

Memories of a door
(by Udo Lauterborn 05-2021)

Hello, my name is „Conference Hall“. I'm a door, made of solid beach wood, a door with two panels inswing, a tall frame, two door handles and a four lever lock. That's enough details about me. Don't ask about the amount of screws and other details. That's too personal.

Most of the time I'm closed.

My job is to be closed. To separate the inside from the outside and the outside from the inside. Not an easy job.

It comes in waves. One, two, twenty, a hundred people walk through. They stay inside for minutes or hours. Never for more than twenty four hours. The usual timeframe is three hours, which means that I let in people, being closed for three hours and let out people. That would be an average day for me.

A door like myself is always busy. No weekend rest. If you force me to name a quiet time, that would be at night time, between three and five. Less motion of people in these two hours.

What I can not stand is the misuse of my two handles. They are designed well by the locksmith, fixed well by the carpenter who created me and they are maintained regularly by the housekeeper. A bit of oil here and a bit of graphite there. They work very smoothly, my handles. But, there is a but. Some people are not able to use them properly. You think, they don't think. You have to push down the handle to the full. Not half the way. We are talking about some millimeters, not even an inch to move the latch. That's all. That would cause less scratches, less damage. But what do these people do? They push down the handle half the way and bump their shoulder against me. Sorry, that hurts. I'm full of bruises above the handles. People are rude and ignorant.

People are strange. And so many varieties of them walk through. Business people, handcraft men, politicians, scientists, short people, tall people (nobody has ever banged their head), people with different skin colours and people dressed up in so many different styles. To me, they are all the same. I can't discover any difference between them. People are people.

What I will never understand is the rush that people can create. "Open the door quick" is one of the commands I'm afraid to hear. Then somebody close to me jumps, runs, bounces towards me, pulls down both handles in a harsh way, gives a push with the foot (I don't like that) and both panels go flying in the opposite direction. Coming energized to the end of their range both panels swing back. This causes another hit by a foot (what I don't like either). You can see the marks on both of my two panels. No oil, no liquid polish can cover this evidence. In some languages these panels are called "wings". I know, where they are coming from.

There's one rough situation that I hopefully never have to face. I heard handymen talking about it. If some criminals hide themselves inside my room and police wants to enter the room, oh boy, the police do not knock on the door and push down the handle, they use explosives. Don't even want to think about that.

The most gentle way to come in is practiced by the caterer. They often open both panels to roll in big mobile trays. Quiet careful moves. Sometimes I feel a change of

temperature coming from these trays. A bit steamy and moist, but that doesn't last long. Some people have a carefully behavior.

Changes of temperature and humidity are not good for me. Then I want to expand or shrink. Frame and panels are not compatible for a while and all the people can do is to bang the panel, to shake the frame, to frighten me all together. People have no respect.

Like it happens the odd time. Some windows are left open, thunder and lightning push in, a strong wind speeds through the building and when I'm not closed at that time, the wind will do so. My two panels and all hinges move, clash, bang, open to a gap, clash again. Terrible. Why people can't close the windows in time? Have people lost their instinct for weather and nature?

We can all be happy, that I'm a solid door. Made of beech wood in total. No glass at all. With all this banging, the glass would brake on a weekly bases.

No glasing, no way to see through at all. No frosted glass either, which could give the idea of some life inside the room. Light attracts people, they say. The silhouettes through the glass, even through a frosted glass, causes nosiness. I observe this on the opposite door. Light, coming out of the room, causes interest. People stop for a moment, have a look through that glass, all they can see is the shadow of something. People try to analyze the shape, the shape of a human being, the shape of an umbrella, the shape of something. Imagination takes place. What is going on there? Who is in there? What are they doing in there? People are curios.

Once, only once so far, a man in his 40s stopped at that door, inside the light was switched on, he discovered some shadows through the frosted glass and he pressed his left ear to the door. What a sight. A bit crooked he stood at the door. My only wish was, that someone opens this door in that minute. But he got away with it. People are strange and funny at the same time.

In a similar situation I put another episode to this sort of observation. A man in his 60s, well dressed, head up, generating a special aura by his walk, stopped at that door and peeped through that keyhole. Yes, stooped down half the way, to have a look through the keyhole. Don't ask me if there was a key in the lock, if he could have seen something. Not through mine anyway. My four lever lock doesn't give any chance to see through it. It's one of those modern locks and the key is always in it. But this serious looking man with the strange behavior I will never forget. People are strange.

Coming back to this ear, pressed against the door. I'm not only a big door but soundproof as well. When I'm closed I'm closed. I protect the inside from the outside and the outside from the inside by sound as well. I get the impression, that people outside the room are mostly not happy with that. Heads get very close to me, the breathing stops, ears are pressed against me. Nothing to hear. People get weird.

Last month a music concert was held inside my room. What I still remember are two songs about doors. One song was sung by a woman and a man at the same time. A line they repeated was "nobody knows what's going on behind closed doors". Nobody knows. People make me laugh. I know very well what is going on, on both sides of my panels. The other song I remember was about my threshold. The lyrics were like "dweller on the threshold la la la". That was nice. Are there more songs about doors? Would love to hear them. Sometimes people have lovely ideas.