

Its Time for the Bow

Imagine that you're going to a banquet. It might be part of work or school or a fundraiser. You see a friend talking to a stranger so you walk over and introduce yourself, first shaking hands with your friend and then your friend introducing you to the stranger. You proceed to shake hands with the stranger except you encounter the "Eager Pumper", the "Wet Sponge" or the "Bone Crusher". Fellow toastmasters and honored guests, today I would like to convince you all that its time for the bow.

The handshake has long been a sign of respect and friendliness. You shake hands with your employer, you shake hands with friends you're introduced to, you may even shake hands with your professor or to offer congratulations. You shake hands as a way of saying hello or to say goodbye. However, with numerous torturous handshakes out there, we should not put our hands through such abuse. Our hands deserve better.

At this point you may be wondering what kinds of strange handshakes I am talking about. Let me describe 4 such horrible handshakes:

1. Eager Pumper

The eager pumper often has a big smile on their face and a light bounce in their step. They will shake your hand and all will seem normal but after a few minutes your hand is still locked in with their hand and you find that they are the only one shaking. Perhaps they really are glad to meet you.

2. Wet Sponge

The wet sponge is fairly self-explanatory. Think of shaking a wet sponge. Upon immediate contact, your hand is drenched in sweat. Furthermore, after shaking a few times, you find that your grip is loose and as you clench harder, more sweat pours onto your hand. Are they nervous? You bet.

3. Bone Crusher

The bone crusher is like shaking hands with a barbarian. On steroids. The barbarian hopes to convey warmth and friendliness, but instead, he delivers pain. If you're lucky enough, you're left handed and you don't have to worry about your hand healing for 2 weeks.

4. Paranoid Shaker

The paranoid shaker may not be as bad as the previous 3. When you approach the paranoid shaker, they might seem nervous or shy. As their hand leans in to shake yours, 3 or 4 fingers start to touch your palm and they immediately withdraw their hand. They seem to be afraid of catching the flu from you.

The Eager Pumper, the Wet Sponge, the Bone Crusher, and the Paranoid Shaker have put my hands through such agony that a change must come about. How can we avoid such pain and affliction but still convey a sign of respect or friendliness to others?

Bowing is a prominent sign used in Oriental cultures. It is used to say sorry or say thank you. Bowing can mean hello or good bye. Bowing, like a handshake, is used as a sign of respect or friendliness to others. That is why I think, it is time for the bow.