



The Ultimate Character Development System

**Building a Successful Future
One Student at a Time!!!**



APRIL 2010 - MANNERS

Manners means "Showing kindness in everything I say and do!"

Manners means words and behaviors that show respect for other people.

MANNERS: APRIL 2010

Dear Family,

This month we will focus on the character concept, "manners." Therefore, our power-chat discussions and activities will aim to help children understand what manners are and how to use them. We will be encouraging them to actively engage their manners at home, in school, and out in the community.

Manners show other people that their comfort and their feelings matter. They involve several of our other Powerful Words such as self control and empathy. Empathy is so critical to manners that etiquette expert, Amy Vanderbilt once said, "Good manners have much to do with the emotions. To make them ring true, one must feel them, not merely exhibit them." In other words, manners are not just about going through the motions-- we need to imagine how others might feel in various circumstances and act or react accordingly. While good manners might mean different things to different people depending on values and societal norms, one commonality is that manners help us all follow the Golden Rule: Treat others the way we want to be treated.

People who use polite words and behave with other people in mind tend to make others feel comfortable and valued. As a character-based academy, we are focusing more on being aware of other people's feelings than on "etiquette for etiquette's sake." Phrases like, "Can I help you?" and "You're welcome" and words like "please," "sorry," and "thank-you" all have ways of helping our friends and family feel like their feelings matter.

A recent 2009 online poll of 1000 mothers showed a renewed interest in manners. In fact, 81% of mothers said that manners are more important than ever, specifically; 39% said treating adults with respect was of most importance, followed by saying please and thank you (29%) and then, treating other children with respect (19%). Parents feel that manners can ground children in a world that seems "freewheeling" (Babycenter.com).

The definitions of manners are as follows:

Young students: "Showing kindness in everything I say and do!"

Older students/teens/adults: Words and behaviors that show respect for other people.

During the four weeks of April we will be discussing the following:

- (1) Week 1: Please, thank-you, you're welcome and nice table manners
- (2) Week 2: Polite interruptions, apologies, criticism, compliments, and insults
- (3) Week 3: Polite phone manners and polite introductions
- (4) Week 4: Saying thank-you and showing gratitude to those who help the most

Upcoming Powerful Words

May:	Sportsmanship
June:	Focus
July:	Attitude

As always, one of the best ways to teach and reinforce Powerful Words is by modeling strength of character ourselves. By encouraging your children to practice their manners at home and out in the community, they can develop respectful habits that will make others, and in turn, themselves, feel more comfortable and valued.

We thank you for your support. You are pivotal in helping to make our school one of the best Martial Arts and personal development centers in the world.

Best Regards,
Your Motivated and Dedicated Martial Arts Instructors



DEAR *Dr. Robyn*

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APRIL 2010: MANNERS

(Paraphrased an email; with permission)

Dear Dr. Robyn,

My daughter has always been my “Manners Maven” and my son, well, I guess you can say he’s just a typical boy; rude, crude, and lewd. It was OK when he was in preschool because people thought it was funny. Now it’s getting him into trouble. How can I get him to adopt some manners?

--Janine S, New York, New York

Dear Janine,

When children are very young, making people laugh or getting a look of shock is easy encouragement for someone looking for a little extra attention. Now its not so funny anymore but your son is still looking for that reaction. He has also formed some negative habits. Creating new, positive habits around manners may take some time but will certainly be worth it as he shows others consideration, respect, and kindness.

Here are some ways to get started:

(1) **Nix the negative labels:** By calling your daughter a “Manners Maven” and your son “rude, crude and lewd,” they are both finding ways to live up to their label. For your son, since the label has a negative connotation, the self-fulfilling prophesy is setting him up for failure.

(2) **Dine away from home sometimes:** Put your children in situations in which they are exposed to other positive influences and rules. Whether its at a restaurant or at a friend’s house, when children are out of their usual routine, they can exhibit behavior that may surprise you. If they can show respectful manners in public, they can show them at home.

(3) **Explain, expect but don’t lecture:** When we make dinner time, car rides, outings and play dates all about long lectures, children don’t even want to try. Explain your expectations and then allow them to rise to the occasion. Make sure your children

know that you are certain that they will meet and exceed your expectations as they are respectful, kind people.

(4) **Compliment and thank:** When you see it, let them know you’ve noticed. Praise them for good choices and positive manners. Tell them how much you appreciate their positive choices and how it makes spending time with them even more pleasant for everyone.

(5) **Don’t laugh:** Again, since your son wants to get your attention, laughing at his antics will only encourage him. Make sure that other adults are forewarned also-- so that when he tries to get a rise out of people he is met with blank stares and disinterest. He’ll have to find other ways to get attention.

In the end, it’s all about consistency. Make your “manners rules” required for all your family members so that your son (1) has great examples to watch and (2) doesn’t feel singled out. Whether he’s in your home or out in the community, make sure that the rules still apply. He can do it! With you on his team, he is sure to succeed!

Here’s to your success!



To get more useful ideas, be sure to visit our blog for Powerful Parents!
Go to www.DrRobynsBlog.com

SERVING UP A BIG DISH OF THANKS

Think of a teacher, friend, or family member who has helped you. Use your manners and thank that person! Below, either write him/her a "thank you" note or draw the person a picture that shows how thankful you are. You can even color in our "Thank-you" chef! When we use our manners to dish out a big plate of thanks, it makes everyone feel great!



More than just manners...

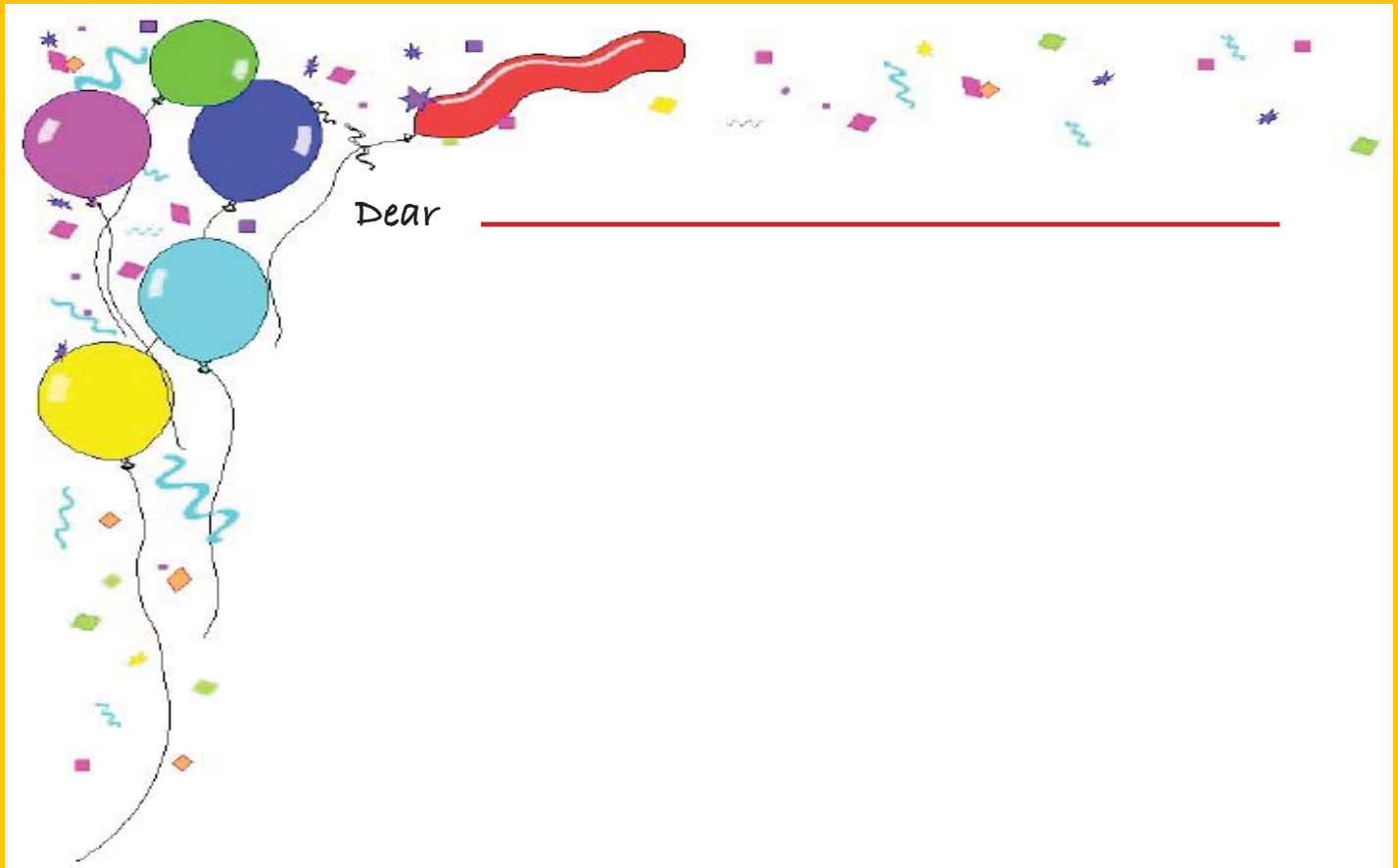
In your own words, why do you think its important to use manners? _____

Which "manners" are most important to you? (circle any or all)

Sorry Thank you Compliments Introducing yourself Can I help?

You're welcome Phone manners Internet manners Other: _____

Write a note of thanks to a teacher who has been very helpful to you.



Beyond Manners

It's important to step back and take a good look at those who have been most helpful to us in our lives. While thanking them for their support, assistance, coaching, or words of wisdom may show manners, as leaders, we must go beyond the cursory "thanks" to express how much we appreciate them. Now is the time. Who has been integral to your success and how have they helped you to become the person you are today?

