

TIPS
INSIDE!

DO talk to strangers

HOW TO
CONNECT
WITH ANYONE
ANYWHERE



K E R R I E P H I P P S

Do Talk To Strangers: How to Connect With Anyone, Anywhere - Travel Toolkit

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DO
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**How to Connect with Anyone,
Anywhere - Travel Toolkit**

Kerrie Phipps

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PART ONE



Welcome, Stranger and Friend!

Stranger: a person whom one does not know or with whom one is not familiar.

Strangers are people!

Since writing *DO Talk To Strangers - How To Connect With Anyone, Anywhere*, responses to the title, particularly the word ‘strangers’, have varied. Many people feel excited while some feel that it’s negative. Consider - is ‘money’ or ‘food’ negative or positive - or are they also words that you might or might not have a good relationship with? It’s simply a word we attach meaning to.

To one person, ‘strangers’ evokes a sense of fear, and to others, adventure, curiosity and perhaps compassion.

Your world expands with every person you meet. And when you appear in a relaxed and authentic way, you can create connections that are lasting.

They become relationships that create positive impacts in communities. You can also have brief, pleasant interactions with strangers whom you'll likely never see again, but you leave each other feeling enriched by the experience.

Forging new connections has the power to deepen learning and generate a sense of belonging. Connecting with others is also essential for thriving in life and in business. It expands our creativity, our understanding, communication skills, empathy and problem-solving ability.

This is what our world needs right now.

Around the globe, there's more fear of the unknown because we're all inundated with news of hate crimes, terror attacks and other traumas. What we're tuned in to affects and informs our thinking and decision-making processes. Much like being conscious of the food we consume,

we can make choices about the media we consume too.

You might be advancing in your career, building a thriving business and passing through a premium business class lounge but still feeling isolated and detached from the world around you. We all have moments and seasons of feeling ‘alone in a crowd’ but a change in the air can be just a moment away.

Perhaps you aren’t facing your own personal crisis of loneliness, but social isolation is a rising epidemic that is being called a health crisis in many nations. The government of the United Kingdom has appointed a Minister for Loneliness in response to the research in this area. So with the world in this disconnected state, your smile matters.

Talking to strangers - particularly when travelling - helps us to get a different

perspective; possibly from the other side of the world. When you're passing through an airport, you could connect with someone who less than 24 hours ago was living in or visiting a very different culture.

Researcher Brene Brown writes in her latest book *Braving the Wilderness*, “People are hard to hate close-up. Move in.”

When we have an open mind to hear the experiences and perspectives of people who are different than us, our assumptions are challenged and our opinions can quickly shift.

Strangers, in Jewish, Christian and Muslim writings and beliefs, are to be welcomed, honoured and shown hospitality. We're all people after all, and to many, it's believed to be an expression of the goodness of God.

*“People are hard to hate
close-up. Move in.”*

- Brené Brown

While we continue to fear strangers, we are fearing what's different or unknown to us, often without enough information to justify our solitude.

I've experienced gracious hospitality in the homes of people from many different faiths and backgrounds, shared meals with people who've lived in Antarctica, Alaska and Africa, in palaces, castles, refugee camps and all kinds of homes. They've changed my world and I'm grateful to every one of them.

I hope that throughout this book you find the tips to identify and be open to moments of connection. These moments can expand your world, increase your knowledge and insight into other cultures and the world around you. Discover new friends, clients, employees, employers, and opportunities to help others and feel the lightness of spirit that comes with even a small act of kindness.



Be kind whenever
possible.
It is always possible ♡

-Dakai Luma ~

Travel is an adventure... or a chore.

It depends on your perspective and your purpose. It might be business, pleasure, a delightful mix of both, or other reasons. Travel can change your world. Maybe it already has.

Based on many years of travel, connecting with fellow passengers, audience members and clients, along with learning from neuroscientists and psychologists, there are some things I know to be true, and worth the attention. Many science and business magazine articles go deeper into this, but as a little travel edition, we'll keep it simple. What it comes down to is that we all love a good conversation, but often avoid connecting with strangers 'just in case' or because we 'don't have the energy'.

You might be very busy, but I invite you to find adventure in your everyday, especially the days you commute or travel by any means - plane, train, bus, car, boat, bicycle, skateboard, horse or hoverboard... or even when you are walking!

The highs and lows of most travel, whether it's for work or pleasure, are mostly related to the people we encounter. Just by meeting someone new, you can suddenly shift from exhausted and isolated to energised and intrigued.

The people - fellow travellers or service providers - are the subject of many stories told around café tables, campfires and office water-coolers. We talk about the people we've met as we travel again, sharing with emotion. Perhaps we have been amused, annoyed, awestruck or fascinated. We share "Last time I was here, I met..."

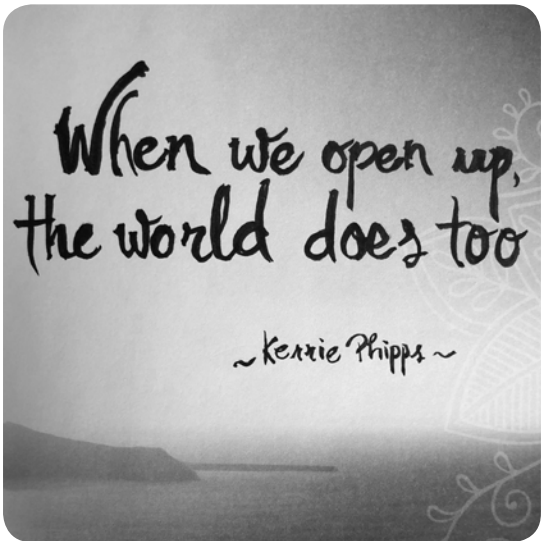
*Travel can change your world.
Maybe it already has.*

I often informally research as I travel, tucking away insights and stories that people share with me. I'm especially fascinated by the conversations I find myself in about talking to strangers. We might have talked about their trip, their family, adventures and experiences and they might ask me about my travels and what I'm doing. When I share that I've been invited to deliver a *Connect with Confidence* workshop, I mention the name of my book, *DO Talk To Strangers, How to Connect With Anyone, Anywhere*.

The response is either "Oh I don't talk to strangers", or "YES! I'm always talking to strangers!" They're often amused to realise that they're participating in the title of the book. When they say they don't talk to strangers, I observe "and yet, we've been having a lovely conversation. What's different?"

This is where it gets really interesting. People share what makes a good conversation and what doesn't. It's often about the questions I've asked and the genuine interest I've shown. It's about the listening, and I haven't asked the predictable, mundane questions that can be annoying or shallow. Most of the common elements are obvious such as smiles, tone and gestures, but we don't always pay attention. We tend to interact with others on autopilot much of the time.

But there is a world of opportunity that can be opened up just by raising awareness of thinking, connecting and listening skills. When we open up, the world does too.



When we open up,
the world does too

~ Kerrie Phipps ~

What if you could tell that someone was a kind, easy-going person, safe to share a conversation and maybe a meal with? In a moment, you often can.

Unfortunately, there are people with negative intent and we do need to be careful of where we interact and what information we share. We need to sharpen our intuition because it's like a muscle that can be developed.

We also need to be reminded that there is more good in the world than we know. It's not often that the good news stories are shared. When you're aware of the good news, you'll see more of it, but paying attention to negativity and scary news will affect you too. A common impact is an increase in fear and a tendency to disconnect.

*“We also need to be reminded that
there is more good in
the world than we know.”*

Many people I know are secretly amazing, anonymously making someone's day. They do things like paying for someone else's coffee or meal and giving a packet of lollies or fruit to road safety workers just to make them smile as it's widely known that they have to deal with impatient and sometimes rude drivers.

Quite often, the subject of someone's travel story is the weather or the sights, but it's not long until either a connection or lack of connection with other human beings enters the story. Even if at times you don't want another single person in your life, it's temporary. We're healthier and happier when we have a sense of connection with others. We're born for connection. We can't stay alive without others, and can't do life well without others.

If you realise at this point that you'd like more good news in your daily diet, find and follow Good Good Good on social media. I'm always encouraged and impressed by their posts.

PART TWO



Preparing and Packing

While this book is about the connections you can make while travelling, we'll start with some practical tips to reduce stress so that you can then feel free to connect with others. Of course, travel tips are often shared by frequent travellers. I've learnt some really interesting ideas from other passengers over time and love improving my travel habits!

Many people miss extraordinary opportunities because they're wrapped up in the stresses of travel and the busy nature of everyday life. It's a headspace issue, so let's look at some simple travel tips to create more smooth sailing.

Before the trip

Get advice from travel agents and other sources before you start because not all of the best deals are online.

Sometimes your local advisor can get you better prices and connections than you'll find on your own. They can also save you time, stress and money by asking questions you might not have already considered.

Check:

- Is your passport current with more than six months' validity? Make sure you have a safe place for it, so you never have to search frantically before heading to the airport.
- Do you need a visa for the country you're visiting?

Search online for your relevant government travel advice and warnings for your destination. For example:

- Singapore - www.mfa.gov.sg
- Australia - www.smarttraveller.gov.au
- United Kingdom - www.gov.uk

Handy tips:

- Pack light. Consider your schedule and your wardrobe. Do you really need the extra outfit? Paying for laundry occasionally is better than wasting time in airports waiting for luggage and expending energy dragging extra weight.
- Include noise-cancelling headphones and earplugs. They actually make a significant difference to your ability to sleep. A comfortable sleeping mask and a scarf will help too.
- Put small essentials inside shoes when packing.
- Roll instead of folding your clothes. Cylinders have the greatest possible volume for the least surface area. A bonus is being less crumpled.
- Use a glasses case to safely store cords and cables for phones, etc.
- Zip-lock bags are always handy,

and don't take up space. Hand sanitisers, moisturisers, face wipes etc can be put into tiny containers and a zip-lock bag.

- Keep mini toothpastes from hotels and airport lounges for future trips.
- A microfibre towel can be handy (mine packs into the size of a fist).
- Include snacks! With a full-on schedule, it's easy to skip meals and it's not as easy to be nice to people if you're hungry! Something as simple as a protein bar can help you keep going.
- Pack everything into your hand luggage. Invest in a small 'carry on' suitcase with wheels.
- Ask fellow travellers including friends and colleagues for their best tips and enjoy the feeling of travelling lighter and minimising physical and mental exhaustion. It can also be a great conversation starter when you're on the road!

*“Travelling light is a joy and
easier on your body.”*

Holding on and letting go

While your passport, cash, cards and other valuables are held close, be mindful of what is helpful to let go of, or hold lightly. Here's a possible list:

- Assumptions
- Judgments
- Needing to fix
- Needing to convince
- Sense of entitlement
- Needing to know the outcome
- Needing validation
- Needing to be right

Travelling light isn't simply an issue of luggage! You'll connect better when you're not weighed down or hindered by your judgments.

COACHING CORNER



What if you didn't have to convince anyone about your point of view or beliefs?

What if you let them think differently?



Look for opportunities to hear contrary perspectives and simply thank people for sharing. Travel lightly!

PART THREE



Connect, Discover and Enjoy

THE ASKING MODEL

- authentic connecting simplified

I created The ASKING Model for the first DO Talk To Strangers book to provide a framework to support confident connecting. It's about curiosity, permission and quality connections in any scenario.



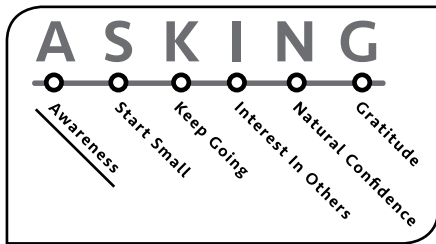
Consider how you wish to connect, sense if others might be open to connecting, and learn how to gauge each situation. We don't always feel in the zone to connect

with other people - a poor night's sleep, a stressful preparation or just feeling nervous about the trip or the destination take the edge off our ability to really see one another. Sometimes we do need time to be alone in our thoughts, catch up on emails or enjoy a good book.

People are often closed off to conversations simply because their brain is otherwise engaged. We don't know what is happening in their lives; they might have had an argument with someone, be worried about work or meeting deadlines, or could have just received bad news and are travelling to be with a loved one who is sick or injured. They might also be carrying some good news that they'd love to share with someone!

The ASKING Model helps us to tune in to ourselves and each other in various situations and be guided in our communications. You'll see examples of The ASKING Model throughout this book, and on reflection you'll see your own experiences reflected here too.

AWARENESS



This relates to ourselves, others and the space around us. The more self-aware we become, the more we realise that we think differently to those around us, regardless of culture. We become aware of the filters through which we see the world and the expectations we have of ourselves and others.

Once we are aware of our own assumptions, judgements and biases, we can begin to see the world differently, changing our attitudes and our responses to others.

We always have biases, but as we notice them, we can make choices to be more compassionate, connected and collaborative. We have these opportunities often as we travel, connect and reflect. I recall the 2011 Neuroleadership Summit in San Francisco was the first time I learned that scientists have discovered more than 100 human biases. If you'd like to explore this, check out "Cognitive Biases" on Wikipedia.

COACHING CORNER



What are you biased towards?
And away from?

Do you take a few moments throughout the day for self-awareness, to notice how you're feeling, how you're responding to various events and people? Sometimes you can spend so much time being busy that you don't notice an elevated heart-rate, the warmth of the sun on your skin or the feelings you have when you see and hear a child laugh. You mightn't even notice a tightness in your chest or stomach when you walk into a meeting, but others can feel it.

I remember being in the front row at a Neuroleadership Summit and hearing a panel of scientists and psychologists discussing their research and “when you suppress emotion, the other person's heart rate goes up”. Oh! This completely made sense, when I thought of those moments when you say to someone “are you ok?” They insist they're fine, but you can feel that something's not right.

Sometimes you're consciously suppressing emotion, trying not to be angry or stressed or sad but you also could be suppressing without even being conscious of it.

Are you aware of the space and environment and the people around you? To consider this, look around you and see the lack of awareness people show in their daily activities. You'll see people crossing roads, stepping on to trains and walking along streets with their head down, often looking at a device.

There are now cities in Australia, Asia and Europe with pedestrian lights in the streets, so that as you're looking down at your phone, you're more likely to see the lights and less likely to step out in front of traffic.

An article on www.usnews.com titled ‘Pedestrian deaths spiked in 2016...’ shows how people are dying from a lack of awareness, not looking where they were going.

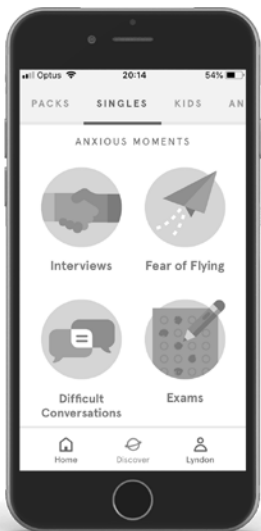
Awareness is something we must choose, since we are surrounded by too much information for our brains to process.

“Awareness is something we must choose, since we are surrounded by too much information for our brains to process.”

To increase your awareness, develop mindfulness practices. You can be mindful - completely present - with a cup of tea, a piece of fruit or chocolate... your thoughts will wander to other topics and conversations in your head, but bring your attention back to the present moment, tasting, touching, smelling, appreciating.

A really helpful resource is [Headspace.com](https://www.headspace.com) which is known for “Meditation Made Simple” because “Brilliant things happen in calm minds”.

At the time of print, they’ve also partnered with eleven airlines and reach over 800 million passengers a year! Enjoy the benefits.



Headspace app

START SMALL - WITH A SMILE



The first thing to consider is how you present yourself. Think about how your posture affects you because it also affects and influences others. It may seem like a small thing but body language and the way we hold ourselves has a massive impact on how others treat us.

“Think about how your posture affects you because it also affects and influences others.”

I had just left a hotel room with my suitcase in tow when a couple also came out of their room ahead of me. They began walking towards the lobby with their luggage. As we all walked along the hallway, I straightened my posture, realising as I did so that the woman ahead of me had just done the same. I was influenced by her to improve my posture before even realising I did so! They didn't even see me as I was behind them but it was a great reminder of how we can influence others without even knowing that we do.

Smile and step out of your comfort zone. We are surrounded by different cultures almost anywhere we go and we can either immerse ourselves or take some small steps towards learning more. A small start might be writing a few notes to yourself about your intention to connect.

Or stop for a little conversation with someone you deal with on a regular basis such as a shop assistant or clerk who's likely to have grown up in a different culture. Even a smile and wave as you go for a morning or evening walk is a great way to begin. If you're travelling, perhaps it's an offer to help a fellow passenger with their luggage or to move your own across a little to give them some space.

Kara Lambert has been familiar with The ASKING Model for a couple of years now since we met online and then at a conference in Sydney. She shared these thoughts about 'starting with a smile'. There's also powerful awareness of her inner world in these words.

“I travelled back from the US just months after 9/11. I hated it there, so I booked a flight back to Australia. The internal flights were non-eventful. Then, we sat on the tarmac in Dallas awaiting the flight to Sydney. As a female travelling alone, I anxiously watched the other passengers board. I had two free seats next to me. Would it stay that way or would someone come along to share the space with me such as a mum with a toddler, or (in this heightened state) a Muslim man. I shook my head, telling myself that I wasn’t someone to stereotype people and to stop those thoughts. So when a Muslim man came and sat next to me, I smiled at him and said ‘Hi, I’m Kara and I’m heading home to Australia’. He smiled and in a broad Aussie accent said, ‘I’m heading home to Australia too’. And at that point I knew I was safe. This is the point where I learnt to smile and talk to strangers on a plane.”

Kara could have stayed in the fear; instead her small act of smiling and starting a conversation changed how she handles travelling the world alone. I have a feeling it was a gift to her fellow traveller too.

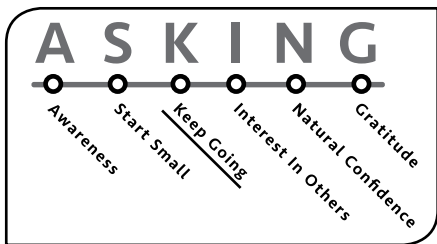
COACHING CORNER



When have you taken a small step that resulted in something significant?

What could you do this week to create a change?

KEEP GOING WITH QUALITY QUESTIONS



Were you one of those children with lots of questions? Eager to learn, curious. Perhaps your curiosity has been curbed by people who didn't appreciate your curiosity or couldn't answer your questions. For many adults, we need to reclaim the natural curiosity we've stifled or inhibited over the years.

*“When you ask quality
questions you’ll be amazed at
what you discover”*

When you ask quality questions as a way of life, you'll be amazed at what you discover in the world. Our curiosity allows us to learn more from others. Gaining permission doesn't have to be a question, it could begin with eye contact and a smile or questioning glance at the seat next to them on a train, bus or in an airport lounge, and a quality conversation might even start with a simple statement like "Thanks! I wasn't sure I'd find a seat!" The learning journey of connecting with others can be a bumpy ride at times but if you're committed to self-honesty and authentic connections, you'll continue to inspire and be inspired.

What makes a quality question?

Quality questions are questions that keep the conversation moving forward in a positive manner. Quality questions empower the conversation, unlocking ideas and insights.

They provide a fresh way of seeing a situation or the world. It causes a smile and creates a sense of connection.



- “Are you heading to (insert next destination here) or further on?”
I realised the power of this early one morning, asking “are you going to Sydney today or further on?”
The response “to Germany for a few days to see my parents... then to London to work at the Olympics” was the beginning of a really enjoyable conversation and the beginning of a friendship with our families.

Asking the same question another day, the response was “Dubbo to Delhi!” - via Sydney and Singapore.

That conversation was not only pivotal for me, but the lady I spoke with was so grateful for our conversation - in many trips from Delhi to Australia, no other passenger had spoken with her. She shared with me that she had taught English in Delhi for most of her life and told me “You should speak in India”.

I considered the incredible impact of her career, and how her students would be working all around the world by now. I think of her often, and I've since spoken in India to over 6000 people.

- “How’s the coffee?”
In a café in Sydney airport, I’d chosen a table because of the powerpoint on it, plugged my phone in to charge, but hadn’t decided on a drink. Although my first question to a young man nearby was actually “would you

like a seat?” - as there weren't many available - my question about the coffee was the connector, and soon we were discussing our destinations. Mine, Malaysia and his, Rio - for the Olympic Games, where he would be broadcasting for television channels around the world.

Not only did we enjoy the chat - especially as I love hearing about the Olympics - we discovered later that his sister had read my book and loved it.

- “Good morning! How are you?”
- “Is this trip business or pleasure? Or both?” (for me it's generally both. I love what I do!)
- “What's your favourite destination? (or favourite airport, airline, anything relevant)

People so easily discuss the worst places, events etc, but turning this around and asking about the best can put smiles on faces and lift spirits. Consider, would you rather hear someone's negative experiences and encounters, or positive ones? And how's your energy after such conversations?

Other quality questions might be as simple as 'What else?' or 'What was that like?'

COACHING CORNER



What questions have you asked that worked well? And have you asked questions that you won't ask again?



Consider how you can ask simple questions that serve others, put them in a good headspace to share interesting and pleasant things.

INTEREST IN OTHERS



Sometimes we're genuinely interested in someone else immediately, but at other times we're too busy in our own heads to really notice them.

However, when we:

- choose to be interested,
- respect someone enough to give them a few minutes, and
- really SEE them...

we can find them so much more interesting than at first glance.

Sometimes, I've paid attention to someone talking to me, initially to be polite. Then as I'm thinking of exiting the situation respectfully, they say something that genuinely interests me and I want to know more.

On an early morning flight after a week of travelling and speaking, I was 'too tired' to engage but I found myself in conversation with the man sitting beside me. I learned about how to protect myself against spam, and how hackers work. It was an incredibly valuable conversation in my early days of emailing that I'm sure has saved me countless hours of frustration. Quick tip – don't click on any links you're not certain of!

More recently on a flight to Singapore, I'd decided to sleep - but just get a cup of tea first - when a gentleman standing at the back of the plane caught my

attention. He was chatting with the flight attendants and I noticed his energy. I wondered if he was recently retired and excited about holidays. I honestly didn't feel like getting into a conversation, but I was a little curious and let go of my 'need to sleep' for a little while. He was clearly an interesting, friendly person, genuinely interested in others.

He'd lived in many different countries throughout his career and was 'officially-retired' but researching for a thesis, and working with organisations helping to care for refugees who've fled persecution and war zones.

Within minutes, we'd found mutual friends - following a mention of my hometown, Gilgandra - and I thought of people I wanted to introduce him to cheer him on in his mission and possibly help more people.

In letting go of my plans, to be present with someone while I waited for tea, I learned more about the world from someone who's been just about everywhere.

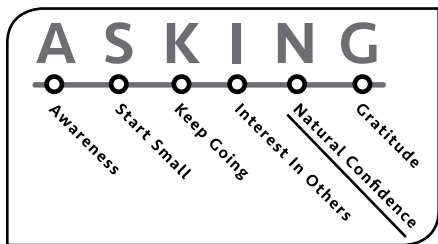
Polite exits

If you don't feel up to engaging, take a moment to respectfully excuse yourself: 'I really need to do some work, or I'm exhausted, I just need to nap for a while. Is that okay?'

If you can, thank the person for what they've shared with you and acknowledge them in some way. When people feel heard, even for a short while, they feel validated and respected, and are more likely to respect your needs.

“When people feel heard, even for a short while, they feel validated and respected, and are more likely to respect your needs.”

NATURAL CONFIDENCE



You are most confident when you're actually being yourself, when you let go of pretence and expectations to be knowledgeable, professional or otherwise 'all-together'. Think of the things you do every day without thinking. Perhaps it's driving a car, using your mobile, conversations with friends or finding your way around familiar places.

You don't recognise that you're doing these things confidently because you're simply doing them. Perhaps you can recall that you weren't always as confident or comfortable in these practices.

We lose confidence when we have expectations on ourselves that we probably wouldn't have on others. We allow our friends and colleagues to be human and forgive them for being a little awkward and we probably seek to reassure them.

Generally, we're much harder on ourselves which makes our confidence drain away further.

Be okay with awkward!

Come to terms with awkwardness and accept that it's part of connection and beyond that short moment, there can be an adventure!

If you feel awkward and suppress it, you'll keep yourself inhibited and unable to connect. You'll miss the joy of genuine connection and find yourself lonely.

Remember:

- There's always a possibility of awkward moments; breathe.
- Being honest can be liberating; name it.
- Everyone feels awkward at times - even if you don't see it. Don't stress - you're in good company.

The more we travel and learn, the more we realise there is to learn. There's no end of learning in the world, and we are surrounded by incredible teachers in the people we meet. When we're more curious and open to learning rather than trying to impress, we're more confident to step out of our comfort zone and connect, ask questions and share something of ourselves.

*“We are surrounded by
incredible teachers in the
people we meet.”*

When we appreciate our surroundings - the colours, flavours and views - we're more ready to connect.

A couple of days after speaking at the ARTDO (Asian Regional Training and Development Organization) Leadership Conference in Manila I was interviewed on radio and invited to a 'Meet the CEO' event on the same night.

Due to traffic and a lost driver, I arrived at the second event as people were beginning to leave, but was still welcomed in with enthusiasm to come and meet the CEO and leadership team. As I was being ushered in, I passed a tall young Englishman on his way out. I saw a brightly coloured book on a table and asked my host, "Is that his book?" "Yes!" she replied, "That's Tom, our guest speaker!".

I excused myself quickly and followed him out, keen to meet him before he left. Apart from the fact that I love connecting with other speakers, his book title (and matching business cards beside it) grabbed my attention; “The Genius Of The Poor”.

I introduced myself and commented on his great book and that he was the only other person I knew with his book cover image filling one side of his business card - and showed him my card. He laughed when he saw “Do Talk To Strangers” and made a comment about that being the reality of the moment. He was not only open to a conversation with this stranger who chased him out, but when I was so inspired by what he shared with me I asked him “Can we please share this moment on Facebook live? I’d love to introduce you to more people!” he agreed.

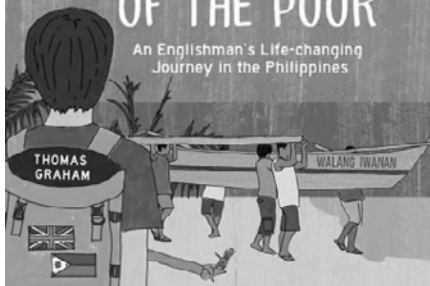
“Time to ditch the shirt and tie...”

- Tony Meloto, the Founder of Gawad Kalinga



THE GENIUS OF THE POOR

An Englishman's Life-changing
Journey in the Philippines



Not wanting to delay him from his departure - for too long - I quickly started a livestream and asked Tom to share about his book - which is his story of coming to the Philippines as a British journalist, meeting ‘Nation Builder’ Tony Meloto, and through him discovering “the genius of the Filipino poor”.

I was incredibly inspired by his story, and we connected on Facebook so we could keep in touch. The next day we discovered via Messenger that we were in the same neighbourhood of this massive city, and could meet for breakfast the following morning; my last day in the Philippines. Within a minute of meeting Tom - at a cafe 200 metres from my apartment - he asked me, “So where exactly in Australia are you from?” “Dubbo...” (ready to explain how far from Sydney it is) “Dubbo?!”

“You know Dubbo? Have you been there?”

“No, someone from Dubbo has been here, to the Enchanted Farm.”

I immediately replied “Riverbank Frank!”

Tom was astonished. “You know Riverbank Frank?”

“Yes! We all do! Frank is a well known, influential local indigenous man, a community leader. In fact, I have a photo of Frank and me in my PowerPoint, and have spoken about him several times in the Philippines - in Cebu and Manila!”

Tom and I were both amazed - that we connected and discovered a mutual friend so quickly - and so randomly. I'd known that Frank had been to the Philippines, and had told Filipino audiences that he'd been to see and learn from community development programs there. He was featured in my ‘Interest in others’ part of The ASKING Model in my presentation,

because the photo of us is a moment captured when we were deep in conversation, clearly interested in each others views.

Frank is one of those people you could pass in the street, possibly make judgements about, and have no idea of how knowledgeable, experienced, and deeply caring he is.

I share this story of connecting with Tom in the Natural Confidence chapter because my curiosity and interest in the cover of Tom's book compelled me to connect with him, confident that he'd be happy to talk to me.

When you are interested, curious, and with only a moment to take action before it's gone, you're more bold to step forward.

When you're nervous, you're thinking about yourself; when you're focused on others, or something of interest, the nerves disappear. If you overthink things, or decide all the reasons that someone won't want to talk to you, you'll miss the moment, and lose your confidence.

Be happy - this is a more confident state to be in. My Grandma said once, when asked about her confidence "oh... I just assume that people will like me!"

If they don't - nevermind - there are billions more people to connect with! Of course Grandma was a really sweet person, generous and hospitable so it was easy for people to like her.

What a treat, to discover the 'Frank connection' in a city of millions!

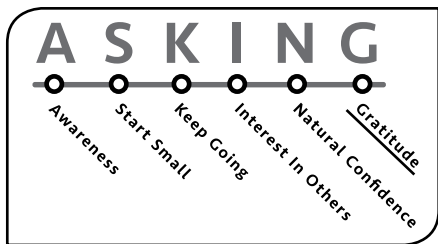
COACHING CORNER



When are you most confident?

How can you put a bounce in your own step, to connect from a happy place?

GRATITUDE



Gratitude: the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation, and to return kindness.

This attitude, when honestly developed, practiced and expressed, is not only enormously good for our own mental health, but it's also a powerful connector. Gratitude is universal. We all love to be appreciated and even a small nod of acknowledgement can open a door of connection or opportunity.

*“We all love to be appreciated
and even a small nod of
acknowledgement can open a
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opportunity.”*

Patricia Lim - a HR manager with an attitude of gratitude - created a connection with me that has had a profound ripple effect: following my Connect with Confidence presentation at the ARTDO conference in Manila, Patricia approached me with a little gift and post-it note, introducing herself and expressing her thanks.

I'm always grateful to know how my work has an impact, and I was honoured and encouraged by her comments. She later gave me another gift and note, so of all the many wonderful connections I had with other speakers and delegates, Patricia had a special place in my memories of the conference. Her efforts to convey gratitude beyond words and taking photos with me put her at the top of my list of people to see in the days after the conference before leaving for Australia and Singapore in the coming week.

Gratitude often goes both ways. Consider how many times you've been part of, or witnessed a conversation like this, "Thank you!" "No, thank YOU!" If you find yourself saying this, try leaving out the "No" or replacing it with "and". Accept someone's thanks graciously, even while offering your own. You wouldn't want your thanks refused, would you?

The sense of gratitude that connected Patricia and I resulted in far reaching consequences. It was because of Patricia that I moved to a different part of the city for a few days after the conference, from Ortigas to Century City, Makati where more adventures unfolded.

She invited me to her 'Meet the CEO' event mentioned above, where I connected with Tom Graham, and it really was just the beginning of many amazing experiences. She hosted me in an Airbnb apartment for a couple of

nights to be closer to the action, and several months later, booked a Connect With Confidence session for sales managers.

This also gave me the opportunity to accept Tom's invitation to speak at the Enchanted Farm, north of Manila and to meet the founder Tony Meloto. The farm is referred to as 'The Silicon Valley of the Philippines'. It was a great honour speak to an assembly of the students and young entrepreneurs and tour the farm, visiting the many enterprises that are lifting countless Filipino's out of poverty.

I took my mother on this trip and was able to return two months later with my mother-in-law, husband and son.

Many people have grown and been inspired because of the gratitude with which Patricia connected. We're all grateful!

COACHING CORNER



What doors have opened because of your gratitude? Or someone else's?

Where can you genuinely offer thanks?



Look for someone to acknowledge today - be specific, mindful and sincere.

MORE TRAVEL STORIES

My friend, colleague and mentor Rob Salisbury is a frequent flyer who loves connecting with people as he travels. He mentioned recently in an email that he has noticed an increase in the quality of service he receives including many upgrades, over a number of years since he *“started to ‘pay more attention’ to the senior crew and attendants or hotel team while travelling overseas and domestically.”*

People in service industries encounter some less-than-pleasant customers, so when Rob - or any one of us - treats them with respect and appreciation, they're more likely to be kind and generous. Rob says this increase, *“... has been a unique combination of awareness with appreciation...”* and he conveys this with sincerity. At times they need to upgrade someone because a flight or hotel is overbooked, so imagine if you were arranging seating

or rooms - what kind of person would you offer a better option to?

Rob lights up the faces of the people he engages in transit as he does from the stage in conferences. I referred to this kind of attitude in the first *DO Talk To Strangers* book as 'being a good customer'. We don't simply deliver good customer service when our business is in action, we choose to **#BeAGoodCustomer** whenever we interact with humanity. The attitude of 'customer service' can be taken anywhere. It's simply 'serving others'.

Rob also shared with me a lovely moment at the Melbourne airport check-in area where he had a brief connection with Jimmy Barnes and his wife Jane. Jimmy is an Australian rock music legend. Rob was nearby to help Jane - as he'd help anyone - with her luggage as it became stuck when she was checking in.

He was thrilled with the smiles and thanks from both Jimmy and Jane, and brief chat with Jimmy.

He added *“Kerrie, it was a fun moment of interaction that had its own magic in the simplest of human connection kind of ways - you share in your talks and book, DO TALK TO STRANGERS - in this case, I was helping a super stars’ wife in a moment that got an immediate, positive interaction and huge smile from Jimmy Barnes.*


By the way, taking a photo with him or her would have blown the whole thing as it would have been too pushy and rude to ask.....hence my wife and I get to own this story and experience as if it were anyone else whom we were helping in a moment along our normal day travel experience.”

Some people would say “You should have taken a selfie!” but you can only know in the moment if it’s appropriate. I’d say Jimmy would oblige, but then Rob would be like any other fan. My guess is that Jimmy and Jane might find it refreshing to interact with respectful people who don’t make a fuss, but let them travel like everyone else.

Coen Tan is another speaker friend who, like Rob, I connected with through Asia Professional Speakers Singapore. Coen shared this story after visiting Chicago - a lovely example of a small step being the beginning of a positive encounter.

“I was walking around one of the landmarks there which offers breathtaking views of the city - 360 Chicago at John Hancock Tower. I was enjoying myself so I decided to have a drink at the rooftop bar. I noticed a distinguished looking gentleman also by himself, having a beer. I made a simple gesture of sharing a toast with him.

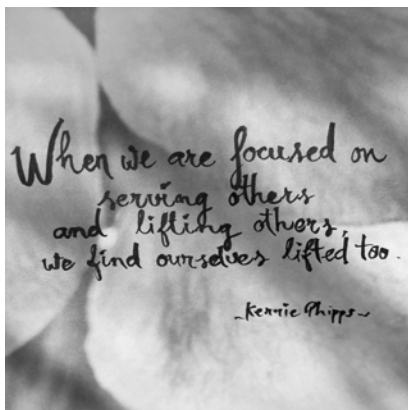
We clinked glasses and it started a meaningful conversation. Raj shared that his parents had come from India to seek a living and he was born in the USA. He's been lucky to have carved out a good career for himself and even worked in Wall Street before he found the stress was taking a toll on his health and family life. He is now happily working for Microsoft in Seattle and takes time out to travel and just enjoy life."



Sometimes you never forget a travel encounter, and we don't realise how much a little help can mean to someone. When we are focused on serving others and lifting others up, we find ourselves lifted too.

"Waiting to leave Beirut airport (1987), Mum, my sister and I heading to Australia with \$200, I overheard a lady (from Sri Lanka) who was checking in to go visit her family (she was working in Lebanon) but the person

behind the counter was telling her she had excess luggage but she didn't have money to pay so she was begging him to let her on! I ran to my Mum (I was 14) and begged her to help... after Mum spoke with him, he let the lady onto the plane. Mum said the electricity she felt when that lady hugged her was indescribable... from that point she knew everything was going to be ok... 30 years later we are so very blessed and prosperous. Till this day I am convinced she was an angel.”
- Anne-Marie Attlee Kehres



A final story I need to squeeze in comes from a new friend I met in a cafe recently, when she'd just arrived from the other side of the world.

“From a young age I realised the importance of reaching out to people, strangers or not. My mother inevitably taught me this as that’s all she seemed to do when we were out. Despite a long history and struggle with depression and anxiety, my mother would always strike up a conversation with anyone she could. I didn’t understand the significance of this until my late teens when I found myself surrounded by people but in complete isolation.

Like most people, I had an internal battle with embarrassment and fear of rejection, combined with the feeling of raw loneliness and desperation to reconnect. This battle went on for several years until I found myself working in psychiatric healthcare and realised I wasn’t alone in my thinking.

In some way or another, we're all looking for the comfort others can bring us. I saw how the smallest act of humanity (a smile, a nod of acknowledgement, a kind word) could make someone feel a little less isolated, often bringing meaning back to their life.

The importance of talking to strangers was increased when I left my UK home and everyone I knew and loved for a flight to Australia, not knowing whether I would return. I threw myself head first into the unknown. I forced myself to interact with anyone and everyone so that I would avoid the pain of being on the outskirts looking in. The fear of rejection had never been so great, but the pay off has never been greater. Completely immersing myself in this risk has led me to find some truly amazing friends as well as helping me to love wholeheartedly.

*It's so easy to get wrapped up in thoughts and everyday life, but a daily reminder to remain present helps increase my self awareness and ground me.” - **Kirsten Partridge***

PART FOUR

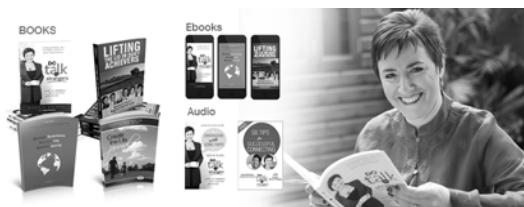


Bonus Tools

KEEP LEARNING AND CONNECTING

Now it's your turn! I hope you've enjoyed these stories and ideas, and will see more opportunities to connect, learn, enjoy and cause more good in the world.

Please share your stories, on social media with [#DoTalkToStrangers](#) and [#ConnectWithConfidence](#) - and if you'd like to send me a story for consideration for the next Do Talk To Strangers book - message me directly via social media, or through www.kerriehipps.com



CONNECT WITH KERRIE FOR YOUR TEAM AND/OR CONFERENCE

CONNECTING with
Confidence



As a speaker and leadership coach, Kerrie inspires and equips audiences with thought-provoking and practical tools to develop the confidence they need to expand their network and create more opportunities.

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RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Good Good Good:

www.goodgoodgood.co

Brené Brown: www.brenebrown.com

Headspace: www.headspace.com

Articles:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/17/world/europe/uk-britain-loneliness.html>

<https://hbr.org/cover-story/2017/09/work-and-the-loneliness-epidemic>

<https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2017-03-30/distraction-citied-as-pedestrian-deaths-spiked-in-2016>

GRATITUDE AND COLLABORATION

Creating this book in a short timeframe highlighted my need to collaborate and the joy of sharing a creative journey.

Immense gratitude:

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together across the world.

Thank you to everyone in my world who
cheers me on - from next door or across
the globe. You remind me how much it
matters that we connect and encourage
the world around us.

Gratitude and collaboration is not complete without YOU, the reader. Thanks for coming on this journey! As a result of the purchase or gift of this copy of this book we have given access to life-giving water for families in Cambodia. We do this through our partnership with B1G1. We make a bigger difference, together.

Cheering you on,

Kerrie

Social Media



Facebook Page

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Instagram

@kerriehipps



Connect - Remember to connect

well online; keep it personal by including a note or a question

(to demonstrate you're a real person) 😊

NOTES TO REMEMBER MY NEW CONNECTIONS...

