

## **Why Should You Bother To Be Nice To People?**

### **Scenario A**

A young lady, Bose, was having a really rough day at work. It had been a long and frustrating day – one of those days when you simply can't seem to get anything right, and everyone gets on your nerves and you feel like screaming. But you are forced to endure and manage a smile. At about 2p.m, she decides to take a break and step out for lunch. As she heads across the road to the nearby restaurant for a quick meal, a young school girl returning from school approaches her. She is possibly no more than 10 years old at best. 'Good afternoon Ma'. 'Good afternoon', Bose replied, though mildly irritated and wondering if the girl was about to beg for money or something. But the school girl's next words simply took her breath away. 'I really like your dress. You look very pretty in it.' She said, with a giggle and then ran away, apparently shy and slightly embarrassed. Bose's mood immediately lifted. She knew the dress was nice, it was her favourite. But in the course of her rough day, her appearance was the last thing on her mind. The innocent girl's compliment brightened her day. She smiled at her own reflection in the glass windows of the street shop. And then she continued her journey to the restaurant. But now she had a smile and a spring to her steps. What a bright and colourful day it was, she thought to herself.

### **Scenario B**

John arrived at the office in a good mood. His wife just gave him the good news of a positive pregnancy test result after 4 years of fertility concerns. He felt on top of the world. He greeted everyone very cheerfully and stepped into his cubicle. 'Good morning Emeka', he greeted his colleague. 'How are you?'. 'I am fine, thanks', Emeka replied. But there was something about Emeka's tone of voice and demeanour that hinted at things not being fine. John contemplated briefly if he should just mind his own business or try to investigate what may be bothering his colleague, Emeka. He decided to probe a little further.

John: Chief Emeka, you know we have been working closely together now for almost 6 years. You have always been very supportive during periods when I felt very bad on account of my infertility challenges. I noticed that you are not looking as cheerful as your usual self, even though you said you are fine. What is really going on? Please talk to me.

Emeka: My brother, thanks for your concern. You are right and things are not really going well with me. I have a lot on my mind these days. My wife has been unwell for a few weeks now and we were requested to do some tests. She has now been diagnosed with breast cancer...at the age of 35 years. Can you just imagine? And the doctors said it has already spread to the chest, bones...all over. It was an aggressive type. The chances of her survival are slim. With two young daughters aged 4 and 2 years. Now openly weeping, 'how am I supposed to deal with this now? Ehn John?'. I try to be strong for my wife and to encourage her, because she is devastated, but I am also at my wits end. We have not told anyone yet, but I am also dying slowly under this burden. I don't know what to do, my brother. This is not how we planned it when we got married.

Why has God dealt with us this way? Who will bring up our daughters? He lamented, in between his tears and sobs.

John: I am so sorry to hear this. I will be there for you. And my wife too. Let's not give up hope just yet. She can still beat the odds. Let's face the challenge with courage and everything we can muster. Don't give up or give in to despair. You and your wife stood by us during our tough times, we are also solidly behind you on this.

## **Conclusion**

I came across two independent real-life events mirroring above stories (details have been modified) via facebook in the past week. People that you see every day, including random strangers - everyone has a story and a life. Beyond customary greetings (Good morning, how are you) and statutory responses (I am fine, thank you) lie an ocean of real-life experiences, challenges and struggles. If our struggles could be pasted on a poster that is stuck on our chest and our backs for everyone to see and read, we would be amazed at the long list that would be on most of our bodies.

But we can all do something to help, and it does not have to be financial support. Simply by being nice and kind to others. Such that if you can't reduce their burden, at least do not compound it. Would you rather not be nice to people? With a kind word here, and a smile there? And wouldn't you also like others to be nice to you? I will conclude with the mantra of the Asido Foundation: Together, let's all make the world a better place, one person at a time.

## **JIBRIL ABDULMALIK**

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