

**THE ART OF ETIQUETTE**



Now in her 30s, when Marina Pas-salaris was 23, her family emigrated to Australia. Today she's putting her modelling, theatrical and styling experience to good use in her *Beautiful Minds* programme, which teaches young girls vital life and self-improvement skills.

**As a South African, how hard was it to start a business in Australia?**

It's incredibly challenging to move to a country where you have no friends, contacts or history. I've worked relentlessly at making contacts, joining networking and community groups and building a good reputation for myself.

**As a South African abroad, what would you**

**like to see happening here?**

I believe that due to this country's history during apartheid, many women were suppressed. I'd like to see all South African women embracing who they are, believing in themselves and striving for a better life.

**What do you miss most about South Africa?**

There are many things I miss: biltong, *koeksusters*, Mrs Ball's Chutney... I cry whenever I hear African music or the national anthem. I ring my dearest friends from school when I need to chat to people who really know me. And there's nothing on earth like an African sunset.

**Your book, *Beautiful Minds: A Journey of Self-Discovery*, is coming out this year. Will it be available in South Africa?**

I want it to be available worldwide, but that's currently being negotiated by my agent. I'd love to do a book tour in South Africa. - CARA BOUWER **D**



# MUG SHOTS

**Covet another colleague's coffee mug - and prepare for a caffeine-fuelled catfight**

The office can be a minefield of politics, at times petty, at times significant, and workplace propriety is often the shakiest ground to cover. A bit like walking a tight-rope in your birthday suit over a shoal of frothing, famished Amazonian piranhas.

From not properly screwing the lid onto the peanut butter jar to leaving the milk out, tactfully navigating your way through office niceties can be tricky, especially when you realise that one person's rule is another person's rude. We all have our little foibles.

While there's usually restraint at work, in the office kitchen people feel comfortable enough to express themselves fervently about a hugely contentious issue... the coffee mug. Yes, emotions run high when it comes to this simple, impartial piece of crockery.

And there are two distinct types of people: those who guard their coffee mugs like sentinels of justice, with the same possessiveness as they would a no-good, serial cheating husband (mug-huggers), and those who'd happily sip out of a jam jar so long as it held a splash of hot, wet liquid.

If you've ever drunk out of another



colleague's mug, the indignant cries of "Who's got *my* cup!?" will still be reverberating in your head... There's nothing quite like getting bust with someone's mug hovering inches from your lips. It's akin to getting caught on *Cheaters* having it off with your kid's PT teacher on your lunch break. In a word, disgraceful.

So what is the root cause behind this fierce reaction? Perhaps it's a deep-seated desire to express individuality. Which is why people choose greased-up Chippen- dales screensavers, plaster their cubicles with pictures of their partners and pin up cute sayings like: "There is no distance too far between friends, for friendship gives wings to the heart." Right on!

All these "expressions" are calm and

unobtrusive, however, which is why mug-huggers are more likely to be suffering from displaced anger. Are mugs an easy way to vent fury over another night at the office eating 2-Minute Noodles and finishing off a report? Are they an excuse to walk around in a huff with a face like a slapped arse, when inside you're reproaching your manager for being a lazy swine?

Whatever the reason, in the interest of global peace in the workplace, the answer could be identical mugs - just don't be surprised if certain people choose to bring their very own, treasured "Haley's Comet" mug into work. And if you're sipping from it, you'd better throw it down and run, because hell hath no fury like a mug-hugger scorned.

- FIONA DAVERN **D**

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