While celebrating Thanksgiving two weeks ago someone asked what to do when a someone brings an unexpected guest to a Holiday Dinner. Do you tell them there's not enough? Do you always cook an extra portion or two just in case…? Do you serve skimpy portions to everyone? This dilemma is the source of the famous FHB. Never heard of it? Family Hold Back. That's what we always did. If at any time for any reason, our mother realized we might be a little short of food for the big meal. It might be just one item on the menu or the whole thing. In either case she would whisper, "This is an FHB moment for the beans (or whatever is short)." We knew that meant we were to take skimpy or no portion at all until ALL the guests (invited or otherwise) were served.

Many families practice the FHB tradition. However, this past Thanksgiving I learned a new one. We were sitting at our shared lunch table at The Emily Post Institute talking about these matters when someone mentioned the "No Thank You" portion. "What is that?" I asked! I always tell parents and kids that if there is a food they don't like being served, they do not have to eat it. There is no manners rule in the world that says you HAVE to eat something that makes you gag. However, I do tell them they should at least try it. Who knows - maybe the chef has found a way to make that particular food delicious. That's what the "No Thank You" portion is all about. You put just a ***taste*** of the item that is not so appealing on your plate rather than saying "No thank you." Whether it's a food you've never tried or it's a food you haven't liked in the past, this gives you the option to try it and at the same time shows respect for the person who has taken time to prepare it. It's much better than just saying, "No, thank you," unless, of course, you have a food allergy – then you don't even want to take that taste and a simple verbal "no, thank you" is just perfect.

I hope you all are having lovely holiday dinners without a need to FHB and finding that the "No Thank You" portion is leading to the discovery of new tastes that will enlarge the number of foods you can enjoy at holiday and all other meals. Yum!

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