



## History of Manners

Every wonder where certain manners come from? Like why we have to shake hands, cover our mouth when we yawn, and clink glasses when we make a toast?

Many manners stem from behaviors from the past that were done for a specific reason. These codes of conduct are still with us today and it's funny to know why.

### **Why do we shake hands?**

To show we are not holding a weapon. In Medieval Times, people would hide daggers up their sleeves so if you wanted to talk to someone, you each needed to extend your hand to check up their sleeve to see if they were holding a weapon, and if they weren't, then you would clasp and shake hands.

### **Why do we cover our mouths when we yawn?**

So we don't swallow a fly. In the early 11<sup>th</sup> Century, there was an elite group of people who thought it was uncouth to bathe, so they smelled horrible! As a result, there were many flies around. This meant that when they had to yawn, they had to cover their mouth with their hands so that they didn't swallow a fly!

### **Why does the blade of the knife face in when setting the table?**

Because in time of Knights, they would only place the blade out if someone would be killed during dinner.

### **Why do we clink glasses when make a toast?**

To make sure no one has put poison in our glass. There used to be a problem with people putting poison into drinks, so to stop this from happening, people began to clink glasses very hard together so that liquid from one glass would go into the other. You wouldn't poison someone if you knew that you would likely get some of the poison in your glass too.

### **Why can't we spit on the ground?**

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it was thought that spitting on the ground would spread disease therefore it was forbidden to do so. This became the standard practice for civilized people.