



BROOKLYN_BORN

[Change Banner Image](#)

154,981
SparkPoints



- Info
- Photos
- Feed
- Blogs**
- Awards
- More ▾

I guess chivalry is dead said the party hostess

Sunday, February 17, 2013

I had just opened the door as DH & I were about to leave.

It was the 70s and I was known to be a feminist, outspoken about equal pay for equal work and expanded opportunities for women.

While I always wanted to be a wife and mother, when I was growing up in the 50s my other options were limited. Some women in my neighborhood worked in the garment industry or in retail. A few were hairdressers, clerk-typists or secretaries. The highest ambitions of my girlfriends were nurse or teacher.

I was thinking about this while reading all the blogs about sparkers different lives, jobs, hobbies, fitness routines, strength training, distance running and other activities non typical for earlier generations, like kickboxing.



The times really did change and it's all about having choices.

Fortunately male attitudes changed for the better as well.

[Add a Blog Entry](#)

See Today's Featured Member Blog Posts

More Blogs by BROOKLYN_BORN

[Now I can add one more event to my "Anniversary Dates" to forget - 6/7/2021](#)

[Avoiding Our Wedding Anniversary - 6/4/2021](#)

[Multitasking for Safety – Plus Remembrance and Reflection - 6/1/2021](#)

[Taps Across America – The National Moment of Remembrance - Monday 5/31/21 3PM - 5/30/2021](#)

[View All >](#)



Now returning to that party nearly 40 years ago. I did advise my friend, the hostess, that “before we came here tonight, my husband bathed the 3 kids and got them ready for bed so I could get ready for this party. That’s chivalry to me because it’s the help I needed. I can open my own door.”

For the record, as I approach a door I open it and hold the door for whoever is coming behind me, whether male or female. It’s the friendliest and most efficient thing to do.

Edit: Boilham makes a good point that should be considered as well.

It’s always hardest for the first generation confronting new attitudes. Perhaps my perspective is colored by coming of age in NYC. I saw behavior like holding a door or giving up a seat on the subway as a matter of need rather than gender. Was the person using a cane? Were they carrying packages or perhaps a small child? That’s why I always equated respect with non manly things like helping with housework or changing diapers.

I would never respond to any kindness with contempt, however. Even now when occasionally some young person defers to me, I say thank you, although I feel perfectly fit and capable of managing by myself. Of course, now the help is probably offered because of my age and not gender.

[Edit Blog Entry](#) | [Delete Blog Entry](#)

Share This Post With Others

[Report Inappropriate Blog](#)

Member Comments About This Blog Post



WATERMELLEN

Great blog! I'm a feminist, for sure . . . and at my age experienced plenty of discrimination to achieve the (traditionally "male") stuff I've done.

But basically I'm a humanist. Courtesy for everyone, based upon need, is much more important to me. Read in the paper just today that the strongest marriages are those in which small everyday courtesies are the norm . . . not the big romantic gesture so much!

3036 days ago



BROOKLYN_BORN

I can't thank BAMA JAM for her comment (or include my input) on her Sparkpage since she doesn't have one. So I'll just do it here. I reread my blog and the comments and except for one description of misunderstandings in the early days of the women's movement, I can't find any mention of anyone reacting badly to a display of courtesy. In fact, most have written that they are courteous to BOTH genders. Both genders need help occasionally.

Regarding women working outside the home or not, it's about having the choice. Forcing women into factory work as she described in Russia is not choice.

The last thing women of any generation need is antagonism between those who made a different choice than others did.

3036 days ago



BAMA JAM

I was taught to extend courtesy, and I am always grateful to receive it! Too bad that some folks are so easily offended by gracious acts of consideration. Geeeee, are they just looking for a grievance?!--- I am from the old school; grew up with mom practically tied to the house. She did



not even drive a car, yet she seemed to be very "fulfilled" as a wife and mom. As a teen, I learned about the Russian culture in high school. I learned that the Russian women had babies, deposited them at the state day care institutions, and worked in factories, laboratories, ditches, etc..... In America, I went home from school and Mom was waiting to hear about my day. Indeed, I felt like I was truly blessed to be an American kid in American culture!

Well--- Truly we have come a long way baby! Now women have career opportunities and equality with the men. Hooray, women can now fight war on the front lines, as well they should. Brave troops are of both genders.
(I just feel blessed still----- that my experience was so darned old fashioned.)
3036 days ago



GINIEMIE



We have come a long way, and in some ways I feel as if we have burned ourselves. I like when someone holds a door for me, but I also hold doors for those who follow me. My son Erik sometimes has trouble opening a door, we appreciate when someone holds it for us. Other doors he is able to open, but is afraid it will smack him in the backside and cause him to lose his balance, so I sometimes let him go in front of me and thank him as I grab the door he has opened. Raised in the day when guys wouldn't think of not opening a door for a woman or elderly person, I raised my boys to open doors and hold them for those coming in behind us. A bit of thoughtful courtesies doesn't hurt anyone.

I'm glad my daughter can be what she wants to be, and my son and I both get irritated when we go into a car parts store for me to buy something and the person talks to him. Steven says, "it's her car, why don't you ask her!"



3037 days ago



CD13252816



Just tell them: Beauty before age: and then jump in front of them!



And I like the way

you put this blog together.
3037 days ago



SADWHITEWOLF



I personally love it when a man (or anyone) opens a door for me. I do not see it as them say "You are weak and incapable of opening that door for yourself" I see it as them saying "You are deserving of this courtesy"

When I hold open a door for my mother I am not say "You are old and need help" I am saying "You raised me, and cared for me, Opening this door for you is the least I can do to show you the respect and love I have for you"

I also see it as a two way street, when I make my boyfriend a hot cuppa and bring it to him I am not saying "I am a woman and am here to serve you" I am saying "I love you and thought you might like some tea" I might feel differently if this was expected and unappreciated, but he does appreciate it. I am very lucky in that he does the same back.

I am grateful for my rights and abilities as a woman in modern America, but I do love chivalry in any form.

3038 days ago



JAHINTZY



from a young woman (I'm only 26) I have to say that sometimes I forget just how recent those changes are. In my life time I've never really felt that I couldn't be a welder because I am female - believe me, I've considered manual labor jobs because of the pay - I felt I couldn't be a welder because I know me, I would get tired of it pretty quick and I don't do well with dangerous things like high voltage. But then I see little vignettes like your story here or the recent legality of wearing pants in Paris... and I am ever so grateful for the ones who instigated change :)
3038 days ago



CELIAMINER



You touched me in many ways! I hold the door, whether to the building or to the elevator, as a genderless matter of courtesy. I also give up my seat on the Metro to someone older or to someone with a small child, when I see that people in more convenient seats are "conveniently" immersed in their iPhones/iPads/Kindles or just plain too self-absorbed to be courteous. And if someone extends the same courtesy to me, I make sure to thank them.

On another note, the one about the top being easy enough for a woman to open, well, sigh, I have to admit that the hands are starting to become arthritic, and I often have to ask for someone to "do the guy thing" and open the bottle.

3038 days ago



WILSONWR



That blog did bring back some memories. When I dated initially, the young women expected to have the door opened for them. (You could get in trouble if you didn't!) Over time, through all the efforts of people like you, it changed to only opening doors for people who really needed the help. While things haven't completely changed in all respects (as some of the readers pointed out), it is much better than it used to be. Change does take time.

I like your approach of not criticizing the person offering help -- it was really confusing when I was

younger. Sometimes you got in trouble for helping; other times you got in trouble for not!!
3038 days ago



SKEEWEE2MEK

Great post.
3038 days ago



WOLFKITTY

LOL, some of the most dangerous thinking can come from our perceived misinterpretation of what other people think of us!!

Thanks for the jaunt through some thoughts, fun blog.
Hugs,
Jocelyn

3039 days ago



BARBARAJ73

Equality for women - and all - has come a long way. But we also have a long way to go.
3039 days ago



CD8467616

As a feminist, single mom, and old hippie, this is all very familiar to me. Nothing new, right? Til just a few days ago, when I invited a male friend to lunch at an old Hollywood restaurant. When we sat down, my friend said, "It's astonishing how they automatically defer to the man. I mean, I'm your guest, but they assume I'm in charge. I was thinking how women have to go through this all the time." And I'm thinking: YOU'RE JUST NOTICING THAT NOW????!!!!!! I just laughed and said, "I don't even notice it anymore. It's only in old-fashioned places like this."
3039 days ago



MJREIMERS

I'll admit that I sometimes get very frustrated! I work full time and still have to work "full time" at home taking care of the house and doing laundry. My family does help, but the majority still falls mostly on the woman. All my kids think women and men should be "equal" and I've been called a feminist.

What frustrates me is now when one person wants to stay home, they basically can't. My husband and I make about the same and I wanted to stay home. We couldn't afford a house, car and food on one salary. Sometimes, I wonder if we, as women, "shot ourselves in the foot" as now we can't stay home even if we chose to. It seems like it takes two incomes, or one really good one, to be able to "just live" in today's economy.

Any other opinions on this? Maybe that's what I need to hear is another perspective.
3039 days ago



MISCHAKEO

Yes, the young women of today grew up much differently than we did. I also think age is now a factor when people offer to help me carry groceries. I usually refuse.

I love those old posters. Great blog.
3039 days ago



DR1939

I think we lived the same life.
3039 days ago



SUZYMOBILE

Where did you find those ads? (Not to mention the sanitized tapeworms one.) I'm a fan of old ads, but I've never seen those classics!
3039 days ago



BOILHAM

Oh yeah, fun times when womens lib came around. You had us guys reeling for a while there, glad you gals got it all straightened out.

Some of the ladies got kind of confused about it, and had us not knowing what to do. I did have some women bitch at me for holding the door for them, or complementing them. There was some overreaction in the beginning days. But, like I said, we seem to have worked it out nowadays, and all for the better.

I can say chick again, when referring to a woman and get a smile, rather than hit on the head with the nearest heavy object. :)

PS: as I remember it, we men would hold a door for a woman, and stand aside as the woman passed by. As a young man I believed it was a way of showing respect for a woman. You go first, M'am. That got convoluted into being disrespect by implying the woman needed a helping hand with the heavy door and were being relegated to second class citizens by virtue of their weakness. Very confusing stuff.
3039 days ago



Comment edited on: 2/17/2013 8:28:13 AM



KELLIEBEAN

Amazing how things used to be. We've come a long way baby!
3039 days ago

v

Add Your Comment to the Blog Post

Leave encouragement, a question, or anything else relevant to this post. All blog comments must abide by SparkPeople's [Community Guidelines](#).

Subscribe to this blog

ADD AN EMOTICON

SPELL CHECK

Post Comment

Disclaimer: Weight loss results will vary from person to person. No individual result should be seen as a typical result of following the SparkPeople program.