



The Art of the Visit: Being the Perfect Host/Becoming the Perfect Guest

Kathy Bertone

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The Art of the Visit is an invaluable resource for people who want to make visiting with family and friends the best it can be--and stress-free! This practical and humorous guide establishes the ground rules for successfully spending time with those people who are most dear to us. Full of anecdotes from the author's experiences, *The Art of the Visit* illustrates the dos and don'ts of extended visiting from start to finish so that the reader can become the perfect host and/or the perfect guest.

The Art of the Visit: Being the Perfect Host/Becoming the Perfect Guest Details

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From Reader Review The Art of the Visit: Being the Perfect Host/Becoming the Perfect Guest for online ebook

Jenika says

The good:

The first seventy pages or so are a highly useful tutorial on how to set up your house for guests. I actually read this part a few years ago, followed the advice, and in that time have gotten many "oh that's such a good idea!" Or "it was so nice to have ____" from guests. (One is: We have a mini frame on a guest room bedside table with our address, cell numbers, wifi network and password - everyone really appreciates having this in a clear permanent spot!) She points out several things I hadn't thought to provide for guests. I encourage everyone to read the first part.

I agree with her basic philosophies. I appreciated her words on caring for elders and children, on staying in the moment and not stressing yourself out, good communication, including everyone, smoothing things over when feathers are ruffled, being gracious without overreacting or being a doormat.

The not good: The writing of this book is amateurish. Not that I expected a literary work, but she makes the same exact points a half dozen times or more. Her metaphors and examples are often overwrought and extremely clunky, occasionally straying into downright tasteless. Example: "I entered the room with a sense of dread. Cold, half-filled coffee cups and paper plates with unrecognizable matter clinging to them littered the family room like wounded soldiers." Seriously? The leftover breakfast dishes should be compared with wounded soldiers and fill you with dread?

You can tell from the way she writes that she is a bit blind to tinges of her own classism/elitism (she actually uses the phrase "lowlifes at the mall.") Although she seems fond of children you can tell from the way she writes about them that she has not experienced firsthand the rigors of parenting kids through a travel experience. Her experiences are her experiences, but some of her priorities reflect this lack of understanding.

At least she is self conscious of the fact that she is a neat freak. No, I don't expect my guests to Windex the inside of their car windows after they arrive if they drive us somewhere for sightseeing. (Yes, she brings this up.)

All in all: I recommend reading the first 60-70 pages and skimming the rest. Some worthwhile words, not my cup of tea overall.

Carianne Carleo-Evangelist says

I want to apologize to all the people who have visited me who haven't had a guest suite with matching towels, non allergenic bedding and who have had to *gasp* share a bathroom with their host.

I'm not coming at this from the argument that Gen X/Y/Millennials aren't as bad as etiquette as other generations would portray us - but rather this is generally a guide for a specific subset of the population. Specifically upper middle class suburban, for the most part, who have guest suites, second homes, and room to store gender appropriate matching bedding & towel sets for guests. Really!?!?!

That said, she was a pretty funny writer and her Visit Wizard tips are useful in general, even if you don't have plans to visit friends' condo in Aspen and/or host them in your Caribbean villa.

Kathy Bertone says

I must admit I am biased...I loved writing it. I hope you love reading it. It's goal is to make visits with the people who are most dear to us, our family and friends, the best they can possibly be - and stress-free! Happy visiting!

Sarah says

I don't know why, but when I'm feeling depressed or worrying about something, I find how-to books very therapeutic. (Have today set up a new bookshelf called how-to and will now need to scroll through all my "read" books to gather these together. It'll be fascinating to find out how many of these I've read. I guess it beats therapy.)

This how-to book addresses hosting guests and being a guest. I enjoy being a host but my present circumstances do not permit much of this. I am, however, often a guest in the homes of both friends and family. This is an exhaustive book on the how-tos of both hosting and visiting, and I found it rather too exhaustive and repetitive. I did, however, like the author's emphasis on politeness and taking the high road.

Monicaaaa says

I like how to books. I feel like a person can always learn something new in them, even though sometimes the information may be obvious. And yes, there was a fair bit of obvious information in this one, but there was also things I didn't think of before. Bertone's goal was to teach you how to go above and beyond as a host or a guest. Sometimes I could feel myself thinking whether or not all this advice was excessive. Much of it can easily be edited or watered down to suit the average person. Although if one wants to go for perfection, they can follow her advice to the dot. Overall, it was an easy read. No hint of condescension at all.

Jessica Haider says

As someone who has had long term house guests for 6+ months over the past 2 years, I am always up for some pointers to keep me from losing my sanity. This book doesn't specifically cover the situation where you have the same guest(s) in your house for months on end, but there were some useful pointers. Maybe I am the only lucky person to have in-laws visit for loooong term visits. ;)

The book was not a fussy manners tome and was entertaining to read. Bertone had lots of tips on both how to be a good host and a good guest, many of these presented in bulleted lists of DO's & DON'Ts. I have some of my own to add (some similar to Bertone's)

To be a good guest:

DON'T go into the single shared bathroom for an hour plus in the morning when the host is trying to get ready to leave for work.

DON'T leave dirty hygiene products and unmentionables lying around the bathroom.

DON'T leave water all over the toilet seat.

DON'T sit at home all day piling up your dirty dishes all over the kitchen and then just sit there watching TV while your host spends 2+ hours after they get home from work cleaning said kitchen.

DO try to converse and engage with your host and hostess. DON'T be social with one of your hosts and not with the other.

DON'T spend your entire visit on your smartPhone, laptop and/or TV. Facebook and your favorite show/movie will always be there. Your time for your visit with friends/family is limited.

DON'T just sit around on computer etc. while your child is misbehaving and expect the host to be your child's babysitter and disciplinarian.

DON'T reorganize your host's closet unless they specifically ask you to apply your fantastic organizational skills.

DON'T get drunk and insult your host. You may not remember this in the morning but your host will most likely ALWAYS remember this.

DON'T bring your one night stand home to your host's domicile. ick.

DON'T expect your host to drop the rest of their life (work, social obligations etc) for the length of your stay and play chauffeur, chef, and maid for you. As much as you may want to go to that one area site every single day, your host may not share that same desire. Give your host a chance to show you some new things as well!

DON'T leave all your toiletries at home and expect your host to have them in stock in their medicine chest. If your host doesn't wear contact lenses, why should they have contact lense supplies!?

If you expect to have clean towels everyday and you blow through the pile of clean towels your host gave you in just a day and a half. DON'T demand that they give you new clean towels. Instead ask if they can show you where your laundry room is so you can wash the towels.

Ashley says

From my Cannonball Read V review ...

Another book I'm wrapping up – this one is only a month old, and was another purchase at Anthropologie. I cannot get out of there without buying a hard-cover etiquette or lifestyle book with fancy font and great colors on it. The clothing rarely fits, but the books so often do.

As the title suggests, this book is about things to keep in mind when you have houseguest and when you are a houseguest. I've actually not seen an etiquette book devoted solely to this topic – usually it's covered in those giant Leticia Baldridge / Emily Post tomes, but not on its own. And at over 250 pages, it covers a lot.

The book isn't bad – there are a lot of sound tips. Some are things you'd obviously think of, but some are kind of fun and clever. The next time we have people in town, or the next time we visit family (holiday travel is right around the corner) I'm going to consult the book. The first bit covers being a host, the second bit covers being a guest, and the other sections have suggestions about special considerations to take when your guests are kids (especially good if you don't have any) and elderly folks.

There's not much more I can say. The writing is definitely coming from someone who has a different sense of humor than I do. Some comments are condescending, some are insulting, some are obviously outdated. The only attempt at humor that actually landed and made me laugh out loud probably was accidental. But if you like this type of book, and you ever have houseguests, or stay at other people's homes, I'd recommend it.

Kate says

I received this book for free from the author through the Goodreads First Reads program.

First, the many positives. Kathy Bertone sent me the book with a sweet handwritten note, setting the warm-hearted tone for the book. As a typical Type A personality, her emphasis on grace and planning, planning, planning resonated well with me (although she does specifically recommend downtime for both hosts and guests to "recharge," which my introverted side appreciated very much). She is meticulous and pays close attention to every detail, while still making it clear that some things, for the sake of sanity, will inevitably have to fall by the wayside. The book came into my life right around the time of my first "guest room" for friends and family, and it's an excellent read for those who are just beginning this chapter of their lives, or for those who want suggestions for making any visit go more smoothly. Her chapters on traveling/hosting with kids and the elderly were tremendously appreciated, since I am neither elderly nor a parent, and I now have a much better idea how to take care of these specialized needs. She includes checklists for specialized equipment, tips for keeping furniture from being damaged by kids and pets, and many other things I hadn't considered but now consider necessary for planning visits, or for borrowing the place of an absent friend or family member. As someone with pets, I also found the "bonus chapter" on them gave me some new ideas for when I bring my pets with me. I also loved that she emphasized hand-written thank-you notes, in an age where they seem destined for the endangered species list.

There are few negatives with the book, although they are worth mentioning. I could see this book not appealing to those people who hate planning (such as my fella), though perhaps it is the gentle nudge they might need. Some of the advice seemed common-sense to me, although I notice that common sense isn't as common as it probably should be. It seemed geared more toward detail-oriented multi-taskers, and women tend to be better at this way of thinking, so I'm not sure how many men would find it appealing (though, again, they are probably the ones who need the most help with this sort of thing). Some of the jokes (especially those coming from the "visit wizard") were a bit cornball for my taste. Although I appreciate the money-saving tips sprinkled throughout the chapters, I think an entire chapter could be dedicated to visiting/hosting on a shoestring budget, especially in this economy. Also, some ideas - while nice - aren't necessarily the most "green" suggestions, and given the increasing interest in environmentalism, I think some more attention to this area might be helpful in future editions; it would probably dovetail well with a discussion of low-budget solutions.

Overall, though, Bertone is to be commended for the book, and it would make an especially good gift for those just purchasing their first home, or those visiting their bosses for the first time! While I'm usually loath to hang on to books after reading them, this is one I will hang on to indefinitely as a reference guide, since she includes so much information that it's difficult to remember everything off the top of my head. It would be an excellent refresher while planning any visit, and her creative problem-solving makes the book one of the stronger etiquette tomes that I've read.

Heather says

Really basic; probably would have been better as a series of blog posts.

Monica S. says

God bless this woman !

Rachel says

I felt like most of the tips for being a good hostess were common sense. Although as a mother of young children I do think it would be presumptuous to email someone ahead of time and suggest that they completely child proof their house for me. If I had an allergy to pets, I also think it would be rude to ask someone to board their dogs while I was staying in their home. It is better to stay in a hotel. If the hosts ask how they can help, a few suggestions can be offered, but I certainly don't expect my friends or family members to be inconvenienced especially at their own expense.

I would have loved to see the subject of time zones addressed. When someone from another time zone visits, should you adjust to their schedule, have them adjust to yours, or try to meet in the middle?

Overall this book read like a blog turned book.

Alex says

A fun little book - slightly over the top in some places, but it gave some good pointers, on what to think of as a host and how to act as a guest! This is especially relevant for those of you who get a lot of visitors (that includes EVERYONE in the foreign service or expats!) Its easy to read, light and fluffy. It would also make a good gift!
