LIFELESSONS

Lucy Bruce came to the Middle East from the UK in 1999 and co-founded the Insignia advertising agency with her husband. Last year the couple established Harmony House, a day-shelter for underprivileged children outside Delhi, which officially opened yesterday

Make a stranger smile. Small gestures can go a long way and make us feel uplifted and unified. I had a terrible habit of lashing out at others when I was having a bad day, even those who

were trying to help me. No matter how my day is going, I now make an effort to try to be happy, polite and kind to those with whom I cross paths. Making other people's lives easier in some way is a reward in itself.

There is no substitute for action. I have been guilty of "talking the talk" but not "walking the walk", making promises and not keeping them. I have learnt that before I voice my intentions,

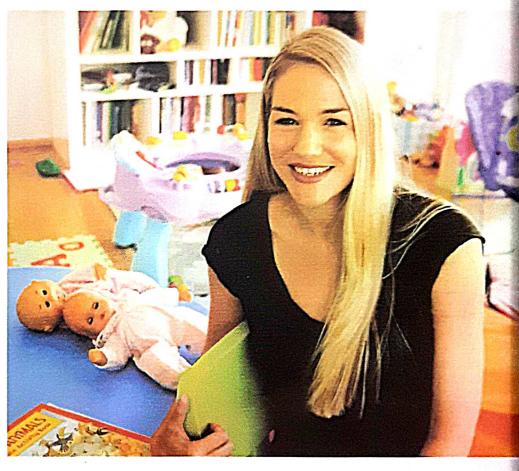
I should act. Once you act upon an idea, your thoughts start to rapidly manifest themselves into reality and nothing is out of reach.

Never turn someone away if you can help. I have often ignored people I could have helped, only to be left wondering if I judged them harshly – it still bothers me.

Now when I pass someone in the street asking for money or if I lend a hand to a friend who I've helped out one too many times, I tell

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myself that it is not my business to judge them but it is my responsibility to do what I can to help. If I have been taken advantage of, at least my conscience is clear and my intentions were good.



Be thankful for small blessings. In the quest to achieve the perfect life, complete with all the accessories, we can lose sight of what we already

have. Throughout the day, I try to take moments to appreciate and be thankful for everything I have and remember that many things I take for granted are often things that others desperately need just to survive each day.

You are given things to share with others. I come from a society that teaches us that what we

teaches us that what we earn and what we have belongs to us. Since leaving the UK, I have had the honour of

experiencing many different cultures and traditions, some which have taught me that what we have is ours to share – not only with those we know and love, but with strangers who have no one else to lean on.

www.harmonyhouseindia.org

As told to Helena Frith Powell