

GOOD MORNING OLD GUARD

“Ode to the Father”

The title to my talk may have been a little *foreboding but if I said:*

Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation -

you may have skipped this part of the meeting

- As we all know yesterday was President Day honoring George Washington and Abraham Lincoln
 - But what do we know about George?
 - We know that George appears on the one-dollar bill and the quarter
 - What follows is a bit more

I picked this book, not because of the title - THE RULES OF CIVILITY - but I had read other books by the author. In this story, The Rules of Civility were mentioned several times.

Because I am curious, I had to Google the title and investigate.

These rules were actually written by George Washington when he was about 13 years old. The inspiration for these rules may have come from a 16th century French manual on etiquette which George modified to his taste.

- These rules taught him the proper behavior that we call etiquette including how to dress, walk, talk, and eat. They also conveyed a moral message of humility and paying attention to others. They reveal important lessons about leadership, patriotism, and perseverance that are still relevant today. The teenage Washington took these rules to heart and they profoundly influenced the development of his character.

A quote from George Washington later in his life. - “A good moral character is the first essential”.

I will read several selections that I feel are meaningful today - for our personal life and interaction with others. I start with -

1. Every action done in company, ought to be with some sign of respect, to those that are present.

Now that’s an apt statement for today’s world

2. Sit not when others stand, speak not when you should hold your peace
3. Let your facial expression be pleasant **but** in serious matters somewhat grave.
4. The gestures of the body must be suited to the discourse you are upon.
5. Show **not** yourself glad at the misfortune of another, even though he may be your enemy.
6. Let your discourse with men of business be short and comprehensive.

How many here can relate to that?

7. In visiting the sick, do not play the physician if you be not knowing therein.

WOW - how about that - Docs?

8. In your apparel be modest - and endeavor to accommodate nature rather than to seek admiration, keep to the fashion of your equals - those who are civil and orderly with respect to times and places.

Surely this relates to the Old Guard jacket and tie history

9. Speak not of doleful things in a time of mirth or at the table; speak not of melancholy things as death and wounds, and if others mention them, change if you can, the discourse.

10. Tell not your dreams, but to your intimate friend.

11. Speak not injurious words neither in jest nor earnest. Scoff at none although they may give occasion.

12. Give not advice without being asked & when asked, do it briefly.

13. Do not find fault in the imperfections of others for that belongs to parents, masters and superiors.

14. Think before you speak - pronounce not imperfectly nor bring out your words too hastily but orderly & distinctly.

15. While you are talking, point not with your finger at him of whom you discourse **nor** approach too near him to whom you talk - especially to his face.

16. Undertake not what you cannot perform **but** be careful to keep your promise.

17. Be not tedious in discourse, make not many digressions, nor repeat often the same manner of discourse

18. Be not angry at the table - whatever happens. Put on a cheerful face especially if there be strangers - for good humor makes one dish of meat a feast.

And lastly-

19. Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.

THANK YOU