

Have you ever noticed how relaxed our society has become? Causal is being taken to the extreme. It is rare to see people dress for dinner any more. I think it is rather sad because along with the better clothes has gone better manners. My husband and I went out to eat dinner. We had been given a gift certificate for a nice steak house. I wore a casual dress and my husband wore khakis and a button down shirt. Most of the other dinners were in shorts and tank tops or t-shirts. Several of the men kept their baseball caps on while they ate. These small things bother me. I know I feel better about myself when I look nice because I put some effort into it. When people put some effort into how they look they put more effort into how they behave as well.

My husband and I talked about this over dinner. I questioned him to see if he thought we would ever go back to being a more formal society. He stated that only if schools start requiring this because he does not think parents will. My children were taught, in the same manner that I was, how to set a table, the manners at the table and how to make conversation during a meal. Like my mother, Sunday dinner was served in the formal dining room with china, cloth napkins, crystal and place card holders. We would often ask company over to share in the meal. Part of this tradition was done because I love to cook and entertain, but the greater reason was to teach our children manners and to have them be comfortable eating in a more formal situation. I used the place card holders because I would vary where each person sat. This allowed the children to practice talking to others and also sitting at different places at the table helped the experience from getting routine. My two daughters enjoyed making the different place card holders and writing the cards. They were quite creative in the designs they came up with.

My one daughter is very creative. She would ask what we were having for dinner and she would think of different place card holders that would related to the menu. I have a box of different place card holders that she created through the years. Some are mad of rocks and others are made from folded paper. She often used a stiff card stock or a cardboard to create the stands to place the cards on. She also learned calligraphy in a class so many of the place cards were beautifully written. My children have kept many of these traditions going in their families. My children still dress well and all are very comfortable in social and dining situations. I think this is due to practicing as children.