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### The DOs and DON'Ts of Talking to MKs – Guest Post by Julia Witmer



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When I returned to the States a while back and talked to people living there, I discovered that people seemed very interested in what my family and I are doing, but they didn't know what to ask so that they could figure out more about us. I've also learned that there are a few questions that should be avoided and others that I really enjoy answering. I thought I'd list some of them off for you so that you could know what to look out for, and what questions might be good conversation starters!

## ***Don't . . .***

**Ask me how it feels to be "back home."** I don't even know how to answer this question. I have lived in Thailand for a little over three years now. Some of the toughest things that I have ever been through happened in this beautiful country. I have some friends here. My house is here, and my family is here. So when you ask "How does it feel to be back home?" it can make me both confused and annoyed. Thoughts spin through my head, such as, "Um . . . I don't know if I even *am* home," and "Goodness, don't they realize I've been gone for three whole years? This isn't home anymore!" When I went back to the U.S I heard this question from a few people, and I simply smiled and said, "It's good to see everyone again, yeah!"

**Ask me if I speak Taiwanese.** I live in *Thailand* not *Taiwan*. I speak some *Thai*, yes, but I have no reason to learn Taiwanese . . . (Is Taiwanese even a language??)

**Ask me if I live in a hut.** No. I do not live in a hut. I live in Chiang Mai, which is quite a good-sized city. It's bigger than where I lived before! Just because my family is doing mission work, doesn't mean we're out in the middle of nowhere.

**Ask me if I am going to get a pet elephant.** Yes. I have actually been asked this question. However, the answer is no. Again. I live in a city. I own no elephants, nor will I ever. Although I did ask my Dad at one point if we could get one, his



answer was no, and I was lucky enough to get a cat instead – and, most recently, a dog!

**Ask me “do you even have friends?”** Being a missionary kid and being homeschooled does make it a little more difficult, but that doesn’t mean that I’m incapable of making

friends. Yes, I have friends – a few of them, actually. So asking me *if* I have friends isn’t the best question.

*If you have asked me any of these things, don’t stress about it! I understand not knowing for sure about where I live – I couldn’t even point to Thailand on a map before I moved here. But next time, maybe try one of these questions instead . . .*

**Do . . .**

**Ask me how I’m adjusting to life in another country.** Believe it or not, I really like it when I’m asked this question. I have been here for a while, but not a super long time. It’s still a bit of a foreign country to me, and so it’s nice when you show interest in how I’m holding up.



**Ask me about Thai food.** Goodness, please do! I love talking about Thai food – it’s delicious and I highly recommend it. Again, asking this question makes me feel like you are investing your time in me and that I matter to you.

**Ask me if I miss my family and friends from the U.S.** This is a great question, because it can often lead to other conversations as well. I also think that it

can help you know a little bit more about me, while continuing to keep up a conversation that is, at least in my eyes, relevant to my life in Thailand.

**Ask me about friends in Thailand.** I’ve made lots of good friends while in Thailand, and I wouldn’t mind talking about them at all! This is a topic that affects my everyday life in Thailand, so it’s a great question to ask. I’ve also met a few awesome people that I like talking about whenever I get the chance (Hi, Suu!)

**Ask me about any funny stories I have.** I don't have many, but I do enjoy telling the few I have. Good things to ask me about that will lead me to some funny stories: traffic, power lines and motorbikes.



**Ask me about riding elephants.** I've ridden elephants before, and it's fun to talk about it, though I don't think I could hold an entire conversation based on elephants – unless, of course, you're great at talking to people, because I often can't keep up a conversation for the life of me.

So, there you have it! A list of bad and good things to ask me. Some of these things might vary depending on what missionary kid (MK) you talk to and their own personal preferences, but, for me, this is a great start to a good conversation.

*In addition to being an MK, Julia Witmer is a fifteen-year-old Christian writer with a passion for all things imaginative and creative. Her creativity usually expresses itself in the form of young adult fantasy. When she isn't typing away at her computer, Julia enjoys devouring the advice of other authors on blogs, listening to music, and nursing her unhealthy obsession with Doctor Who, Sherlock and The Mentalist. Making her home in Chiang Mai, Thailand, she enjoys the advantages of homeschooling and the extra time spent with her parents, siblings, and favorite cat, Layla. Read more from Julia on her blog, [juliawitmerblog.wordpress.com](http://juliawitmerblog.wordpress.com), and on Facebook at [Julia Witmer, Author](#).*