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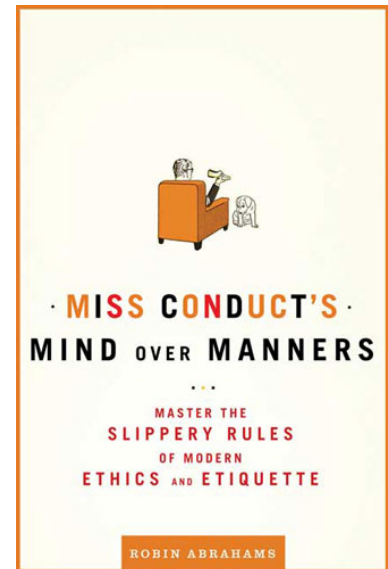
## The Essential Compendium for Today's Modern Manners

# MISS CONDUCT'S MIND OVER MANNERS

### Master the Slippery Rules of Modern Ethics and Etiquette by Robin Abrahams

- ❖ *Should you say "Bless you" to a sneezing atheist?*
- ❖ *Should you pronounce a foreigner's name in their native r-trilling accent?*
- ❖ *What do you serve guests for dinner if one is a fruitarian, another keeps kosher, and yet another is intolerant of gluten?*

Robin Abrahams helps us navigate today's dizzying social complexities in her clever and witty compendium of advice, **MISS CONDUCT'S MIND OVER MANNERS** (Times Books/May 26, 2009). Throughout history, new technologies (from the printing press to the iPhone) and new ideas (from Manifest Destiny to multiculturalism) have changed the accepted rules of social behavior. But unlike a school of fish suddenly veering away from a shark, we human beings don't all react to change in a coordinated fashion. The multitude of cultural shifts within the past few decades has left us in etiquette limbo.



Are men still expected to pick up the dinner tab? Is it possible to request a "doggie bag" with dignity? How do you tell colleagues about your recent bout with the stomach flu without going over the line? Following the "rules" isn't enough anymore. We have to *think*. A uniform code of conduct may have worked in the days when everyone agreed on the same set of priorities: that decent people never talk about money or sex, that children are seen and not heard,

and that observant Jews and Muslims should simply accept that Christmas is as American as pizza and chow mein. But in today's diverse offices, health clubs, dog parks, and soccer fields, manners aren't enough—we need to use our *minds*.

Much more than a plain guide to protocol à la Emily Post or Miss Manners, **MISS CONDUCT'S MIND OVER MANNERS** covers food, finance, religion, sex and relationships, children, health, pets and other passions, and everyday conversational kick-starters. Abrahams examines how values, priorities, and experiences differ in contemporary America; explores the psychological and evolutionary reasons these differences are so challenging; and offers fun and concrete advice on how to cope.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Robin Abrahams** is the “Miss Conduct” columnist for *The Boston Globe Sunday Magazine* and writes the “Socially Scientific” column for *Annals of Improbable Research*. A research associate at Harvard Business School and a former stand-up comedian, she holds a doctorate in psychology. She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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**by Robin Abrahams**

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