



Positively Jane - The Podcast

Navigating Life's Highway... *together*

Episode #9 Transcript: What Makes a Good House Guest | Are You One?

JANE SHINE:

Summer is here and it is vacation time! Time for relaxing, hanging out and doing all the fun things. Now you may be fortunate to have friends or family who live someplace you love to visit. Like the beach or a lake or even another country. So you make plans, pack your things and head off for a long and relaxing vacation. But wait - did you forget something? Did you forget that you are a guest in someone's house and not renting an Airbnb or staying in a hotel with maid service?

INTRO:

Hey there - I'm Jane Shine. As a blogger for over 4 years, I have been encouraging women to rise above those circumstances that kick them in the butt and choose a life filled with joy. Topics - you name it. From relationships, anger and irritation, embracing the aging process, how to retire with wealth, and so much more! I can't wait to dive in!

Today's episode is brought to you by Vitruvi whose slogan is 'Make the air beautiful.' Vitruvi has the most beautiful stone essential oil diffusers that I have ever seen PLUS their scents are light and amazing AND non-toxic to you and your pets. Traditional home scenting products use toxic ingredients to mask odor and I am on a quest to eliminate as many toxins as I can. All of their scents are 100% natural, vegan, and pure. I diffuse their scents all day. Looking to go to sleep, get energized, stay calm....there is a scent for everyone. Check out the Vitruvi diffusers, humidifiers, and scents. Link is in the show notes. Your home will thank you.

JANE:

5 years ago my husband and I built our dream house on a lake. As we were designing it we thought of family and friends. We wanted everyone to come and enjoy life on the lake. We created guest rooms and hang out areas. Before our guests arrived we made sure that the boat was cleaned, gassed up and ready to go. Towels were washed and ice was plentiful. And so many more things! All in anticipation of our guests.

When all of my kids moved out I decided that they were now 'adults' and that mom no longer had to be their 'chief cook and bottle washer'. So that first



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summer all went well with my family.

I put 'team cooking' into effect. Ahead of time, I assigned teams (2 per team) and asked them what they would like to cook. The 1st team that responded got to cook that meal. Example. – if Fajitas are chosen then that is the only Mexican meal for the week. They have learned to be pretty quick with responses AND, they start saving recipes before they even arrive – I love that.

Now, because they are my kids, I always ask them to send me their grocery list and I make sure to have all the food items that they need. Each team is responsible for not only cooking the food and gathering drinks, but for the setting of the table and ALL their own clean up. (I learned this the hard way - my husband and son will make bacon, eggs, and French toast and then use every pan in the kitchen and since they don't clean up as they go along the kitchen is always a mess).

So, if 'You Use It – You Wash It' is my motto. (I think that should be a sign in my kitchen – what do you think? Anyway...

As the summer went on and friends came to visit things changed. I do want everyone to have fun and relax – but my home is not a hotel where people can just laze around and do nothing...or bring nothing.

In order for everyone to have fun and enjoy each other I learned that it was important to set up the expectations ahead of time - before they came. Otherwise I would just get frustrated. Because if everyone knew that dinner was at 7 and no one was around to eat I would think - what the heck? Or bathing suits were littering the yard or boat toys would be blowing away because no one put them away.

I came up with a system that worked pretty well for us. And if you live someplace that everyone wants to come and hang out at - this might work for you too.

- I would text or email before their visit and ask what they would like for breakfast and lunch. I make sure I have that in the house. Do they drink anything special (like coke)? Anything I should know before they arrive?



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- I let them know that snacks are at a minimum so they might like to bring their own.
- I ask them if they would like to pick a night and help cook dinner. If they ask me 'what can I bring' I usually ask them to stop at the local grocery store and buy the ingredients for that meal. Usually every one asks if we have any dietary restrictions before they come, but in case they don't ask, I will let them know I am a no sugar and low carb girl and I don't drink adult beverages.
- I would then send out our 'Welcome to the Lake!' letter. This pretty much covers it all anyway.
- And, when they are here, I am not shy in asking for help. I realize that some people don't really don't know what to do or feel like they are in the way...so they do nothing.

Almost everyone is grateful to be asked and wants to do something! I learned the hard way, that if I don't ask, I grumble. And, I hate to grumble – it is not very becoming! Asking is the better alternative for me! And then I can keep my joy! I have included a copy of our 'Welcome to the Lake letter' as well as a Vacation Packing Checklist. There are 5 formats. You pick the one you like. The link is in the show notes.

And, I just gotta say, and I hate to even say this out loud, that after that first summer I was worn out. Not with our family but with our friends. People arrived with full suitcases and the vacation mentality to go with it. Even though I tried to set up the expectations ahead of time.

I do realize that we all live different types of lives. And I was definitely not trying to place my values on others but there are some common courtesies that should happen when we are in someone else's home. No matter what the reason.

And then it dawned on me that most people don't really know how to be a house guest. They walk through the door with a 'love me as I am' attitude. Which is great...out in the world but not necessarily in our homes.



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Just in case you are curious about what makes a good house guest I put together a little list for you:

Here are a few house guest do's and don'ts for you:
I will start with the don'ts.

- Don't forget to ask about the house rules.
- Don't leave a trail of clutter and take over the house with your own stuff.
- Don't leave your wet towels on the bed or floor.
- Don't stay up all night watching loud TV or blasting music. Never cause your hosts to lose sleep OR, stay up so late you can't participate in daily activities.
- Don't smoke in a non-smoking home (or the yard) - Smoke clings to your hair and clothes.
- Don't be inconsiderate of time and plans – ask when dinner will be ready - and then be on time.
- Don't bring your dog or cat, or any other pet for that matter, without prior permission.
- Don't leave your dirty dishes in the sink.
- Don't stay too long.
- Don't speak negatively about the host family when you leave.

Now let's move on to the 'what to do's'!

- Arrive with a gift.
- When you arrive, ask how 'things are done' to avoid misunderstandings. I.e – should you take your shoes off in the house or hang up your coat in the closet.
- Lend a hand.
- Make your bed and keep your bedroom clean and tidy. Hang up your wet towels.
- Treat the hosts to a nice meal.
- If you have dietary restrictions bring your own food – do not ask your host to provide special food for you.
- Keep your stuff out of common areas and don't clutter up the house.
- Send a thank you note (Since I make cards and mail them regularly this particularly touches my heart).



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Do those rules sound difficult to you? Will they get in the way of your vacation and relaxation time? My friend, Mo, sends her rules out ahead of time and then ends with 'And if you don't like any of the above here is a list of local hotels.' Guess that nips it all in the bud, right?

So, let me ask - do you own a summer house or vacation destination? Does all (or most) of the responsibility fall on your shoulders? Is everyone 'on vacation' and forgetting that you are not the Ritz Carlton or the Hilton Garden Inn? Are you enjoying your family and friends?

If not, give it some thought and figure out how that can change it so you aren't resentful at the end of the summer. Grab the 'Welcome to the Lake' letter and make changes to fit you and your family. Or, start the team cooking - we really do love our team cooking!

And if you are a house guest, one that is forgetting that you are staying in someone's home ...usually for free, if you are not being a team player - isn't it time to make a few changes yourself?

A few small suggestions - Make your bed. Pick up your stuff. Chop some veggies. Take your hosts out to dinner. Do the dishes. Take out the trash. Fold the towels. I am sure there is something you can do. A little goes a long way.

We have since sold that dream house and are building another one. This time there is no lake. If you come to my house you are coming to see us...and maybe we will find a few fun things to do.

I hope this helps you look at how you behave when you are vacationing at a friend's house.

And as always, I would like to encourage you not to let the circumstances of life kick you in the butt. I would like to encourage you to learn how to rise above those circumstances so that you can live a joyful life....everyday.

If you haven't already go on and grab my FREE 'Joyful Living Quickstart Guide' - this will definitely help you take the first step towards living your joyful life..



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Thanks for listening. If you like what you hear please subscribe, make a comment or two, and share with your friends. I have linked everything I talked about in the show notes. Go on and grab them. Until next time - let's keep on navigating life's highway together

Links mentioned in this episode:

- [Joyful Living Quickstart Guide](#)
- [Vacation Checklists and House Rules](#)
- [Aging Gracefully Newsletter](#)
- [PositivelyJane Website](#)
- [Vitruvi Diffusers, Humidifiers and Oils](#)

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