

Thank you for purchasing college-prep materials from DreamCatcher Curriculum, LLC. We appreciate your business and hope that our products meet your needs for assisting students prepare for college. Although our materials can stand alone as a handout for students, the program guide will offer additional information and activities to share with students in a classroom or workshop setting.

The program guide is intended as a rough outline for the topic and can be adapted as you see fit to meet the needs of your program, school, or situation. The guide also includes copy-permissible pages for use in activities as a supplement to instruction. **Please note that color handouts are copyright-protected and duplication in any form is strictly prohibited.** See our website [www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com](http://www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com) for additional info, resources, and new curriculum topics.

➔ **BEFORE YOU BEGIN:** This workshop requires minimal prep, however, it is strongly recommended that you read and review the program guide along with the handout before meeting with students.

## **LIFE HACKS, TOO OBJECTIVE & INCLUDED TOPICS**

To provide students with an in-depth understanding of life skills necessary for personal and professional success as adults, including soft skills and social intelligence strategies; *Attentive Listening Skills, Conversational Etiquette, Accountability, Social Etiquette for the Digital World and Face-to-Face Interactions, Basic Manners & Social Norms*

## **BEFORE THE WORKSHOP /SESSION**

This workshop is designed as a transitional topic for high school-to-college level students. Building on concepts covered in the original *Life Hacks* middle school transitional topic, the material delves deeper into the development of soft skills and social intelligence through various life skills (or “life hacks”) to practice through adolescence and adulthood. This topic can stand alone without previously covering the original *Life Hacks* curriculum. Supplement this topic through discussion, guest speakers, or role play through various situations (such as phone conversations or conflict situations).

**DreamCatcher Extra:** Provided with this guide are copy-permissible sheets for *Life Hacks, Too*. If time permits, print in advance and distribute for each student to have their own copy for future reference.

## **STEP ONE TIME: 10-15 MINUTES**

Start by asking participants if they know what “life hacks” are, or what the terminology might mean. Explain that life hacks are tools or techniques to make aspects of one’s life easier or more efficient. For today’s workshop/session, they will learn techniques and strategies (life hacks) for navigating various social situations and developing social intelligence, which are absolutely necessary for success as an adult in college, the workforce, and in life.

Distribute the *Life Hacks, Too* handout. Read aloud the sections about soft skills and social intelligence. Provide time for participants to read the rest of the cover page, completing the *Picture You* activity, and using any extra time for “think time” to consider what was read. Follow up by mentioning that “soft skills” are also called “power skills” by many employers because these skills are considered imperative for success in the workplace (equally if not more important as hard skills). Review the difference between hard skills and soft/power skills:

**Hard Skills** = *job-related* knowledge and abilities employees need to effectively perform their job duties (measurable abilities such as math, writing, or specific technical skills such as specific computer programs, etc.)

**Soft/Power Skills** = *personal* qualities that help employees succeed in the workplace (traits like etiquette, listening, critical thinking, communication, empathy)

Review what it means to have **social intelligence**, which is **the ability to successfully build relationships and navigate various social environments, adhering to social norms.**

Provide participants with the included *Take Note* sheet included with this guide (or they can use scrap paper). By writing down the following list of soft skills, it will improve memory of which skills to practice and master before applying for admission, scholarships, or employment.

# LIFE HACKS, TOO

## Program Guide



### STEP ONE (CONTINUED)

Read aloud the following *Take Note* soft/power skills. As you read through the list, provide time for participants to write each skill. Offer clarification, explanation, or elaboration as you see fit for discussion. What opportunities can students think of to gain experience or refine each skill? (Note that the first skill is listed on the printable sheet already.)

- »→ Self-motivation
- »→ Communication (written, verbal, interpersonal)
- »→ Leadership (be able to provide specific examples)
- »→ Teamwork & team performance
- »→ Decision-making (weighing options and possible outcomes)
- »→ Creative thinking & problem-solving
- »→ Time management (the ability to work under pressure)
- »→ Inclusion, coaching, & mentoring
- »→ Attention to detail
- »→ Positive attitude
- »→ Adaptability & flexibility
- »→ Collaboration
- »→ Personal accountability & awareness
- »→ Conversational & listening
- »→ Negotiation & persuasion
- »→ Conflict resolution
- »→ Sense of service, generosity, & empathy
- »→ Strategic partnership building

Refer to the section of the cover page about employers seeking college grads with soft skills. Emphasize that in order to be successful and/or venture into leadership roles, organizations expect employees to possess these skills. Mention that **in a 2019 LinkedIn survey of 4,000 business leaders around the world, 57% of senior leaders value soft skills more than hard skills and 92% of human resources managers say that soft skills matter as much or more than hard skills.** LinkedIn identified the five top soft skills companies are looking for: **Creativity, Persuasion, Collaboration, Adaptability, & Time Management.** If time permits, instruct students to go back to their *Take Note* sheet and add a star to these top five skills.

To wrap up this step, you could share the following quote, then ask participants if they think this sentiment relates to why soft skills are now increasingly called *power skills*.

***“The soft skills are the hard skills. People who master the critical leadership skills today are anything but touchy-feely — they’re direct, they’re clear, they’re compassionate, they’re no-nonsense. But they’re not soft.”***

- Amy Edmondson, Professor of Leadership & Management, Harvard Business School

### STEP TWO TIME: 15-20 MINUTES

Transition to the inside of the handout. Questions to ask before covering the material: *How might lacking in social skills be detrimental to a person in college, when seeking employment, or in their career? How does someone improve their social intelligence or social skills?* Explain that **social skills can take years of practice and be a lifelong exercise in learning social norms and behavior.** Although some may find it easy to interact socially, for many it is a learning process. Today’s session will provide some “life hacks” for how to address and navigate various social situations.

Cover the *Life Hacks* frames by reading aloud (pausing for discussion as needed), or provide time for participants to read on their own (discussing afterward). To increase engagement, ask participants to circle any statements they think would be helpful to remember. Cover the frames on the left page before moving to the right side. Take a break between pages by instructing this quick activity: ***Stand up (if able) and close your eyes. Feel your body relax as you take deep, slow breaths (in through the nose; out through the mouth). As you are breathing, picture yourself in one of the social situations just discussed. Consider your behavior and what other people are doing around you. Take a moment to envision this scene. Open your eyes and have a seat.*** Explain that mental preparation before social events or interactions (visualizing the scene ahead of time) can be helpful in easing anxiety (as can deep breathing for relaxation). Proceed with the remaining frames. Be sure to cover Strengthen Social Intelligence (not only is it critical, but it’s also part of the assessment).

To wrap up, ask participants to consider the life hacks covered (you can provide a moment to think about it) then jot down which hack they believe will be most helpful, or something new that they learned. **Provide a 1-minute pair and share time** for participants to share with a partner (30 seconds each) what they wrote down and why.

**DreamCatcher Tip:** For regaining control of workshop participants after an engagement activity, consider using a “Zynergy” or meditation chime. These chimes can be found very inexpensively online and work wonders to quickly refocus the group. Playing music (at reasonable levels, given the setting) can also work well for restoring attention. Simply stopping the music will draw focus. Using chimes or music is a great technique to incorporate in most group settings, for all ages of participants.

### **STEP THREE TIME: 10-15 MINUTES**

Move to the back page of the handout to cover *Etiquette Hacks*. This part of the handout would be great to cover as an open discussion where you ask for volunteer feedback so as not to put anyone on the spot. Start by offering a quick definition: *etiquette is a code of polite behavior according to customary conventions of a society. Rules of proper behavior may differ among countries and may change over time.* The hacks provided on the handout provide basic etiquette for a variety of social situations. As you cover each category, solicit feedback and spend time discussing with participants.

Questions for processing the material: *What rude behaviors have you noticed on public transportation or in public? Do you feel comfortable speaking with someone on the phone? Why do think someone would choose to text or email when a phone call would be quicker and easier? Have you heard of people losing their job or scholarship due to previous digital posts they made? Do you think it's fair for your past digital behavior to impact you professionally, even years afterward? Have you ever made a judgment about someone based on their behavior, facial expression, or overall demeanor? Is it fair to judge others based only on their actions? What other social behaviors do you find inappropriate or lacking etiquette?*

Allow for discussion as time allows or you see fit. Participants may disagree or have strong opinions, but as long they're respectful, it can be excellent social skills practice (like communication, listening, and conflict resolution). Encourage completion of the *Life Hacks to Work On* section at the bottom of the page.

### **STEP FOUR TIME: 15-20 MINUTES**

To provide a few more life hacks to participants, and encourage further thought and discussion, the following activity will get students moving and interacting. Before the session, you will need to print (on cardstock, if possible) and cut the *Life Hack Snap Shots* activity cards. Printing card sheets on two different colors of cardstock will make the partner activity quicker/easier. Make enough activity cards for each student to have one card. Distribute to each student just one single card from the set of eight, plus their own copy of the *Life Hack Snap Shots* sheet for notetaking.

Instruct students to read the life hack on their card carefully so that they can teach others a few of the highlights of what was just learned. Provide quiet time for reading. After a few minutes, ask participants to jot down notes on their *Snap Shot* sheet for their particular numbered hack. What concepts of the life hack stand out most? They can also use the back side of the sheet for additional notes. Now instruct participants to pair up with someone who has a different numbered card. Pairs should take turns teaching the highlights of their assigned life hack to each other, using the *Snap Shot* sheet to take notes of new life hacks. Ask participants to find a different partner (with a different numbered hack) and start over with sharing their life hacks. This process can be repeated until most of the hacks have been shared or as time allows.

Afterward, reiterate that **teaching others newly learned concepts helps to seal that new learning into long-term memory.** This activity can be done as a game, to see who can get all 8 life hacks (completing all sections of their sheet). Collect the *Snap Shot* activity cards to use for a future workshop/session, or produce enough cards for participants to keep a set of their own. You could give away prizes for most life hacks learned, if presenting the activity as challenge or game.

### **LAST STEP & ASSESSMENT TIME REMAINING**

Provide a sampling of participants (at least 4) the included assessment sheet and collect before the session concludes.

### **LEARNING OUTCOME**

At the end of this session, participants will be able to identify critical soft skills necessary for the workforce and adult life, as well as provide specific ways to improve social intelligence. Participants will be able to provide at least one “life hack” or skill learned today that they plan to use in the future.

## LIFE HACKS, TOO ASSESSMENT

List **FIVE** soft/power skills that employers look for in an ideal employee or job candidate:

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List **THREE** ways you can strengthen your SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE:

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Which LIFE HACKS do you want to remember for future use or need to work on the most?

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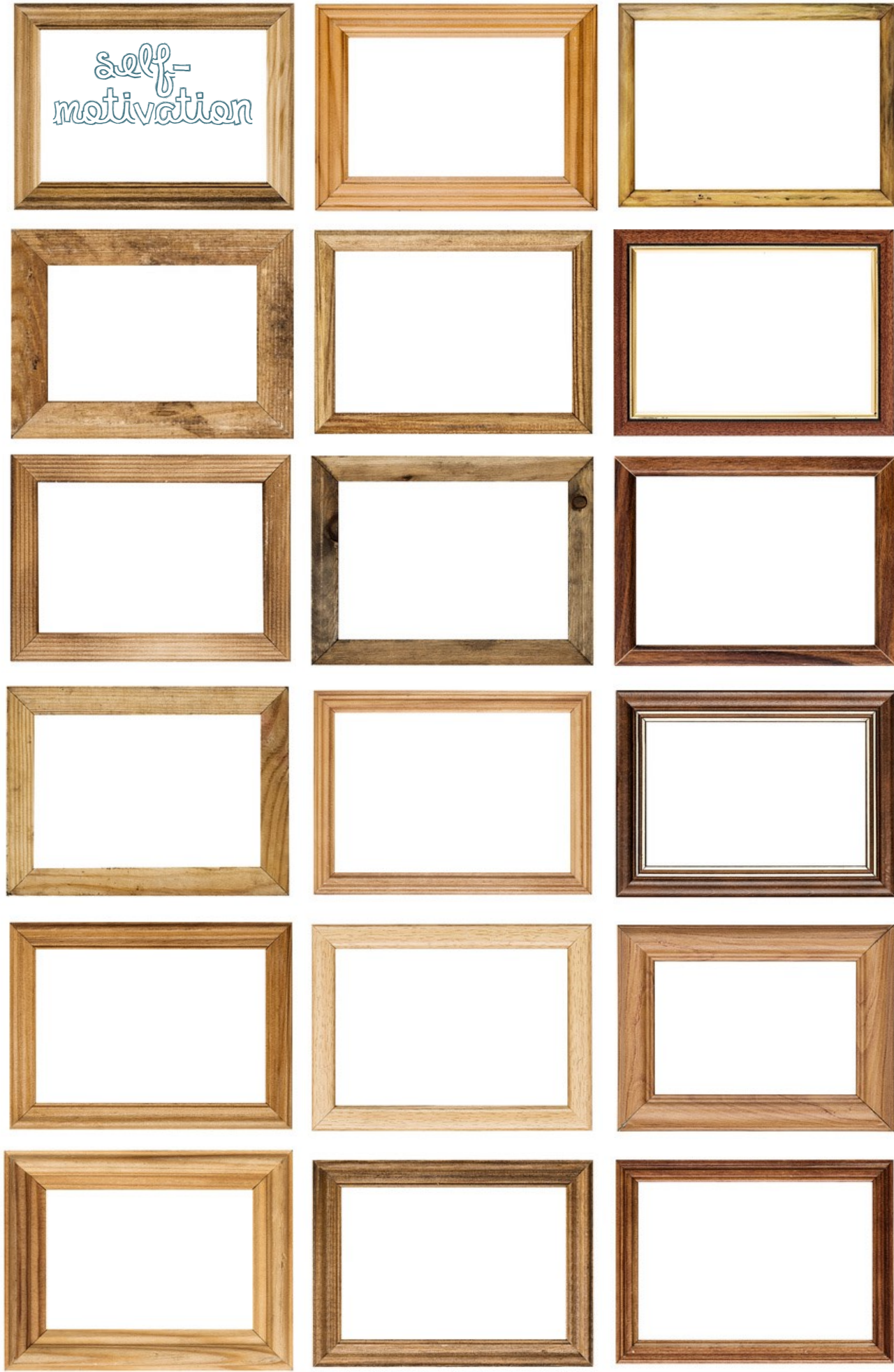
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# TAKE NOTE OF THESE SOFT SKILLS

Picture yourself having these skills! As your facilitator lists individual soft skills, jot down each one in a frame. Let this be a guide as to which skills (AKA POWER SKILLS) to cultivate in the years ahead. Any of these would look great on a college/scholarship application or resume (be prepared to provide personal examples).





# LIFE HACK





Read carefully the Life Hack card you were provided. You'll need to learn the info well enough to teach it to others. Note that *teaching or sharing newly-learned info helps seal that learning into long-term memory*; it's one of the best ways to learn! Use this sheet to take notes.


**1** **WHAT IT IS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*how to hack it:* \_\_\_\_\_


**2** **WHAT IT IS:** \_\_\_\_\_   
*how to hack it:* \_\_\_\_\_


**3** **WHAT IT IS:** \_\_\_\_\_   
*how to hack it:* \_\_\_\_\_

**4** **WHAT IT IS:** \_\_\_\_\_   
*how to hack it:* \_\_\_\_\_

**5** **WHAT IT IS:** \_\_\_\_\_   
*how to hack it:* \_\_\_\_\_

**6** **WHAT IT IS:** \_\_\_\_\_   
*how to hack it:* \_\_\_\_\_

**7** **WHAT IT IS:** \_\_\_\_\_   
*how to hack it:* \_\_\_\_\_

**8** **WHAT IT IS:** \_\_\_\_\_   
*how to hack it:* \_\_\_\_\_



## be a good co-worker

Be a good coworker by meeting deadlines and doing your share of the work with a positive attitude. Show up to meetings prepared and on time. Don't disparage people's ideas or put them down. Engage with colleagues personally, getting to know them better through work projects and conversation. Try to end meetings on an upbeat note. Speaking of ubiquitous meetings, practice your best *meeting face*, a neutral, yet alert expression (concealing boredom or less-favorable emotions). Help foster a feeling of inclusivity by including others in projects or outings. When new employees arrive, be the first to introduce yourself and offer to show them the ropes. Find a mentor (they don't have to work in the same office) who can provide career guidance and support. Never take credit for another person's work. Be polite, but honest, in your feedback on projects or ideas.

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## contact your political representative



Part of being an adult is civic engagement, which can make the world a better place for everyone. If there's an issue you care about, contact your political representatives in Congress or at the state and local level. You can do this as an American citizen, even if you're not old enough to vote. Figure out who represents you by typing in your home address at [whoaremyrepresentatives.org](http://whoaremyrepresentatives.org). Here you will find their contact info to send an email or letter, but a phone call is quicker. Know what you want to say in advance. Try something like: *Hello, my name is Laney Gaga and I live in {City/State}. I am calling to let the senator know that I'm really worried about people having access to vote in our state. I hope she supports the bill coming up for a vote in order to protect our democracy.* You will likely leave a voice mail or talk to an aide who works for the politician. Easy!

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## effectively address conflict

Sometimes conflict happens. You don't have to like every person you interact with (and they may not like you) but you do need to find a way to get along, especially at work. It's not easy or comfortable when conflict arises; act quickly before the situation worsens. It will be harder to address later, so get to a resolution by having a direct and honest conversation with the individual(s) involved using this method:

1. Define the issue without accusation or blame.
2. Brainstorm possible solutions.
3. Discuss options available.
4. Make a plan of action.
5. Monitor and adjust the solution.

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## know proper dining etiquette



Occasionally, award banquets/ceremonies, job interviews, or various events in your career will involve a fancy dinner. This requires knowing some basic table manners. Note that silverware goes in the order you use it (by food courses), from the outside to the inside nearest your plate. Even if the food isn't to your liking, you should still attempt to eat as much as you can, as it appears rude to not eat. When necessary, you might need to engage in *surreptitious food redistribution strategies* (wink!), giving the appearance that you have eaten some of what was on your plate. If you must leave the table during dinner, say "Excuse me" and leave your napkin on your chair; once dinner is over, leave your napkin on the table to the left of your plate.

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## write a condolence note

Personal loss is part of life, sadly. It's not easy to choose the right words and may feel uncomfortable to address with others, but you should still write a note of sympathy (also called "condolence") for people you know (like friends and colleagues). The point is to simply say you are sorry for their loss and wish they didn't have to feel this grief. You are expressing support during a time of sadness. It can be brief, but sincere. The worst thing you could do or say (in times of loss) is nothing at all. A condolence note should be written and NOT texted. Try something like:  
*Dear Laney, I was so sorry to hear about the loss of your dog Spike. He was always such a friendly dog and must have been a great companion for your family. You must miss him very much. I'm thinking of you. Sincerely, {You}.*

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## properly complete official forms



You are going to complete many forms over the course of your life. To save the hassle of mix-ups and mistakes, you'd better know how to fill out forms and applications properly. First, read through the whole form and take note of specific instructions, such as "print" (meaning NOT in cursive), if other signatures are needed, or if a specific color of ink should be used. Next, fill in the sections, likely starting with your name. Note that spacing may be limited. Pay attention to which order your name should be listed (first or last name could come first). Your address may spread across two lines or more. For dates, be sure to notice if the format is MM/DD/YYYY, so the month and day should be two digits, and the year four digits, like 04/09/2003. Sign your full name in cursive. Double check the form before submitting.

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## calculate the appropriate tip amount

If someone serves you food, drives you in a taxi, cuts your hair, or provides a most any personal service, it is customary and good manners to pay them a tip beyond the cost of the service itself. Leaving a tip is not really optional in the U.S. because people who work service jobs count on this money to make a living wage. A general rule is tipping 20% beyond the total cost of the bill. An easy way to calculate is to figure 10%, then double it. It's simple to do because 10% means chopping off the last zero. If your coffee cost \$6.00, tip would be 60¢, then double it (\$1.20). For pizza/food delivery, you can tip less at 10-15%, but should tip at least \$5 no matter what. See a tip jar when ordering at the counter? Leave your tip there!

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## be a welcome guest



When you're invited to visit someone's home, the main message you want to express by words and demeanor is: "I'm happy to be here. Thanks for the invitation!" If other guests are there (whom you don't know), be sure to introduce yourself. When in doubt about anything, politely ask (do not assume it's okay to pet the dog or help yourself to food or drink). If your host offers choices about what to do, pick an option rather than saying you don't care. Go with the flow and follow the lead of the host. Be sure to clean up after yourself. Have a pleasant attitude and try to make good conversation while visiting. Pick up on social cues as to when is the best time to leave. Thank the host as you go. You could also send a note of thanks later.

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