

Kirk Docker

Interviewer, TV producer & co-creator of You Can't Ask That

Kirk Docker is one of Australia's finest interviewers and storytellers. He is the co-creator and director of the ABC program *You Can't Ask That*, now in its 7th season. The show has been awarded Rose d'Or, AACTA and Walkley awards and is the most successful format in ABC history, selling to 17 territories, and broadcast in 9 different languages world wide.

When it comes to the content he creates, no subject is off-topic. Kirk's interviewees range from ex-politicians to ice users to sexual assault survivors. He has a deep curiosity, compassion and playfulness that elicits honesty from his participants, many of whom have never sat in front of a camera before. Through thousands of hours of open dialogue, what's become absolutely clear to Kirk is that every human, no matter what they believe or how high their stature, share a core value: the desire to be understood.

Through his show *You Can't Ask That*, Kirk offers a window into the unheard stories of misunderstood and marginalised Australians. Each episode takes a group that lives with a label (Transgender, Suicide Attempt Survivors, Schizophrenia, etc.). Participants are courageous, as Kirk guides them through the often crudely honest questions submitted by the public. The show's purpose is to help the audience move past the myths and fears associated with those labels and understand who these people truly are.

In 2009, Kirk landed a spot on the program *Hungry Beast* (ABC), under the wing of respected producer Andrew Denton. He then went on to create and produce shows *Demolitan Man* (A&E) and *Hello Stranger* (ABC). Through his work, Kirk has interviewed thousands of people. His portrayal of these people is geared to reveal the universality of humanity, without apology or sensationalism. Through this experience, he's honed a range of techniques that allow him to communicate effectively and empathetically with any subject.

Kirk's workshops:

Kirk unpacks the processes and techniques of the interview to help his audience communicate more productively in the workplace and everyday life. His sessions will make you consider the purpose of your dialogue and instil the ability to ask high-level questions that lead to revelations and new understandings. At the heart of Kirk's sessions is the ability to walk away with a



repeatable tool and process – a system for deconstructing the barriers for effective dialogue.

Kirk works in multiple modalities, using simple models, video clips and lots of audience interaction. He puts the audience in the shoes of a production team; plans and conducts live interviews in the room; facilitates in the moment; and gives the audience a chance to practice techniques via interviews with each other.

Through the lens of TV interviewing, Kirk draws upon his experience to cover topics such as:

- Creating a non-judgmental environment for open communication.
- How to help someone express themselves with authenticity.
- Asking the difficult questions.
- Understanding people's contexts and motives.
- Looking past the stereotypes and personal bias.
- Balancing communicating with a plan and improvising in the moment.
- Interrogating versus understanding – how to ask questions with care.
- How to increase understanding between people of different ages, backgrounds and statuses.

Some organisations that have integrated his work are:

- IKEA
- Tomorrow Architects
- Mckinsey & Company
- NetApp
- PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC)
- Sydney Writers Festival
- Telstra - Griffith University
- The University of Newcastle
- Healthscope

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