

## **Don't Rush The Aisle...a spin on the attributes of diversity**

**By Rhonda Hamilton**

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People watching is not only fun, it can be very educational as well! Because of my professional speaking and training business, I have the wonderful opportunity to travel to many different places, and observe people of every age from various backgrounds and cultures. I watch and learn new things, gain new perspectives and oftentimes, I gain a deeper appreciation because of a new understanding.

I enjoy these experiences and have found that I can learn a lot of new things right here in the good, old U.S.A. It is of great interest to me to observe how something as simple as living in a certain area code of the U.S. effects communications with people from certain other area codes in the country.

Being a Southern girl, traveling to New Jersey a few years ago for the first time, was like going to another country! For communication to be effective, it necessitated a desire to understand and a willingness to adapt on my part. Only then did I gain the ability to appreciate the more direct communication styles and a different focus or approach to topic discussions. Thankfully, I am blessed with a natural curiosity and the desire to constantly find areas for self-improvement (which, by the way, is not a hard thing to find). Clearly there are positives and negatives associated with "different." The key is to recognize both, and then to use the positives as personal and professional growth opportunities. It is important to have an open mind. It is important to learn from "different". Right?

For me the answer is yes.... and no! I believe that our society values non-judgment and political correctness to a fault. Okay, I know what you're thinking. What in the world do you mean by that?" Before you accuse me of being "judgmental" and get the urge to tar and feather me, consider this. I believe that you should keep an open mind and embrace new ideas ...without letting go of your own positive values. One of my favorite expressions is this: "*Step out of pre-judgment and into curiosity.*" When a new idea comes along, when you come face-to-face with "different", before making a decision about whether you agree or disagree, whether it is "right" or "wrong", step back and be curious to understand. Once you understand the different perspective that is before you, then make your decision.

Which brings me to the title of this article...*Don't Rush The Aisle...* Traditionally, here in the states accepted behavior has been to wait your turn. That is considered the polite thing to do. Isn't that what your mother taught you? Your teachers at school also? Remember this? "Wait your turn at the water faucet." And, "No cutting in the lunch line!" We take our place in line seriously around here! Recently, it was even reported that two women came to blows in line at Disney because allegedly one woman tried to cut in front of the other. Most agree, it is polite to wait your turn. This is common courtesy. I don't think that is a bad thing, do you?

I have been flying for 30+ years (I flew as a small child) and in the past upon landing and deboarding the plane, people filed out of their seats one row at a time, politely waiting their turns. Over the last few years, I have seen this courtesy begin to go by the wayside. I understand that in some cultures "taking turns" is not the traditional way, and at first, it was just a few people once in awhile who jumped out of their seats and "rushed the aisle",

pushing their way as far up the aisle until their path was stopped by someone who stepped into the aisle from their seat. Lately, more and more people are rushing the aisle - and not because the plane is late, but just because of impatience. Impoliteness and self-centered behavior seems to be contagious. After all, if others are getting ahead in the aisle, why shouldn't I?

Is this really what we want? There is nothing wrong with disagreeing with an idea or a practice. Matter of fact, standing for principles is a good thing, as long as we have first considered with an open mind the newness. Embracing diversity does not mean that you have to agree. Rather it is more about seeing things from a different perspective so that you can have an understanding that allows you to empathize and communicate more effectively. It goes without saying that kindness is owed to everyone, even and especially those with whom you may disagree.

I happen to believe that the traditions of courtesy and polite behavior are good positive values of our society — values that we should want to keep. So, give it some thought. The next time you are on an airplane and others plow ahead at break-neck speed refusing to wait their turn, there are several ways you might respond. You might sit back, watch and enjoy the show. Or, if you want to be a little ornery, you might turn slightly sideways placing your legs into the aisle, or perhaps place your carry-on in the aisle next to your seat, or even stand in the aisle beside your seat. By blocking the aisle and hindering advancement, you may cause others to slow down long enough to observe the traditional filing out row-by-row procedure. Or, maybe not.

However you choose to respond, remember to be polite, wait your turn, hold on to your good, positive values, and **please, don't rush the aisle!**

***Rhonda Hamilton energizes people and organizations to shift their thinking and implement success strategies that build the bigger, more abundant life. As a professional speaker specializing in life-success skills and people-smart communication skills, she offers motivational keynote speeches, seminars and training for those who want more personally and professionally. She champions others to build a better self, build a better business, and thereby build a bigger life and a better world. Rhonda can be reached through her website, [www.RhondaHamilton.com](http://www.RhondaHamilton.com)***

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