

HOW TO USE A LIFT

by Guy Browning



CALLING A LIFT IS EASY. Simply press the button and wait. And then press the button again. Many lifts work on the pressure you exert on the call button, so hitting it 100 times will make it arrive a lot faster. Before you get into the lift, it's as well to check whether it's going up or down. There's nothing more embarrassing than saying confidently to a packed lift "Ground floor please" and then feeling the lift rocketing upwards.

Getting into a crowded lift is like entering a mini party. Everyone's already settled in there, and when the doors open they all look at you as if to say, "You're not coming in here!" Just take a big breath, step in, and then say something to break the ice, such as, "You're probably wondering why I called you all here."

This difficult entry moment explains why, even when the lift is the size of your living room and there's only one small lady in it, the tendency is to wait

for the next one. If the same lady is in the next one, it could be her job to operate the lift, so just get in and stop being so silly.

In a crowded lift it's very bad manners ever to face anybody head on. You should always try and be at least 90° to your neighbours – so that an aerial view would look as if you were all finding your way around a particularly tight maze.

Never talk to someone in a lift unless you know which button they've pressed and you can tailor your conversation to the exact second. Restrict yourself to saying "Morning ..." In a lift it's acceptable to say this at any time of night or day, because you're in your own little world without daylight. The other word everyone wants to say in a lift, especially when the little bell pings, is "lingerie". Don't say this unless you're with people you know and love, or you're absolutely positive the other person is getting out.

You're allowed to look at a stranger in a lift a maximum of once – then you must look elsewhere for the duration of your trip. That's why it's a relief when everyone gets out and leaves you alone in the lift. You're then free to pull faces in the mirror, say "lingerie" loudly, and pass wind extravagantly. Often at this moment you'll discover that the little lady is still in the lift with you.

Being in a lift means invading someone else's body-space. This can be quite exciting when two people are attracted to each other. Passions often ignite in lifts. This can be awkward for the other passengers, even at 90°.

© GUY BROWNING IS AUTHOR OF 'NEVER PUSH WHEN IT SAYS PULL' AND CREATOR OF 'TORTOISE IN LOVE' (DVD) – USED BY PERMISSION.

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THINK! IT GIVES YOU SOMETHING TO DO WHILE THE COMPUTER IS DOWN.