

Have you ever had that friend you refuse to sit by when eating to save your sanity? My pet peeve is when people lack manners at the dinner table, including, but certainly not limited to: chewing with their mouths open, eating loudly, talking with food in their mouths, interrupting, and even kicking. The reason this bothers me so much is that it shows you don't care about the other people around you, suggesting your family skipped the whole lesson in manners when you were under their roof. My second reason is that it is an important skill to pick up for your future, and there is no reason not to learn it.

As a 5th-generation Gainesvillean, it's safe to say my parents made it clear that I was not going to be able to skip the lesson in manners. You see, my grandmother on my dad's side often gets made fun of in a lighthearted way because she went to an all-girls college, where we jokingly say she majored in manners. I remember when I was around ten years old, I took a course in my house taught by my parents as a sort of fun, introductory way to learn manners. After two months of this "course," I had a final exam where I ate dinner with them and couldn't mess up setting the silverware or slip up with anything at the table. If I failed to pass, I had to do another week of this stupidity. Although I passed, I passed with something that would hang over my shoulders for the years to come. Ever since I learned manners, it's been easy to spot who among my peers didn't know how to be proper at the dinner table, which pissed me off greatly, knowing how simple it is for them to pick up.

Without being a snob, I believe it is an important skill to pick up in your future for obvious reasons. For example, if you are searching for jobs and get the opportunity to meet for an interview, you are expected to present yourself with a certain level of formality, and if you don't, it often results in you not getting the job. Even beyond trying to get that job, it is also important for making friends (assuming you're not looking for people who chew with their

mouths open, of course). It is never too late to learn manners, nor could it ever adversely affect you; in fact, it does the opposite. Ultimately, having manners helps you build connections that can impact your life immensely, aiding you in reaching your future successes or goals.