



Peninsula Chinese Business Association

美國華聯商會

*Leading because we care*

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## Writer Message

March 1, 2025

Dear Members and Friends:

In this “Spring Highlights,” I emphasize my interest in exploring human connections and gaining a deeper understanding of others. Genuinely knowing someone requires curiosity, empathy, and meaningful interactions that extend beyond the surface, whether in professional, personal, or social contexts.

From my experiences, I’ve learned that getting to know someone goes beyond merely asking questions; it requires actively listening to their stories, observing their actions, and understanding their values. Engaging in meaningful conversations, noticing behavioral patterns, and appreciating differences all contribute to uncovering a person’s true nature.

My approach to understanding people is rooted in personal experiences and research-driven techniques. I focus on active listening, asking insightful questions, and observing how individuals react in various situations, like handling pressure, confronting challenges, and expressing their emotions. A person’s life experiences, actions, relationships, painful moments, and responses reveal more about them than words alone.

I read a book titled “How to Know a Person” by David Brooks. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this topic in the newsletter and explore how my insights can enhance the understanding of human personality. Please feel free to reach out and share your thoughts with me.

In this issue, I spotlight a true story experienced by Angie Sam Lee, where the risks and consequences do not overshadow her empathy and compassionate heart for acts of kindness.

Thank you for your time; I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

*Johnny Da Rosa*

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## The Art of Knowing a Person

One essential skill for knowing someone is recognizing and appreciating others intensely. This means genuinely understanding another person so they feel valued, heard, and understood. However, many struggle with the reality that we encounter individuals who feel invisible, overlooked, and misunderstood everywhere we go. When people feel unseen, they often withdraw socially, hesitant to let anyone into their inner world.

How can we look someone in the eye and recognize something significant within them that, in turn, helps us see something more profound in ourselves? To truly know someone, you must understand how they perceive you. Looking at a person differs from looking at an object because they look back at you. Respect is a gift you offer with your eyes.

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## Start with a Good Talk

To start knowing someone, it begins with small talk. A good conversation isn't simply a group exchanging statements; it's an act of shared exploration. A conversation ignites thoughts you've never encountered before, begins in one place, and concludes in another.

Good conversations invite stories about specific events or experiences and encourage deeper exploration. You want to discuss what happened and how you felt during that experience. Was the dominant emotion dread, humiliation, or maybe relief? Sometimes, you can learn more about a person by observing how they interact with a server than by asking deep questions about their philosophy of life.

When you first get to know someone, it's best not to try to peer into their souls immediately. When you ask people about their lives, they often start in the middle of their careers. However, if you encourage them to reflect on their beginnings, you can guide the conversation from their professional lives to their personal experiences. This approach helps you understand how they treat others, whom they love, and their actions to improve the world. Humble questions are open-ended, allowing the other person to take charge and steer the conversation wherever they wish.

The worst questions are those that neither require a surrender of power nor disregard evaluation, such as where you attended college, which neighborhood you live in, or details about your job. They said, "I'm about to judge you."







Closed questions have fundamental flaws. For example, if you mention your siblings, I ask, “Were you close?” I restrict your explanation of your relationship with them to a simplistic close/distant dichotomy.

The other sure way to shut down conversations is to ask vague questions, like “How’s it going?” or “What’s up?” These questions are impossible to answer.

### **Strengthen Relationships with Empathy**

The quality of your relationships shapes the quality of your life. A person with strained relationships with their spouses is more likely to experience dementia in later years, and those raised in a cold environment often turn to various prescription drugs. Angry young people frequently direct their anger toward others as they grow; this anger escalates and leads to misinterpreting and misreading those around them. If you genuinely wish to understand someone, you must learn about the struggles and blessings of their childhood and the defensive strategies they carry throughout their lives. Additionally, it's vital to understand who they were before experiencing losses and how they reshaped their outlook afterward. The essential role of people’s narratives is to help you see their life story, where they are the heroes. How are they able to stand among the rubble of life?

Empathy is vital in every stage of getting to know someone. It involves seeing through another’s eyes, listening with ears, and feeling with another’s heart. Empathy is both a social and emotional skill. A person who feels secure from the dependable and empathetic support of others experiences life with a broader, more open, and happier perspective.

## Dive Deep into Personality Traits

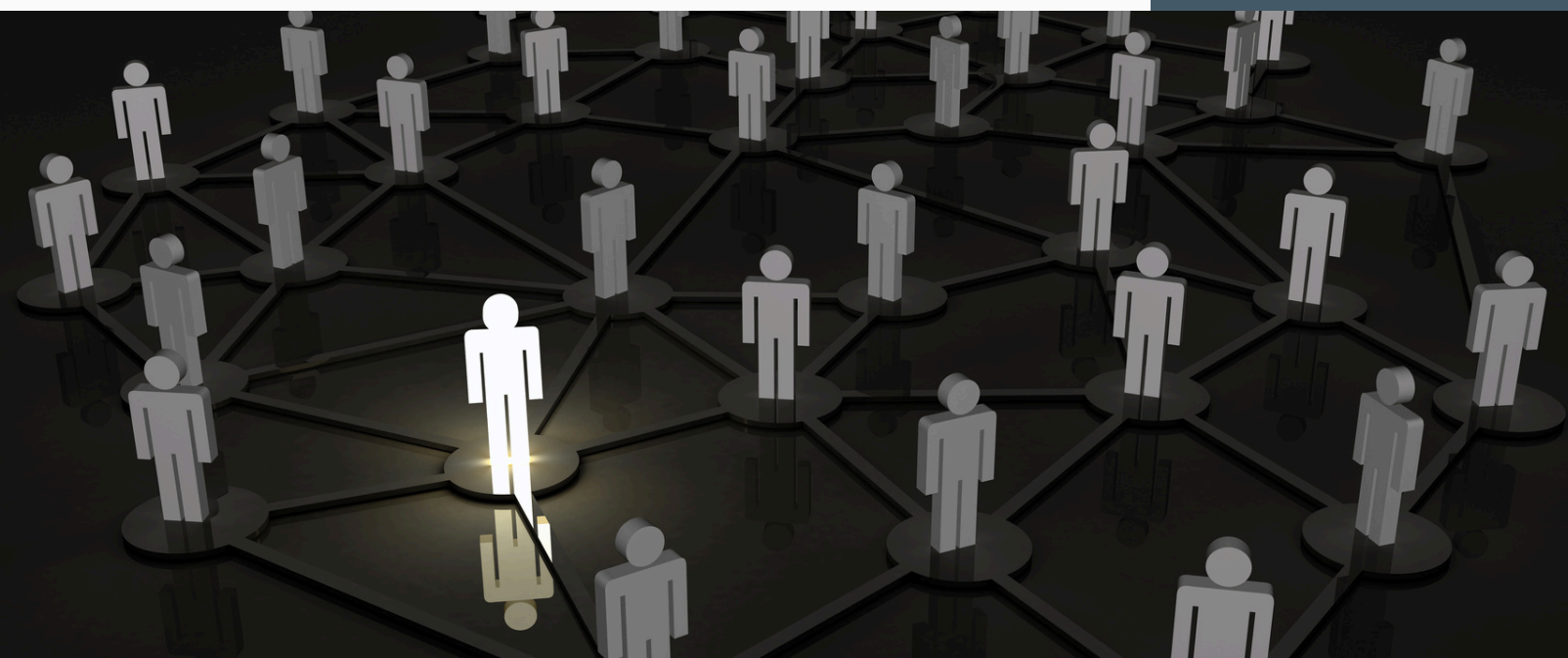
We all enter this world with diverse personalities, which equip us to fulfill different social roles. Personality traits are dispositional signatures and habitual ways of seeing, interpreting, and reacting to a situation. Every personality trait is a gift; it enables its bearer to serve the world in a valuable way.

The problem is that people who are terrible at understanding others' personalities think they are just as good as those who are pretty accurate. For example, the longer many couples are married, the less precisely they read each other.

Personality traits certainly don't reveal everything about someone. Still, they are a crucial part of a person's makeup and can predict specific life outcomes just as accurately as a person's IQ or socioeconomic status can. Moreover, understanding a person's personality traits is key to treating them appropriately.

If you are planning to marry someone, you need to understand not only that person's appearance, interests, possessions, and career prospects but also how their personality developed during childhood has evolved into adulthood and whether their deepest longings align with yours. If you are considering hiring someone, you shouldn't consider only the qualities listed on their resume but also the subjective aspects of their personality.

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These traits can motivate some individuals to work hard, feel comfortable with uncertainty, remain calm in a crisis, or show generosity toward their colleagues. Behavior is how we speak the unspeakable.

Each of us has been given the gift of a unique personality, which can be used to create an extraordinary life over time. Although many still believe that personality is unchangeable, people generally improve as they age, becoming more agreeable, conscientious, and emotionally stable. Like wine, they improve with age.

*Sources: David Brooks*

Johnny DaRosa



## **A Story of Humanity with a Simple Act of Kindness**

It was a typical morning in 2016 when I went to the bank, unaware that a simple decision that day would stay with me for years. As I walked to my car after finishing my errands, I noticed two young boys, barely in their early teens, standing by the roadside with their luggage. Something about their presence struck me—they hadn't moved since I first saw them about half an hour ago.

Curious and concerned, I approached them and asked if they needed help. I soon discovered that they didn't speak English. I then communicated with them in Mandarin, inquiring why they were standing by the road with their luggage. They explained that they had just arrived from China and were waiting for their ride, which would arrive in two hours. This made me uneasy, so I offered to take them to a nearby Starbucks for some food and drinks while they waited.

As we sat down, I asked if they had the driver's phone number to check his arrival time. What I discovered shocked me—the driver was in Fresno, nearly five hours away. Their parents had mistakenly booked their flight to San Francisco instead of Los Angeles, leaving them stranded in an unfamiliar place.

The thought of these two boys standing outside on the street for hours, unable to communicate or even find a restroom, was unbearable. I had them call their parents in China on my phone to reassure them that they were safe. After spending about an hour with them, I couldn't bear to leave them waiting for the driver who was five hours away. I then asked the boys if they would like to come home with me while we waited. They gladly accepted.



At home, I let them relax, watch TV, play on my laptop, and made them lunch. Throughout the day, I kept in touch with the driver to check on his arrival time. When my husband and children came home, they were shocked that I had picked up two strangers from the street! My friends, when they heard, were even more astonished. Some even warned me that it could have been a scam. But in that moment, I didn't consider any risks or consequences. I simply saw two children alone in a foreign country and imagined what I would want someone to do if my own kids were in their place.

Due to traffic delays, the driver didn't arrive until seven hours later. I was so glad I didn't ignore them but instead trusted my motherly instinct that something might be wrong. The next day, I called to confirm they had safely arrived at their uncle's house in Los Angeles, and once I knew, I felt immensely relieved. To this day, eight years later, those boys still send me messages of gratitude, telling me how much it meant to them to meet me as the first person they encountered in the U.S.

Looking back, I'm just grateful I didn't hesitate. That day wasn't about being cautious or calculating—it was about humanity, about kindness, and about doing what I would hope someone else would do for my own family. Sometimes, the smallest acts of compassion can have the deepest impact.

Angie Sam Lee

