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160 ways to say 'Do Not Disturb'

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Wlodek Filipczyk says the signs remind him of his travels when he's itching to go somewhere.

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Wlodek Filipczyk spends about 100 days out of the year traveling for business, and the walls of his cubicle show it: They're lined with Do Not Disturb signs he's collected from hotels around the world.

But not just any sign will do. In the 25 years he's been traveling, he has stayed in more than 1,000 hotels, but only brought back about 160 signs.

"Only the signs which have some kind of a special [element], either graphics, like there is a, you know, picture of something or drawing, or they have like funny maybe notation," Filipczyk said. "Not just 'clean my room' or 'do not disturb.'"

One sign says, "Just five more minutes. Repeat until necessary." Another reads, "Can't come to door right now, I'm in Heaven."

Filipczyk, 68, is a chief specialist for TMEIC, which means he sells steel to customers around the world.



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Wlodek Filipczyk points out that some signs are silly, like one of his favorites that reads "Too fabulous to be disturbed."

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The signs show how different countries use different wording.



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Wlodek Filipczyk has 160 Do Not Disturb signs hanging in his cubicle from his travels around the world with the company TMEIC. His collection includes signs in many different languages. His collection began around 15 years ago on one of his first business trips to China.



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Wlodek Filipczyk collects Do Not Disturb signs from his travels around the world with the company TMEIC, where he sells steel to customers. Filipczyk spends about 100 days of the year traveling for business, and has brought back around 160 signs.

His collection began about 15 years ago on one of his first business trips to China.

"My first day in the hotel. I noticed that they have such fancy Do Not Disturb signs, and I said, 'I just take it as a souvenir.'"

Then he started watching out for other interesting signs, such as one from Turkey that just features a woman drinking a glass of wine.

His collection includes signs in many different languages. One from China reads "Occupied" in Chinese. One from France is an advertisement in addition to being a Do Not Disturb sign. In French, it reads "Please do not disturb, I'm watching Channel Plus," a television station there.

Filipczyk said he likes the differences in wording.

"Even the language, you know, is like say, some say 'do not disturb,' some is 'privacy,'" he explained. Different countries use different phrasing.

But the signs he collects aren't exclusively Do Not Disturb. One says, in Polish, "My friend is here with me," which warns housekeeping that the occupant has a pet. Another warns returning occupants that maintenance workers are inside the room.

"And this one, actually, this one is very special," he said of a sign that came from a beach condo and features a sea turtle. Newly hatched sea turtles, on their way to the ocean, can get distracted by lights on shore, then head the wrong way and die.

The sign asks occupants to be conscious of how light affects turtles and to do things like close the curtains at night if the lights are on.

"It's a different Do Not Disturb, it's a Do Not Disturb for the turtle, so I found this is really very special, special sign," he said.

Some of the signs are much fancier than a traditional cardboard sign. One, from Santa Fe, New Mexico, is made of leather. Another, from Taiwan, is carved wood.

"Probably this is my favorite, because it's a beautiful [one]," Filipczyk said. "And because they charge me \$250 for the room I say, 'I can have this.'"

Others are silly, like Filipczyk's other favorite, which reads "Too fabulous to be disturbed."

Filipczyk said he hung them in his office partly because his wife at the time wouldn't want them at home, but also because they remind him of his travels when he's itching to go somewhere.

"When I sit here in the office, and sit for long, long time then I feel this itch, right, that I should probably be going," he said. "I look at this and kind of smile. Reminds me of a lot of different places I have been."



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Not all the signs are made out of paper or plastic. Some of them are leather or carved wood.



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Wlodek Filipczyk points out a sign carved from wood that he got in Taiwan. His collection began around 15 years ago on one of his first business trips to China.

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