



Photo by Kevin O'Riley

MISS MANNERS: Jacqueline Rogers teaches fifth graders from Dogwood Trails Girl Scout Council how to use their fingers to memorize place settings.

Manners Matter

How being an etiquette expert almost landed this southwest Missouri mom reality-TV role.

BY JABET WADE

freelance@417mag.com

Today, she's a busy soccer mom with a job, a husband, three kids and too little time.

But last spring, Jacqueline Rogers was close to spending a month on the West Coast as an etiquette consultant for an MTV reality series backed by Donald Trump. Jacqueline runs The Etiquette Academy in 417-land, and the produc-

MORE TO LEARN:

Jacqueline Rogers's lessons apply to everyone, from children to businesses and college athletes.



One Question: **Jacqueline Rogers** ◀◀

417: What's the biggest problem you see in today's society when it comes to a lack of manners and etiquette?

J.R.: I think a sense of entitlement has developed. And probably the age of technology has played a big role in that. For instance, with cell phones there's this "I can talk when I want and where I want, and I'm not bothering you, so why should you care" attitude. We've gotten away from extending common courtesy to people we come in contact with and having a personal touch in our relationships. Like knowing the value of a good handshake or just looking someone in the eye. You can't do that when you're behind a computer or on your Blackberry.

“**Etiquette isn't the art of snobbery... It's about having self-respect and giving respect to others, no matter where I'm from. Manners are for everyone, across the board. Or they should be.**”
—Jacqueline Rogers

er found her website (theetiquetteacademy.net) and called her up. The idea was to take a dozen or so wild, twenty-something women and teach them some manners. And Jacqueline would be the one to do it.

Fast forward almost a year, and the show is still on hold indefinitely. MTV came out with two similar shows last year—*From G's to Gents* and *Charm School with Sharon Osbourne*—but neither featured Jacqueline's expertise. Perhaps one day L.A. will come calling again, but for now Jacqueline stays busy with her own students and clients right here in Springfield.

She loves working with children first and foremost. She teaches them everything from how to properly drink out of a soda can to how to behave at a funeral. She also works with

athletes from all sports at Missouri State. “They are always on display, whether they like it or not,” she says. “They're on TV; they're in the newspapers. Someone is always watching them.” She refers to that YouTube clip of Mizzou quarterback Chase Daniel picking his nose last year.

On the corporate level, Jacqueline has worked on multiple occasions with the BKD accounting firm. Business sessions are customized to fit different companies' needs, whether it's addressing employee friction in the workplace, putting a stop to incessant knuckle cracking during meetings, or helping employees know how to interact with clients over a meal.

We know what you're thinking: How do you become an etiquette consultant, and what is she doing in Springfield? For Jacqueline, it began when she got engaged at 19 in Pompano Beach, Florida. In an effort to prepare herself for nine bridal showers, she bought books on etiquette. When she had children, she read to them about etiquette. When her family moved to Missouri, she taught science and history at Grace Classical Academy, where she wrote her own curriculum on etiquette. Finally, she became certified by the Etiquette Institute of St. Louis and started The Etiquette Academy in 2002.

There is often a misconception about what Jacqueline does, as some folks think etiquette is only for rich, white-collar, country-club people. Not so much. “Etiquette isn't the art of snobbery,” she says. “It's not me thinking that I'm better than somebody else. It's me trying to be the best that I can be. It's having self-respect and giving respect to others, no matter where I'm from. Manners are for everyone, across the board. Or they should be.”

And it isn't rocket science. It's the little things, says Jacqueline, like being courteous enough to hang up your cell phone in the grocery store check-out line.

“The key to having good manners is making the individual with whom you're with feel as though he or she is the most important person in the world,” she says. “When you're on your phone, you're telling the person checking you out that he or she doesn't matter.”

So, does that mean Jacqueline never talks on her cell phone in the grocery store? Well, no. She admits she isn't perfect. “Just ask my kids, they'll tell you I'm not perfect,” she laughs. “Kids love to tattle on their parents.” But, she makes a conscious effort at it every day. “It's not one lesson,” she says. “It's a lifetime.”

Photos by Kevin O'Riley