



**SAFE HARBOR
COUNSELING**

**Dr. Beth
Speaks**



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WSPY, Your Life Matters, Good Manners

- Mike Williams And it's time now for **Your Life Matters** with **Clinical Social Worker Dr. Beth Placketka** from **Safe Harbor Counseling** and **Dr. Beth Speaks**.
- Mike Williams And Dr. Placketka, thanks again for joining us. How we doing this morning?
- Dr. Beth Placketka Great! How about you, Mike?
- Mike Williams Doing good! We are closing in on the holidays. Folks are probably excited about that. We hope they're excited, some the gatherings and parties and family get together.
- Dr. Beth Placketka It's that time of year, isn't it?
- Mike Williams The big day is approaching fast and this is kind of an interesting show we've got lined up for you today. We talked the last time about being mindful during the holidays and now with those parties approaching, those gatherings, times that are only this time of year where we have these types of social interactions, there are some do's and don'ts. Some manners that you want to be aware of for the holiday season.

Dr. Beth Placketka Absolutely! There's so many things going on and while we're not invited to all them, often we are invited to enough. Either family or neighbor things that we have to know what's going and be really thinking about it. Sometimes people avoid, they say that they're going to go and then they don't go because they feel awkward or they don't know what to expect. So I want to let all of the listeners in on a secret. All that's expected when you attend a party or host a party or a gathering, whether it's at Grandma's house or I would even say at the White House, what it really mounts to is that we are supposed to be gracious and open, grateful and that's it. We don't have to do stellar things. We don't have to solve world problems. We just have to be gracious and that means we pay attention and mind our manners. It is a little different when you run into Grandma's house, you might be throwing you coats and all that kind of stuff but, some things really are standard everywhere that we go.

Now before you get to the party, here's some things that I think are really important if you are going to survive the holidays.

- * Get some sleep. People will stay up and watch old Christmas movies and they'll be wrapping and shopping and all that kind of stuff.

- * You really need to sleep your regular amount.

- * Eat your regular meals. Don't go crazy by skipping or over indulge.

- * Avoid drinking too much because we make really poor judgments or sometimes we can't tell we've made poor judgments. We really want to avoid that.

- * Exercise and spend some time alone and in quiet. 15 minutes a day, even broken up in into 5 minute periods really helps us reset.

Does that make sense?

Mike Williams These are really good to use all year long and especially this time of the year. Some good advice here. It's tough to avoid all the sweets and the good foods, and it's time to maybe indulge a little bit, but you gotta keep it in moderation to a certain extent.

Dr. Beth Placketka Right! You have to decide in advance, what you are going to eat and what aren't you. I think also socially you know sometimes things come in clumps, so we have too many things close together, and we have to be realistic. Can we attend everything? Some of my clients will say, they may come to the realization later, "Oh my gosh I forgot to allow travel time between places you know, it takes me a half an hour to get to Grandma's and I want to be on time, and the other place doesn't end." So how do we do that? How do we make an appearance? We have to think about that. We have to prioritize. It's not an insult if you say to someone, "thank you for the invitation I really can't make it this year. I've got things that I have to do in another town or another house." And be realistic when you take something, whether it's a hostess gift or a dish to pass or an actual gift, be realistic, don't go overboard with everything that you do.

Mike Williams And I think too, people will understand if you can't make it. I would you like to think at this time of year they understand that you've got commitments, and other things that you have to do, and you mentioned it's not an insult, and you would hope that people would take it well. Yeah I understand it's a busy time, you've got stuff and I've got things too.

Dr. Beth Placketka I think when you accept it, when you tell them graciously, when you say thank you for the invitation I really wish I could be there because we do wish we could be there.

Mike Williams There's a way to do it.

Dr. Beth Placketka There's a way to do it. If you don't tell them at all, that's a problem. But I do think too sometimes knowing what to do when we get there. Some of the things that people forget about that go into graciousness is you can have fun and do all of these things and fit right in and enjoy yourself.

So you stay an hour or 3 hours or overnight, sometimes it's nice to bring a dish or token. It could be a candy bar, it could be a little note saying thanks for having me.

Greet everyone individually or in groups and as much as possible include names. Now sometimes you know you get to places and you think I can't remember this person's name.

Mike Williams Yes it's difficult sometimes.

Dr. Beth Placketka Here's a very easy way to do it. You put out your hand and say, "I'm not sure you remember me, my name is Beth Plachetka." And they will go, "oh yeah." They might make a joke of it and say, "yes, I'm your cousin" or they might just tell you who they are.

When it's time to switch conversation, "Hey I wanna go get a cookie or sandwich, you want to come with me?" It changes the venue, and it allows us to mingle with other people. Because you sometimes think you've spoken, you've told them everything you know and it's time to let them talk to someone else. And that's ok. Invite them to, let's go get a drink or something to eat

I do suggest strongly avoiding controversial topics. You know if someone has a strong opinion about religion or politics or something that is going on in the world, a holiday party is probably not the time to bring it up. That is something you can have over coffee if you want to debate. It is not time to bring up family issues and feuds. Our old triggers are always there, the people who are always around us. It is the time to, if someone says something, bite our tongue and think we will talk about it later when emotions are not high.

Mike Williams You want to keep a positive vibe going as best you can in these situations. It is not always easy with family. Understandable.

Dr. Beth Placketka Right but you know family is ours for a reason, we all learn from them and they learn from us. I think it is also ok to politely excuse yourself from the conversation for a minute. Say, "I will catch up with you in a few minutes," and then come back or move on and mingle. Most people notice that about every 20 minutes in a party, the conversation dies down for about 30 seconds then builds back up. Watch for those things that happen.

I do think it is important to leave on time. People get tired. We can do too much and that can be a problem. That is part of being gracious. Offer to help if you like, and if they say, "No Thank you," believe them. So thank the host for the evening and be specific. What did you enjoy? Holiday parties can be stressful, but when we mind our manners or we know what is going on, they can be fun.

Mike Williams Alright. And hopefully we are all going to one soon. These are some good tips and we would like to put them into use and have a good time with our holiday parties. Christmas just, gosh, just a week and a day away.

Dr. Beth Placketka Yes it's coming fast.

Mike Williams Hard to believe. Some good advice as always. Thanks for your time as we have run out of time on today's show. Don't forget you can submit your questions at: safeharboril.com and tune in next week for another edition of **Your Life Matters** with **Clinical Social Worker, Dr. Beth Plachetka** from **Safe Harbor Counseling** and **Dr. Beth Speaks**