

# GRATITUDE IS A GONER



**By Eileen Spatz**

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I started working in the retail business when I was 17. Back then, and throughout the many years I worked in retail, quality customer service was of the highest priority. Any company I worked for stressed the importance of courtesy during the initial training, and management saw to it that it was top notch out on the sales floor. We were always expected to make our best effort to serve the customer and to end each transaction with a cheery “Thank you!”

What the heck has happened???? It is a rare event when I encounter a helpful, courteous employee ANYWHERE. I have realized that the only person saying thank you is I! Why am I the one thanking *them*? And then, if that wasn’t bad enough, after they’ve wadded up all the clothes I just laid out big bucks for and stuffed them into a bag, NOT thanked me for my purchase, and tossed my change into my hand without even counting it back—I then say thank you because I have been conditioned to always thank a person for anything they hand me. And to top it all off, these personality-deprived Neanderthals then grunt out a “no problem.”

OK, so that's when I come undone. Recently, I have been known to snap back to them, "Oh, I am SO happy that taking my money was no problem for you!" Sometimes, I have patiently waited for a thank you at the end of a transaction and when, usually, it never comes, I tell the salesperson that they should always thank someone for choosing their store to spend their hard-earned money at. I have taken on the job of teaching these rude folks Customer Service 101.

My question is, who is training these people? They are most certainly not being trained by anyone over the age of 45. Whoever is doing the training for these salespeople were most likely themselves raised by self-centered parents who never taught them how to be grateful. Gratitude is typically learned by the example of your parents. If a child does not witness their parent expressing appreciation in various transactions and exchanges in life, they will most likely grow up to treat people in this same despicable manner.

At the root of gratitude is humility. The problem seems to be a matter of puffed up egos and rampant pride that has permeated society and led to all this boorish behavior out there. Seriously, where were the parents when they were supposed to be instilling virtues into this crop of offspring? Were the parents themselves so self-absorbed and distracted with their parties and shopping and getting their nails done that the effort to groom their children into quality human beings was simply not made? TV, movies, and the Internet took the place of teaching these kids how to interact with people, and the schools cultivated their outrageously bloated and artificial self-esteem.

Out on the road, how many times a day do we encounter a rude driver ahead of us who just suddenly stops and makes a turn without bothering to use their turn signal? Too many times to even count. It's all about them; it seems, with no concern for the safety of the people directly behind them. What has happened to common courtesy?

Sadly, the culture is slipping deeper into the pit of degradation where nothing and no one is truly valued, except oneself.

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