

Transcription - Mental Wellbeing at Christmas

Welcome back I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. And, as we record this, although probably not when you hear it, but as we are recording it, we're a week out from Christmas and obviously, two weeks out from the new year. It's a time of year that's very emotional one way or another for many of us, whether we are involved in the religious side of things or not. It is a time of year that creates a lot of anxiety and a lot of roller coasters of emotions, so today we want to talk about the about health and wellness and wellbeing, mental health particularly. It's a topic that we've touched on a number of times with a lot of experts over the years because we do feel it is quite important for us to be thinking about our mental well-being, as well as everything else.

Last week I had the opportunity to watch a wonderful talk by the Dalai Lama that he did recently in India. It was about being mindful of analytical meditation. I always find that he puts together words that I would never think about in the same context, but it was an interesting exercise to see him talk for 90 minutes about how you think about your thinking, basically, and so very relevant to so many areas of our lives. To look at the audience that were there, from in school kids through to people who obviously follow him wherever he goes around the world and to see how much they were taking from his approach to lessening anxiety and anger and depression in a very general sense and across religions. So, it wasn't a religious activity. It wasn't aimed at his own followers or anyone who was particularly looking to hear what he had to say. As I say, a range of people and the questions came from the schoolkids. The questions were about how do they prepare for exams, how do they not get worried about exams.

So from a very early age, we are instilling in people this idea of emotions and the emotional roller coaster. Today we want to talk a little bit about what you can do, particularly at this time of year, or at times of year where there are a range of emotions being thrown at you from within as well as around you. Fulyana's going to talk about random acts of kindness and how that can help you.

Random acts of kindness are good all year round of course, as Kim said particularly this time of the year. Now those acts of kindness don't have to be anything deep and meaningful, they can be as much as just smiling at someone and saying hello, just interacting over any general topic as it comes up.

I think the key word is this for me is random. Not just something random in terms of who receives them, but they're random in terms of when you do them, that you don't overthink it, you don't think about it before and it's not a planned activity. It

is random.

Yes. Those random acts of kindness can brighten up the most dull day for a person or can make a very, very happy day even happier for another. And guess what? It's two people, it's always two people. The person doing the act of kindness will be just as fulfilled and happy by doing it as the person receiving it. So never underestimate how well a person would feel. There's a lot of literature written about that, lifting the spirits of yourself because a lot of people can't just be lonely. They see everybody else looks like they're having a good time and they haven't got much on. When you engage with someone or someone has got so much on that they think it's only waste of time, I'm just going through the motions and then somebody stops and smiles at them or talks to them in a very unexpected way. And they think, oh wow, that felt good and as they leave that person and walk away, they feel very fulfilled. In a sense, they had what I call, a human touch in a real sense, to a complete stranger they might not ever see again.

I had this, in fact, last week. Most of you know that, you will have seen my photo, is that my hair is quite distinctive and I do forget that it is like that. Thursday last week, I was rushing around trying to get a whole lot of things done, in shopping sense on my own, Fulyana's going to be horrified to think I was out shopping on my own, but I was and I had this great long list of stuff that I had to get and most of it was not for me, I was doing it for other people. I thought, well I'm efficient at these activities, I'll get it all done. Moving around, trying to get out of the pre-Christmas shopping rush because I'm not a big fan of that either, I was, as I often do, at a place that I'm not a regular at. I could see people doing the double type as I was going past and my automatic reaction is to think I must have food on my clothes or I must be missing something. My first thought is not ever that they are looking at my hair and it was until I was walking back to where I had to get the bus back to where I was going, that I was passed by this young girl in tattoos and piercings, not anyone I would normally engage with I have to be honest because I find them scary, I don't know how to interact with them, when I look at them I just feel old - I know that's me not them. I was past her and I heard her say, almost under her breath, "awesome hair" and it made me smile. I should have stopped, I should have turned around and acknowledged her but I didn't because I was still processing that in my head but I was smiling as I was doing it and I did feel better. I obviously made her feel better and it made me feel better. She didn't know how much it meant to me, but she knew that made her feel better to say it and it's stuck with me and now I'm talking about it and now I'm sharing it as an example for you. It doesn't have to be something that you look for a reward for, but it will make a difference. You do it, it'll make a difference.

That's good. I can vouch for that, I'll be walking down the street with Kim and I know exactly why they are looking and it does brighten people's faces at all ages. They just look and smile, it's really lovely.

I've got another example here of a random act of kindness, I guess, that comes under the heading. I did a bit of shopping, I'm not very good at this stuff and it was more groceries (it was food she couldn't consume immediately). If you've ever seen me at this, I'm ver disorganised. I had two or three bags, came out of this small shopping center and there is a bench at the bus stop. I was disorganised so I sat there and I realized there was a man sitting next to me, he's in his eighties and I said hello, I've just got to get myself organised here, I'm in a bit of a mess. Next thing something droppped out of my bags and the gentleman picked it up and he said "pecan nuts, what are you doing with them?" I said I'm making sticky date pudding and he goes sticky date pudding, my wide used to make fabulous sticky date pudding, I haven't had a good one since she passed on seven years ago. And I said, oh, I'm sorry to hear that. He said, I did have sticky toffee pudding, but it wasn't as good. I said I don't know how good mine is, but I made it before and it's okay. Anyway, would you like some if I made it? This is a person I've never met before, I don't know where he lives, he doesn't know where I live and certainly didn't want to take it to the next level. So he said, oh yeah and he started laughing. I said well, I'm making it tomorrow, I can just drop it off at the bus stop her,e I'm not far from this bus stop. He goes well actually I do have to be here tomorrow and I said okay and we started laughing. He said I can't believe you're making me sticky date pudding and I said, well, I can't believe that was something you liked.

Off we go, I did it, I came the next day, he was there, I gave it to him. I felt really excited because I like cooking, I like food and he seemed to be really into his sticky date pudding. The end of the story is that we never exchanged names, we never exchanged any other contact, just left it at that. He took it, he went on his way and I went on my way. Now, if I ever see him again, I'll be by accident. So I didn't know what he thinks, but it made me feel fantastic. And I hope it brightened up his day a little bit.

It's about being kind to yourself, about being good to yourself but in the process of looking for something that makes you feel good in that way, do it for somebody else because it will make you feel good. When my boys were young, young enough to read, so early school years until the time they left home, so teenagers basically, it was a time 30 plus years ago, when The Giving Trees were first introduced. Some of the big department stores had trees that had little

tags on them and you took a tag that related to boy 3 to 5 or whatever it was tagged, you went and got a gift and wrapped it and you put the tag back on and you brought it back to put under the tree. So I'd take the boys to the trees and say you have to choose, you've got to read the labels, you have to choose who you are buying the gift for and then you will go with me and you'll tell me what you want to get them, why you want to get it. That continued on. I had early Christmas with my oldest boy and his family last weekend and he was saying that they had done the same thing their boys and my grandsons were telling me the same story about what they got this year. Now the eldest grandson is 13 and this is the first time that I've heard about it. Apparently it was a big deal for us u all sorts of reasons and they wanted to tell me that they'd done it and why they'd done it. It was just at a time when I hadn't thought about it, here was something that made me feel good again in a way that they would never have known. All they were doing was telling the story of what they'd done and they obviously felt good about what they'd done. There was three generations of people that felt good about an activity that has continued on, that obviously in its end result does good for somebody else, will make someone else feel good, but we never know who that is. And it still has this power of making us feel good about ourselves and good about the idea that we've given some joy to somebody else.

I think we've probably covered all we need to do in that period of time. So the summary of it for you is about your emotions and about your mental wellbeing, about taking this time of year as it comes, about being kind to you. But, for now, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.