

REALITY CHECK

Are We Really That Polite?

In his new book, Richard Florida calls our city uncommonly well-mannered. Ugh. If one more person calls us polite we're gonna...write a strongly worded letter. We put his assertion to the test, stopping Torontonians in their tracks with some admittedly odd requests BY J. M. HOWARD

1. "Would you mind tying my shoe for me?"

Most Good Samaritans were inclined to grab for the box rather than get into the squat position. "Bad back" and just plain "busy" were the main reasons for refusal, while one well-dressed gent expressed concern that our plan might be to pee on him if he bent down.

(5/10)
SAID YES

WHERE: OUTSIDE
BEST BUY
ON DUNDAS



3. "You're about the same size as my girlfriend. Could you try this on for me?"

The shocking thing here was how eager the "yes" camp members were to make sure the dress fit just right. They really cared about our phony girlfriend's phony gift and offered to try on multiple sizes and styles. That said, the majority of test subjects were creeped out by the request, including one woman who busted us propositioning her 70-something mother-in-law.

(3/10)
SAID YES

WHERE: H&M
AT YONGE
AND DUNDAS

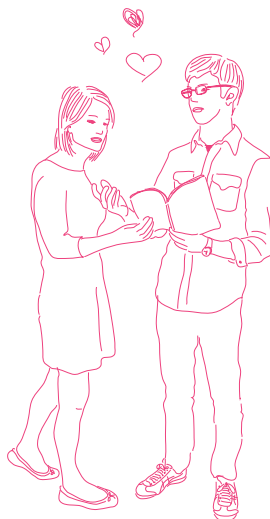


2. "I'm on my way to an audition. Would you mind running this scene with me?"

Little known fact: Indigo is crawling with would-be Stratford stars (or maybe just lusty ladies eager to be someone's Juliet). Those who agreed were extremely keen and didn't even balk at the [Romeo kisses Juliet] stage directions, although the potential for lawsuits stopped us from going in for the smooch.

(6/10)
SAID YES

WHERE: INDIGO
BOOKS IN THE
EATON CENTRE



(3/10)
SAID YES

WHERE: THE
ST. LAWRENCE
MARKET

4. "May I have a bite of your sandwich?"

We fully expected zero co-operation on this test, and from many lunchers that's exactly what we got. Suits would barely look us in the eye, and when they did it was only to offer a "get your own goddamn sandwich" glare. Those who did share their grub were less willing to swap germs, opting to rip off a bite rather than hand over the whole sandwich.

THE VELOMOBILE

In brief: A pimped-out super-bike, it's like the Batmobile for David Suzuki disciples.

Cost: \$7,500–\$14,000.

Speed: Hits 40 km/h with ease, pretty impressive for pedal power.

Verdict: Extra cargo space offers loads of room for your reusable grocery bags.

Pricey, but the cost will keep dropping when the first North American models are made in Oakville this fall.



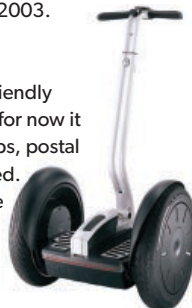
THE SEGWAY

In brief: This vertical vehicle suffered a PR setback (and a massive recall) when George W. took a header off his in 2003.

Cost: \$6,000.

Speed: 20 km/h.

Verdict: Fun and eco-friendly (battery operated), but for now it can only be used by cops, postal workers and the disabled. Unless you're on private property, making it a must-have for lazy Bridle Path gardeners.



THE RICKSHAW

In brief: For those who would rather outsource their exercise.

Cost: Rides start at \$30.

Speed: 4 km/h (without a whip).

Verdict: A bit awkward, unless you're comfortable with the whole *Ben-Hur* aesthetic. Kinda slow, too, but romantic—except when the driver's butt is shapelier than your date's.

