

# THE ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO

# FREE HUGS



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## JUAN MANN

This book is for you, Dad.

Thank you for being the one man who led by example. Without your support, guidance and belief, I could never have been nurtured beyond my nature.

Thank you for being my hero.

Thank you for being you.

## KRISTA BRENNAN

Inspiration, support, love, generosity; everything this book celebrates, I learned from my bright-eyed hero, Mitch.

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“Be kind; everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.”

~ *Plato*

“There are no strangers here; only friends you haven't yet met.”

~ *William Butler Yeats*

## **FREE**

1. Without cost, payment, or charge;
2. Given without consideration of a return or reward;
3. Not subject to special regulations, restrictions, duties, etc;
4. Acting without self-restraint or reserve;
5. Ready or generous in giving;
6. That may be used by or is open to all;

## **HUGS**

1. To clasp or hold closely, especially in one's arms; embrace or enfold, as in affection;
2. To keep very close;
3. An affectionate embrace.

From Scandinavian/Old Norse *hugga*, to comfort, console

## **CAMPAIGN**

1. A series of actions energetically pursued to advance a principle or tending toward a particular end;
2. To exert oneself continuously, vigorously, or obtrusively to gain an end or be an advocate for a certain cause.

## **FREE HUGS CAMPAIGN**

1. To offer everyone and anyone an embrace, free of charge, until such time as nobody partakes of the unlimited offer.

Definitions from Google.com

## FOREWORD

This is where I say something like this:

Hello! Welcome to my e-book.

Why an e-book, you ask? Because they're better! It's true – click on any picture and it will take you somewhere interesting on the net.

See the little Mann over on your right?

When you click on him, you'll be taken to a page where you can make a donation to support the creators of this fine e-book. That would be fine indeed!

To those of you who have already done so – thank you!

Click the pictures, discover new sites and share your stories. For those who look closely, hidden throughout the book are links to all manner of surprises and gifts.

This book is free to download and free to share. One day when we find a publisher who supports this idea, you'll be able to buy this book in stores.

Until then and most importantly of all – pass this book along to anyone you know and love.

And we love you!

Hugs,  
Juan & Krista



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## WHAT IS THE FREE HUGS CAMPAIGN ALL ABOUT?

The Free Hugs Campaign is an international kindness initiative, that has spread to over 80 countries around the world, founded on the simple principle of offering a stranger a hug.

The Free Hugs Campaign began on Wednesday June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004 in an effort to cheer up one person's day. Mine.

The Free Hugs Campaign is about many things, like making someone's day a little brighter, meeting people and showing the world that strangers aren't so bad after all. It's also about bringing people together and sharing a happy moment before heading back out into the world feeling a little lighter.

The Free Hugs Campaign is all about people being there for each other.

When you're feeling sad and alone in the world, it helps to talk to people, to share a laugh with someone, to see someone smile at you, to have somebody wrap their arms around you and reassure you that everything will be alright.

What about those people who don't have somebody? Whose families live far away? Whose friends just don't understand?

Once upon a time that was me.

[2]



## **I RETURNED TO SYDNEY ...**

From London after my family fell apart, my fiancée left me and my life seemed in ruins. The last words my Dad shared with me before my family went their own ways in London had been, “You can’t change the world, but you can make a difference.”

But what world? Without family or purpose, what difference could I make?

I spent months living alone in the Blue Mountains, having little contact with the people and the world around me.

Every day, I remembered that moment returning to Sydney Airport. Just standing there in the arrivals terminal, watching other passengers meeting their waiting friends and family, with open arms and smiling faces. Hugging each other, laughing together, happy to see each other. Even strangers had people waiting with their name on a sign, expectant faces of men in suits waiting to see who would find them.

I wanted someone out there to be waiting for me. To be happy to see me and to smile at me. To hug me.

I found it hard to relate to the world and the world found it hard to relate to me. I felt like was part of the world when I was stuck in traffic, staring at

the same red traffic light as the person in the car beside me. Human contact was limited to a cashier's hand brushing mine when returning my change in stores.

After a few months of solitude, an old friend tracked me down in the Blue Mountains. He called me up and invited me along to a party, to encourage me to get back out into society, to meet people again and regain faith in the world. Standing in a corner of the room, watching people enjoying each other's company, I wondered, “I have nothing to talk about, I have no way of making someone else smile... what can I do to cheer somebody else up? What can I do to cheer up myself?”

While I was deep in thought a young lady strolled out of the crowd and right up to me, smiled into my eyes and wrapped her arms around me. In that moment I discovered something I'd known all along, but hadn't realised or had simply forgotten in my sadness. I'd found the one thing I'd been truly missing, in all that time I'd spent alone. Hugs are amazing. Everyone involved in a hug benefits, everyone feels better for it!

This young lady had given me a hug for the first time in a long time. I felt happier. My problems weren't solved, the world hadn't changed there and then, but that hug had made a difference to my life.

I immediately knew what I was going to do.

I was going to make a sign and offer Free Hugs to everyone and anyone. It doesn't matter how rich or how poor, how old or how young, who they were or where they came from. A free hug would be free of charge and free for all!

## THE IMPORTANCE OF HUGS

Touch is one of the most important of our five senses. Without it we feel detached from the people around us. It is one of the first senses we develop in the womb. One of the most commonly accepted forms of touch among people is also one of the first experiences we have in the world.

A hug!

There is no better way to understand the importance of hugs than to be deprived of them. For those who have experienced a deprivation of hugs, you will know how important they are to share.

In those dire moments of hug deprivation even one hug can be enough to cheer you up.

Research by US psychologists Karen Grewen and Karen Light has shown that when people hug the brain releases the chemical oxytocin. This encourages social bonding, increases our willingness to trust and decreases fear. It has also shown that hugs are great for your heart. A study was conducted that measured the heart rates and blood pressure of two groups of people, a group of huggers and a group of non-huggers. Those who went without hugs were found to have a higher blood pressure and resting heart rate in comparison to the group of huggers, who had noticeably healthier results.

In 1995 a pair of prematurely born twins were being cared for in hospital. While one of the twins seemed quite healthy, her sister was suffering. After trying a range of medical approaches, the nurse on duty, Gayle Kasparian, placed the twins in bed together. The twins immediately snuggled up to each other. As one placed her arm around the other, the frail infant's health began to improve. You can never underestimate the power of a hug!

The need for hugs doesn't disappear as we grow older, though it seems we are less willing to give them. Research on people of all ages has proven that a hug is essential for physical and emotional well-being.

Without hugs we can become sad, withdrawn and depressed. A hug provides solace, safety and tenderness. A hug provides us with social contact, an overall sense of wellbeing and a feeling of importance and belonging.

No matter who you are, where you come from, where you're going or who you're surrounded by, you can find a hug in the arms of someone. All you have to do is ask!



## MY FIRST FREE HUGS SIGN...

Took me two nights to make. When people looked at it, I wanted them to realise I was serious. To take notice of what I was offering and not just dismiss it as some prank or a viral marketing campaign.

I'd spent the days before my first Free Hugs day walking around the city looking for the busiest places. I was searching for outdoor areas that had plenty of shade and plenty of people walking through. I had a short-list of places to go. The harbour side at Circular Quay was full of tourists and had beautiful views of the Harbour Bridge and Opera House. Martin Place was full of business people during lunch hour, rushing about their day. The Pitt Street Mall had tourists, business people and locals. It seemed perfect.

There were security cameras everywhere in case something went wrong. There were guards and police watching thousands of people passing by. I couldn't have found anywhere safer.

For my first Free Hugs Day I made a shirt. It had written on it, "Juan Mann, One Love."

Everything was covered. I had my location. I had my sign offering Free Hugs. I had a shirt with my name on it and a statement of my intention

- to be kind to everyone.

I'd prepared everything I could have before the day. The only thing I couldn't prepare in advance was the courage to carry through with what I'd planned. I knew what I was going to do.

I wasn't going to let my fear hold me back.

## THE ANATOMY OF A HUG

Are the hugs you share with your friends the same as the hugs you share with your grandparents?

Are the hugs you share when you're celebrating the same as the hugs you share when you're sad?

There are different types of hugs, each one with a unique significance. A bear hug means something different to a group hug. A group hug means something different to a cuddle, but they all have something in common.

They feel great!

The Free Hugs I've shared with strangers aren't the same as the hugs I've shared with family.

After sharing hundreds of thousands of hugs with people from all over the world, I've noticed a few things.

A hug consists of three separate parts. The position of the huggers' bodies in relation to each other, the configuration of their arms around each other and the placement of their hands. Each element contributes to the delivery of a heartfelt hug.

But what makes such a hug?

The perfect hug for me is a gentle cuddle with the over arm/under arm technique and a slight amount of back rubbing, but the hug that suits you best could be completely different.





### **“SO HOW DO WE DO THIS?”**

She stands before me, drying her eyes.

I'd been standing there in the middle of the Pitt Street Mall, Sydney for fifteen minutes. The smile on my face is shaky, nervous. Hundreds of people had passed me by in minutes. Some pointed and laughed, others stood and stared. But this lady wearing a purple sweater and a long skirt?

She stops.

She pats my arm while wiping away tears with her other hand. She tells me that this idea is something her daughter would have loved.

“My daughter,” she says, “would have hugged you. She would have been about your age. She passed away in a car accident a year ago today.”

That morning she climbed out of bed and, already sad to face the day, found that her daughter's dog had died. The last living link to her daughter was gone.

She buried it in the backyard at breakfast and at lunch left her house

behind and went looking for a sign. Something, anything to give her hope in the world.

Instead she found me. A nervous first time Free Hugger.

“So how do we do this?”

“I guess we just hug each other and see how it goes.” I stammer, opening my arms.

We step into each other's arms, our bodies a jumble of limbs before we settle into a gentle and comforting embrace.

The troubles in my life melt away. I'm safe in a mother's arms. I'm happy to know that for this moment, she has brightened up my life.

I know for sure, that this may be my first Free Hug but it will not be my last.

We separate and she holds my arms, just above my elbow, smiling from behind brimming eyes.

“Young man, don't ever stop what you're doing, it means more than you'll ever know.” She wipes her eyes dry with the back of her hand and walks away. I watch her disappear into the crowd before it dawns on me. I will never, ever see her again. She will never know just how important that hug was to me.

That Free Hug changed my life.

The next hug, I step into with confidence. I open my arms and stand ready, willing, capable and accepting of whatever comes my way.

## THE A-FRAME HUG

The A-Frame Hug gets its name from the shape that the two huggers' bodies make when seen from a distance.

An A-Frame Hug occurs when two people stand at a fixed distance, lean their heads in towards each other and wrap their arms around each other's shoulders. The two bodies do not come into contact, except for heads on each other's shoulders and hands on each other's backs.

The A-Frame Hug is most common between people who only just know each other or taller people, leaning down to give a shorter person a hug.

When offering Free Hugs, this may be the most common type of hug you receive from people who appreciate what you're doing.

After noticing people giving you an A-Frame Hug, you'll probably be amused. You'll think "This person is a little uncomfortable hugging me, but hey, it's nice enough that they made the effort." You'll be happy knowing that the person you've just hugged might have done something they never thought they could do.

An A-Frame Hug is like the opening hug in a relationship between two strangers. It's a great way of getting to know someone without overstepping their personal boundaries. It may seem a little awkward, but a hug is a personal thing and everyone's personal space is something to be respected.





**“OH I DON’T WANT YOU TO TOUCH MY BUMPY BITS!”**

She laughs as she totters towards me, “you might get excited!”

I raise a quizzical eyebrow at her. “Ma’am, I’m a trained professional.”

She giggles, “A professional hugger? That’s ridiculous!”

“I have a money back guarantee, if you aren’t satisfied I’ll give you a complete refund.” I open my arms and invite her in for a hug. She stops around two feet away from me, opens her arms and leans in towards me. If I don’t lean in fast, close that gap and hug her, she might fall over. The last thing I want is someone getting hurt because of a Free Hug.

Her head rests on my shoulder, I place mine roughly near hers. Her hands just barely reach my shoulders and mine, hers. There is an awkward space between us and I feel as though I should close the gap but her arms have gone stiff. She’s hugging me, holding me at a distance. With a couple of quick pats on my back the hug is over as soon as it’s begun.

“That wasn’t so bad, was it ma’am?” I ask.

She bubbles with laughter, “When I left the house today, I didn’t think I’d hug a strange young man!”

A man walking past overhears her. “You didn’t, lady! I could have fit in the space between you two!”

I shrug and smile at her. “Ma’am, if it was good for you, then who cares what anyone else says? It’s still a hug. Have a great day!”

She shuffles off, rosy cheeked, her chest heaving with laughter.

The ‘A’ in ‘A-Frame’ stands for Awkward.

## PHOTO OPPORTUNITY HUG

The Photo Opportunity Hug is for the world to see. It occurs when the hugger and huggee stand side by side with their arms around each other and smile for a camera or any other audience.

Almost everyone who asks for a photo when you're offering Free Hugs, will give you a Photo Op Hug. Every time you've posed for a photo with a friend, a partner or a loved one, have you noticed how someone will slip their arm around somebody else, all for the camera? You've just had a Photo Op Hug.

The Photo Op Hug can be found wherever people are taking photos. Somebody may want to capture an image of you to show to people they meet or to share you with their friends and family later on. How flattering! The Photo Op Hug makes you feel like a star!

There is a variation of the Photo Op Hug that is common among couples, who walk with their arms around each other. This is an advanced form of hugging that shouldn't be attempted without training, practice and a skilled partner.

When a couple meets somebody in the street and they start talking, they might hug like this. It creates a snapshot in the observer's mind that these people are a couple.

The Photo Op Hug when not performed in front of a camera can make you feel as though you and the person you're hugging belong together. There's a personal bond there that doesn't need a camera or an audience to re-affirm how special this hug is.





### **“EXCUSE ME, CAN WE TAKE A PHOTO WITH YOU?”**

She asks, waving her camera at me.

I’ve been holding my Free Hugs sign up for an hour now and I’m learning to handle the awkwardness of each embrace with a stranger. But why would anyone want to take a photo of me?

“Are you serious?” I ask. “Sure, if that’s what you want.”

What I really mean to say is “I have no idea why you want a photo of some guy with a Free Hugs sign, but hey, it’s a free country.”

She hands her camera to a stranger and stands beside me, her arm around my waist. Her boyfriend on my other side throws his arm over my shoulder.

“You have to put your arm around me too,” she scolds me, “and show your sign. I want that in the photo.”

We stand there posing for this smiling stranger who snaps a photo. He hands the camera back to this young couple so they can look at the photo.

“It’s beautiful!” she says, jumping up and down. She thrusts the camera at her boyfriend. “Now take one of just me and the hugs guy.”

Her boyfriend and I look at each other, confused.

She rolls her eyes and huffs. To her boyfriend she says, “It’s for after we break up and I don’t want you in the photo, I’ll want to remember the hugs guy!”

She snuggles up beside me and wraps her arm around my waist again. With her free hand she holds up my sign. Her boyfriend scowls down the barrel of the camera at the two of us and fires off a shot.

She takes a look at the photo. Grinning from ear to ear, she jumps up, plants a kiss on my cheek and scurries off with her boyfriend. She wraps her arm around his waist. He throws his arm around her shoulders.

There’s a first time for everything, I pull out my cell phone and snap a picture of this photo opportunity in motion. I wouldn’t want to forget them, even after they leave me.

## THE CUDDLE

A Cuddle requires a complete absence of space between the two huggers, bodies pressed together with their arms thrown right around each other. A cuddle is a firm yet forgiving hug and is a physical manifestation of love between people.

The close physical proximity of the cuddlers is indicative of their shared trust and affection.

Parents cuddle their children, partners cuddle each other, close friends will offer each other a cuddle in times of happiness and need. A cuddle is the most intimate hug you can share.

People can cuddle everywhere and anywhere, couples cuddle together on the couch, parents cuddle their children before heading off to work or school, children cuddle their stuffed animals before sleeping at night.

Cuddles make you feel loved. A cuddle can make you feel important to somebody and shows them that they mean something special to you.

A good cuddle can help you relax after a stressful experience.

A Cuddler is someone who makes you feel comfortable.





## **I PICK HER GLAZED RED EYES...**

Her drooping shoulders and her mascara streaked cheeks out of the crowd as she walks towards me. This young lady, clutching her mobile phone in one hand and a balled up knot of tissues in the other, shuffles up to me sobbing. Her frowning mouth quivers into a smile.

She dabs the tissues at her nose. "My boyfriend dumped me this morning, he's in love with my best friend. They were my life!"

She folds herself into my arms, buries her face in my jacket and wraps her arms around me. It's a tender hug, a moment of compassion between two strangers.

"I went to work today, trying to stay strong. But I couldn't, I just couldn't. I got fired for crying on the phone to a client." Her life seems in ruins. "I really need a hug, this is the worst day of my life!"

I hold her in my arms as she sobs into my chest. A shoulder to lean on in troubled times.

"I'm so sorry, I've ruined your jacket now!" She comes up for air, dabbing a damp tissue at the tears on my red velvet jacket.

I smile at her and wipe the mascara from her cheeks with my sleeve.

"It's only a jacket, that's what it's there for. To be cried on, to be hugged, to have food spilled on, to be sweated on."

"Please, let me pay to have it dry cleaned." She fumbles with her phone, tissues and bag to find her purse.

I laugh.

"Why don't you take the money for dry cleaning and buy something to cheer yourself up. That's more important than my jacket."

She smiles as she cries.

"Thanks for the cuddle, I needed it!"

## THE MAN HUG

A Man Hug is a fusion of a handshake and a hug. It opens with a handshake as the huggers lean towards each other. With their free hand they pat each other on the back vigorously, before separating quickly.

The handshake, held at waist height, prevents the chests of either hugger from coming into contact, though on occasion the men will bring their shoulders into brief contact with each other.

Outside of a sporting victory or achievement, anywhere men can be found hugging you'll find them sharing a Man Hug.

Men adopt this hug with other men in an effort to retain an air of machismo without leaving the impression that they have settled merely for a handshake. It shows a willingness to share an embrace, but a fear of how people watching the men embrace will interpret it.

That said, a man hug is an exhilarating thing and to share in one is almost an initiation rite afforded only to men. Nothing says brotherly love like a Man Hug.





## **A GROUP OF YOUNG MEN WALK PAST ME...**

In their business suits, pressed shirts and crisp ties, laughing and pointing at my Free Hugs sign.

“I can’t hug you, bro, men don’t hug!” one of them laughs, “but I tell you what, I’ll shake your hand!”

With his friends watching, he offers his hand as a consolation prize. His handshake is firm. Two quick pumps and the handshake is over. It can’t be confused with a hug. One of his friends walks over and laughs at him.

“Don’t be such a wimp, I’ll hug the guy.” He grabs my still outstretched hand in a handshake, pulls me towards him and with his free arm pats me on the back.

Laughing, he yells back at his friends. “See guys, that there is a man hug you can be proud of and no funny business!”

The rest of the group egg each other on as one by one, they all cave in. Four man hugs and one very slapped back later, the man who offered a handshake is being heckled to get in there and give me a hug.

“It’s only a man hug, huh?” He grins, shaking my hand, patting me on the

back.

The group of guys strut off laughing, thumping each other on the back, shaking hands and delivering each other a play by play on the anatomy of the man hug they’ve just given.

I watch them walk away, stretching my stinging back and wondering what all the fuss was about.

## THE LIFT AND SPIN HUG

The Lift and Spin Hug is an advanced hug, not for the beginner or the faint of heart. The hugger lifts the huggie off the ground and spins them around, twirling them in a circle before returning the huggie to the ground. Think of it as the merry-go-round of hugs!

The Lift and Spin Hug is one of the most spontaneous hugs, making it both physically and emotionally uplifting for lovers, parents and sometimes complete strangers.

You'll find this hug wherever you find excited, happy people, people who have been re-united after time apart or people who have something fantastic to celebrate.

This is one of the fun hugs that plants a smile on your face, places some laughter in your heart, a twinkle in your eye and puts a spark into life. The Lift and Spin Hug is a memory maker.

A Lift and Spin Hugger is always bound to surprise you with something exciting!





### **SHE GENTLY TAPS ME ON THE SHOULDER...**

Surprised, I whip around searching for the culprit. Her head barely reaches my shoulders and with the momentum of my turn, I grab her around the waist, lift her up and twirl, twirl, twirl.

She squeals in my ear. Giggling, she braces herself with her hands against my chest.

I gently return her to the ground and steady myself against her shoulder. I'm so dizzy, I drop to one knee and breathe, breathe, breathe.

I smile up at her, "Sorry. I got a little carried away with that!"

"Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god!" she bounces around beside me, "that's the best thing that's ever happened to me, thank you!"

Her hands covering her mouth, her cheeks red with glee, she disappears into the crowded mall. Moments later someone gently taps me on the shoulder.

I whip around. This time she takes a quick step back before I can lift her up and spin her around. In her hand there's a bouquet of Irises.

"They're my favourite flower," she says, blushing this time, "I've never bought anyone flowers before and I thought you might like them."

"Thank you so much!" My cheeks turn the same shade of red as my velvet jacket.

Bouncing on the spot, she smiles at me, turns on her heels, waves goodbye to me over her shoulder and skips down the street, leaving me with a beautiful bunch of Irises.

With a simple gesture, she lifted me up and turned my world around.

## THE RUN AND JUMP HUG

The Run and Jump Hug could also be called the Slow Motion Romantic Comedy Hug. You've seen this before, where the love interests in a film run towards each other and one leaps into the others arms. Remove the slow motion and the romantic comedy, you've got yourself the Run and Jump Hug.

This is used by anyone who is thrilled to see somebody else. Lovers use it to express their romance, children use it to be caught by their parents and sometimes complete strangers will run and leap into your open arms when you offer Free Hugs!

This kind of hug can be found on grassy fields, cinema screens, airport arrival halls, your city streets and anywhere people are pleased to see each other.

This may be one of the most exhilarating types of hug around. There's a thrill in seeing someone running towards you, with arms wide open and a smile on their face. In watching them leap into your arms. You've seen it before, but to experience it for yourself is not something you will soon forget.

The Run and Jump Hug is not for the faint of heart!





## **SHE SMILES AT ME FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MALL...**

Drops her shopping to the ground, throws her arms open and runs towards me. This lady is the most excited person I have ever seen.

She closes the distance between us in a few short bounds, launches into the air and lands in my open arms. She literally takes my breath away.

There's a crowd gathering around, watching and smiling. I gently let her go and she drops to the ground. Behind her a beaming man in shorts and a t-shirt picks up her shopping bags and brings them over.

"I just wanted to say, that was the most amazing thing I've seen all day!" he says, holding her shopping bags out to us. "I didn't want to see anyone take these, so I brought them over."

She turns around to thank him. Their eyes meet and there's a moment of recognition. He smiles a lopsided smile. He drops her bags at our feet.

He scratches his head. Shyly, she blinks a few times, fanning her face with her hands, trying to catch her breath.

"Are you guys alright?" I'm confused.

"I fell in love with this man on a holiday in Spain a decade ago. We met there, spent a holiday together and never exchanged details. Our time together was perfect, we didn't want to ruin it with the worries of the real world." She reaches out and clutches at my jacket sleeve.

"That's the thing with love. Once you have it, let it go and see if it comes back. We said that if we ever found each other, we'd get together again." He scratches his cheek as he talks.

"You haven't seen or heard from each other in ten years and you meet here, like this?" She lets go of my jacket and reaches out for his hand. "I think you guys owe each other a hug!"

There isn't a moment of hesitation. The way they come together you can tell they missed each other every day they were apart.

## THE 'KOALA' OR SIDE ON HUG

The 'Koala' Hug or Side On Hug looks a lot like a Koala clinging to a tree. One hugger stands side on to the other, their shoulder resting against the chest of the person hugging them, so their bodies form a 'T' shape.

The 'Koala' Hug requires a level of familiarity, comfort and expectation that strangers cannot provide.

When a huggee finds themselves caught up in a task, the hugger will approach from their side and wrap their arms around the shoulders or waist of the huggee. The 'Koala' Hug tends to occur most regularly when the huggee's attention is drawn away to other tasks, sights or experiences.

A 'Koala' Hug is a great way of sharing an experience with somebody. The nature of a 'Koala' Hug requires that some external input from the world at large has captured the attentions of the huggee.

A Koala Hugger always wants to share themselves with you.





## AT THE SOUTHERN END OF THE PITT STREET MALL...

John, a homeless man, sits with his dog Carrie and a sign asking for help. Every week, I'll stop for a quick chat and an update on John's life. Sometimes I'll bring little Carrie something to eat. Without his teeth, John is particular with his food.

It's lunchtime and I'm taking a short break, sitting on a milk crate opposite John at the end of the Mall. A young lady stops to read John's sign, reads my sign, nods to herself and walks off.

John and I share a look.

"Don't worry, Hugger," he says me, "you get strange looks from people around here all the time. It's a good thing you're here though, people are kinder to me after they've seen you."

The Free Hugs flow-on effect: Someone might not take a Free Hug from me, but they might be inspired to do something kind for someone else, like John.

Standing over us again, the young lady holds out a plastic bag with the smell of hot food steaming out of it.

"You look like you need something to eat," she says, handing the bag over to John. "And I've got something for you too." She stands at my side and wraps her arms around my shoulder.

"Thank You!" We both pipe up as she melts into the crowd.

John opens up his bag of lunch and smiles. "See what I told you! People used to only bring me lunch around Christmas and Easter, since you've been here, it happens a little more often."

He shoves his hand inside and pulls out a foot long sandwich and a container of soup. He looks it over and holds the sandwich out to me.

"Here you go mate, I can't eat alone." We split the sandwich and eat half each. We share more than just a meal, but a common place.

"Thanks John, I owe you one!" I dig into lunch and throw Carrie a sliver of carrot.

"The only thing you owe me, Hugger, is a hug," He stands up from his milk crate and wraps himself around my shoulder, like a koala.

## THE SURPRISE HUG

The Surprise Hug can be given to anybody with their back turned, whether they're sitting, standing or kneeling.

A pair of arms snake around your waist and a face presses against your back. You look around, but can't see the face of the person hugging you. Their hands disappear back as they step away. You turn around for the real surprise: to discover who it was that just hugged you!

People who give this hug are looking to affectionately surprise somebody or to show their appreciation for somebody, without recognition, without invitation and without excuse.

Wherever you find someone meeting up with a friend or wherever somebody is sitting, toiling away, someone who loves them may sneak up behind them for a quick Surprise Hug. A Surprise Hug isn't for people with any form of medical complaint or heart condition.

A Surprise Hugger is a delightfully cunning trickster.





## I'M GRINNING AT THE WORLD...

There's a happiness in my life I thought I'd never find. The world seems a little brighter. Days are longer and my life is peaceful. Wherever I go people stop me and ask for a Free Hug with smiles on their faces, happy to have me in their lives for a moment.

This is the feeling I was missing at the arrivals terminal at the airport. This is the feeling I was seeking to rediscover. This is happiness. This is a world where everybody is welcome and nobody is a stranger.

My family doesn't know I'm out here in the middle of Sydney standing around offering Free Hugs to strangers. It can be my secret. Who boasts about doing good for others anyway? Isn't this just a different form of charity?

People stop and ask me why I'm standing around offering Free Hugs and I reply, "It's to make people happy and to see them smile."

Others will stop and ask me, "So, what's your name" and I tell them,

"It doesn't matter who I am, it's what I do that's important. I'm one man, trying to do something good for others."

"Your name is Juan Mann? Sounds like you were born for this!" Someone

replies with a smile.

A City Ranger approaches me with his Akubra Hat and neon yellow vest. He has a notebook in hand. He reaches out and takes my Free Hugs sign away. "Mate, you're going to have to leave. The council's brought in a new rule. Section 3.8.5 of the signage and advertising control plan clearly states that you cannot carry a sign promoting a business on a person. You are being a public nuisance and are subject to a Council compliance action. You need to get public liability insurance to limit the council's liability in the event of a hugging related *incident*."

Just then, a pair of hands snake around my waist. Nail polish usually means it's a lady, cracked nail polish could be a teenager of any gender. A wrist watch and suit, usually a man. A face buried into my shoulder and I can guess someone's height. One thing I can never anticipate is a surprise hug though. It always happens when you least expect it.

I'm shocked. I need answers. I need to put a face to the embrace. More than anything else, right now I need this hug.

The City Ranger looks at the person hugging me, the person I can't see.

"Excuse me, Sir, you can't hug this man, he's banned from offering Free Hugs. Both of you can either move on or I'm going to have to fine you."

## AT ARMS' LENGTH HUG

Two huggers hold each other's arms at the elbows while smiling into each other's eyes. This is an excellent way to maintain a close level of contact with somebody after hugging them, while continuing a conversation.

Similar to the A-Frame, this hug is also for those people who aren't quite comfortable sharing an embrace with somebody.

This variation of a hug is common between people who either have never met before, or people who are very familiar with each other. Used either as a method of holding someone at a distance, or as a method of keeping them close to you while talking. Its meaning is varied though the intention is clear depending on the huggers.

If used as a method of keeping someone at a distance, this hug leaves you with the knowledge of the other person's physical boundaries. As a method of keeping someone close while continuing a conversation, it leaves you feeling wanted.

An At Arms' Length Hugger doesn't want you to leave.





## **SHE TAKES ONE LAST SIP...**

Drops her empty bottle in the bin and strides after me as I turn out of the Pitt Street Mall and back into Sydney's streets. I'm lost and don't know where to go or what to do. If I go back to the Pitt Street Mall with a Free Hugs sign the council will fine me thousands of dollars. I've just lost something that made me happy. Something that made countless other people smile.

What can I do?

"What's the rush there, Juan?" She catches up to me just outside the State Theatre, a few hundred metres away from the Mall.

I tell her the whole story about the City Ranger, the council's new rules and how I've just lost something that means more to me than just a couple of words on cardboard.

"Can I give you a hug?" She pulls me into a careful embrace.

"I don't know if I'm allowed to even hug you, I might get in trouble." I'm looking around for a neon yellow vest, an Akubra Hat and a note book full of fines waiting to be given.

"Don't be so melodramatic! You can't give up on this, it means too much to you, to others." She laughs, "I came to tell you something today, actually. I'm quitting my job because of you."

I figure, this day can't get any worse. Not only have I been banned, I've just ruined this nice lady's life.

"I took this career to keep my parents and my partner happy. I bought a house, a nice car, great clothes and I've had fantastic holidays. But I'm not happy. It isn't what I wanted to do." She slides her hands down my arms and holds my elbows. I'm a captive audience.

"Watching you put yourself on the line every week inspired me to chase my dreams and do something I believe in. You've made a difference to my life and probably tons of other people who wouldn't even tell you. Get yourself together! Get a petition going and I bet thousands of people will sign it, just to make sure you can do what you do!"

"A petition? How many signatures would I need, do you think, for the council to let me go back to the Pitt Street Mall with my sign?" I've never signed a petition before, do they even work?

"Petitions almost always work. I think ten thousand signatures would send a pretty clear message." She grins. "Good luck and don't give up. Your city needs you!"

## THE GROUP HUG

A Group Hug is a life affirming experience. Think of a riot. Now imagine the happy alternative, a group of people piled together, with arms around each other and laughter in the air. A Group Hug is a free form, free for all, hug for three people or more. The more the merrier!

A Huddle is a form of group hug, more for the purpose of communicating a message amongst people and less as a method of showing someone you care. That said, huddles can become group hugs in two easy steps. Step One, throw your arms around the person beside you. Step Two, yell out “Group Hug!”

Teams celebrating a victory, groups commemorating a happy moment, families, friends piling together for a photo and gatherings of more than three people will almost always end in a group hug.

A Group Hug leaves you feeling like a part of something amazing, with the knowledge that you’re surrounded by some awesome people.

A Group Hugger cares about the world around them.





### **“EXCUSE ME, WOULD YOU LIKE TO SIGN...**

My petition? The City Council banned me from offering Free Hugs in the Pitt Street Mall unless I get millions of dollars worth of public liability insurance, in case somebody gets hurt. I’m trying to get ten thousand members of the public to sign this petition saying that I don’t come across as any kind of liability to you.” I’ve got a clipboard and pen in one hand and a Free Hugs sign in the other.

“How many signatures have you got so far?” A red haired lady asks.

“Today’s my first day and I’ve got a few hundred so far. People have been really supportive.”

“Why did the council ban you in the first place?” a curly haired lady asks, “What did you do wrong?”

“They banned me because of public liability insurance and that *maybe*, I was a nuisance. I didn’t do anything wrong. I don’t run up to people and hug them, I don’t scream out ‘FREE HUGS!’ at people walking past. I just stand there, smiling and waiting for someone to come up and hug me.”

“Why don’t you just get the insurance?” A short, dark haired man asks.

“Because I’m doing this for free, I can’t afford anything that costs more

than a piece of cardboard and a marker.”

“Then why don’t you get sponsorship?” A dark haired lady asks, “Surely there’s a company somewhere that would sponsor you?”

“Then it wouldn’t be free anymore, would it? It would be something else. It would be motivated for a particular reason. I’m just trying to keep it simple. So I have no other choice than people and a petition. Can I have all your autographs?”

They sign their names and pass the petition around. The curly haired lady hands it back to me. I’m now four people closer to ten thousand signatures.

“Can we have a group hug?” She asks, corralling her friends in for a group hug.

There’s laughter in the group hug, as everyone wraps their arms around the expanding mass of huggers. A young man walking past stops, doubles back and joins in.

“What’s this all about then?” He asks.

The red haired lady grabs my clipboard, “Would you like to sign a petition?”

## THE BEAR HUG

A Bear Hug involves the hugger grabbing the huggee around the arms and squeezing them as tightly as possible. Sometimes, the enthusiasm of the bear hugger can lift the huggee right off the ground!

A Bear Hug is delivered by anyone who has the strength to give it. Uncles will always bear hug their nieces and nephews, children will always bear hug their stuffed animals!

You can find Bear Hugs being given at family gatherings, social functions and anywhere enthusiastic and excited family members can be found.

A Bear Hug can make you feel like your lungs will burst and your head might pop right off, but most of all a Bear Hug makes you feel special. Nobody puts that much effort into a hug unless they really mean it!

If you're the person receiving a Bear Hug, you get to rest safe in the knowledge that you survived this one until the next time somebody tries to hug the life out of you! If someone can deliver a good proper Bear Hug, then you're in safe arms.

A Bear Hug can be one of the most comforting hugs of all. It tells you that the person hugging you can keep you safe and watch over you.

A Bear Hugger is a protector.





## **THIS IS THE TENTH MAJOR URBAN CENTRE...**

I've visited in the past fortnight. This isn't just about me and sign, it's now a city wide campaign for kindness. I've stopped at almost every train station, stood outside all the major shopping centres, lobbied outside all the local councils, petitioned along every major pedestrian area in the greater Sydney area.

I've been all over the City of Sydney in fourteen days and I have just under ten thousand signatures to show for it. Signatures from politicians, policemen, public servants, gas station attendants, strippers, students, teachers, television presenters, trapeze artists, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Jews, gay couples, lesbian couples, transgendered people, grandparents, families, garbage collectors, charity fundraisers, tax officers, bartenders, money lenders, tourists, buskers, shop assistants, security guards, insurance underwriters and lawyers.

Signatures from just about everybody I asked to sign the petition.

"What's this Free Hugs thing all about?" A man wearing a suit jacket in the middle of summer asks, pen poised over the petition.

"I'm just trying to do a good thing and make people smile." I open my

arms and raise an eyebrow. "Would you like a hug?"

He quickly scribbles his name down on the petition, drops the pen and clipboard to the ground, wrenches me towards him, his arms around my waist, lifts me off the ground and squeezes. My breath escapes me in one giant whoosh. I think I'm going pass out. I can't feel my legs. Surely even bears don't hug this strongly.

He drops me to the ground and grins.

"It says on your petition that I'm the ten thousandth signature." He picks up the clipboard and hands it to me, pointing at the bottom of the sheet. "Do I get a prize? Can I keep your sign?"

He's right. He is the last one. Ten thousand signatures. We did it! I scribble a thank you note on my Free Hugs sign and hand it to him.

"Congratulations, Hug Man! I hope that was a hug you won't ever forget!" He holds the Free Hugs sign above his head and is tackled by a team of teenage netballers who were walking past.

I did it. I got my signatures. Next stop, the council!

## ACROSS THE THRESHOLD HUG

One hugger leaps into the waiting arms of the huggee and wraps their arms around their neck or shoulders. The huggee carries the hugger in the same fashion as a newlywed couple.

It's a traditional style of hug and rarely seen outside of such a joyous context. An Across the Threshold Hug given outside of such a traditional setting will still give those viewing the embrace an impression of a recently married couple.

Couples initiate this type of hug anywhere. At a family gathering an Across the Threshold Hug will have family members calling for a wedding.

An Across the Threshold Hug can be an exhilarating experience, leaving the parties engaged in the embrace excited at the prospect of new love.





## **I HAVE MY FREE HUGS SIGN TUCKED UNDER ONE ARM...**

A stack of petitions filled with ten thousand signatures in my hands and determination in my heart.

This is it. I travelled around the entire city, I hugged ten thousand more of its inhabitants and I loved every moment of it: the acceptance I encountered, the charity I received and the support that rallied around me. Now it's time for me to return to the Pitt Street Mall.

It's time for the Free Hugs Campaign to go home.

At Town Hall, I take a number and wait in line. I sit beside a man with a building application, who nods at me and smiles. A street musician with his collection of glass bottles that he fills with water, tunes and plays like a keyboard, sits down opposite me and nods in recognition. A young lady sits down beside me.

"You're that Free Hugs man in Pitt Street, what are you doing here?" She scrunches her brow.

I tell her the whole story. Of being banned, of writing a petition, of getting ten thousand signatures from all over the city and now waiting for my moment.

"You really believe in human kindness?" Her eyes shine when she smiles.

"In the beginning I expected the worst from the world. I've put my heart and body on the line every week and nothing bad has ever happened. If anything, what is shocking is that people have shown me great kindness and compassion. People aren't as bad as we think they are." My number is called and I approach the lady behind the counter.

I am afraid. The same fear I felt the first time I offered Free Hugs. I don't know what's going to happen or how I'm going to deal with it.

"Hello Juan," the Town Hall representative smiles, "What can I do for you?"

I put my petition on the counter. A stack of paper inches thick, bound in brown string.

"I travelled around the city and collected ten thousand signatures from members of the public stating that I'm not a liability and that I should be able to offer Free Hugs in the city." She unties the bundle and rifles through the papers, grinning at every page filled with signatures, at every margin filled with messages of support.

"Let me check out what's going on." She taps something into the computer. "Interesting. Just a second, I have to make a call."

She picks up a cordless phone, dials a number and steps into a room behind her desk. I fidget while I wait. There's a map of the city under the glass on the desk before me and all I can do is stare at the Pitt Street Mall. The heart of the city.

She hangs up the phone as she walks out the door, a serious expression on her face.

“Well Juan, we have a problem.” She sits back at her desk. “It seems there’s no record of anyone having banned you. The City Rangers recognise the ordinance is there for them to ban you, but don’t have a record on file of having fined you.”

“They told me to leave and never return or they’d fine me. I couldn’t afford to pay a fine! When I called here, I was told it was an insurance issue. I don’t understand, have I wasted my time?”

She takes a leaf of paper from the stacked of petition and ties the rest together.

“Juan, you have ten thousand reasons why you haven’t wasted your time. That’s ten thousand people made happier, because of something you did. I can’t say I’ve had that in my life. You’re a lucky man.”

She pushes the bundle of petitions across the desk.

“Isn’t there somewhere more important you need to be? “

“But, the City Rangers... will they fine me?” I’m confused.

“I don’t think you’ll be bothered by anyone from here ever again, unless it’s for a hug. You’re free to go back to the Pitt Street Mall. You’re doing a great thing for the city.” She gestures to the door behind me.

The man with his building permits and the street musician with his bottles stand up and queue for a hug.

My face is as red as my velvet jacket and my heart is filled with

promise. I have a Free Hugs sign tucked under my arm and ten thousand signatures in my hand. I am free.

The young lady jumps at me and I catch her in my arms. The petition flutters to the floor. She swings her legs up in the air and I hold her there. I’m ready to cross this threshold, back into the city. This young lady in my arms still has a gleam in her eye.

“Hey Juan?” She bites her lip, “will you marry me?”

## THE ARM HUG

One hugger latches onto the arm of another person, hugging their arm instead of the whole body.

The Arm Hug is most commonly used by children or partners in an effort to get their parents' or partner's attention as a method of sharing something the hugger has found interesting. People will also use this type of hug in an attempt to keep up with their partner.

The Arm Hug is native to environments such as shopping malls, supermarkets, playgrounds, festivals and events - anywhere you'll find somebody trying to hold onto another person, or to keep up with them in a busy crowd.

Once initiated, an arm hug often shifts into a photo opportunity or koala style of hug, as the huggee more fully embraces the hugger.

An Arm Hugger will follow in your footsteps.





## **AS I PACE UP AND DOWN THE PITT STREET MALL...**

I'm smiling at people passing me by and offering a Free Hug to anyone who'll look or smile in my direction. Out of the corner of my eye, I catch a flash of somebody rushing towards me. I see a glimmer of a smile as a pair of hands clutch around my arm, stopping me in my tracks.

Bouncing, she yanks me down to around half my height.

"Hello Juan!" She smiles up at me. "How's your day been?"

She is the centre of my attention. With her hugging my arm, she's always in step with me, or at most a step behind me.

She's a definite highlight of my Free Hugs Day. Every week she's there, dropping by with a bottle of drink to keep my energy up, to keep me company and to talk about our worlds.

I tuck my Free Hugs sign under my arm and have a quick drink before sharing stories with her of the people I've met that day. The men in suits who've stopped for a man hug, the kids I've kneeled down to hug and the police officers I've shared a handshake with. The little old ladies who make me feel sad because they're so alone, who hold onto

my arms and won't let me go. I tell her everything of the world around me, of the people I've met and the things I've seen.

She is my friend as I am hers.

She tells me of the sadness her friends feel and of the worries she has for her future. She tells me of her successes and we celebrate. When she tells me of her failures, we commiserate. We share our perspectives on life, family and friendship.

What good is knowledge if you don't share it?

What good is offering Free Hugs without making friends?

Aching, exhausted and smiling, my Free Hugs Day will come to an end. She will go her way, I will go mine and next week we will meet again.

## ARM APPROACHES AND HANDY VARIATIONS

Now that we have covered the basic style of hug, we can look at some more advanced techniques, approaches and variations on a hug.

Arm positioning is an intricate detail in all hugs. Where do your arms go? Do you go high, around someone's shoulders? Low around their waist? Or do you attempt a cross arm approach to a hug?

After you've got your arms in place, there are some other handy variations you can use to round out your hug.

## THE OVER ARM APPROACH

The Over Arm technique involves wrapping your arms around the shoulders of the person you're hugging. It is a safe approach: your intentions cannot be misread and there is no chance of hands straying or giving the wrong impression. This approach is most commonly used on strangers, parents and by taller huggers on everyone they wrap their arms around.

This approach is always returned with the Under Arm Approach.



## UNDER ARM APPROACH

The Under Arm Approach involves sliding your arms around the waist of the person you are hugging. It is a personal and more intimate form of embrace. It involves a level of familiarity between the two parties that transcends a first hug. With your arms around someone's torso, you have free access to all areas of their back, from the shoulders right down to the waist.

This approach is always returned with the Over Arm Approach.



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## THE CROSS ARM APPROACH

The Cross Arm Approach falls somewhere between the Over Arm and Under Arm approaches. Each hugger has one arm over the shoulder and one arm around the waist of their hugging partner. This is one of the most common and accommodating approaches to a Free Hug.



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## THE HIGH FIVE

Two people smiling at each other, slapping each other's palms.

Used to celebrate an achievement or during moments of excitement and happiness. High Fives are common amongst kids and sports people, but are found just about anywhere and at any time.

When someone is a little uncomfortable with the idea of hugging a complete stranger, sometimes a high five or a handshake can express a similar sentiment without invading personal space.



## “LONG TIME NO SEE,”

She stands there in her official looking council uniform, smiling at me. “It’s great to see you back out here.”

It’s the lady from Town Hall who handed me back my petition and set me free all those months ago.

“Hey, thank you so much for what you did.” I smile and invite her in for a hug.

“No worries Juan. The other people at Town Hall and I were wondering if you’d still be here after all that. I had a lunch break so I thought I’d come over and see how you were doing. How’s everything going?”

I try to explain how great everything has been. People seem happier, the city seems a more welcoming place. Now there are people coming out every week with their own Free Hugs signs, standing around the Pitt Street Mall offering a hug to everyone.

The Free Hugs Campaign is growing and I couldn’t be happier about it.

“That’s fantastic,” She holds her hand up, palm held up for a high five. “Keep up the great work, Juan! Have a great life!”

## THE PAT

You're all the way into a hug and then you feel it... a hand gently patting you on the back.

A pat on the back is a comforting thing. Parents pat their newborns on the back to comfort them, to ease their pains. People pat each other on the back as a sign of sympathy. You could call those the "There, there" pats, imagining somebody saying it every time they pat you on the back.

When offering Free Hugs a pat on the back means something different – it's there to keep a hug quick. When somebody starts patting you, it's a sure sign they're ready to let go.

If you've ever watched a pro-wrestling match, you'll recognise the pat as a sign that someone wants out of the position they're in. Fast!



## "HEY JUAN,"

A teenager chuckles over his shoulder, "watch this!"

He takes a stranger into an A-Frame hug and settles in for the long haul. She laughs at first and holds him for a few seconds before gently patting him on the back.

He holds her a little tighter and shuffles closer. He's twenty seconds into the hug and her pats on his back have become faster and harder. Forty five seconds into the hug and she's raising welts on his back at a lighting pace.

"I think I proved my point. Every pat is like they're tapping out of some submission hold. Patting keeps it quick, keeps it clean, keeps people at a distance." He laughs as he breaks away from the embrace, holding her arms at her side and smiling with these tear rimmed eyes at her. She shakes her head and scowls at him for hugging her for too long.

"If you knew that's what it meant, why did you keep hugging her?" I shake my head at him.

"I may have known that," he rubs his back where the lady paddled him, "but why would I try explaining it to you, when I could just show you instead?"

## THE RUB

The Rub is a hand on your back, gently rubbing in circles.

This is another throwback to parents and babies. Parents rub their children's backs or limbs to soothe them. A rub on the back is a nice way of easing your pains, of showing someone you care. It's also a great way to generate warmth on cold day.



## HE PULLS ME INTO A HUG...

And buries his face into my neck. His hands stray down my back and stop just over my kidneys. He breathes me in slowly, inhaling the scent of a city of people, their perfumes, their aftershaves and deodorants on my jacket.

He slowly rubs my kidneys and it's awkward. I don't know this guy. In fact, the only guy I can ever remember rubbing my back was my Dad. It's creepy, but nowhere near as sinister as being groped.

We separate and he holds my arms by my side and searches my face with his eyes.

"Has anyone filmed what you're doing here? Look at everyone man! They're so happy to see you, you're making a difference." His clothes, they're crazy. Pants with patches from cartoon shows, t-shirt slogans and a colourful tie poking over his belt like a cat's tail.

"People have asked, but no-one ever comes back. Others take photos with me, but I never see them again. All I have is my memory and a collection of signs I can't bear to throw away. It would be great to have my own reminder of what's happening out here."

"I'm going to borrow my Dad's camera, I'll film you, we'll make a documentary or something and split the profits, it'll be great. The world needs to know about what you're doing." He's excited. He nods to himself, holding up his shoe store sale sign.

For the next fortnight, he follows me around with a camera. For the next two years, the tapes sit on the shelf of his home.

A stranger becomes a friend.

## THE HEAD HOLD

Holding someone's head or touching their face is a wonderful sign of love in an embrace.

It shows a level of comfort, appreciation and respect for the person you're hugging.



## “WHAT’S THAT SIGN SAY?”

She squints up at the sign held high above my head.

I lower it to my waist, somewhere near her eye level and silently point out the words.

“Free Hugs? I’ll have one!” She cackles, ambling towards me. I drop down to one knee and open my arms. She holds my head and pulls it against her shoulder, gently stroking my hair.

“You’re an amazing young man!” she says as she pulls away, gently touching my face. In the dead of winter, her hand on my cold cheek warms me. Not only where her hand touches, but somewhere inside. “You know, I haven’t been hugged by a man since my husband Russell passed away some seven years ago. Thank you young man!”

I smile and stand once again. As she wanders away there’s a spring in her step. As I turn and face the world, there’s a glow on my face that comes from more than a physical touch.

## THE HAND SHAKE

The Handshake is a hug tailor made for hands. Two people's hands are clasped together, with a shake for emphasis.

When people aren't too comfortable with the idea of hugging somebody, sometimes a handshake will suffice! It's a personal way of making contact with somebody in a way that isn't too intrusive.



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## “I CAN'T HUG YOU, MATE...”

But I will shake your hand.” With his left hand he uses the bottom of his t-shirt to wipe the tears streaming down his cheeks. He offers me his big, dry right hand.

His handshake is soft. His hand is trembling. He nods, his mouth caught in a frown, before his body is wracked with a fresh round of sobs.

“Mate, I just have to tell you. I was standing on top of that building over there, looking down on the mall, ready to jump and just end it all. Then I saw you there, smiling, holding up your sign. It gave me faith in people and hope in the world.”

I could never have imagined that this man on the verge of suicide and I, some smiling man with a sign, could ever be brought together?

“I was released from jail this morning. Thirteen years, I've been away. I've hurt people, been hurt by people and didn't think I could or should make it in the world. I can't hug you, but please shake my hand.”

He chokes back a fresh bout of tears.

I'm stunned into silence. There's a big, burly man with a scar running down his face from ear to neck, unashamedly sobbing in front of me.

[80]

Remorseful and torn between choosing to live a life or to end one.

“Whatever you do, don’t stop what you’re doing. Don’t think that just because someone won’t hug you, you aren’t making a difference.”

He shakes my hand once more, looks down and walks away. I watch him disappear, one broken man in a crowd.

For years I searched the faces in the crowd, looking for his scarred face, wondering whatever happened to that crying man. Did he live a better life? Did he find forgiveness in himself?

For years, I hugged hundreds of thousands of people, but not him.

One Thursday I’m watching from the side of the mall, as a group of tourists pose with another Free Hugger for a photo, when someone stops beside me and shares the view.

For minutes we stand there, side by side, silently smiling at the busy street before us.

“To think, we live in a world where there’s someone out there doing something good for other people and asking nothing in return,” he says, “I mean, just watching these people changed my life.”

I turn to face him. There’s a scar running down the side of his face, from ear to neck. A scar I could never forget. His hands, big, dry and folded under his arms.

I turn back to watch a lady run and jump into the arms of a Free Hugger and smile.

“It changed my life too.”

## **ADVANCED HUGGING TECHNIQUES**

We’ve covered the anatomy of a hug and the way our bodies, arms and hands all contribute to the delivery of a great hug.

There are some circumstances and situations that require a more advanced hugging technique for both parties.

These techniques aim to close the distance between two huggers so they may enjoy the benefits of a hug, regardless of the situations or circumstances that keep them apart.

These advanced hugging techniques can be used in conjunction with the great variety of hug types, approaches and variations to deliver a tailor made hug.

## THE SWAY

When engaged in any form of the different types of hugs, the huggers slowly and softly sway from side to side.

Gentle, rhythmic and romantic, it replicates the tender motion of a mother rocking a baby to sleep. If one hugger is swaying in a hug and the other hugger isn't aware they are also meant to be swaying, it can become a touch awkward.



## SHE IS ONE OF MY REGULARS...

A jovial older lady, she sneaks up behind me and surprises me with a hug.

After so many years of hugs and chats, I can pick her out of a crowd. The way she walks, the way she does her hair and the way she dresses. She's a highlight of my week. You meet someone enough times, you share enough moments and they're not just huggers and hugges, they're friends.

I hadn't seen her for a few weeks. She's not wearing her usual bright clothes. Her hair isn't quite the same and the way she walks isn't the way she usually walks. She's changed.

"Hi Juan," she says, "it's been a while, where's my hug?" She buries her face into my jacket and we gently start to sway from side to side. It's soothing and calming.

"It's been so long, how've you been?"

"Well, my cancer's come back. The doctor's only just let me out today to come and get my free hug from you." Her mouth quivers into a smile as she pulls back her hair to show me it's a wig. "I've had it before, this is my second bout. The doctor says it doesn't look too good. I just wanted to come out here and say thank you. Keep doing what you do." She wipes the back of her hand across her eyes and pats my arm. "You've made this little old lady happy."

I'm left speechless as she shuffles back into the crowd.

I haven't seen her since.

## THE TWIST

Two huggers are engaged in any kind of hug, with their feet placed firmly on the ground, their upper bodies twist from side to side, similar to a pepper grinder working.

This variation is most common among excited or enthusiastic people or people who may not have seen each other in some time.



## SHE DROPS HER SHOPPING BAGS BESIDE ME...

Wraps her arms around my waist and twists from side to side with an expression of pure happiness on her face.

“You’ve had a great day, haven’t you?” I laugh as I ask her.

“Oh, you wouldn’t begin to believe it. I met my sister for the first time in over a decade today. I have a beautiful baby niece!” She’s gleeful.

“Wow, that’s a long time to not talk to someone. It’s great to hear that your relationship is on the mend.” Still twisting around, her hug is so excited, I’m glad to share in the moment.

“The funny thing is, she saw a video I made on YouTube and got in touch with me through there. It’s amazing what the internet does for bringing people together!” She takes a step back and picks up her shopping. “You should really put something about this on YouTube, you never know what might happen!”

She waves good bye and I’m left scratching my head.

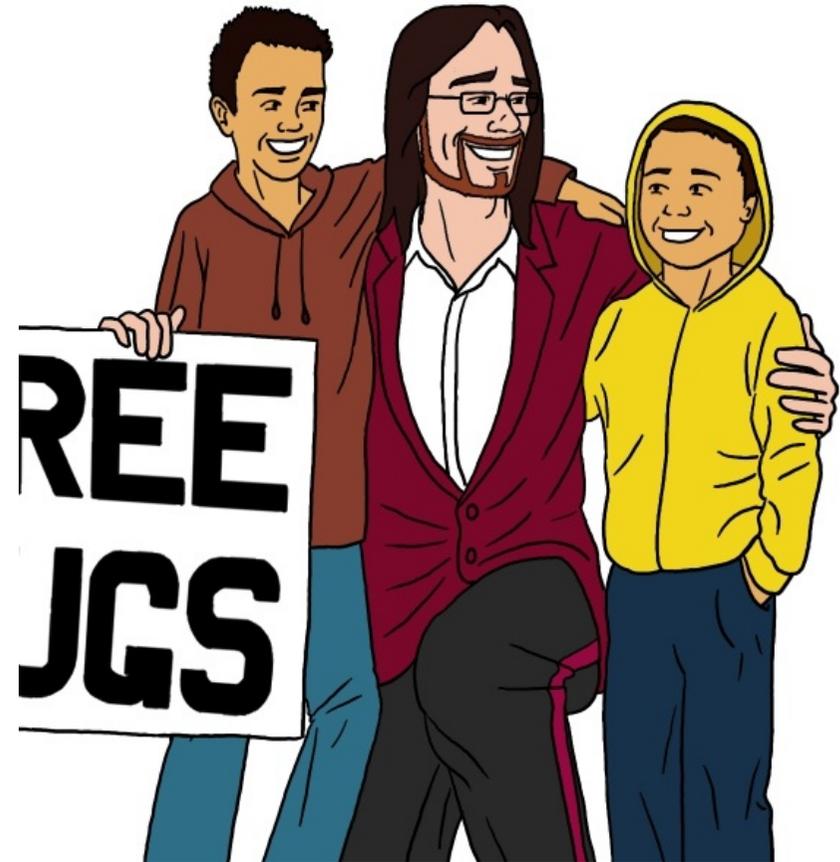
What is YouTube?

## THE BENDED KNEE HUG

The Bended Knee Hug is a great way to address the difference in height between two huggers. A hugger bends down on one knee delivers a hug, using any of the previously mentioned styles of hugs and techniques, to the huggee.

Taller huggers taking into consideration the height of children and smaller people will on occasion get down on one knee and hug away! In special circumstances, the Bended Knee Hug may also be used by people making a marriage proposal.

At first, a Bended Knee Hug may seem awkward for both huggers. It brings attention to the height disparity between them. But no matter what height people may be, once they are caught up in a hug, the details aren't as important as the hug itself.





## THERE'S A TAP ON MY KNEE...

I turn around and there's a boy in a yellow sweatshirt, holding his Dad's hand. His older brother stands just a few steps behind. I drop down to one knee and smile.

"Hello there, young sir," I say, "would you like a Free Hug?"

He blushes a shade of red that makes the freckles across the bridge of his nose darker. He tugs the hood of his sweatshirt down over his eyes, while nodding.

I hold my arms open wide and he gingerly steps into my arms, patting me on the back while his brother slips his arm around my shoulder and flashes his Dad a thumbs up.

"Can I ask you to sign my petition?" He says, turning to his Dad to get a clipboard. "It's to help get more money for doctors in Africa. They help lots of sick children there and sick children need more doctors. I want to be a doctor in Africa!"

I smile and sign his petition. This boy, he's not even eight years old and yet he's already aware of what's happening in the world and how he can make a difference. With my signature on the petition, he thanks me and runs off with his brother to find another willing volunteer.

"You've got an amazing son. When he grows up he's really going to change someone's life." I stand beside his father, watching his sons shyly approaching strangers with this petition.

"He has a brain tumour that can't be removed, he won't ever grow up to be a doctor. He knows he won't ever grow up but wants to help other children who could be saved from illness. He's trying to make a difference with the time he has left." Tears well in his eyes as he watches his son over to a charity fundraiser to collect another signature.

"You've raised an amazing child."

"That's the part that hurts the most. Imagine all that could have been."

The boys run back with another page of the petition filled. "How many more signatures do you need today?" Their father asks.

The boy in the yellow sweater stops, looks around and thinks for a moment.

"As many people as there are here in the city. How many is that, Dad?"

His Dad smiles. "Just enough."

## THE LAZY HUG

Using any of the various different styles of hugs, a hugger initiates the Lazy Hug when they lean on and place all of their body weight upon the huggee.

A Lazy Hug can go wrong if the huggee fails to catch the weight of the hugger, or if they step away from the hugger. This is a hug of faith, as the hugger must have great faith in the huggee to know that they will support them.

This is also an exhausted hug – at the end of a long day, a hugger may be inclined to collapse into the arms of somebody and hope that they'll be there to catch them when they fall.





## **WITH THE SUN SETTING...**

I tuck my sign under my arm and head for the nearest train station for the journey home. My feet ache, my back is sore and my face hurts from smiling so much.

I'm tired, but I am happy in the knowledge that today was a good day. Content that I gave as many hugs as I got, that I shared a moment of happiness, a moment of sadness, a moment at all, with someone I'd never met before.

I drop into a seat on the train and settle in for a long ride home.

The lady next to me glances at my sign out of the corner of her eye and slides down the seat away from me towards the aisle. Opposite me, a man in a business suit huffs at me over the top of his newspaper, snaps it open and returns to its pages. The sound of loud heavy metal leaks out of the earphones of the tattooed and pierced musician beside him.

I'm on my way home, just another man in the crowd and I am happy.

The train pulls in at the next station, the lady jumps out of her seat and moves across the aisle. Her place is taken by another man in a suit. He places his briefcase between us and, in that way all public transport

patrons do, discreetly glances around to see who he's sitting near.

With my head resting against the window, he taps gently on my arm.

"I don't mean to bother you, I know you're off duty, but... are you still offering Free Hugs?"

I muster up a smile.

"I'm never off duty, just tired. You might need to hold me up!" We stand up and I fall into his arms, exhausted and weary. He laughs and squeezes me tightly, before sitting back down. I collapse into the seat beside him.

"I work for the Tax Office in town, just above the Pitt Street Mall where you are. Today, I wanted to hug you, but I thought I missed out. I managed to give back a whole bunch of tax money to this little old lady who hadn't filed a tax return in years, because her husband passed away. I just felt good about it and wanted to share that with you!" He's beaming proudly.

Tired as I am, I can't help but smile back.

## THE ONLINE HUG

Four letters on a screen. A single word letting you know that somewhere, someone in the world is thinking about hugging you. All you need to do is type the word...

Hugs.

People across the world use it every day, signing off on an email, leaving a message on someone's webpage or slipping it into a text message. Why finish an email saying "Sincerely yours," when you can write "Hugs," and let your correspondent know you care?

Users of the Online Hug use technology as way of bridging the distance between people. Laptops, cell phones or any new piece of electronic wizardry – one word that shows somebody you care, no matter how close or far away they may be. This type of hug uses the technology that can keep us physically apart to close the emotional distance between us.

You can even kick it old school by writing it in a letter.





## **I USED TO SIGN OFF MY EMAILS...**

To people with a simple “Thank you!”

It was just a nice way of telling everyone I appreciated that they’d made the effort to email me. My parents had taught me saying thank you was a courtesy and that I should always thank everyone for the effort they had made.

Though I was always thankful, it always seemed an obligation or a courtesy rather than something heartfelt.

I received an email from a young lady telling me all about her life. About the woes, the worries and the strife she had fallen in. She explained to me that a friend had emailed her a video about a young man offering Free Hugs in Sydney and that just watching it gave her hope. She felt inspired to do something kind for others.

It was a goal of hers to meet me and offer me a hug, to thank me for doing what I was doing.

She lived on one side of the world and I lived on the other. It seemed implausible that I would some day cross paths with her.

She ended her email with:

“Though I may never meet you I want to send you this hug, all the way from my home to yours. \*hugs\*”

That was it.

\*hugs\*

A simple word for a powerful gesture. She was letting me know that wherever I was she had hugged me, in her own way. Even if it was just a word on a screen.

The Online Hug also works in other ways. You should know that right now while I’m typing this, I’m thinking about you reading this book and you should know that I owe you a hug.

## THE UNIVERSALITY OF HUGS

A hug is a universally recognised gesture that demonstrates affection, compassion and support between people. All over the world, people hug at different times and for different reasons. To celebrate, to mourn, to greet and say goodbye. No one is immune to a hug and no one is allergic. A hug crosses national borders and leaps over language barriers.

Some cultures enjoy hugs everywhere and from anyone they're available from. Other cultures treat hugs as sacred things that should only be shared with someone you know and love. Some people don't know how important a hug is until they no longer share them. What is universally accepted is that hugs are amazing, life affirming things!

The words 'Free Hugs' have been translated into many different languages and now Free Hugs have been offered in over 80 countries, with great results!

## HERE ARE A FEW TRANSLATIONS FOR "FREE HUGS"

Arabic: احضان مجانية

Afrikaans: Gratis drukkies

Bulgarian: Безплатни прегръдки

Chinese: 免費擁抱 (traditional) / 免費擁抱 (simplified)

Croatian: Besplatno Grlim

Czech: Objetí Zdarma

Dutch: Gratis Knuffels

Esperanto: Senpagaj Brakumoj

Farsi: بغل کردن رایگان

French: Câlins gratuits

German: Gratis Umarmung(en)

Greek: δωρεάν αγκαλιές



FREE HUGS FRANCE

Hebrew: חיבוקים חינם  
Hungarian: Ingyen ölelés  
Icelandic: Ókeypis Faðmlög  
Indonesian: Pelukan Gratis  
Irish: Barróg Saor  
Italian: Abbracci Gratis  
Japanese: フリーハグズ  
Korean: 자유롭게 안아드려요.



**FREE HUGS KOREA**

Latvian: Bezmaksas apskāvienī  
Malay: Pelukan Percuma  
Nepali: अन्कमाल सितैमा  
Norwegian: Gratis Klemmer  
Portuguese: Abraços grátis

Russian: Бесплатные объятия  
Slovak: Objatie zadarmo  
Slovenian: Brezplačni objemi  
Spanish: Abrazos gratis  
Swedish: Gratis Kramar  
Tagalog: Libreng Yakap  
Thai: กอดฟรี  
Turkish: Bedava Kucaklama  
Ukrainian: Безкоштовні обійми  
Vietnamese : Ôm miễn phí/ Ôm tự do  
Welsh (Cymraeg): Cwtsh am Ddim



**FREE HUGS RUSSIA**



## IT'S BEEN SIX DAYS...

Since the Free Hugs Campaign video launched on YouTube and already my email inbox is filling up faster and faster every minute. The emails are all the same, with one welcome difference.

"Free Hugs, Bogota, Colombia"

"Free Hugs, Tel Aviv, Israel"

"Free Hugs, Austria"

"Free Hugs, Beijing, China"

They're pouring in from all over the world. From places I've only imagined, now made real to me because a part of me has been there.

The second day I offered Free Hugs someone asked me, "So you're standing here hugging people, but now what? Where do you want to go with this?"

I thought for a moment.

"If offering Free Hugs works here, if it can cause complete strangers to stop and hug me, then I wonder if it works everywhere else in the world. Someday I'd like to visit every country and offer Free Hugs. I wonder if it will work in different languages and across different

cultures."

He laughed at me and wished me luck.

My email inbox keeps filling up:

"Free Hugs, Toronto"

"Free Hugs, New York City"

"Free Hugs, Bath, United Kingdom"

"Free Hugs, Moscow"

Though I haven't been there, haven't breathed the city air, haven't seen the city streets or embraced the city people, I'm there in spirit.

My Dad calls from London.

"Son, I just got sent a video in my email. There's a man walking around in the street carrying a cardboard sign. He looks a lot like you, but his name is different. Do you know Juan Mann?"

I'd been offering Free Hugs for three long, happy years without my family knowing. This is how my Dad finds out. Not from me, but from the world. You can only keep a secret for so long.

"Um, Dad... it's me. I'm him. I guess I didn't tell you because I couldn't really explain it. I know it isn't changing the world, but it makes a difference, people seem happier. I'm happier."

How can I even begin to explain what's happened in my life since we last saw each other in London?

I try here with this book.

“I just want you to know, I’m proud of you, son.” It’s been three lonely years away from my family, with only a city of strangers to depend upon. This is where I start to get my family back.

My email inbox keeps filling up:

“Free Hugs, London”  
“Free Hugs, Atlanta”  
“Free Hugs, Malaysia”  
“Free Hugs, Seoul, Korea”

Around the world, the news tells me that there are people struggling and suffering, people made miserable by the actions of others. In those places there are now people smiling and offering someone a Free Hug as they pass by.

The people passing by don’t ignore them. They don’t stop them. They don’t lecture them for being bad people. These people all over the world are stopping for a Free Hug from a complete stranger. They smile in all the worlds’ languages.

My email inbox keeps filling up:

“Free Hugs, Argentina”  
“Free Hugs, Ireland”  
“Free Hugs, Japan”  
“Free Hugs, Mexico”

My phone rings twice before I answer it. There’s a voice at the end of the line, an accent foreign to my ears, telling me how they’ve heard about this Free Hugs Campaign and asking me if I want to hop on a plane and fly to the USA and offer Free Hugs there.

I turn off the computer, I pack my bag, slip into my red velvet jacket, pick up a Free Hugs sign and head to the airport.

My email inbox keeps filling up.

## STARTING YOUR OWN FREE HUGS CAMPAIGN

We've covered the styles of hugs, the technique of hugging and some of the finer points of an embrace. Now how about we put that new found knowledge into practice? You can hug your family and your friends, why not hug a stranger as well?

Starting your own Free Hugs Campaign is simple to do. All you need is yourself, something that has the words "Free Hugs" on it and a place filled with people ready to take you up on your offer!

Here is some friendly advice about starting your own Free Hugs Campaign:



## ADVERTISING

Make a sign that says "Free Hugs" and carry it around for the day. Design it however you like so that it can be easily read from a distance. Decorate it, colour it in, make it eye catching, attractive and fun.

Make or buy a t-shirt that says "Free Hugs" and wear it anywhere. Why buy a shirt when you can make your own? Remember, whenever you wear your Free Hugs shirt someone will come up to you and ask for a hug, wherever you are!

After you've got your advertising covered, finding a place to offer Free Hugs takes a little consideration. You can walk down any street with your sign or shirt, but if you're the only person there, who is there to hug?

## TARGET MARKETS

In choosing a place to offer Free Hugs it's a good idea to find a busy public place – parks, public squares or busy pedestrian areas. There are more prospective huggers walking around and for both the safety of you and others, it is important to stay on public property in busy areas.

Other great places to offer Free Hugs are festivals, major events and anywhere there are lots of people looking to celebrate life.

Shopping malls, stores and schools may not be such great places to offer Free Hugs. If you do want to offer Free Hugs in these places, it's a good idea to get permission from the people in charge. Let them know you're interested in making people smile, let them know you're doing a human, charitable thing and it won't cost anybody a cent. Maybe they'll let you hug away!



## CODE OF CONDUCT

You have something that shows you are offering Free Hugs. You've chosen some places where you're going to offer these Free Hugs, now all you have to do is get out there! But what can you expect from people and what might people be expecting from you? Here are a few things I keep in mind every time I'm offering Free Hugs.

**BE FRIENDLY** - Stand around, wave and talk to curious bystanders. If someone's smiling, great! If they're frowning then wish them a great day as they walk by.

**DON'T HUG SOMEBODY UNLESS THEY OFFER TO HUG YOU** - An unwanted, uninvited hug can be threatening and unwelcome. The purpose of the Free Hugs Campaign is to offer Free Hugs to those who want and need them, not to force yourself on those who might be scared, intimidated or uninterested.

**WEAR COMFORTABLE CLOTHING** - You really have to make sure you're comfortable if you're going to be standing around all day. In summer, not only will you be incredibly hot, by the end of the day you'll be incredibly sweaty. In winter you'll be battling the cold, so stay warm and rug up.

**DON'T FORGET TO SMILE AT EVERYONE** - They may just smile and maybe double back for a quick hug. Even if they don't, they won't soon forget the happy people they've just seen offering Free Hugs!

**WHEN HUGGING SOMEONE, BE MINDFUL OF THEIR PHYSICAL CONDITION** - Don't pick up a someone frail and twirl them around like you would a dancing partner! Unless they run and leap into your arms, a nice old fashioned hug is just fine.

**WHEN THE PERSON YOU ARE HUGGING STOPS HUGGING YOU, LET GO** - If they're patting you on the back, let go faster. Go with the flow and let the person you're hugging guide the hug.

**OFFER FREE HUGS WITH A GROUP OF FRIENDS** - It'll be a great experience that you'll all remember. You'll laugh together about the people you meet, cry over the stories you hear and when the crowds disappear and it's quiet again, you have someone to talk to.

**WHEN OFFERING FREE HUGS IN GROUPS, REMEMBER TO KEEP YOURSELVES APPROACHABLE** - Try to avoid standing around chatting with each other, otherwise people will think you're too busy to hug them and won't want to bother you. There's also no need to scream 'FREE HUGS' at people passing by. If you're wearing a Free Hugs shirt or carrying a Free Hugs sign, they'll understand exactly what's on offer.

**SOME PEOPLE DON'T WANT A HUG** - But they will settle for a handshake. Some people may just want someone to talk for a moment. Others may just wonder how crazy you are and if you're with a religious group, a university study or a TV program. Everyone, no matter how stern they look, is going to be curious about these happy looking people they see offering Free Hugs.





## HE STOPS ME ON THE CORNER...

of East Huron Street and North Michigan Avenue in Chicago and offers to exchange a Free Hug for one of his promotional brochures.

“Hey... what’s it like, you know, hugging strangers?” He asks after we separate from our hug.

How do I explain something that doesn’t quite have words?

“Well, it’s... it’s a lot like this.” I hand him my Free Hugs sign and wave him towards the people passing by. He blinks at me, grins and drops his promotional brochures in my hands.

Almost immediately, a young man in a blue jacket stops beside him and nervously asks if he can have a hug, before pouncing on him and nearly toppling him over. When they separate, they’re both laughing.

The young man in the blue jacket, he looks at the flyer guy and myself.

“Hey, how often do you guys do this?” He smiles at us with a gleam in his eye.

“Back home in Australia, I’m out every Thursday over in the heart of the city, so long as the weather’s good.” A lady stands in front of us, waiting

for a hug.

The young man in the blue jacket nods his head in thought as the lady hugs him, the flyer guy and then me, before skipping down the street.

“Do you mind if I make a sign and do this here in Chicago?” The flyer guy and I look at each other.

“Hey, I’ll join you,” The flyer guy answers. “I’ve never tried this before, but it seems like a blast.”

Smiling, the flyer guy hands back my sign.

“See you around, Free Hugs Guy!” They both wave goodbye to me as I head towards my hotel on Chicago’s Magnificent Mile.

The next morning a limo pulls up outside the hotel. The driver runs around to open the door for me.

“Good morning, sir. Are you ready to go? The people over at Oprah’s studios are waiting.”

## **THE BENEFITS OF GIVING AND RECEIVING FREE HUGS**

What's so great about Free Hugs anyway? So everyone's doing it, done it or plans on having one later on, why should you?

### **FREE HUGS:**

**FEEL GREAT** – A Free Hugger is a hugging veteran. With many years and many hugs worth of experience, they'll deliver a quality hug every time or your money back!

**MAKE YOU FEEL LESS LONELY** – A Free Hugger is someone who will try to understand. They are someone who will listen to you, laugh with you and cry with you.

**GIVE YOU THE COURAGE TO DO ANYTHING** – If you can share a Free Hug with a complete stranger, you can do anything!

**CAN HELP YOU FEEL** – When all the pain and sorrow in the world has you feeling numb, a Free Hug can help you find that spark that makes life worth living once again.

**BOOST YOUR SELF ESTEEM** – Knowing that there's somebody out there who wants to hug you can really help you feel better.

**INSPIRE YOU TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD** – If something as simple as a Free Hug can make a difference, what else could you do to make your part of the world a better place?

**IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH** – Happiness is one of the greatest boosters to the immune system you can get!

**HELP YOU RELAX** – A tough day at work? Problems at home? A Free Hug will ease that tension and help you remember that there are good people in the world.

**ARE GREAT EXERCISE** – If doing a hundred push ups is great for conditioning your muscles, one hundred Free Hugs can be a great benefit for you.

**ARE A GREAT WAY TO KEEP WARM IN WINTER** – Sharing body heat is a sure-fire way to warm up and feel better for it.

**ARE COMPACT AND PORTABLE** – You can take them and share them anywhere. Wherever you go a Free Hug can go with you!

**REQUIRE NO SPECIAL TRAINING** – We've all hugged someone before, we're all experts. All you need to get started is something that tells people, "Hey, I'm offering you a Free Hug," like a t-shirt you've made or a sign you've painted.

**ARE A GREAT WAY TO CELEBRATE** – The world is treating you well? Why not share that awesome feeling with someone else and offer them a Free Hug?

**ARE ENDURING** – Hours and even days after your Free Hug is over, just the thought of it will make you smile again. The effects can last for as long as you want them to!

**COST NOTHING** – It doesn't matter how much money you have, what clothes you're wearing, where your ancestors are from or what you believe in, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

## **THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF GIVING AND RECEIVING FREE HUGS**

Offering Free Hugs is an amazing experience. Your city will open its arms to you, some people will smile at you, others will wish you well and a few special people will thank you for the wonderful service you are providing. A larger number will throw themselves upon you and hug you as though you've never been hugged before.

Then when you're smiling and waving to an elderly man who's trotting down the street after having his first hug in years, it will happen.

Someone will squeeze your bottom.

When offering Free Hugs you're putting yourself on the line and there are a few individuals out there who will take advantage. It doesn't matter if you're male or female, what clothes you wear or where you're standing.

If somebody has the audacity to grope you, confront them and tell them what they did isn't acceptable. You aren't alone, you have your friends to support you and the general public will take your side!

Whatever you do, don't let one horrible person ruin the Free Hugs Campaign for you or anybody else. Remember, you're doing an amazing thing.

There's another negative aspect to offering Free Hugs. Your face will hurt from smiling too much. Mine always does.



## **THE FREE HUGS CAMPAIGN – A TRUE STORY.**

Free Hugs. Two words and a gesture that changed my life. I have travelled around the world and seen people offering Free Hugs in the most unlikely countries. I have met more kind hearted people than I could ever have imagined. I have been welcomed as a guest into stranger's homes, shared a meal and a part of their lives.

I have seen old friends take the opportunity to chase their dreams and others drift away, while welcoming new friends into my life and into my home.

I've come a long way from a sad and lonely man standing in an airport longing for someone to hug him.

I've celebrated International Free Hugs Day, the first Saturday after June 30<sup>th</sup>, every year since I began offering Free Hugs.

I've hugged hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world. Together we laughed and we cried.

I have learned that the beautiful thing about life is knowing that you are the one that gets to put it all together.

My Dad's words were a truth I came to terms with. I may not have changed the world but I have made a difference. Even if it's just to one person's life and in a simple way, like making them smile or offering them a hug.

The smallest gesture can have the greatest significance.

A smile from a stranger, a kind word from a friend, a thank you from a loved one. A hug from someone who cares.

Alone, one person can make a difference. Together, we can change the world.

Tomorrow I'll wake up with the sun. I'll open my cupboard and take out my red velvet jacket. I'll pick up a piece of cardboard and a marker and make a sign that reads "Free Hugs."

Wherever in the world I may be, I will make my way into the city and I will wait there with arms wide open.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

**INTERNATIONAL FREE HUGS DAY** is the first Saturday after June 30<sup>th</sup> every year.

For more information about Juan Mann and the Free Hugs Campaign check out the following websites.

The Official Home of the Free Hugs Campaign  
[www.freehugscampaign.org](http://www.freehugscampaign.org)

The Free Hugs Campaign on Myspace  
[www.myspace.com/freehugscampaign](http://www.myspace.com/freehugscampaign)

For more information regarding the benefits of hugs, links to further research is available at -  
[www.freehugsguide.org/research](http://www.freehugsguide.org/research)

You can contact Juan Mann personally, check this website for his phone number, email and home address -  
[www.juanmann.tv](http://www.juanmann.tv)

For more work by the artist Krista Brennan check out her website -  
[www.purpleorb.net](http://www.purpleorb.net)

## OUR MODELS

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