

## Richard Branson's 'Dear Stranger' letter

Richard Branson's 'Dear Stranger' letter is a profound piece published on 3 February 2017. I found *Dear Stranger* on Happiness, a Virgin [blog](#), packed with wise ideas shared by inspiring people.

In publishing *Dear Stranger* on Letting Go. Stepping Up. I acknowledge Richard Branson and the original source, *Dear Stranger*, a 2015 collection of inspirational, heartfelt letters to an imagined stranger from many authors, collated by [Mind](#), a mental health charity.

*Dear Stranger*

*You don't know me but I hear you are going through a tough time, and I would like to help you. I want to be open and honest with you, and let you know that happiness isn't something just afforded to a special few. It can be yours if you take the time to let it grow.*

*It's OK to be stressed, scared and sad, I certainly have been throughout my 66 years. I've confronted my biggest fears time and time again. I've cheated death on many adventures, seen loved ones pass away, failed in business, minced my words in front of tough audiences, and had my heart broken.*



*I know I'm fortunate to live an extraordinary life, and that most people would assume my business success, and the wealth that comes with it, has brought me happiness. But it hasn't; in fact, it's the reverse. I am successful, wealthy and connected because I am happy.*

*So many people get caught up in doing what they think will make them happy but, in my opinion, this is where they fail. Happiness is not about doing, it's about being. In order to be happy, you need to think consciously about it. Don't forget the to-do list, but remember to write a to-be list too.*

*Kids are often asked: 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' The world expects grandiose aspirations: 'I want to be a writer, a doctor, the prime minister.' They're told: go to school, go to college, get a job, get married, and then you'll be happy. But that's all about doing, not being – and while doing will bring you moments of joy, it won't necessarily reward you with lasting happiness.*

*Stop and breathe. Be healthy. Be around your friends and family. Be there for someone, and let someone be there for you. Be bold. Just be for a minute.*

*If you allow yourself to be in the moment and appreciate the moment, happiness will follow. I speak from experience. We've built a business empire, joined conversations about the future of our planet, attended many memorable parties and met many unforgettable people. And while these things have brought me great joy, it's the moments that I stopped just to be, rather than do, that have given me true happiness. Why? Because allowing yourself just to be, puts things into perspective. Try it. Be still. Be present.*

*For me, it's watching the flamingos fly across Necker Island at dusk. It's holding my new grandchild's tiny hands. It's looking up at the stars and dreaming of seeing them up close one day. It's listening to my family's dinnertime debates. It's the smile on a stranger's face, the smell of rain, the ripple of a wave, It's sunrise and sunset.*

*There's a reason we're called human beings and not human doings. As human beings, we have the ability to think, move and communicate in a heightened way. We can cooperate, understand, reconcile and love, that's what sets us apart from most other species.*

*Don't waste your human talents by stressing about nominal things, or that which you cannot change. If you take the time simply to be and appreciate the fruits of life, your stresses will begin to dissolve, and you will be happier.*

*But don't just seek happiness when you're down. Happiness shouldn't be a goal, it should be a habit. Take the focus off doing, and start being every day. Be loving, be grateful, be helpful, and be a spectator to your own thoughts.*

*Allow yourself to be in the moment, and appreciate the moment. Take the focus off everything you think you need to do, and start being – I promise you, happiness will follow.*

*Happy regards*

*Richard Branson  
3 February 2017*

Thank you Richard Branson and Mind