

A MODERN APPROACH TO MEETING THE NEIGHBOURS



There are many reasons why it could be helpful to befriend your neighbour; one of the most important these days is to find out whether the electrical outage was caused by local load shedding or simply by forgetting to pop in your voucher code earlier that evening. But, now more so than ever before, making contact with the people who live next door can be a tricky endeavour. People tend to keep to themselves more these days, so popping by with a welcome basket might not be as warmly received as it

was years before.

Below are some tricks on how to establish contact with your neighbours in the modern era:

SEIZING THE MOMENT

Whether you're pulling into the driveway, collecting your mail or simply in your front garden at the same time, you are bound to run into the person who lives next door eventually. Use this moment as an opportunity to establish contact. Based on your confidence levels, this can be as simple as a smile and a nod to acknowledge that you saw them, a fleeting "Hi" or a fully-fledged introduction involving handshakes and name exchanges. Based on this interaction, you can get a feel for how receptive your neighbours are for establishing a relationship. Some people simply prefer not to get involved with their neighbours. If they are short and dismissive to your greeting, it might be better to let them make the next move.

ASKING A NEIGHBOURLY FAVOUR

If you're a shy person, it can be helpful to go with a purpose rather than to knock on their door just to introduce yourself. People generally like to feel helpful – just don't be too ambitious in your requests. For a modern-day approach, ditch the request for a cup of sugar and opt instead to inquire about their internet setup to find out which networks work best in your area. You could also inquire about HOA regulations, whether there are any nearby recycling collection points, or ask to borrow a pair of scissors to cut the packaging the scissors you just purchased came in (why do they do this anyway?). After they've assisted you, you then have the opportunity to thank them for their help by inviting them over for a cup of coffee or, depending on how helpful and receptive they were, perhaps even dinner.

SENDING OUT A VISUAL INVITATION

Without even realising it, you might be making yourself completely inaccessible to your neighbours who secretly have been dying to meet you all along. Closed curtains, safety gates and burglar bars are hardly inviting cues. If you are open to your neighbours popping in, then you need to make your home welcoming to visitors. By no means ditch the safety precautions, but perhaps pop a welcome mat outside and leave the curtains open when you're at home. It also helps to be out and about in the local community. Taking your dog for walks, going for jogs, playing with your kids in the park and shopping at the local grocery store all present great opportunities to meet the people who live nearby.