

9 Words Podcast

Bobby Tiwana interviews Sue Brisco and Kanj Nicholas

Bobby: Hello I'm Bobby Tiwana, I'm a Creative Producer of Live Performance, the occasional short film and a hand full of podcasts about a thing or too. In this podcast I will be talking to contemporary artists commissioned as part of Offsite 9, to complement the touring British Art Show 9 in Wolverhampton. Welcome to 9 words.

Bobby: I'm joined by Visual Artists Sue Brisco and Kanj Nicholas

Bobby: Thank you for coming in today, Sue Brisco and Kanj Nicholas it's great to see you here on this wet rainy day in the Rococo Room at Wolverhampton City Archives. Thanks for coming in. So shall we start, we're talk about kindness today, and that's a theme in your work. Can either one of you tell me why kindness? Why is kindness important?

Kanj: We've had time to reflect over the past 2 years through the pandemic in terms of what I'm talking about the aspect of kindness in our community, one thing that has struck me is people coming together to support each other, people coming together to help each other, people coming together to weather the storm, people make communities and what are their motives why have they done this for each other? It's kindness. One thing that's shone out from the hearts of people in our city and I'm sure every city in our country is a similar story, has a similar reflection on kindness. It's there it's alive and well in Wolverhampton and that makes me happy to see. And I've learnt about the power of kindness through this project through these couple of years, how kindness makes, builds relationships, strengthens relationships, builds communities, and makes communities stronger. It forms like the glue that binds us together. So, for the future, kindness for me is the one quality, there are other qualities, there are love, there's many others I could talk about, peace, but certainly kindnesses has stood out. As the factor that has brought

communities together to weather the storms that we've all come through. And for the future.

Bobby: Has kindness become more evident, for you in recent times? You know, over the two years and the things that we've all been through. Is it more recent, did it exist before? What's happened?

Kanj: I think it did exist before, but we haven't really stopped to reflect on it because life is busy. We are all on our treadmills, busy busy doing this, running from point A to point B, and suddenly we've had a whole year of being still because we have not, nowhere to go really. Those who had to go to work did go but the rest of us stayed at home and that was a time of reflection in many ways our eyes have been opened. Our lenses have changed, the lenses with which we view our world has changed completely for the better. We're looking at our world, our communities in a different way and I guess it's the pandemic that's done that. Through all the suffering and all the darkness that it has brought. There are the rainbows through this and that is kindness, and that is us, we have changed whether we are aware of it. And I'd like to think that all of us are kind, kinder human beings.

Sue: I agree with you there I was thinking that when it's Christmas time sometimes you feel that human spirit, people are particularly more friendly, kinder to each other, more willing to give way, smile. And I think this pandemic has also induced that somehow. People who've been out or been allowed to come out they've been more supportive to each other, more in tune. And I couldn't help thinking that sometimes it was like Christmas Eve but it kept repeating. So, I think we'd all been quite lonely, lots of hardship like Kanj said, quite dark places. And even times when I think I stood outside my doorstep and clapped, people were like waving to you. Your neighbours. Some of my neighbours I'd only just started to say "hello" to, through that clapping on the doorstep. So, I think for me it's the just given the community spirit of goodwill.

Bobby: So, March 2020 was a long time ago, nearly 2 years ago. We've had a lot of, you know, a lot of unusual living let's say, to our normal life. Whether there's been a lockdown on or not, the

normal pace of life hasn't really been active most of the time. We know the rest I know, not being able to touch people, to see people, introduce new family members, all those things. Are you over optimistic, do you think on kindness like, 2 years on, do you not see or experience, I want to know where you live, you know where is all this kindness? Is there not more cynicism, wariness, fatigue, may be less patience as well as well as kindness? Do those other things I have just mentioned exist in some people, or all of us?

Kanj: I think they do. Not everyone is kind. Not everyone is prone to giving. And that is a fact. None of us can change that, it's how each of us are wired. But if the message of kindness is shared, it is more likely that that seed is dropped in someone's mind or heart to flourish somewhere else. If for us, in order for us to pass this message on, and this is the goal of our project, to pass this message of the value of kindness. Because it's important that ultimately a society can be built upon kindness because that will make it a stronger society. How do we do that, it is by example at the end of the day if we are kind and we practice what we are preaching, it is more likely that seed is picked up and passed on by someone else. If, if we don't, then it's unlikely that it is going to affect anyone and yes, we're all different not everyone will be kind. Not everyone will be willing to be generous and giving. And that's human nature.

Sue: Also, I could just say that it doesn't have to be money or anything like that. Just, just being polite, like polite smiling you've no idea how much a smile is, just how when someone smiles everyone starts to feel more relaxed and easier. It does help bridge trust in other people.

Kanj: This is where Sue has done a lot of research. It's sharing the benefits of kindness to our health, our mental health, our physical health. This is where Sue has focused her attention on.

Sue: Well, when I was saying to you about how nice you feel when someone does something nice, first of all people are attracted to you more when you're kind. "She's or he's nice," like they've made a cup of tea, something just something simple like that, it

makes you more attractive, in a beautiful sense. But not only that, it has an effect on you inside your body as well. So for example there was a day I was driving into Wolverhampton and I was a little bit apprehensive because I was going to a meeting and I was running over these thoughts what was going to happen at the meeting and I then got this awkward moment where I pulled up and somebody pulled up next to me and as I was looking round while the traffic lights were on red. I suddenly came face-to-face with the passenger in the other car and it was awkward and I looked away quickly but before I did, this passenger smiled at me which completely took the anxiousness out of that situation. And I was thinking "oh gosh!" I smiled back straight away, and it made me feel a little bit easier and I thought that was really kind of them, when they could have thought I was being a bit intrusive with staring or whatever, but as I was going on started to feel less apprehensive about the meeting and I found myself smiling at other people as well. And I was starting to think how come, why did it help change my level of anxiety. It's making me feel a bit easier and I think that was the beginning part of me thinking about the science of kindness, what happens in me to make me feel just that little bit easier and happier so that led a whole line of questioning for me, for this particular project?

Bobby: And what is happening inside?

Sue: Okay, well when someone's kind to you or you are kind to them there's a trigger going on in your brain? I don't want to get too scientific or anything. I just asked questions. I say well, what part of the brain does this? So, I started to look into this and do a little bit of research. There's a little structure deep in the brain called the hypothalamus and that produces oxytocin, and I was thinking what does oxytocin do and this lead on to this research looking into that, and it's like a magic molecule. It's like creating these effects in your body. It helps to improve your heart health, it has an effect on the vagus nerve in the body, which is the major nerve system that goes round which calms us down. So, the oxytocin is affecting the vagus nerve which makes us feel calmer, which is why I was feeling less anxious for that meeting. Serotonin is also produced and so is dopamine which are neurotransmitters. So

they act in between the synapses of the nerves and when the signals are coming down the axon the little neurotransmitters are sitting there waiting to help the message get along, so we're like seeing all of our thoughts and emotions and ideas are all buzzing round the body and it affects the walls of the arteries. So, it helps us relax which means the apertures a little bit wider so the blood is able to get through more easily and that lowers our a blood pressure. When we're stressed, we get a racing in our heart, in our chests but when the oxytocin's going... A smile can make the oxytocin really release around the body.

Bobby: Wow! Other things of course are things like you know loved ones, kissing, hugging...

Sue: Absolutely.

Bobby: Holding your baby, having a cuddle, stroking a pet.

Sue: And intimate contact as well. So, it's not just kindness that creates this oxytocin, there's lots of other reasons but if we could, the message I was hoping to share was that that nice feeling, there's actually a physical action going on inside our bodies.

Bobby: Are either of you familiar with Deepak Chopra's 'The Seven Principles of...', I can't remember the book now, erm is it the 'Seven Principles of Success' something like that, someone had bought it for me and I remember being really cynical about it. It just looked like a self-help book which was about being successful, that's how I was interpreting the title. And actually, kindness is in there, it talks about how we have this little voice in our heads all the time complaining, you know all those little judging type comments that might happen in transit let's say, going somewhere. So, it's saying don't do that anymore or try not to, try and see the positives instead. Observe the tree against the sky or the breeze, appreciate and you know, we can often think nice things about people but we don't always say them. And it was sort of saying you know, think about giving other people a gift and it doesn't have to be monetary gift, it could be a flower. Or it could just be "you look nice in that" or "you look well." Those kinds of stuff and actually the impact of that on the other person and

yourself is positive. I suppose that book is getting at you know, what you release into the world comes back to you.

Sue: It does absolutely, and people gravitate towards you a little bit more, they remember you. Any kind of act of kindness, I know I remember that, I don't remember everyone but I do remember lots of times when people have just gone out of their way a little bit to be nice to me. It's made me feel so much better and you don't forget.

Kanj: And also from a giver's point of view when you do give it's something that seals relationships, you feel that the moment you step out and make that decision to do something for someone else that relationship changes forever, it brings you closer, it deepens the roots.

Bobby: Can you give an example?

Kanj: I can give you an example, one of the things I love doing for people I love cooking and I like sharing food particularly when people need some help, when they're ill or circumstances have changed. It's one of those areas I step into even though life can be tough. It's a decision. I make that decision to do something to help them along and in the process, I find friendships deepen, relationship deepen, and there is no expectation there because the other person hasn't got the ability to cook me a meal or and so the moment that is removed it just becomes one act simply to help another human being. This is not to put me up on a pedestal I'm sure plenty of people are doing this around the world. It's just an example of what I then feel because I'm the giver, the other person is really grateful that's so clear and, in many cases, they can't stop thanking me. But what do I get for it? Relationships, friendships that you know lasted a long time because it's actions, at end of the day if you can't step in and help someone else what's the point in doing a social cup of tea or coffee in the café, those are superficial things in my mind. This is what, these are the important things that build relationships and its kindness.

- Bobby: Thinking about the value of it, this food that you've made for someone I suppose it's time you make, you making time for them. It's also an expression of love and that's beautiful.
- Kanj: You've said exactly and that's how I define love. Everyone has a different language of love. I know that my husband, he's a very tactile person, he hugs a lot, I'm less so of that and I always explain to my children "I've cooked this amazing meal, you're joking to me that 'Mum it's a Monday and you've got a roast on a Monday who does that?' But I've done it with love, darling because I felt like doing this for you guys and it's my language of love, pure and simple."
- Sue: Just to add there, about a few weeks ago my husband tested positive for Covid so we had that situation where we'd got to keep separate. I wanted to, didn't want to get ill because I'm so busy with this project. And during that time, you mentioning hugs, there was this. It's incredibly important having hugs off people, and erm, because I was so engrossed in the project as well, I wondered why I was quite so down and a bit lonely. And it was just an odd hug here and there, and think it was affecting me more than I realised. Then I thought that a lot of people had to isolate from family, just to keep them safe and you are doing it out of like, thought and care, but at the same time you're not getting those hugs are you and those hugs mean a lot. And I was thinking goodness me, I should be realising this, I'm feeling this way because I'm not getting my oxytocin level.
- Bobby: Pre covid, do you think you were getting ten hugs a day, or..?
- Sue: Well my children are living away now. So, one child lives in Dubai and the other's in London and the other's in Bridgnorth. So, I used to have hugs off children, always stealing a hug here and there, but then I just live with my husband now and we do have hugs. It's just nice to have that hug. But goodness me I realise that without them you're feeling a little bit lost.
- Kanj: One of the nicest things for me because I've had the choice to be at home and not run here and there during the lockdowns. My husband had to go to work because he was a...he is a key worker. I

have my children with me 24/7. Now on the one hand that would drive most mother's crazy, but this was just amazing, just the proximity of having both my babes at home with me. Just passing each other in corridors, in the kitchen or having the space to be in our different rooms, but they were there. And to me was the most heart-warming time to be able to be with both my children for a long period of time. And then again, it's feeling of, like Sue explained the oxytocin must have been at its peak at that time. When the pandemic was at its peak. It doesn't make any sense because there was suffering on the one hand and then there's me, you know pumping with oxytocin because my children were around me. So, two perspectives there again.

Bobby: You must have heard of the project where people, you know, artists offer hugs to strangers, those sorts of two projects happen all over the world. People have all sorts of wonderful experiences in those.

Sue: It's lovely. I've been thinking about people who live on their own and from that time I was spending well, when my husband was isolating, I was feeling quite sort, quite lonely and project that to someone who lives on their own all the while. I don't know how they survive.

Kanj: So one of the, what you just said Sue about people living on their own and loneliness was probably felt at its highest levels during the pandemic. The elderly were having to isolate, they couldn't even go out to shop, they couldn't see their families. And through this project I spoke to people in our community to see where they were coming from, what their heart was like, not so much about what they've done because they don't really talk about what they do. These are generally quite kind people they don't brag, but one of the things that Mr Sidhu shared with me... He's the owner of a corner shop in Ettingshall which is not far from town. His corner shop became a place where people came to talk, so they'd have come to buy a bottle of milk possibly as an excuse or bag of sugar, but that wasn't the reason they came, they came because they were so lonely. They were not able to see their families. They had no one to talk to, so the corner shop became their place to come

into contact with other human beings and have a person who was willing to look at them, listen to them and speak to them and let them speak and share their problems. And he spoke at great length about this, it really touched me, and I hadn't really thought about it in that way and that shop in many ways. I've done a painting of him, a portrait of him and I've called it 'The Heartbeat of the Community' and that's what that shop was in that time and still is I bet because the values haven't changed. He's still the kindest man and his family are all running the shop together. And they make time for people.

Sue: If you are living on your own sometimes people who have animals as pets and actually gaze into the eyes of each other there's that contact and that can help them improve. There's another piece of research which I looked at where two groups of people. One were asked to have lots of hugs - when you talk about 10 hugs a day, lots of hugs. This is for a whole month and the control group were, don't have any hugs and then they measure the oxytocin levels afterwards. It was amazing the reports of the people who had been having hugs and then their levels of oxytocin in their systems were much much higher.

Bobby: Shall we talk about your work, your commission, you started on yours there Kanj. Can you tell me about your portraits?

Kanj: Yes, so erm as part of my project was looking at the external effects of kindness. The acts of kindness and Sue was looking at the internal side of what's going on in our bodies. I was led to, really talk to people to open up conversation which wasn't an easy thing for me to do as an artist because I see myself as a creative introvert and going out and talking and engaging is not particularly the most comfortable area for me, but it felt important for this project. So I looked around, I spoke to people I identified a few people that popped up on my radar as here's something special going on and the minute you engage with one person or two people that triggers off a chain of they mention "have you spoken to so and so, they've been doing amazing things, have you got in touch with this person?" So through it, I was able to identify a few people in our community that have been doing wonderful kind

deeds through this pandemic. But these are people who've always done this anyway, and it takes me back to the point we made about the pandemic only highlighting it. But also, the need was greater, a lot of people didn't have employment in that time. So, they were relying on the kindness of people and communities to provide their everyday essentials. So, my work is really a tribute to each of these persons and it's my way of passing on kindness. I've painted a series of portraits. I'm aiming for 7 portraits at this point. A couple of them are, what I call everyday heroes who are beautiful human beings who've just done the best they can in the pandemic. One lady who has severe difficulties with her own mobility, she's on crutches. She'll still shop for her elderly neighbour every week with her own shopping. And to me that was quite remarkable really because she struggles to move a trolley let alone help someone else. And she did it and she kept giving and giving so I painted her, her name's Lorraine. Usha another sweet lady, I've painted her. She made time to talk to people. So these acts don't cost any money and that's the point I was trying to really get across through my painting, it doesn't have to cost any money, a bit of time and a willing heart. She made time to talk to the friends who were lonely. And who she knew could do with someone listening to them and so she'd sit on a sofa get a phone now and ring and spend an hour talking to each person, that is amazing and so Usha's getting a painting too. And each one of these have wonderful, amazing stories. There's one particular one that I've become really connected to is Lakshmi Sweet Centre. There again on my radar as a fantastic place for samosas, delicious food, but I didn't quite notice the heart of this family and the work they did for their community. In particular the owner he passed away last year, a year ago now from Covid, Major Singh Jawanda. His legacy is a legacy of kindness that he has left behind because by talking to his wife and his family it hit me how much this one man has done for his community. He has given so much, he's worked tirelessly simply because he had this huge heart. He just gave and gave, this bottomless river that flowed out from one person, but what's remarkable is he's not gone, and he has left a big void in that community and it's felt deeply by all of them.

Looking at his family, you know that his heart has passed on his legacy has passed on to them. And also what he's taught his grandchildren is bound to carry on, we hope it will carry on.

Bobby: What do we see in the painting? Can you describe a painting? I'm interested in the one about Usha, you know the lady who spends makes many hours, makes herself available on the phone.

Kanj: Usha I just placed her on her sofa holding a phone, in her comfy slippers as she described it because I asked her very clear questions about where will you sit when you're talking to these people, asked her to send me a few pictures of a living room. And I've placed her in that, making the time to talk to people the colours are probably a bit more vibrant than, than what Usha has. She might wish to go and decorate her house afterwards but I've kept it real, I've kept it relevant and they will all be getting the painting as a gift and it's my way of passing it on.

Bobby: Sue do you want to talk about your commission?

Sue: As I was asking myself all these questions about what's happened? Where's oxytocin produced? It lead me into a journey into the brain, very mysterious organ and very complicated really. And being quite interested in how neuroscientists of the past used to do their beautiful drawings directly from a microscope, for example some very skilled artists back in their days. I mean for example Leonardo da Vinci had these beautiful anatomy drawings that look like works of art although they were later discovered to be accurate as well. They are all done in sepia inks. So, I've kind of blended this idea of brain, and the microanatomies of the brain with modern day imagery as well, so it's culminated into large scale drawings of different parts of the brain involved in the process of kindness and how does kindness affecting the brain and trigger look like. To try and share with the viewers the message through what happens inside our bodies. So, they are basically large-scale drawings which are hanging almost full length and there's a series of those. I've also got a piece of work where I've got a film and a sound piece. It's going to be projected over 1 of the drawings and the film is made up of lots and lots of smiles that have been donated to me. I put out a request and people either,

I've got Kanj's as one of my smiling people and various other people I've come across and these are not faces but just the mouths. You know during the pandemic we were so busy hiding our mouths, we didn't see them did we, it was just eyes. So, kind of use these lovely smiles and created this animated film so as you see the film being projected you see smiles appearing in different places, so hopefully to surprise a viewer of where they're going to appear and then to work them moving round the body as if telling a story or narrative of what happens in, in the body. That's my interpretation creative piece and then the sound piece that goes with that is, I was trying to work out what kindness sounded like and for me I used birdsong, that I got a recording of but it's not birdsong per se there's a little bit of manipulation with that sound and chords. I worked with a sound engineer on a previous project, he was really quite skilled at taking a simple sound and changing it because I was really interested in making a sound a little alien like because I felt like I was alluding to sounds inside the body. So, you've got these kind of layers of birdsong that have been manipulated and human voices that have also been manipulated. So that's what, that's what my sound of kindness is.

Bobby: So what are the everyday images, you said mixed with some everyday images, can you give some examples? modern day imagery?

Sue: Oh yes erm I've referenced MRI scans as well that are like modern visualisation tool for seeing into the brain and I'd found this research where they are looking at participants who were in happy states or sad states or different emotions. A new piece of research that I'd read about so one of my images is looking at the beautiful structures in the brain, really quite beautiful which I put my own interpretation on as well and then the hypothalamus is bright orange, for me the colours of kindness for me I've introduced some colours. Kanj used lots and lots of bright colours haven't you? I've been a little bit more muted with mine and my work is mainly oranges and blues because for me those are the colours of kindness. The brain I've got is in a happy state because kindness makes us feel happier and that was an image I wanted to portray as well.

Bobby: So just to understand is the image of the brain an interpretation of a happy brain?

Sue: I think you'll know it's a brain when you look at it. You know how you look inside and see these lovely folds and things; you'll see those and the subtle shading areas and bits of stippling areas. I put what you would know as an MRI scan but is actually a drawing just like you know how Leonardo would have done shading, I've put shading in that to get a tonal value.

Bobby: The other thing I wanted to ask you, you know collecting so many smiles, can you rate a smile like nought to ten or maybe one to ten? Because every smile is gonna have some impact because it does, we would acknowledge. Do you, do some smiles have more of an impact?

Sue: Well...

Bobby: Certainly in the recordings?

Sue: Do you know something, when I was asking people if I could have a photograph of their smile, they're instantly conscious of their mouths, their teeth. But I said "it isn't a dental advert," I was a little bit concerned in case you know people just want to get a good shot of themselves, but I said "I really just want to imagine that you've just smiled at a stranger and it's you know, you just break out in that smile, just be natural." People are quite generous. I've got people with facial hair, I've got old people, young children as well. Just the mouths. I said "I just want a natural smile and I want all kinds of smiles as well." So I've got a gentleman who's got a lot of facial hair, so you can see that on there, but as I mask out the rest of the face, I've just got the smile area. But would you believe that while I was sitting at my computer editing this, every time I'd see a smile, I found myself smiling as well, even in video smiles, every time I see someone break out into a smile, I found myself smiling even though I'm sitting at the computer, I'm on my own. It's really infectious, incredibly. So there's two pieces of work I've got working with smiles: one was the film that I have mentioned but the other one was mentioning this reproductive value of smiles or kindness in

general, so the research I've been looking at suggested that this reproductive value of 5. So one person smiling can induce others to smile and then to five others and five more. So before you know it, you're one simple smile has rippled out like a pebble falling in the water. So, I kind of alluded to that idea. I wanted to collect about 200 smiles for that but I actually managed 80. I've got about 80 smiles and I've had to repeat some of them for the artwork, so it's a piece of artwork that has got and lots and lots of smiles arranged in the kind of a pattern but they're showing ripples going out.

Bobby: And this is the film?

Sue: This is actually a digital piece a large scale, 80 by 80 cm piece, it's on dibond, a surface that's really nice for exhibit a digital piece.

Bobby: So you say digital piece?

Sue: I took everybody's smile

Bobby: Yes

Sue: Edited it and then through photoshop managed to position in particular places, get the scale changed and then there's lots of tiny little smiles all dotted around acting as like a pattern which is alluding to these ripples.

Bobby: Can you tell me what's been the hardest most challenging thing about being an artist in your life?

Sue: Self-doubt for me. Self-questioning, whether I'm communicating with the audience appropriately. You can create art works and you can put it out there to the public, but you don't know how they're going to receive it. You're trying to make lots of different clues and messages. You just hope the public are going to like it.

Bobby: And what's been the most rewarding part of being an artist?

Sue: Sometimes you are surprised by, connect with what you put out there and you think "oh gosh!" You work in your studio don't you and you're never quite sure, you need feedback from people. I'm always testing out what I call a virgin viewer, "you're a virgin

viewer will you come and look and see what you're reading from this?" I don't know if you do the same?

Kanj: I don't have virgin viewers. I'm slightly different I think so, I am a wired up differently, and this is great thing about collaborations, you are brought together and you recognise the differences as you work towards a united goal. I suppose my make-up is I work on my own, I work from home; my studio is my home in terms of feedback? Family they are around me, my husband doesn't particularly notice much. My son is brilliant he'll come up to me and he's my pair of eyes "mum that's amazing" or "that one's not quite right." I go with that. I've got a few close friends who I ping a message to and "what do you think, how's it looking?" And I'm pretty much, I go with it, I go with my heart and if I feel that it's going in the right way, it makes me feel good and I carry on.

Bobby: What's been the hardest thing in your life being an artist?

Kanj: Life I guess, life is uncertain and when you have plans for work, life has other plans to make sure that your plan is thrown out the window and it's usually regarding children, family and health, my health has had major setbacks over the past 3 years. I've had many things go wrong, so those are the challenges I think I have faced because when you have a solo exhibition it's just you doing it and there's nobody else to prop you up and make you deliver it's just you and then life comes and throws you one heck of a curveball you've got to pop up for a minute when it just calms down. And trying not to lose sight of the goal, try not to give up that's been hard and but through it that the positives that come out and more of a personality thing, resilience, learning how to flex, learning how to regroup, but still keeping your eyes fixed firmly and like this project is no example, no different to all the others. My son had Covid for 2 weeks and I took a lot of time on my part to look after him because he was isolating so I had to shelve my project in order to look after him properly and then I lost my vision and I didn't get it back for two weeks. And that really threw me and I was worried that it will take me out of the picture. So, things like that, you can't control life, it cannot be controlled it has a mind and I'm learning that I have a part of me

that is resilient and it's flexible. And that goal is still there, so I am one of those, no matter what I'll work to the very end and it will be delivered.

Bobby: And what's been the most rewarding thing or enriching thing?

Kanj: It is talking to the people in our community my goodness what a fabulous community we live in. I've looked at Wolverhampton as it's not the most attractive place to live in but it's the community that makes a place and we do have a fabulously rich community and talking to these individuals and I've made connections and those connections I'll make sure that they are carried on. You can't walk away from people like that.

Bobby: On the theme of community, you've lived in other places. You know you've spent some considerable time in Australia?

Kanj: Yes

Bobby: How does community here compare to the other places you've lived in?

Kanj: The other places were different because they were transient. I knew I wasn't going to be living there forever in Oz. I was born in Sri Lanka and I went to Australia to do my degree in textiles so I knew there was a finite time scale there and then I'd get back home. So, in that time as a student, you know who thinks about community. Just want to have fun and enjoy yourself which is pretty much what I did. It was great. And then I guess Wolverhampton has been the place I've lived for the longest other than my birth home which is Sri Lanka. And 22 years we've been here, 21 years and that's a long time to the forge communities make connections and bonds. And in the end, that's what makes up a community for me.

Bobby: Can we forget to be kind?

Sue: Absolutely, I think we can get very busy rushing around and you know sometimes you can be on a phone call then you might go into a shop and then there are times when you've had to pay for something and you might have still been carrying on a conversation on the phone. I think we can all slip into those kinds

of moments you think you need to give people time, have eye contact. How you keep remembering, if you just feel like when you feel nice from being kind, perhaps it will induce us to be kind of little bit more often because we need to put it on repeat. But I'm sure that we get too busy, which is such a shame

Bobby: Can I ask both of you a final question, how are you kind to yourselves?

Kanj: Really important question because one of the things that has become my little motto really is "if you're not kind to yourself you can't be kind to others," be kind to yourself because you can't pour from an empty cup, so when we're giving, our reserves are being depleted in many ways, we might not realise it but they are because it's your time and your energy and all of that and so the counterbalance to that is to reset. By being kind to ourselves, do something we love, make time for ourselves because then we get topped up and then I'm more able to give again on that repeat button you just mentioned. If you don't then we will be depleted that is where kindness runs its course.

Sue: I try and be kind to myself because I love being outside. I like to, I sometimes go running which is sometimes quite a plod but it's around a particular area where there's two beautiful pools and it's being in nature for me. Just reconnecting with nature really boosts me, makes me feel better and then it helps me to think about other people because sometimes I think we can get very self-absorbed and so I'm always trying to turn myself around, doing these nice things and just being in the moment for me and helps me reset like you just mentioned resetting.

Bobby: Great, thank you both. Thank you, Sue Brisco and Kanj Nicholas
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