

# LIFE LESSONS

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

**1** **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.

**2** **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.

**3** **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 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.



**4** **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.

**5** **You are given things to share with others.** I come from a society that 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](http://www.harmonyhouseindia.org)

As told to Helena Frith Powell