

October is



**CONFLICT RESOLUTION
MONTH IN COLORADO**
Listen. Talk. Work it Out.

About Us

Each year, Conflict Resolution Month in Colorado selects a book that enhances problem-solving skills and/or inspires dialogue. Over 450 copies of the book are distributed across Colorado - to the governor and lieutenant governor; legislators; supreme, district, and appellate court judges; alternative dispute resolution professionals; and various public libraries, including Free Little Libraries.

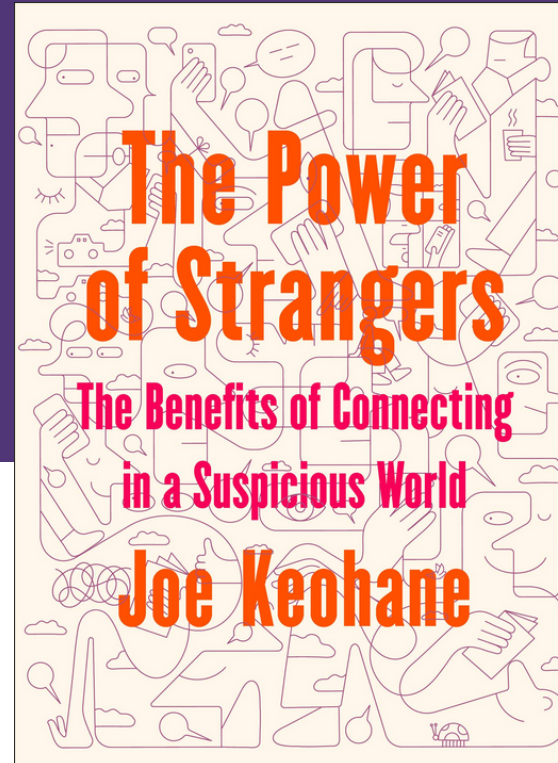
This Reader's Guide was created to further conversation and inspire connection with others.

Learn more. Get involved.

www.conflictresolutionmonth.org



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2022
Book
Selection

Explore what happens when we take steps to get to know those around us. Learn how to move beyond fear and distrust to create mutually beneficial connections through small and everyday interactions. Real-life examples and research help us to find value in getting to know those we don't know.

"An acclaimed, entertaining, surprising, and inspiring look at why we don't talk to strangers, how we can, and what happens when we do."

Guiding Questions

FEAR OF STRANGERS:

Many have been taught that strangers are to be feared. From messages received from our parents as children about "stranger danger" to historical examples of persecution of people for being different — fear has driven how we do or don't interact with those we perceive as others.

Questions: Can you think about a time when you chose not to interact with someone whom you felt was "different"? What fear(s), if any, played into your decision not to engage? What might encourage you to engage differently in the future? OR What fears do you have about talking to strangers? Where do you think they come from?

ASSUMPTIONS:

The author highlights pluralistic ignorance, or everyone having the wrong idea about everyone else, as a huge contributor to folks not engaging with one another. Many people believe that nobody else wants to engage/talk or they assume that rejection will occur. We underestimate, dehumanize, and treat strangers as obstacles rather than see them as contributors to the path we are on.

Questions: Who in society are your strangers? (The people you have little contact with, may be at odds with, or simply do not understand.) What assumptions do you have/hold about them?

EVOLUTION OF RELATIONS:

Engaging with others used to be required to be successful. Humans were more likely to survive and thrive with a stronger network of support and relations, as collaboration and indirect reciprocity led to better outcomes for all involved. The impact of being exclusionary or inclusionary has shifted as society, technology, and relations have changed over time.

Questions: In what ways, if any, have you seen a shift in your own interactions or those of your family, region, country, etc.? How have these positively or negatively affected you?

IMPACT OF TALKING TO STRANGERS:

Research has shown that interacting with strangers makes us better people, more compassionate, happier, connected, optimistic, and understanding. It improves not just our own life, but the lives of those we interact with too. Findings suggest that those who talk with strangers enjoy it, feel more trusted and optimistic, are less lonely, and have reduced prejudices.

Questions: How has talking to strangers influenced your life or way of thinking?

TIPS FOR CONNECTING:

Throughout the book, the author provides stories, tips, and examples to ease into conversation with strangers. Whether using small talk to discover and establish little connections, noting incidental similarities to create a stronger feeling of kinship, or using mere belonging as an invitation/icebreaker — these techniques can ease anxiety and open the door to both connection and conversation.

Questions: What connecting tips or examples from the book resonated with you? What other tips or strategies have you found helpful in your own interactions? What learned habits, if any, might be keeping you from talking to strangers?

A BETTER FUTURE:

Keohane writes, "You cannot hope to be a good citizen, you cannot hope to be a moral person, if you do not recognize that the world is a very different place for the person sitting next to you." He suggests that when we engage in conversation with someone who is a stranger, we connect with their humanity, and that this can shift our view from ourself or our own bubble to a better understanding of the other person's experience of reality, and help to build social trust among groups and in society.

Questions: When you want to talk to a stranger what inspires you to connect? In what ways have the interactions you've had expanded your self-view or worldview?