

Keep Your Holiday Shopping Spirits Bright:

The Holidays: the joy, the snow, the rush...the frustration, the bad tempers, the rudeness! Here are ten tips to keep you cool this holiday season, and even spread some cheer along the way.

1.



Smile. You can't do it enough. Your face (and your soul) will thank you for it.

2.

Lose the 'Bah Humbug!' attitude. Yes, it will be crowded and there will be lines and it will take time to find a parking spot. Don't let that dampen the holiday spirit. (Planning on a little extra time helps, too.)

3.

Use "Please, Thank You, and You're Welcome." Make this your mantra and you will smooth the way for better service and create a kinder atmosphere wherever you go.

4.

Be gracious. You have circled the lot for the fifth time when you spy a space, only to see that someone else is already waiting for it. Be gracious: they were there first, so let it go.

5.

A little patience, please. Checkout counter or airline counter, the rules are the same: First come, first served, and one at a time. (If you need to use your phone, opt for text messages instead of calls so as not to annoy those in line around you.) When it is your turn, be ready with documents or payment--and a smile!--to speed things along.

6.

Friendliness. Hold the door or elevator for other shoppers, and smile and say "hello" to the harried clerk behind the counter.

7.

Complain to the proper person. Yelling at a salesclerk because a store is out of an advertised item only makes you look foolish and rude. If you have a problem, ask to speak to the manager. Frame your complaint clearly and simply. (No venting, please.)

8.

Cell phones. They're useful when trying to find out your mom's glove size, but put them away when you are working with a sales clerk or checking out at a register.

9.

Shopping with children. Sensory overload says it all: the music, the crowds, the lights, the toys, the Santas! It's best to arrange to leave your children home. If they must accompany you, or when it is their turn to shop, make sure they are well-rested and fed, and be ready to head home at the first sign of a meltdown.

10.

Hold to your own. Meet rudeness with patience and kindness--you'll feel better for it, and you inspire some holiday cheer along the way.