



## Traveling and Group Dynamics

By Kat, Ciao Bella Travel's Home Correspondent

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Being a social animal, I cherish group holidays, with one of my favourite ever holidays being the time a dozen or so gate crashed the safari honeymoon of some newly married African friends. And another when eight of us hired a house in Yamba in Northern New South Wales for Easter. And another when 15 of us went camping to Moreton Island over New Year.

It is such a luxury to have so much leisure time with my friends as an adult – I hadn't spent that much time with friends since I was a student, and it also allows me to indulge in my favourite pastime, observing group dynamics, especially my own role in a group. .

It seems fitting to consider the group question as we all gear up for Christmas and New Year holidays with family and/or friends.

Don't panic, it isn't next week, but Christmas is coming. Kirsty and I decided a few years ago that Melbourne Cup marks the beginning of the silly season. We train all year for the silly season, because it is punishing on the body. I've been to three weddings in the last three weeks and they have all been a blast, which is precisely the problem. To be truthful I don't know how many 10 hour drinking marathons I've got left in me between now and the New Year. But anyway I digress.

I think we all fill a set role in groups and after a recent work team building weekend, a family holiday and a few friends weekends away, I've seen myself exhibiting the same sets of behaviours in all of these groups.

I call it bossy, and when Mark is feeling less kind, he calls it controlling, but in reality, it is just organising the group to get things done. Like dinner for example. And to be fair to me, when I remember, I do try to control my controlling

behaviour, but then I think what is the point? I think it defeats the purpose because when I'm doing that I'm still being controlling. It's just that I'm controlling myself instead of the situation.

So after a recent work weekend away, where a lot of my colleagues have a similar pattern of behaviour I came up with a way to control my controlling behaviour. I go mute.

It's quite liberating to be one of the people nodding and smiling and not having to make phonecalls to the taxi company, or the restaurant to book a table, or negotiating with everyone to get consensus. I wonder if this is why my mother seems a little vague when I look back on childhood, perhaps she was just trying to relax.

So if like me, you suffer from wanting to make every decision the perfect one and if you want a break from yourself this year, join me in giving up control for Christmas. I guarantee, someone else will step in to fill the breach. So let's practice a smile and a bit of silence as a response when group talk turns to the question of what's for dinner.

I might find that things run a little late, or I might have to wait a bit longer for a table at the restaurant and I might find myself eating Italian for dinner instead of French, but I think it will be quite liberating to give myself a holiday from being in control this Christmas. And maybe, someone else will enjoy having their turn in the role of bossy boots.

Best of luck to you, and I'll let you know how I go.

Ciao Bella  
Kat