

Don't box up etiquette at holiday time

By Craig Wilson, USA TODAY

Hate this time of year? Don't quite know what to do about holiday parties or gift-giving? Joy Weaver is here to help. As president of Protocol Enterprises in Plano, Texas, she specializes in business and social etiquette. USA TODAY asks her about some of life's more perplexing situations come the holidays:



Weaver has tips for everyone, from the person who got drunk at the office party to recipients of hideous gifts.

By Eileen Blass, USA TODAY

Q: Let's start with the BIG one. You broke the cardinal rule and got tipsy at the office Christmas party. Even told the boss a thing or two. What do you do the next day to salvage your career?

A: Oh, brother! You definitely need to go in and apologize. You need to do all your damage control up front. Put it behind you and never bring it up again.

Q: We hate it when someone gives us a gift and we hadn't planned to get a gift for them. Do we rush out and buy something, or should we just thank them and leave it at that?

A: Thank them and leave it at that. Don't run out and buy anything. It sets the precedent for next year.

Q: We also hate it when we get a gift that is hideous. How do you mask what you're feeling when the giver is sitting right across from you?

A: Put your best game face on, say you appreciate it, and then write them a thank-you note. And for crying out loud, don't re-gift it.

Q: You get an invitation to spend the holidays with friends. You like the friends better than your family. How do you do this without causing World War III?

A: This is a touchy situation. You're going to have your family for the rest of your life. I would say you have to spend some time with the family and then the friends.

Q: What happens when you're hosting a holiday party for 50 friends, half of them didn't RSVP but showed up anyway, and many of them even brought someone along, suddenly making it a party for 75? Cut those Christmas cookies in half?

A: Send people out for more food and drink or cut the party short. ... One great way is to cut the liquor off. Believe me, the people will just fade away.

Q: Every year you get something you don't like — chocolate you can't eat, coffee you don't drink, liquor you can't imbibe. How do you politely tell the giver to cut it out?

A: That's a sticky situation. In all cases you want to be gracious. Say your neighbor brings chocolate-covered cherries. Hopefully, you can tell that person you're allergic to chocolate-covered cherries, but that your mother LOVES them.

Q: Someone gives you a holiday decoration that does not match your décor, and the giver will be coming to your home. Do you haul it out?

A: Do not do that. They're going to come and see that it does not match, so don't feel like you need to put something out. Otherwise, you get the matching set for next year.

Q: Is it rude to call people who did not show up for your party after saying they would and ask them what happened?

A: You want to let them know you missed them and are concerned about them. Call out of concern.

Q: If someone brings food or beverages to your holiday party, are you expected to serve it, even if it's not anything you'd ever serve?

A: No, because the menu has already been determined. If it doesn't go with the menu, just say, "Oh, we're going to enjoy this tomorrow."

Q: What's the rule on bringing a hostess gift? Always?

A: Always. And know your host or hostess. If you bring coffee and I don't drink coffee, I know you don't have a clue about me.

Q: Is it OK to send religious holiday cards to people of a different faith?

A: Sure it is. You're sending it from your heart. It's not as if you're trying to convert them.

Find this article at:

http://www.usatoday.com/life/lifestyle/2004-12-08-xmas-etiquette_x.htm

Advertisement

Student Loan Fact #249

Student loans such as the **Stafford loan** have variable interest rates until the borrower uses the **Federal Student Consolidation Loan**. Since student loans are at historic lows, now is the best time to consolidate and fix your student loan interest rate. Your rate may be fixed as low as **1.625%** and monthly payments reduced by **54%**.



[Click here to learn more](#)



Classifieds: [Cars](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Personals](#) | [USA TODAY](#)

- [Home](#)
- [News](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Money](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Life](#)
- [Tech](#)
- [Weather](#)

Lifestyle

▪ [E-MAIL THIS](#) ▪ [PRINT THIS](#) ▪ [SAVE THIS](#) ▪ [MOST POPULAR](#) ▪ [SUBSCRIBE](#)

Posted 12/8/2004 9:52 PM Updated 12/9/2004 1:31 AM

Don't box up etiquette at holiday time

By Craig Wilson, USA TODAY

Hate this time of year? Don't quite know what to do about holiday parties or gift-giving? Joy Weaver is here to help. As president of Protocol Enterprises in Plano, Texas, she specializes in business and social etiquette. USA TODAY asks her about some of life's more perplexing situations come the holidays:



Weaver has tips for everyone, from the person who got drunk at the office party to recipients of hideous gifts.
By Eileen Blass, USA TODAY

Q: Let's start with the BIG one. You broke the cardinal rule and got tipsy at the office Christmas party. Even told the boss a thing or two. What do you do the next day to salvage your career?

A: Oh, brother! You definitely need to go in and apologize. You need to do all your damage control up front. Put it behind you and never bring it up again.

Q: We hate it when someone gives us a gift and we hadn't planned to get a gift for them. Do we rush out and buy something, or should we just thank them and leave it at that?

A: Thank them and leave it at that. Don't run out and buy anything. It sets the precedent for next year.

Q: We also hate it when we get a gift that is hideous. How do you mask what you're feeling when the giver is sitting right across from you?

Advertisement



*** CLICK HERE**

Today's Top Life Stories

- " [Gunman kills four at Ohio nightclub](#) - 11:31 AM
- " [Clark has mild stroke](#) - 8:53 AM
- " [New York eatery doesn't pour it on](#) - 8:09 AM
- " [Celebrity nativity scene draws ire in U.K.](#) - 7:46 AM
- " [Who has momentum for a best-actress nomination?](#) - 1:30 AM

[Add USATODAY.com headlines to your Web site](#)



[What's this?](#)

Tickets

Buy and sell tickets to premium and sold out events

Search by events or regions:

Location

Genre



Movies

- [Movies home](#)
- [Box office report](#)
- [DVD releases](#)

Music

- [Music home](#)
- [On the Verge](#)
- [Top albums](#)
- [Top singles](#)
- [Listen Up](#)

TV

- [TV home](#)
- [Nielsen ratings](#)
- [Critic's Corner](#)

Books

- [Books home](#)
- [Top 150 books](#)
- [Open Book](#)
- [Excerpts](#)

[Daily haiku contest](#)

Columnists

- [Columnists home](#)
- [Robert Bianco](#)
- [Peter Johnson](#)
- [Whitney Matheson](#)
- [Alison Maxwell](#)
- [Craig Wilson](#)

More Life

- [People](#)
- [Crosswords](#)
- [Media Mix](#)

[Pop Candy](#)
[Photo archive](#)
[Talk Today](#)

A: Put your best game face on, say you appreciate it, and then write them a thank-you note. And for crying out loud, don't re-gift it.

powered by 

Ticket holders:
Looking to sell tickets quick? [Register now.](#)

Q: You get an invitation to spend the holidays with friends. You like the friends better than your family. How do you do this without causing World War III?

A: This is a touchy situation. You're going to have your family for the rest of your life. I would say you have to spend some time with the family and then the friends.

Q: What happens when you're hosting a holiday party for 50 friends, half of them didn't RSVP but showed up anyway, and many of them even brought someone along, suddenly making it a party for 75? Cut those Christmas cookies in half?

A: Send people out for more food and drink or cut the party short. ... One great way is to cut the liquor off. Believe me, the people will just fade away.

Q: Every year you get something you don't like chocolate you can't eat, coffee you don't drink, liquor you can't imbibe. How do you politely tell the giver to cut it out?

A: That's a sticky situation. In all cases you want to be gracious. Say your neighbor brings chocolate-covered cherries. Hopefully, you can tell that person you're allergic to chocolate-covered cherries, but that your mother LOVES them.

Q: Someone gives you a holiday decoration that does not match your décor, and the giver will be coming to your home. Do you haul it out?

A: Do not do that. They're going to come and see that it does not match, so don't feel like you need to put something out. Otherwise, you get the matching set for next year.

Q: Is it rude to call people who did not show up for your party after saying they would and ask them what happened?

A: You want to let them know you missed them and are concerned about them. Call out of concern.

Q: If someone brings food or beverages to your holiday party, are you expected to serve it, even if it's not anything you'd ever serve?

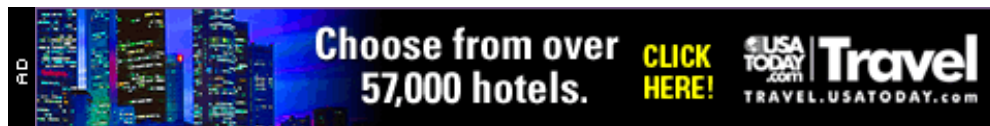
A: No, because the menu has already been determined. If it doesn't go with the menu, just say, "Oh, we're going to enjoy this tomorrow."


Q: What's the rule on bringing a hostess gift? Always?

A: Always. And know your host or hostess. If you bring coffee and I don't drink coffee, I know you don't have a clue about me.

Q: Is it OK to send religious holiday cards to people of a different faith?

A: Sure it is. You're sending it from your heart. It's not as if you're trying to convert them.



Choose from over 57,000 hotels. **CLICK HERE!**  **Travel**
TRAVEL.USATODAY.com

USATODAY.com partners: [USA Weekend](#) • [Sports Weekly](#) • [Education](#) • [Space.com](#)

[Home](#) • [Travel](#) • [News](#) • [Money](#) • [Sports](#) • [Life](#) • [Tech](#) • [Weather](#)

Resources: [Mobile News](#) • [Site Map](#) • [FAQ](#) • [Contact Us](#)
[Email News](#) • [Jobs with Us](#) • [Terms of service](#) • [Privacy Policy](#) • [Media Kit](#) • [Press Room](#)

[Add USATODAY.com RSS feeds](#) [XML](#)
[Add USATODAY.com headlines to your Web site](#)

© Copyright 2004 USA TODAY, a division of [Gannett Co. Inc.](#)