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Now kids have to be taught manners ... at school

She's the princess of Ps and Qs, the mistress of manners. Rose Smith is bringing manners back, one school at a time.

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Rebel Wylie
Editor

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"What's wrong with kids these days? Haven't they heard of manners?" If you've ever caught yourself thinking – or even saying – those words out loud, you're probably not alone. With parents and children busier today than ever before, the teaching of good manners may be one of things that falls by the wayside.

One woman may have a solution, Sensei Rose Smith – the Principal of Hoshin Jutsu Australia. Her revolutionary **Manners for the Modern Warrior** programs aim to bring back a good, old-fashioned dose of Ps and Qs into schools, and parents are loving the results.

Up until the 1960s manners were routinely taught in schools, via poems, songs and stories...and, perhaps less beguilingly, reinforced by the cane. It began to fall away when the Gen Xs were in school, but many agree there's an increasing need to re-introduce manners training into schools today.

It's never too late to get polite!

"I'm not saying that people are bad parents these days," Rose told Kidspot. "Sometimes parents need support because maybe they are just too busy, maybe they are a single parent family, or maybe they didn't have the greatest examples themselves. They might lack some of the tools they need to be accountable for their children's behaviours.

If you have a five-year-old dictating meal choices and bed times, or a teen that refuses to help around the house, Rose believes that a little manners education can make a permanent, lasting change in your life.

"We hope to help families have better interactions with each other," she says.

The eight week program is currently available in various Sydney locations, as well as a pilot course that is being trialled in child care centres and schools – but soon you'll be able to enrol in an online version to gain some tools for improving the manners situation in your own home.



All images courtesy of Kellie Lafranchi

Chores - Manners

Aside from the obvious 'please' and 'thank you' side of manners, being helpful around the home from an early age sets a good foundation for respect.

If you make excuses such as 'My child is too young to help out around the house' Rose wants you to know that there are a lot of things a five-year-old can be doing.

"A five-year-old can make their bed, or put their pyjamas under their pillow. They can put shoes into pairs, or carry their dirty dish to the kitchen," explains Rose. "As they grow the jobs will begin to include bringing in the washing or even putting on washing cycle."

For **Danny Osomanski** - a Sydney mother who has had three children go through the program – self esteem was a big plus.

"People acknowledge their behaviour and that gives them self esteem because it does not go unnoticed," she said.

"I'm always surprised when people ask me why I have to teach my children manners, some of them even suggesting that they will just learn them of their own accord – well they don't. The great thing about this course is the whole 'it takes a village' thing, that is having someone else reinforce the necessity of humility, good manners and acknowledging when somebody does something nice for you."

Catherine Perkins's son Tom was trained in martial arts – including the manners modules – with Rose from the age of ten and is now a black belt at 19. "For us it was the reinforcement of good behaviour and good manners that we instilled in our children at home. Be polite, help your parents, be a helpful part of the household – it's a solid base for life," she explained. "Of course parents need to have manners to teach manners. How can you teach a child to ride a bike if you can't ride a bike?"



What do you learn in a manners program?

The **Manners for the Modern Warrior** programs cover:

- Bathroom manners
- Table manners
- Good sportsmanship/resilience
- Not interrupting
- Saying please and thank you
- Saying I am sorry
- Doing things first time you are asked

"The course is really for the whole family. You might find one of the children piping up when mum interrupts them, for example," explained Rose. "You pop the chart on your fridge, and it is a reminder for everyone to help out and be polite."

I think that parenting has never been as busy as it is now. Of course each generation has their own trials and tribulations – but right now we are dealing with family, work and technology in ways that have never had to be dealt with before.

Is there shame in seeking aid for something as important as manners? I think not. If there exists a service that gives us the tools to make sure we are nailing that very crucial foundation for life in our kids – then sign me up.

What do you think? Would a program like this be useful in your life, or should teaching manners be a parent's responsibility?



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