

LGBTQ Community and 5 Business Etiquette mistakes to avoid in the work place

Business Etiquette Expert Maryanne Parker meets with Caitlyn Jenner at Harvard Club of Boston discussing diversity in the work place

SAN DIEGO, CA, USA, August 28, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "When did you figure out if you were a boy or a girl?"

I was sitting in my very comfortable chair at the Harvard Club of Boston during a prominent entrepreneurial conference, surrounded by successful overachievers from all over the world. We were there together building bridges and trying to embrace ways to be able to achieve our full potential, which, ultimately, would allow us to pay it forward and help people who might need our assistance, knowledge, or simply our friendship. And let me tell you, I felt on top of the world! I had just come back from a luxurious Caribbean vacation, and while I was extremely relaxed, I was also very excited because I was thinking about the great connections I'd already made at the conference, and I could see future success written in the contracts I'd already signed! Then I heard ... "When did you figure out if you were a boy or a girl?"

I was listening to one of the most famous, truly successful, and highly controversial people in the world: Caitlyn Jenner. When she officially revealed her transition in 2015 on the cover of *Vanity Fair*—"I am not doing this to be interesting. I am doing this to live"—she practically broke the Internet. At our event, she talked about her kids (all of them), and we all had the time of our lives. We spoke about business, success, families, goals, and so much more (but not politics).

I was absolutely mesmerized by her wisdom, vision, politeness, authenticity, intelligence, and how down-to-earth she was. I asked Caitlyn and her partner, Sophia Hutchins, so many questions that day, not out of misplaced curiosity but because I really wanted to learn more about how I can support them and their mission to educate people regarding the transgender community. As for my answer to her initial question: honestly, I had never asked myself that, and most of you probably never have, either. But we all have different questions to ask ourselves, and mine was "How can I help to educate people further?" Approaching people with respect and dignity is always the best way to act, whether it's in private or in the workplace. When it comes to interacting with LGBTQ people in any context, there are a few basic human etiquette mistakes we all should avoid:



Maryanne Parker and Caitlyn Jenner at Harvard Club of Boston

1. Not addressing individuals from the LGBTQ community properly

Everything is changing. It's a new era, and we need to act accordingly. Even the acronym LGBTQ itself has resulted from change: from LGB to LGBT to LGBTQ.

Always use the transgender person's chosen name, even if she or he has a different legal name. This is the way you will need to address them in person, in work correspondence, and in emails. Do not be shy about asking regular questions that can help you identify basic things, such as which name they prefer to use. Ask questions from a place of genuine interest and mutual respect, not out of idle curiosity. Some transgender people cannot afford to change their names legally; if the person identifies with a certain gender, address them accordingly. Also, some people are in the process of transition, and the change might not be very obvious.

In a recent blog post, The Protocol School of Washington (by which I'm certified) recommended the following when it comes to the proper use of terms with regard to LGBTQ people: use "gay man," "lesbian," or "gay people"—never "homosexual"; use "same-sex couple" or "partners," not "homosexual family," etc.; use "sexual orientation," not "sexual preference," because the word "preference" implies a choice.

2. Not using proper body language

Rolling your eyes, hostile gestures, intimidating signals, not maintaining eye contact, refusing a handshake—all of these are considered passive-aggressive behavior and very poor business etiquette, and they need to be corrected. The fact you do not express certain things verbally doesn't mean people cannot read your demeanor.

3. Entertaining gossip

Gossip is toxic! Complaints should be taken seriously—it's not a game! The key role in this situation is how fluent management is in the particular topic and how ready they are to support the community. We need to remember the old saying: "a fish rots from the head," which means if we do have poorly trained, inadequate, and ignorant management, people will continue to leave the company, and the company will keep losing money and dignity.

4. Not educating your staff

You should educate your staff by creating seminars, lectures, and bonding experiences. These should be done in a friendly, nice, and appropriate manner without specifically calling attention to the individuals who are part of the LGBTQ community.

5. Supporting them only during Pride Month

Celebrate and support them all year around by respecting them and creating opportunities for them to thrive and reach their full potential. When you expect the best, you will receive the best.

Maryanne Parker is the founder of Manor of Manners, company for business, social and youth etiquette. She is certified by The Protocol school of Washington. She speaks frequently on the topic of etiquette and she just spoke at Harvard club of Boston and NASDAQ. She has been featured in Forbes, Martha Stewart Weddings, USA Today, The Epoch Times, ABC, CBS, NBC, E!Entertainment and many more.

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