



N. Marina/Shutterstock

LIFE OF THE POTTY IN 2023

By Carole Bober Gentry

I can't hold it in anymore. I just can't. Maybe I am being a bit dramatic but I'm starting to think that, in 2023, the world is overflowing with bad manners and poor judgement. This may sound trite when compared to the more pressing issues of the day, but sometimes, it's the little things that spur us into action. Quite frankly, this one makes me flush with frustration. And so, I hereby officially announce my opposition to Toilet Talkers. You know who they are – those increasingly irritating bathroom babblers who casually talk on their cellphones while sitting in public restroom stalls. These presumptuous “potty mouths” seem oblivious to the fact that they are exhibiting the cringiest type of behavior – the kind that seems so overtly inappropriate, it should be obvious to one and all. And yet, it's not. Am I missing something here or am I just plumb crazy?

A few weeks ago, I was at the airport, just got off the plane and, like many people, headed straight for the nearest bathroom. I ran into a stall, closed the door, and immediately heard a woman in the next stall exclaim loudly, *“What are you doing? Don't do that!”* I was a little taken aback. I wasn't doing anything unusual, just minding my business...while doing my business. Then I heard her laugh and say, *“No way, you asked him to go out with you?”* That's when I realized, much to my relief, then horror, that she wasn't speaking to me; she was talking on her cellphone while also on the toilet. I don't care if you're the King of England, we don't need to hear you bantering with your best friend while you're sitting on “the throne.” Nothing is that important that it can't wait until you are off the bowl -- and out of the bathroom. Nothing.

In card game terms Toilet Talkers hold the winning hand as the royal flush of bad bathroom behaviorists. Their inappropriate chatter invades our space, assaults our privacy, and threatens to destroy the sacred inner sanctum of the public bathroom -- a place of refuge, where we momentarily seek relief from the comings and goings of our busy lives. Unfortunately, "stall callers" have become an all-too common public nuisance and their numbers are growing. I took an informal survey of friends and acquaintances and discovered that while ladies' rooms are becoming clogged with cellphone stall talkers, men also engage in this tackiest of toilet tactics. One woman told me she had a boss who was so focused on time management, he would call her from the company bathroom to discuss work. He said it was a true timesaver. Really? Gross! To avoid listening to his comments from the commode, this woman would let his calls go to voicemail, then return them 30 minutes later in the hopes that he probably left the bathroom by then. Crazy, right?

But we don't have to take this sitting down. On the contrary, it's time to take a stand! Just as there are "No Smoking" signs posted in public places, I propose "No In-the-Stall Calls" signs. Or "Toilet Talkers Prohibited" posters warning people to refrain from this repugnant ritual. Let's make this our #1 (and while we're at it, #2) privy priority and encourage our citizens to give their phones a rest while in the restroom. If we work together, we can one day put an end to this loathsome latrine routine.

That's all I have to say on the subject. Quite honestly, this topic is draining. If you have an opinion you'd like to share, I'd love to hear it. But for now, I've gotta' go. No, not like that, silly. Until next time...



###