

A Personal and Thoughtful Gesture

As our world becomes increasingly digitalized and mobile, people seek faster, even immediate, forms of communication. The times have certainly changed and now it is easier than ever to get in touch; all it takes is a quick email or text message.

Here at Emily Post, we believe that there is still a place for handwritten notes in our fast-paced society - especially for something as important and personal as the thank-you note. In a recent edition of *The Costco Connection*, Daniel Post Senning explores the question of whether it is OK to thank people by email.

"When I get a handwritten letter, I'm excited to open it. The art of the postage stamp, the feel of the paper, the graphic quirks of a friend's handwriting: There is simply nothing as personal as a handwritten note. In a stack of bills and flyers, it's a treasure in a sealed packet, full of promise and potential. It is a visceral reminder of someone far away.

Good manners are about more than fulfilling bare-minimum social obligations. They are an opportunity for us to connect to the people in our lives in a meaningful way. In an increasingly informal digital world, continuing to pull out pen and paper is a way to distinguish yourself. The handwritten thank-you note speaks volumes simply as a medium and sends the message that you care enough to invest yourself personally in acknowledging another.

Would I ever send a digital thank-you for a gift I was given? No way. It just isn't enough - not personal enough, not weighty enough. You can't hold digital thanks in your hands the way you can hold a note. When was the last time you printed out an e-card? Right. Email is read and deleted. A mailed note is seen again and again on a desk or counter. Would you rather your thanks be remembered or deleted?

There are two common reasons people don't write thank-you notes. The biggest excuse is not having the materials at hand. Note cards or stationary that reflect your personality, a roll of stamps, pens and an address book - one trip to the store and you're all set.

The second excuse is not having time. A handwritten thanks is often as short as three

sentences, just like an email. If you want to talk about your bike trip last summer, do it in a letter. The thank-you note is special; it's to express your appreciation, so keep the focus there. Does it take longer to address and stamp an envelope than to click "Send"? Yes, but by about one minute - a minute well spent to say thanks well.

Being part of a society means knowing how to be appropriate to a situation. Handwritten notes still have a personality, warmth and, when needed, gravitas that computer screens don't. And questions of appropriateness aside, people still enjoy opening them. More than anything, that tells me they have lasting value. So, send a little joy someone's way!"

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