

Reviving the Art Of Etiquette

Candace Smith tells her husband, Vernon, to straighten up his shoulders and avoid slouching.

What's unusual is that she's a teacher of etiquette and Vernon is a Nobel Prize-winning economist.

"I'm obsessed with etiquette," Candace said during a recent interview.

She could probably teach almost any subject she wants. She has a master's degree in economics education and a bachelor's in English, speech and history. She's won awards like Colorado Enterprising Teacher of the Year, the Milken Foundation National Educator's Award, and a National Award for Excellence in Eco-

nomics Education by the Foundation for Teaching Economics.

So why focus on a subject that seems so 19th century and a bit on the snobbish side?

Her interest began in 2002 when she attended the formal ceremony where Vernon, wearing a tuxedo along with a ponytail, was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics.

"I was so in awe of what was happening," Candace said, recalling that she sat by ambassadors from Hungary and England.



Candace Smith:
Nobel worthy for Etiquette

As her husband's fame rose, the invitations poured in from prominent people, such as the president of Chile. She became terrified of saying or doing the wrong thing.

"The more events I attended, the less comfortable I became," Candace said. "I dreaded these invitations."

Candace realized she needed to address her fears, so she read every book and column on the subject and even attended a week-long course in Atlanta. Afterward, when she attended a formal dinner in Scotland, she began

recognizing the patterns of protocol.

She decided to teach the subject in courses, such as advising a pharmacy school in Utah. She blogs about etiquette, with recent topics including perfume, handshakes, negative criticism and job interviews.

While etiquette sounds old-fashioned, people may commit faux pas and not even realize it can hurt their careers, she said. She views etiquette as a way to handle one's self in a social situation.

"I'm in the business of confidence. My goal is to inspire your confidence in your ability in the company of others."

— Peter J. Brennan