

## Playing Nice

### A Few Suggestions for Gaming Etiquette

No, it isn't Ms. Manners to the rescue, nor is it Polite Polly knocking at your noggin. We just know how easy it is to get frustrated or even angry while playing a difficult game, but if we're not careful, that anger and frustration could lead to some butt-ugly moments during a time that's supposed to be amusing. The following is offered in an effort to keep everything fun and entertaining during a session of group play.

1. Encourage each other. Even if you're competing with each other in a boxing match or car race, take time out to congratulate another player for making a smooth or cunning move. There's no need to be a kiss-up, but when tensions are high, and the desire to impress is high, you can help relax any stress just by throwing out a few compliments here and there.
2. Be patient. Your gaming comrades may not be as fast, as coordinated, or as smart as you. So when you notice your regular game pace slowing down, don't criticize. You could quietly plan your next move or you could offer to help if you notice that your buddies seem lost. This will encourage cooperation and relive some of the stress involved with playing a difficult game.
3. Take some breaks. Permitting that your group finds appropriate places in a game to pause, take advantage and get up to stretch, snack, use the john, talk about school, or catch a few silly commercials on television. A long stretch of game play is tiring and stressful at the same time.
4. Play an inclusive game. By that we mean to make efforts to ensure everyone in the group contributes to the game's completion. You never want to make another person feel left out or just hanging around to fill the space. Create opportunities for everyone involved to participate and help play.
5. Listen to others. You may think that you know all the answers about a game or game system, but listen to what others in the group have to say. You just might learn something new.
6. Invite the "weird guy." This bit of advice of course comes after the horrid Virginia Tech massacre. Tales circulating this news event indicate that the young man responsible was a loner and the victim of bullying during his teenage years as well. Sometimes, all it takes to prevent things like this is a simple effort to reach out to someone. We're not suggesting that an invitation to a gaming party would have saved the lives of 33+ college students, but we are suggesting that making an effort to make others feel welcome and wanted is a

huge step towards eliminating the isolation known to cause these kinds of senseless acts.

7. Vow to keep the voice level and cursing to a minimum. That almost goes without saying, but to prevent arguments, agree beforehand to not cross the line when it comes to debating about a particular strategy or selecting a game to play. Some of the most serious fights stem from the silliest arguments. But you can prevent a flare up within your group just by maintaining a cool composure during the entire session.

Now see? That's not too bad a list. All the things that we suggested are certainly "do-able" and they really do work to create a calm and enjoyable environment.

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