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Main content

Article Preview :

The intended audience of Steve Friedman's *The Gentleman's Guide to Life* is the American "guy," a sociological type that has yet to be adequately defined but is everywhere apparent. "Guys" can be distinguished even at great distance by the ubiquitous baseball cap, now worn in the best restaurants.

Up close, the type can be identified not only by its attitudes and values but by its speech as well. The author has adopted each with facility. Beautiful women (the only kind "guys" seem to bother with) are "hot babes," eating is "chowing down," and novelty items called Chia pets are wildly amusing. Among "guys," the rejoinder "Puh-leeze!" constitutes the ne plus ultra of cleverness.

To "guys," the good life consists of impressing "hot babes," drawing an uppermiddle-class salary in a suitably enviable profession and faking one's way through delicate situations. A fear of embarrassment, especially in front of a really hot babe, seems almost pathological. This dread of making an ass of oneself is understandable, since "guys" are unsophisticated about a range of matters they sense they should be comfortable with but aren't.

Apparently, they are sadly ignorant of the most basic social graces. So they suffer a great deal of anxiety about being found...

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Rules of Civility: The 110 Precepts that Guided Our First President in War and Peace. New York: Free Press, 1997. Brooks, David. Grand Strategies in War and Peace. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991. Kenny, Anthony. Our first president was in many ways an ordinary man who, through singular self-discipline, rose to greatness. But his progress was no accident. The 110 Rules of Civility (etiquette) was originally compiled by French Jesuits in 1595, translated into English in 1640 and copied in abbreviated form by

George Washington in his youth (aged 13-ish give or take a few years in either direction). He carried that list of rules with him for the rest of his life and used them to mold himself into the man he wanted to be. Sometimes we forget the importance of good manners and a few rules or constants in our lives. George Washington was successful as our nation's president for a lot of reasons. But this book gives some solid insights on leadership, courtesy and self-respect. I loved it!