

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Northamptonshire Action for Happiness Helpful Hints & Tips for Keeping Physically and Mentally Well – Week Seven

Hello All

Today is the first day of May and I wanted to share a lovely poem that one of my former colleagues from Milton Keynes NHS Mental Health Service shared that was drawn by her daughter.

Big thank you Annaleigh, it certainly gave me hope and made me smile.



Although, we cannot see our friends and family physically I have found being part of different WhatsApp friend's groups, writing these hints and tips each week, gives me a 'virtual hug'. I am therefore going to make this week's coping strategies about **MEANING** and self-compassion.

Peter Harper and Val Payne who are both passionate about Action for Happiness and are part of our local Steering Group have recently written a paper on compassion and self-compassion. I was waiting for the right week to share it with you, and today seemed to be a perfect opportunity to do so. This is shared as the second attachment.

Peter also sent me this quote, which I think sums up where we are and what we might be feeling.

Nerves on Edge - By [Merci Gracia](http://gratitudetwentyfourseven.com/nerves-on-edge/) <http://gratitudetwentyfourseven.com/nerves-on-edge/>

“Now that we’re six weeks or more into this pandemic, it’s normal to occasionally feel unnerved. Conflicting information about what is sensible and what might be lethal behaviour keeps us on edge. Some are experiencing extreme hardship and others, extreme boredom. Some are enjoying the quiet down time; others are feeling traumatized in dysfunctional environments. Nearly everyone senses the menace of this threat of unknown magnitude. Each of us handles our emotions in different ways – from denial and numbness to hypersensitivity and anxiousness. However, we cope, it’s more important than ever to treat ourselves and others...

With kindness”

Taking the Happiness pledge, is for me the essence of the above quote: -

“I will try to create more happiness and less unhappiness in the world around me”

Take the pledge at: bit.ly/A4HNorthants

Peter also shared this week how photographs can give clues to Meaning!

After spending a long time trying to find a ‘fancy sentence’ that would express what gave me meaning in life I attended a workshop facilitated by Vanessa King from Action for Happiness. Vanessa outlined an exercise from her book on using photographs as an aid to clarifying our meaning in life. With some ‘time on my hands’ I decided to trawl through my digital photographs and identify any photographs which ‘spoke to my heart’ in some way. I noticed that the photographs, I had chosen naturally fell into a number of different clusters or themes, e.g. family, friends, nature etc. I selected around six of the most significant photographs from each theme and created a digital collage, incorporating each theme. The realisation that what I had done was create a personal ‘Collage of Meaning’ gave me a great ‘lift’. Rather than discovering a ‘fancy sentence’ I had identified the things that gave me most meaning in my life. The resulting photograph of my collage is now the screensaver on my laptop and gives me a smile each time I look at it! **You may like to give this exercise a go too.**

Finally, as this is the first day of May please don’t forget to download or print off the new Action for Happiness Meaningful May calendar, it can be found <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/calendars>

Remember: Keep Calm, Stay Wise, Be Kind.