

1st March, 2003

## YOU GET ONE CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION

DEAR DIARY, I walked to the lift a few days ago when I was leaving the office and a man walked towards to the lift too. When the lift arrived, he stood back to let me in first. At first I didn't realise he was being a gentleman, I thought he was waiting for the lift that was doing down, but he made a small gesture with his hand which made me realise he was doing the "ladies first" thing. I was so taken aback at his act of chivalry, I walked like a deaf mute into the lift. The voice in my head said say thank you, but nothing came out and for the whole 12 floors I stood in shameful silence. I wanted to say to the back of his head thank you; sorry I was miles away, but thank you. I was dreading the moment when he got out of the lift because then I would know for sure that he would walk out of my life and forever think I was an ungrateful stuck up bitch. He would probably never do that again, or then again, if he is a real gentleman, he will do that again. Oh God, I hope I haven't ruined him into a man who'd never be a gentleman again!

When and if he sees me next time, he'll always think that's the ungrateful what's-it who doesn't have any manners and doesn't appreciate good manners from others either and d'you know what? He's right. His first impression of me is correct, he stood to one side, ladies first and I said nothing. I can put the encounter down to tiredness because I had just completed an eight hour night shift and I'm a bit worse for wear in the morning, but really, that's no excuse.

I could also make the excuse that I was taken aback by his act of kindness. But that's just ridiculous. Oh sorry mate, you shocked me with your kindness so I didn't say thanks. How bloody stupid is that?

It's not really like me not to say please and thank you. I have in fact been taught good manners by strict parents. I even received jibes at school for being posh! Me, posh? That's funny. But the encounter in the lift has left me even judging myself. What kind of person did I become for a minute of my life and why is it really bothering me to the point of obsession.

Does it bother me because I don't want the strange man to have that impression about me?  
Does it bother me because I've made that man think that women like me have no manners?

# The AUGUST MAYFIELD Diaries

Does it bother me that if someone did that to me, I would go away thinking ill of that person? I guess all of the above really.

I choked on the milk of human kindness and it's left me feeling ashamed of myself.

*August Mayfield*