never send our soldiers out to the front lines of battle without intense basic training. Yet that’s what we’ve done with many of our children. As parents, we’ve sent our precious children out to the front lines of society without the basic skills they need to thrive, let alone survive.

It used to be just a given that parents and grandparents would be the ones to teach their children manners and life skills. But it seems that today, many parents are at a loss where to start. Not too long ago, young married couples had a strong circle of family support around them for encouragement and advice as they raised their children: Grandma and Grandpa lived in the same town. Aunts and Uncles lived nearby. However, with our society becoming so increasingly transient, young parents are often on their own to “wing it”, and often hazardedly by trial and error.

Many parents are floundering—and many have thrown up their arms in despair. Parents need and want training and simple creative ideas on how to train and inspire their children to excellence in integrity, attitude and behaviour. Most people would agree that our children are too precious to experiment on. It’s time to get back to basics.

We need to teach our children and *be intentional* as we equip them with the foundational principles that they will need for happiness and success in an elementary school playground... and to be happy and successful citizens in a civil society.

Smiley Blanton, the renowned psychiatrist said that,

“80% of my patients would not be in my office today if their parents had taught them manners—how to get along in society.”

In the 1700’s, Britain was regarded as one of the cruellest of nations. It took the passion of one man, member of Parliament William Wilberforce, to battle against slavery and to speak up against the corruption.

“God Almighty has set before me two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners.”

By the mid 1800’s, the face and heart of Britain had changed, and England became known for its personal civility and business ethics. But now, just two centuries later, the citizens of Great Britain have lost or forgotten their manners to the point that the Education and government leaders of Great Britain were so appalled at the behaviour and lack of basic civility of their young citizens, that this past year, committed \$18,000,000 to the teaching of manners in the schools.

Our Canadian founding fathers brought these ideals of manners and respect as they formed our nation. However, it seems that our younger generation is not continuing this noble tradition bequeathed to us by our forefathers. Our young people—the upcoming generation of leaders—are not being trained in vital life skills and the foundational principles of both a happy family and a civil society. And society is paying the price.

It has been said that “manners are the oil that lubricates society.” The teaching of manners in past generations has always been a three pronged effort:

Parents and grandparents taught manners and modeled them in the home.

2. Society reinforced the universal values of respect and The Golden Rule that hopefully were taught in the home. When children entered kindergarten, schools rightly assumed that manners had been already taught and learned in the home, although formal lessons did occur. Even as a schoolboy, one of George Washington’s homework assignments was entitled, “The Rules of Civility: 110 Rules of Civility in Conversation Amongst Men.”

In addition, the media and popular culture reinforced character and manners; athletes and entertainment icons upheld the standard. Even Hollywood had a written code regarding violence, cursing and mockery of people’s faiths and values.

Our system of government was designed for a people who have self control over their behaviour; if not, our behaviour would need to be controlled by external means, such as the police. And as much as we appreciate our police force, no one wants to have to have a police officer every 20 yards on our streets to enforce the law.

We live in the most beautiful country in the world, but lately, it sometimes seems like we have an epidemic of *whining* in Canada, rather than being creative about how to fix problems or make a positive difference! When people forget to be thankful for what they have, they become whiners and complainers.

The Compelling Solution

The Manners Club is excited to be launching the non-profit “National Project for Manners & Civility” with the goal of inspiring high standards of civil behaviour—character, respect, civility and good manners—from the office of the prime minister and parliament, premiers and mayors, through to families, businesses, athletes, service clubs, universities and high schools and right down to kindergarten and preschool. We want to inspire children, teens and parents to develop their character, and to encourage them to choose to do the right thing—out of the love of virtue, not just out of the fear of punishment.

The behaviour of our young people is an outward manifestation of their inward character—who they really are. We don’t want their manners to be something that they put on (like a hat) just to impress people. We want their manners to be real—a wonderful reflection of their character.

By influencing children, teens and parents to live with manners and respect, we will help strengthen families. By strengthening families, we will build stronger and safer communities, and a stronger Canada.

A Special Opportunity for Home School Families across Canada!

If you would like the opportunity to be a catalyst for truth and change in your community, we would invite you to join with families across the nation in celebrating National Manners Month in September—a special time to focus making a difference in other people’s lives—through our words, attitudes and actions!

If you would like tips and ideas on ways of celebrating National Manners Month (including the exciting “Meet your Neighbour” Contest!) in your family, church, business, home school group, public schools, Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts, or sports teams, write to: **info@theMannersClub.com** and ask for the overview of The Canadian Project for Manners

& Civility. Parents and teachers can run the Manners Club course (The Kit is \$75 with book, music posters and reproducible resources) in public schools, as a Sunday School curriculum, as a four week Home School activity, or as a VBS-like outreach camp for your church!

We would like to raise the funds to donate The Manners Club CD to every family in Canada, and the Manners Kit to every school in Canada! May God bless you as *together* we take God's truths to our community and influence one child at a time and one family at time!

The Canadian Project for Manners & Civility was a natural outflow of The Manners Club and Life Skills Int'l which was founded in 1995 by Judi Vankevich, best known as "Judi The Manners Lady." Judi is fast becoming one of Canada's most trusted sources of wise, common sense (and fun!) advice on raising young, well-behaved citizens.

Judi is the author of Manners Are Cool for children and Manners Are Vital: Secrets of Happy Family Living and the Foundation of a Strong Society (soon to be released) and Say Hello to All the World! (soon to be released). Her award-winning CD, "It's Fun to Have Good Manners" featuring 16 exciting songs teaching manners and life principles is valuable tool for both parents and teachers. Judi travels across the U.S. as both a family entertainer at schools, churches and concert halls and a motivational speaker/trainer for teens, universities and businesses.

Note: Judi will be speaking at The 2006 Equip Conference on April 28-29th at Compass Point Church in Burlington. She has a few openings available if your church would like to host The Manners Lady for a concert or seminar. Call 1-866-ask-Judi (west coast time).

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