



**Table talk:** Adeodata Czink instructs Olivia Minchella, left, Patrick Tsang and Julia Minchella on the finer points of dining and comportment

# The etiquette expert's tips on turning heads

*Whenever you walk in a room, self-confidence will ensure a 'ta-dum' effect*

"PUNCTUALITY. Be on time! I was raised in Sweden, so I am very clock-oriented," says etiquette expert Adeodata Czink. It is 9 a.m. sharp when this one-day teen etiquette workshop starts on a recent Saturday in Toronto. Czink, whose company Business of Manners offers etiquette courses to kids, teens and adults, is dressed in a periwinkle floor-length gown. When the parents leave, the teens gather at a table in one of the stately lakeside rooms at the city's exclusive Boulevard Club.

Each teen is handed a black folder with the day's agenda. First up, "First Impression." "Bum is in, stomach is in," says Czink, who will only admit to being in her 60s. "You have become two inches taller. Tall is not a matter of inches. Tall is a matter of how I feel." Czink spreads her legs to demonstrate how not to sit. "This is what I call the potty position."

Next, she coaches the teens on how to enter a room. "Whenever you come through the door, think 'I, the queen,' or 'I, the king, have arrived.' This is what gives the self-confidence. Make sure it is a 'ta-dum' effect." When one shy 13-year-old girl makes a trial entrance, Czink instructs her to "Look up! Head up! I am beautiful! The princess doesn't shuffle. You went like this, 'Sorry, I am here.' We don't have 'Sorry, I am here.' It's 'ta-dum!'"

Back at the table, Czink discusses the importance of body language. "If you have this arm position"—she crosses her arms—"I can see immediately that you don't want to be here." She aims a look at one of the

girls. "But I wasn't crossing my arms," protests the girl. "It was your facial expression," says Czink. "We cannot let others know on a constant basis that we are tired, that we are upset, that the dog bit us this morning. We have to be approachable."

Grooming is also on the agenda. "Let's write it down," Czink tells her students. "No matter what, you don't go to bed without washing your face. If you get teenage pimples, the most important thing is to wash, and it will be okay by the time you are 20." She warns the girls that dressing properly can be tricky. "But I would say that if I can see the colour of your underpants, you will not get the job. Women who have short skirts, they sit down, the skirt is going to rise up. Then you put one leg over the other and I can actually see the colour of your underpants, and that means you're out."

When greeting someone new, Czink instructs the teens to ask, "How do you do?" not "How are you?" "Now, let's say that I must introduce you and I just can't remember your name. What am I to do?" Czink looks around the table. "Okay, let me give you a beautiful line: 'Your name eludes me.' It means I don't remember your name but I have known it at one point." "Isn't that a little too formal?" asks one of the girls. "It is formal," agrees Czink. "But this is how you will make your

mark. It's a tiny little thing that makes people remember us."

Czink leads the teens in a session of phone-call rehearsals. "Don't shout into the phone: 'Mom! It's for you!' It's very important to hold the phone down. If I am asking for your mother, you are going to say, 'Just a moment, please.' And if I ask for your mother and she is not home, say, 'May I please take a message?'" Czink then play-acts the roll of caller: "May I talk to your mother?" "Um, she's not home," says one of the girls. "Ah," Czink says. "Never, never, never say she's not home. Always be ready with a very fast answer. Say, 'No, she's out in the garden. I can't get her right now.'"

*'I would say if I can see the colour of your underpants, you will not get the job'*

When another teen says, "I'm sorry" when her mom is unavailable, Czink jumps in, "You're not sorry! Canadians are constantly sorry. I'm stepping on your foot and instead of saying, 'Move over,' you say, 'Sorry.'"

She directs the class to open their workbooks, write down the word "sorry" and cross it out with a big X. "Get rid of the sorry. It's in our vocabulary almost as much as the 'um' and the 'like' and the 'sort of.' It's actually not your fault that she's not home."

With the teens still taking notes, Czink tells them, "Under 'Telephone Manners' write: 'Leave phone number slowly.' Next to cell-phone, write: 'Turn off.'" **JULIA MCKINNELL**