MANNERS AND MORALS

For comparison with our present day, let's take a few items from the Ladies' Home Journal "Fifty Yeas Ago" column:

Etiquette: "A chaperon shall accompany an engaged couple when traveling, at the theater at night, and at large dances. At matinees and when driving in an open carriage they may be unattended."

Lady from Philadelphia: "It is exceedingly bad manners for a girl to slap a man on the back, or lay her hand upon him in any way, or for him to touch her except for a friendly handshake."

A male reader asks: "Is it good form for a young lady when receiving to rock in a rocking chair?" Answer: "Extremely vulgar. Lounging attitudes in the presence of young men reveal a lack of delicacy--unpardonable in a young girl."

If these were moral standards fifty years ago, no wonder grandparents are shocked over some of the things their grandchildren do today--especially when they indulge in such activities as the pantie raids of '52. Under the heading of "Manners and Morals" in one of the June issues of Time Magazine the epidemic was said to have involved fifty-two different colleges and universities. The girl students not only welcomed the riots, but did all they could to encourage them. Gordon Southworth, a 34 year-old teacher of New York said such an outbreak was a disgrace to the nation. But it was a crushing rebuke to be reminded that he, Gordon Southworth, had been the champion live goldfish eater in the college craze of the year '39. He had eaten 67 live gold fish at one sitting--then ate a peanut butter sandwich afterward. So we are reminded that each generation has some form of manners and morals that are not acceptable, especially to the older generation. The simplified definition of morals according to Webster is the conduct of life or behavior. For manners he gives the definition as politeness and respectfulness. When these two are combined they seem to add up to personality based on good judgment. Many people who hold high degrees in literary education fail to reach their goal for the lack of judgement in solving problems of every day life. In most cases this is due to the lack of recreational association as a basic training for moral understanding. Our schools do a great deal toward the moral training of students, but it can't all be accomplished in the schools. Don't you think our colleges are making a mistake in abandoning dining rooms in dormitories? Many students come from homes where table manners are neither taught nor required. If they fail to obtain such training with their college education they go out into the world an unfinished product, thus causing them to be misfits and to be shunned by the society to which they rightfully belong. Good manners are the settled medium of social, as specie is of commercial life; returns are equally expected from both; and people will no more advance their civility to a bear than their money to a bankrupt. Manners and morals are not only essential to social life but are often one of the main requirements in obtaining jobs as well as making a success of business. Let's take, for example, an interview with Dr. Mouzon of Southern Methodist University: A reporter asked Dr. Mouzon, "What kind of a man is S.M.U. looking for as a coach for its football Mustangs?" Speaking in strictly an offhand manner, Dr. Mouzon said he could think of many things that would eliminate a man from serious consideration. Among other things he
said, "If a man has never darkened a church door--I don't personally care which denomination he belongs to--but if he has shown no inclination in that direction at all, I don't believe he's the type of man for us."

Athletic Director, Matty Bell, has said often that any coach that is hired must have a reputation for "getting along with boys," morale of the players being considered of tremendous importance. As on applicant for the job, Chalmer Woodard of McPherson College remarked, "Morale means everything in this business." (Mr. Woodard was elected coach of S.M.U. the day after this interview.)

After we reach maturity we no longer have the opportunity to be taught manners and morals, but often acquire improvements on both. This improvement is obtained in various ways; by listening to lectures on philosophy, observing the right and putting it into practice, and by reading good literature. Many good writers give us articles on morals to live by. Let's take a few and try to get some good morals from them:

In the February (1953) issue of the P.E.O. Record, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale says, "To live satisfactorily, or perhaps to live at all, three factors are required--food, drink and inspiration. Stop the supply of food and drink and an individual will die of hunger and thirst. Stop the supply of inspiration and the mind and soul will perish for want of zest and power." In his article he quotes this from Pilgrim's Way: "Time never destroys. Time enshrines. You may have an experience and it is quickly overlaid by other experiences until it becomes vague, but you can return to it. If it is an inspiring experience, you can always be re-inspired by it."

Dr. Carlyle Holcomb reminds us to help our friends constructively, but to wait for them to show need of our help. He says much evil in the world is due to wellmeaning interference. People who fail to have harmony in their own lives often involve themselves in serious circumstances in trying to help others with personal affairs. He says if a person needs your help, not only will he appreciate your efforts but you will be greatly inspired by them. So it is well to remember when you take sides in your mind, of become emotionally concerned about a matter, talk about it and then do something about it. You have made yourself a party to the affair and must suffer the consequences whether they be good or bad.

John Mason Brown says, "What happiness is, no person can say for another, but no one, I am convinced can be happy who lives only for himself. No person is as uninteresting as a person without interest. The pitiful people are those who in their living elect to be spectators rather than participants. The only true happiness comes in living our lives for a purpose."

Dwight Morrow once wrote this to his son: "The world is divided into people who do things and people who get the credit. Try if you can to belong to the first class. There is far less competition."

The most infectiously joyous men and women are those who forget themselves in thinking about and serving others. Happiness comes not by deliberately courting and wooing it, but by giving oneself in self-effacing surrender to great values. The smallest good deed is better than the grandest good intention.

Emerson says, "The barometer of success is making, having and holding friends." But many people scoff at the idea. The express themselves in words like "you take the friends; I prefer my money." And some few of them are able to justify their theory by climbing to the top of financial heap by selfish and ruthless tactics. But others, and they are in the majority, conduct themselves by moral standards of "live and let live." They work hard to make a living, but not at the cost of losing friends. At inventory time, they number their friends as well as cash to their list of assets. These men set an example to live by. It is a truism that the more men, generally speaking, will do for a dollar when they make it, the more that dollar will do for them, when they spend it.

Andrews tells us this story of the depression:

A government agent traveling through the Tennessee mountains was making small allotments to impoverished farmers for seed; stock and needed repairs. He found one woman
who lived alone scratching out a bare living on two acres of barren ground. "If the government should
allot you $200.00, what would you do with it?" he asked her. The woman, standing in her cabin which
had no floor, its windows covered with tar paper, with light streaming through the broken walls, finally
looked up and said, "Reckon I'd give it to the poor."

"He is a man of sense who does not grieve for what he has not, but rejoices in what he
has." Mahatma Gandhi left this penetrating message about Communism "I prophesy that if we
disobey the law of final supremacy of spirit over matter, of liberty and love over brute force, in a few
years' time we shall have Bolshevism rampant in this land which was once so holy." These words
could well become a pin-up slogan for those who wish to defend decency and liberty. Gandhi, of
course, was referring to India, but he might have been taking about the United States or any other free
country.

He said further, "Materialism is the mother of twin troubles, Communism and
Corruption." "Turn the searchlight inward" Gandhi often urged, "A clear view of our own
deficiencies is the first requisite of victory over evil."

If we place less value on material advancement and more on moral improvement; less on
what we have and more on what we are, and live up to our own convictions, we would soon rid the
world of Communism and corruption. There can be no high civility without a deep morality.

Henry LaCossit tells us, "It is necessary to rely on ourselves and learn the truth of great moral
principles by bitter experience if need be and apply it to our everyday living. It is necessary to have
purpose and work toward the achievement of it. These are the things that bring us peace, and when we
bring peace to ourselves we bring it to others. Life is too short to nurse grievances and harbor
resentments. Practice having good will toward people. We can best estimate the effect we produce on
others by analyzing the effect other persons have on us. It doesn't matter how pleasant and agreeable a
person may be toward us, if he holds a grudge our instinct will unmask his real self."

Hope cannot live in the midst of morose and gloomy atmosphere. Children become
unhappy where laughter does not exist. Some people make us feel mean and despise ourselves while
others are like a tonic or invigorating breeze. Therefore it is important to feel and believe that which
will build hope in the fives of others. In these troubled years it seems that this is an especially
desirable end to which we may dedicate ourselves.

"Heredity plays a significant part in the formation of our characters, but too often it is the
scapegoat for our own chosen wickedness. A person is very weak who does not accept the major
responsibility for his own personality. Children should be discouraged when they blame their petty
meannesses on everything and everybody but themselves." -Floyd Poe.

In your local papers and current magazines you will find many good articles similar to
those assembled here. However, Dr. Carlyse Holcomb gives us a very good summary to the
moral of these and many others in this "Inspirational Interlude" of Do's and Don'ts:

Qualities of personality have much to do with success or failure in any field of activity.
Check you limitations--it will be interesting and might be helpful:

Always consistently and cheerfully adapt yourself to prevailing circumstances and
work
In harmony with other
people.

Seek to improve yourself and your work--decide a desirable goal and make necessary
Decisions--seeking knowledge
always.

Train yourself to be a self-starter--don't fall into deadening
routines.

Develop a creative imagination and seek to perform you work in a better
way.

Tackle your problem with determination--seek to overcome any handicap that may
Interfere with your progress.

Be eager, cheerful and have a zestful attitude of mind.

Develop your vocabulary so that you can express yourself clearly and forcefully--this will Make you a persuasive person.

Be friendly, sympathetic, tactful, considerate and understanding in your relations with Others.

Be sincere and honest in your relationship with people in every walk of life.

It is almost without exception--the man or woman who fails in job or profession is the one who has neglected to evaluate himself or herself with regard to personality traits.

The Bible says, "It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools."

If you want to be sought after, counseled and loved--attention must be given these things:

Don't contradict people even if you are sure you are right. It is always better to lose an Argument than to lose a friend.

Don't be inquisitive about the affairs of even your most intimate friend. Anyone so improperly curious soon narrows his field of wholesome acquaintances.

Don't underrate anything because you don't possess it. Envy and jealousy are dangerous To friendship.

Don't believe that everybody else is happier than you. Happiness comes from within and self-pity keeps it from breaking out.

Don't conclude that you have never had any opportunities in life; you may have been asleep when they passed by--wake up!

Don't believe all the evils you hear. The Bible says "all men are born liars."

Don't repeat gossip even if it does interest the crowd. Don't let everything that comes into the ear fall out the mouth

Don't jeer at anybody's religion. It only announces to the world that you don't have any of your own.

Learn to hide your aches and pains under a pleasant smile and many of them will disappear. Few care whether you have the earache, headache or rheumatism.

Learn to give attention to your own business--it probably needs it--and you will be appreciated more for doing it.

Don't try to be anything but natural in the presence of others. Be courteous, gentle and respectful to all. This is the way the magnetism of personality gathers its strength.
The Bible says, "He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh reproach against his neighbor-- he that doeth these things will never be moved."

Let's close with a poem by James J. Metcalf, followed by an anonymous meditation:

Remorse is not a pleasant mood of any night or day And we can do without it as we go along our way. It is that period of life when all of us regret Our mistakes and errors that we wish we could forget. But we can criticize ourselves and carry it too far Until we sell ourselves that we are weaker than we are.

MEDITATION

Build for yourself a strong box, Fashion each part with care; When it's strong as your hand can make it Put all your troubles there; Hide there all thoughts of your failures, And each bitter cup that you quaff; Lock all your heartaches within it, Then sit on the lid and laugh.

Tell no one else its contents, Never its secrets share; When you've dropped in your care and worry Keep them forever there; Hide them from sight so completely That the world will never dream half; Fasten the strong box securely-Then sit on the lid and laugh.