

Bring back barter, mutual combat and... the handkerchief

Some traditional ideas or concepts should have never died. Sure, progress is good but that's when it comes to science, medicine, and technology and not the courtesies that *used to be* common.

What I want to highlight are some habits that used to be commonplace, even common courtesy. It seems these common social habits, common courtesies, and even common sense are no longer common. Either parents stopped teaching their kids or kids just didn't really care. There is a swath of youth that proudly displays their apathy – the so-called “IDGAF!” and “YOLO” sub-culture. I could derail this entire article with scathing, derisive, and vitriolic commentary on the social Zeitgeist of today but I'll refrain.



When I was growing up in the 70s and 80s many of my mom's friends would carry a handkerchief. It was just a normal “guy” thing – at least I always recall men being the only ones that

carried one. It's not that women weren't hygienic, it's just that usually they preferred to "powder their noses" or blow their noses in the privacy of a restroom.

From the 90s through today the practice progressively died out and I think it's a shame. Why would or should I or anyone care about something like a handkerchief?

In the place of handkerchiefs, we have anti-biotic hand soaps, travel packs of Kleenex or people either racing to a bathroom (never making it in time), stifling their sneezes, or – gross – using their sleeves to sneeze, cough into or even wipe their noses. Some people don't even care to bother at all and just sneeze without covering at all.

Yes, it's disgusting and creates a toxic environment in public, not to mention the damage to the environment through the mass production of tissue paper that gets dumped into landfills or tossed on the ground. Then there is the adaption of many viruses to the use of so many anti-biotic soaps that they have spawned super-viruses that are resistant.



When it comes to the public environment shops, stores and cafes become breeding grounds for the transmission of the bacteria and colds, flues and other nasties. Especially considering that people don't cover up or use their hand or

elbow sleeve as a handkerchief.

We all know that people are not clean. Any visit to a public toilet can demonstrate that. Often when I am approaching a restroom door I will hear a flush and a guy comes immediately out. He didn't wash his hands, and more often than not he didn't even lift the toilet seat to urinate. Amazingly, it is often on the toilet lid (why not use the standing urinal?) and even on the ground surrounding the toilet. Many women can attest to this sort of behavior from their sons, boyfriends and/or husbands.

The point of all this sleeve wiping, naked sneezing, and coughing, using Kleenex wipes that are never large enough so the germs get on your hands, etc. is that you are shaking hands with every person in a public space when you reach to grab that door handle. A person has lots of bacteria on their hands and when they wipe their face they then transfer those germs to the door handle and then you grab that door handle and then either touch your face or eat your food and now that bacteria is part of you.

The environmental cost of all these soaps and wipes combined with the increased spreading of bacteria leading to more sick people visiting clinics is a high one.

A handkerchief in time



saves nine



and helps to keep the nation fighting fit

COUGHS and SNEEZES SPREAD DISEASES

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH



This is where handkerchiefs come in and why they were popular in the first place. They served a purpose for the individual user **and** society at large. The small act of using the handkerchief had a Butterfly Effect on society by significantly decreasing the transmission of these colds and cases of flu, placing less waste in landfills, less plastic from manufacturing plastic containers to hold the soaps, and fewer people in clinics meant less of a burden on the healthcare system.

All from the use of a simple handkerchief.

The handkerchief is ready at a moment's notice, it is far larger than a small wipe and your hand never needs to touch bacteria, inexpensive enough to have one for each day (cheaper than socks and underwear we change daily) and will work wonders for cutting down on cases of flu and colds. Stop shaking hands or basically kissing everyone that uses the same door handle you use.

So how about along with barter, and mutual combat we bring back the handkerchief?