1950

Borrowing Is Touchy Business

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Recommended Citation
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol30/iss4/2

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Borrowing Is Touchy Business

By Floramae Gates
Technical Journalism Junior

CHECK THIS LIST TO SEE IF YOU’RE A “GOOD” BORROWER
(Your rating appears on page 15)

1. Do you return all borrowed items immediately after use?
2. Are the articles returned in the best possible condition?
3. Do you underline in the books you borrow?
4. Before returning a typewriter do you try to do an expert job of cleaning it?
5. Do you wash woolen sweaters before returning them?
6. Do you borrow the same item consistently, not bothering to purchase one for your own use?
7. If you borrow shampoo, paper, or other things that are used up, do you supply identical replacements for the lender?
8. Do you always ask the owner if you may use her things—no matter how many times you may have used them before?
9. Do you borrow personal items such as underclothing?
10. Do you often borrow jewelry—especially earrings?
11. Do you let someone else use an article that you yourself have borrowed?
12. Are you gracious in accepting a loan—that is, does the lender feel as though she’s doing you a favor and not that you’re doing her a favor?

WHERE is my pink cashmere sweater?” wails Polly as she hurriedly dresses for a date. Suddenly she remembers Dottie asked to wear it a week ago, and Dottie’s gone home for weekend. More than a little peeved, Polly dons a different sweater. Are you guilty of being a poor borrower like Dottie?

In college where so many women live together, it’s easy to get in the habit of borrowing not only clothing and other personal belongings, but also books and supplies. And, occasional “good” borrowing is not to be condemned, for none of us are so perfectly organized that we have pencils or paper at hand all the time. Nor can many of us afford to own a variety of such seldom-used items as formals. So when you are a borrower, be a good one.

What makes a good or a poor borrower? Many of you were questioned about this habit of borrowing, and your answers can be grouped into general opinions. One thing everyone agreed upon—a good borrower, unlike the Dottie of our story, returns items promptly. Prompt returns win the thanks of your friends and keep your conscience clear. You needn’t think that after a few days the lender will forget who has her silk scarf—she remembers all too well.

If you really can’t remember from one day to the next the things you’ve borrowed, make a list.

All those questioned thought it was important that borrowed items be returned in the best possible condition. If you’ve borrowed a pencil, how about sharpening it before returning it? Or, if it’s a cotton blouse, give it a good pressing or laundering if it has been soiled.

Most of the women prefer that borrowers don’t tinker with their typewriters in an attempt to clean them. Woolen sweaters shouldn’t be washed—they shrink too easily. A dry cleaner does a better job on a sweater you may have soiled. And speaking of sweaters, better not turn up the collars or pull up the sleeves of your friend’s sweater unless you’ve checked with her first.

Good borrowers don’t make a practice of using another’s belongings without making an effort to buy their own. Soap is a good example of an item that could just as well be purchased by the habitual borrower. However, if you do borrow another’s soap frequently, be sure to make an identical replacement for her. And no matter how many times you may use an item, always ask your friend if you may use it again—don’t just take it from her shelf.

Most of you felt that borrowers put you “on the spot.” And, while you don’t mind lending things occasionally, an habitual borrower doesn’t make a very good impression—especially one that makes you feel as though she’s doing you a favor.

So now you’ve decided to be a better borrower. Then, first of all, gather up all those things that you’ve borrowed and still have. Make a friendly trip to your acquaintances and return their possessions. You’ll not only renew better relationships with the lenders, but you might get back some of your own cherished objects that have been borrowed.