



Don't be a no-show

## Description

# Honouring your RSVP commitment is more than just good manners

By Brigitte Stock

It's time for me to lay it out. I am far from perfect! When I accept an invitation and then I don't show up, I feel bad—really bad.

I might have lost a friend because of my lack of discipline and consistency. A couple of month ago, we received an invitation from dear friends for a get-together. Nothing fancy, just neighbourhood friends gathering for a good night of conversation and sharing. The invitation called for an RSVP, which of course we did promptly.

Etiquette requires answering an RSVP from within three days to a week from the reception date. That gives enough time for the hosts to take care of all the details surrounding a reception by knowing how many people will show up. But on the day of the party, my significant other and I decided to take a long walk under a wintery rain. The wind blew in our faces; the elements seemed to be deliberately tackling us, so much so that when we got home at the end of the afternoon, we simply crashed—slept only to wake up at the very time we were expected to arrive at the party.

Then we spiralled downward. We did not call, we did not excuse ourselves. We became invisible, so much so that I am now living in a state of near shame.

A recent Financial Times article by Susie Boyt reported that some frustrated hosts have decided to take action: if you RSVP and don't show up, you will be fined!

The rationale is simple: hosts are spending hard-earned money to create a lively ambiance, with food and drink, for you to enjoy. This is especially true when it comes to kids' birthday parties where not only is there hired entertainment but loot bags big enough to make your little angel think it is the holiday season all over again. If 15 kids are expected and only eight show up, it leaves a sour taste, which leads to the idea of sending a bill. You commit or you pay! It might seem a bit drastic, but it might take just that for people to learn what RSVP-ing means: a simple Yes or No!



The RSVP has been around for a long time. It stands for “Répondez s’il-vous-plaît” which of course means “Please respond.” The imperative form in the French should have given us a clue: No-show is not an option! It is an important piece of protocol of which the goal is to enable the allocation of resources.

Today, we sadly see more and more people showing no regard or even comprehension of politeness strategies.

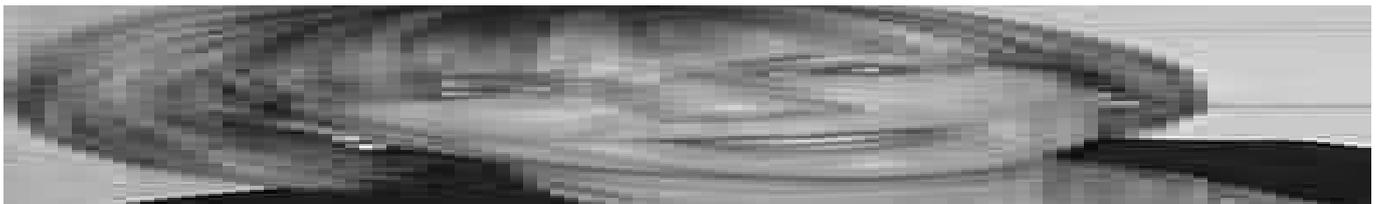
Responding to an invitation in due fashion is important. Showing up and being agreeable is the logical and the subsequent well-mannered comportment. Sadly, we take friendships for granted and, as we feel entitled to be wined and dined in great style, we forget the effects of our actions, or should I say, our inactions.

In the case of my improper behaviour, I have not received a fine for my no-show. The dire consequence of my egoistical moment is that I might have lost a friend. This in itself is pathetic. It lowers my quest for a civilized humanity to accepting an era where bad manners are becoming the norm. If I could apologize to my friends, I would beg to give me another chance.

I promise I will never ever again be one of those “no-shows!”

Image: [goodfon.su](http://goodfon.su)

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