

# Talking to Strangers

by Malcolm Gladwell

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A printable to-do list of the most effective habits from this book. Check one off each day you do it.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

<sup>01</sup> **Run a Transparency Check**

When you make a strong read from someone's tone, face, or body language, write two alternative explanations that fit the same visible behavior before acting.

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<sup>02</sup> **Separate Trust from Verification**

In one important decision, name what you are trusting and what you can verify independently. Keep goodwill intact while checking the facts.

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<sup>03</sup> **Map the Context Around the Person**

Before judging a stranger's character, list the pressures in the room: role, status, fear, audience, fatigue, alcohol, money, or authority.

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<sup>04</sup> **Ask the Slower Question**

Replace 'what kind of person would do that?' with 'what situation might make this behavior more likely?' This keeps context in the investigation.

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<sup>05</sup> **Design One Safeguard**

For a recurring high-stakes interaction, create a small procedure that reduces snap judgment: a second reviewer, a written checklist, or a cooling-off pause.

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<sup>06</sup> **Debrief One Misread**

Choose a time you were wrong about someone. Identify which failure mode was present: default-to-truth, transparency error, missing context, or premature certainty.