

# 設身處地

*she4 shen1 chu4 de4*

A Canadian television journalist was kissed by a stranger as she was reporting live at a music festival in Squamish, British Columbia. The reporter, Megan Batchelor, complained to police, but was criticized by netizens for doing so.

Seeing that his action had caused misery (痛苦) for Batchelor, the 17-year-old prankster (惡作劇者) sent a direct Twitter message to her, identifying himself and apologized.

He was quoted as saying, "At the moment I thought it was kind of a joke, then I stepped in your shoes, that's when I kind of realized that it all was not a joke at all."

A Chinese idiom that has a similar meaning as "stepped in your shoes" is "設身處地" (*she4 shen1 chu4 de4*).

"設" means "設想" (*she4 xiang3*), which is "to imagine," "to envisage," "to assume," "身" is "body," "處" is "be located at," and "地" is "a place," "a position." Literally "設身處地" (*she4 shen1 chu4 de4*) is "imagine body located in a place."

## Idiom by Lon Yan

The body here means "oneself," and the "place" refers to the place where another person stands. The idiom, therefore, means to "put oneself in the place of another," "to put oneself in somebody else's position." It is asking you to sympathize (同情), to show empathy (同感) for the situation of another person.

There is an old saying that you can't really understand a person's experience unless you walk a mile in his or her shoes. Everyone knows that it is hard even to walk a few steps in a pair of shoes that do not fit. If you walk a mile, you would probably need medical attention!

So next time, if someone judges you unfairly, you can say, 設身處地 (*she4 shen1 chu4 de4*), what would you have done? (Try walking a mile in my shoes!)

**Terms containing the character "地" (*di4*) include:**

地球 (*di4 qiu2*) - the earth

殖民地 (*zhi2 min2 di4*) - colony

地產 (*di4 chan3*) - real estate

地震 (*di4 zhen4*) - earthquake