British Parenting Expert Brings Expertise to China, Returns With More Than She Bargained For

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A British parenting expert from Horsham received the trip of a lifetime to China as part of a scheme to train parenting consultants in the world's second most populous country.

Elizabeth O'Shea, director of Parent 4 Success, travelled to China to meet with prospective parenting consultants and train them on topics like child behaviour and socio-emotional development, expecting a relatively low-key affair.

Instead, Elizabeth quickly realised this would be no normal trip after she and her business partner, Betty, were greeted at Shanghai airport with banners and flowers – a lovely welcome and a sign of things to come.

[Image 1 caption: Elizabeth and business partner, Betty, being greeted at Shanghai airport]

From there, Elizabeth was whisked to the city where she was introduced to the first cohort of parenting consultants. After a series of one-on-one interviews, Elizabeth spoke to over 200 parents in a workshop that featured live-action "plays" and parenting scenarios.

[Image 2 caption: Elizabeth giving a talk to over 200 Chinese parents]

And the language barrier? Well, ever the thoughtful hosts, organisers provided Elizabeth with a simultaneous translation team who communicated with the audience via earpiece, all in live time.

[Image 3 caption: Live translation team waving from inside their booth]

Next on the itinerary was Hangzhou, the city referred to by the Chinese as "Heaven on Earth." After a first-class ride on the high-speed train, this nickname came to fruition as Elizabeth was once again greeted with flowers on arrival, as well as a gorgeous Chinese silk dress.

Gift-giving has long wielded immense cultural significance in China, as it is seen as a means of showing respect and developing strong relationships. Elizabeth experienced this first-hand when one of her students surprised her with a sweet poem written by a Chinese calligrapher.

[Image 4 caption: Hand-written poem gifted to Elizabeth by student]

The poem reads:

"Beautiful scenery arises from the flat ground.

This beautiful scenery makes people feel relaxed and happy.

Beauty from afar adds infinite spring light to this place.

Everyone is amazed by the sharing you have brought."

Elizabeth was stunned to receive the poem, describing it as an "extremely touching and unexpected" gesture. And the surprises didn't stop there…

At a graduation ceremony for the newly-qualified consultants, Elizabeth was treated to a traditional fan dance by two talented five-year-old girls. She described the performance as "stunning and unlike anything [she'd] ever seen before."

Media:

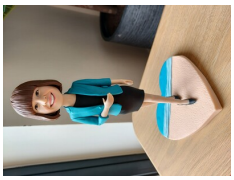












[Image 5 caption: Traditional Chinese fan dance by two young performers]

At the end of the ceremony, each student then took to the stage to speak about how much the course had meant to them, queuing up to receive a hug and a rose from Elizabeth. “It was an emotional and deeply humbling experience”, she said.

[Image 6 caption: Elizabeth hands out roses and certificates to graduates]

Last stop on the tour was East China Normal University, where Elizabeth answered a Q&A in front of a packed live audience. It was here where Elizabeth received the most remarkable gift of all.

[Image 7 caption: Elizabeth with a model of herself gifted by student]

A model of herself! Elizabeth could hardly believe her eyes. “I never in my wildest dreams imagined someone would make a figure of me. It made me laugh so much, and it is something I will hold on to forever”, she said.

[Image 8 caption: Close-up of model]

Over the course of the trip, Elizabeth received so many gifts that organisers kindly provided a second suitcase (weighing over 20kg) to bring them all back to the UK. A most rewarding business trip for sure!

[Image 9 caption: Elizabeth with all her gifts from the trip]

On returning to the UK, Elizabeth reminisced on her time in China, describing it as “culture shock in the best way possible.” She wished her graduates the best and commended their “immense generosity of spirit and kindness.”

Elizabeth will soon be bringing her program back to the UK, teaching British parents how to set up their own parenting consulting businesses to help other families and children thrive. To learn more about the course, click here.



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