Hello, stranger! Why talking to unknown people makes my heart full

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Besides, some people may not be willing to open up to a stranger, but my personal experience says otherwise: people often find it surprisingly easy to open up to strangers because they know they may never meet again. They often share things that they cannot share with their own folks because of the fear of being judged by near and dear ones.

In 2017, I was flying alone from New York to Dhaka. On my connecting flight from Doha to Dhaka, a middle-aged Bangladeshi man sat next to me. He lived in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where he worked as a tailor; he sewed school uniforms for children. I chatted with him the entire duration of the flight and learned what life was like for him



in Saudi Arabia, both good and bad. I was genuinely curious to learn about his life, which was very different from mine.

Nine years later, I no longer remember his name or what he looked like, but I can recall the conversation we had. Before our plane began to descend, he shared with me his phone number and asked me to connect with him if I ever visited Makkah for Umrah or Hajj. He said that he would be happy to help my family and me to the best of his ability. His gesture of kindness remains etched in my memory.

I often meet elderly women at cafés and grocery stores, and I compliment them on their hairstyles, purses, or dresses. No, I do not do it just for the sake of striking up a conversation; I genuinely mean what I say. I do it because I love seeing how people's faces light up upon hearing a kind word about their appearance. I did not know that one could give a compliment to a complete stranger; I picked it up after moving to the US, where giving compliments on a stranger's hair, smile, clothes, shoes, purse, or anything else is perfectly normal and socially acceptable. It instantly creates an unexpected connection between two people.

We share the same world, and yet, we are beginning to feel increasingly disconnected from one another. Talking to people I do not know is my way of spreading kindness, to make someone feel noticed and connected to the world around them. It is also my way of learning about others and connecting to the people who make up my community.

Every person has a unique story to tell, because no two people experience life the same way. And it is these unique stories that I am curious to hear, whenever and wherever life gives me an opportunity.

Representational Image — AI Generated

HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Review outstanding debts. Reconsider past relationships. Resolving old obligations could open doors to future opportunities. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Reflect on family influences. Improve communication with loved ones. Understanding childhood patterns could strengthen your current relationships. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Pay attention to your wellbeing. Build sustainable health routines. Accept your physical limits while prioritising habits that genuinely support you. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



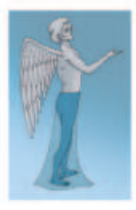
CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Prioritise rest and reflection. Avoid pushing beyond your limits. Creative projects may require patience before producing tangible results. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Address unresolved family matters. Strengthen your home foundations. Small, consistent changes can support your personal growth and confidence. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Review your professional commitments. Communicate carefully at work. Breaking unhealthy habits can improve your relationships and long-term wellbeing. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Reassess your financial priorities. Rebuild confidence after self-doubt. Trusting your abilities can help you reconnect with others. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Face unresolved fears. Reflect on past experiences. Understanding your darker emotions could help you approach challenges with greater wisdom. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Examine your personal values. Align your actions with your principles. Treat yourself compassionately while confronting uncomfortable truths. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Make room for fun. Balance ambition with relaxation. Enjoyable activities can restore the energy you need to pursue long-term goals. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Double-check emails and important files. Stay flexible when plans change. Prioritise self-care with relaxing activities and comforting meals. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Recognise your progress. Reconnect with your long-term dreams. Clear goals and renewed hope can help you move forward confidently. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

