

Pageant Etiquette

Contestant/Winner

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1. Full Title

The first piece of etiquette to discuss is how to introduce yourself to an audience. It's easy when you're Miss USA. You just say that. But what about if you are Miss Greater Lakes of the North International Teenager of America US. It's a little more complex. You're going to want to say Miss Greater Lakes or Miss GL of the North...do you see what I mean? But different pageants have different titles to signify which pageant system the titleholder belongs to. If you shorten your title, it could be confusing to the audience (or infringe of trademark laws). So, the rule is – use your full title as it was announced when you received the crown...even if it's super-long.

2. Thank You(s)

The second most common etiquette error happens just after responding to an on-stage question. Contrary to what often happens, you should not finish your statement with “Thank you.” A presidential candidate doesn't answer a press question during a conference and then say “Thank You” after every answer. Therefore, neither should you. Unless the audience is going truly wild with applause for some marvelous thing you just said. I've seen it a time or two before where a woman answers a question in such a witty and amazing way that the audience truly goes wild with applause, in this case it is totally appropriate to thank them for ‘amen’ing’ your opinion. Otherwise, simply bringing your gaze back to the person that asked the question and sewing up your answer with a finishing tone is proper etiquette.

I also would like to mention that hand written Thank You Cards go a long-way. I will have the name and address of all volunteers, judges, the emcee, sponsors, etc. who helped with the pageant, and I will have a thank you card station set up during interviews if you would like to

send one from you individually. We will not be sending one as a whole group like last year. Especially the judges will be judging other pageants and events, and I promise you they will remember a kind gesture from you from this pageant, and that may score you extra points in other events. Same kind of mindset for applying for jobs, scholarships, etc.

3. Gown Shopping

Our next piece of etiquette comes from gown store owners around the globe. Every time you enter a pageant gown store, you should act like you just walked into Dolce and Gabbana on Rodeo Drive. By that I mean, calm down, go slow, treat everything with care. When you flip through the racks, handle the gown by the hangers, not the fabric which could damage the gown or leave marks from oils on your hands. Take only 3 or 5 gowns into the dressing room at a time and hang each one up before you take another off the hanger. Don't try things on over top of your tank top or ask to try a new pair of earrings with each gown. Instead, be thoughtful in the process and respect the gowns and the attendants helping you. They are there to make sure the gowns are lovely. Treat them with respect and they will respect you. The pageant world, again, is a small world, and word travels fast.

4. Store Discounts

Speaking of gowns and respect... sometimes, you'll receive a discount or a gift card to spend at a merchant's store. This is common as a part of a prize package for local and state pageants. The store discount is intended to put toward a larger purchase, not for a free cocktail. If you receive \$200 to a store as a gift, please do not show up to the store expecting to redeem it without at least buying a pair of shoes. For a business owner, this level of sponsorship is a marketing strategy. Most gown stores that give discounts are deeply tied to the pageant and the owners and attendants are excited to have you in their store so they can show you the unique merchandise they have. If you show up searching for something no more than \$205, they won't view you in a positive light. Instead, when you are ready to buy additional wardrobe (and there is always a time for another cocktail dress, gown, shoes, and accessories), that's that perfect time to shop with them. If you do end up finding the perfect dress for \$199, at least buy a pair of shoes and earrings to make it worth their time and generosity. Same thing applies for the gift cards in your gift bags for free pies and such.

5. Talking to Judges

After a pageant, there are tons of emotions flying around – even for the judges. Many times, they didn't want that girl to win either, they were rooting for you the whole time. Or, they think you had no shot, but have a million ideas of what they wish they could've said to you. Either way, this is not the time nor place to get into that conversation. I did a whole episode on how to

thank your judges and receive actual feedback in episode 52, so I recommend you listen to that for all the gritty details, but for now, suffice it to say that a simple and genuine “Thank You for taking the time to be here today to judge the pageant” will go a long, long way!

(Anything in gray is from <https://winapageant.com/53-7-must-know-pageant-etiquette-tips-to-protect-your-reputation/>, black is my add ins)

6. Emotions/Sportsmanship

Always, always, always keep your emotions in check. If another contestant or parents says something to you that is rude, mean, upsetting, etc. the best way to respond is no response, and I realize that is easier said than done. I do not want to have to break up cat fights. If you go into your interviews and you completely fall flat on your face, do not start cussing, screaming, throwing a fit, wait until you are back in the car with your parent away from everyone else. If you are not crowned the winner, do not start balling and asking why me, or throw a fit. You keep it together, cry gracefully, congratulate the winner, smile as best as you can, and you can fall apart, if need be, when you get home. Sportsmanship – Do not throw a fit, yell at, or do anything harmful to another contestant because you “think” they are going to or did do better than you. You uplift and encourage everyone. Does that mean you have to give a high five to everyone, no. That means if one of your fellow friends or contestants is having a breakdown, you help cheer her up.

7. Be Kind. Be Polite.

Every single person here today and volunteering for the pageant are human. Every single person is probably battling a fight you don't know about. If you wouldn't like it said to you, don't say it to or about someone else. Please and Thank You will take you far in life.

8. Eye Contact, Posture, Walking, Posing, Handshake

Make eye contact with everyone. Don't stare too long, 80%-20% rule. Posture - head and chin up, shoulders back, hips back. Walking – correct posture, walk on the balls of your feet, eye contact, loose. Posing - back leg always straight, front leg bent or straight. Handshake - match the pressure the other person gives you, or go for firm. Watch videos posted on website for examples.

9. Crown and Sash Etiquette

Don't wear your sash to church events or any religious events. Don't wear your crown and sash to another queen's crowning event unless you are asked to. Do not wear another system's sash and crown to another pageant. Don't wear your crown and sash post reign, unless you are

asked to. Whenever you are wearing the crown and sash of any pageant, you must be “on point” at all times.

10. Social Media

Stay neutral or do not comment on controversial topics such as politics. No cussing. No harassment/bullying/hate speech. Do not participate in controversial Tik-Tok Trends or Facebook Challenges.

Video to help you a little more on etiquette >> https://youtu.be/_UXYtAi2cZc