A Quiet Revolution – An Extension

Some years ago, Lifestyle Movement members were asked to take part in the quiet revolution, which was to refrain from buying anything they didn't need. This is obviously one of our main raisons d'être and is designed to make our planet a greener, happier place to live. I have thought long and hard about this and feel there is one major thing we can do to enhance our lives and those we come into contact with.

There is a connection that I was reminded of when putting together part of the presentation for the recent AGM. The simplicity of it is what makes this extension so natural to add.

It is to Communicate with people. Having driven night buses for more than 30 years, I have begun to realise that it is easier to communicate with 'strangers' on these buses because we generally carry far fewer passengers than our counterparts on days. I look at people when they get on the bus and, generally, they will look back. I always say hello the them and thank them when they put a valid pass on my so-called ticket machine. (London buses no longer take cash, thus no tickets are issued). My response to those who don't pay is somewhat less cordial, but generally, my respect for the good people is often rewarded by a Good Night, driver, when they get off. To make a connection like this gladdens my heart. Some people I pick up look somewhat aggressive, but if I have learned one thing in my many years on this job it is not to judge by appearances! You will be amazed how the most savage looking passenger can be very polite and cordial. At first, some give me a puzzled look, along the lines of "What is this strange, old guy playing at?" However, after a few visits to my bus (we have a lot of regular passengers) they begin to relax and realise that my cordiality is genuine and not the

forced attention that the company are trying to impose on us.

This connectivity should not be limited to bus passengers. In our everyday lives, we need to connect with people we come into contact with. This will often yield surprising positive results.

One of the saddest stories to come out of the Pandemic lock down was of a grocery delivery driver, who was delivering to an elderly lady who lived alone. She asked if he would come in and talk to her over a cup of tea. He had to explain that it was not company policy to talk to customers in a non- business setting. She told him that she was suffering from terminal cancer and had only a few weeks to live and that he would probably be the last person she ever spoke to. The driver was left with no choice but to completely ignore company regulations. This is a good example of why communication is so important, even life changing.

Sadly, in this day and age, the powers that be use finger pointing and division to achieve their goals. Classic recent examples of this are Brexit and the very recent U.S. Presidential election. This leaves whole nations and even families divided, which to my mind is a horrendous state of affairs.

One of the greatest examples of the exact opposite of this was that of Winston Churchill during World War 2. He was bright enough to realise that to win the war, he had to win the peace. Thus, he awarded the job of his deputy to Clement Attlee, a man he really didn’t like and whose policies he totally disagreed with, but knew he had to offer the population of this country a future far better than what had gone before.

Another of his appointments was that of Field Marshall Montgomery to lead the forces fighting in the desert against Rommel. The conflict there was going badly, but Montgomery was

a brilliant tactician and also had the support of the men fighting there and turned the war around in North Africa, which was one of the main turning points in the war. Montgomery was a Communist by political persuasion, diametrically opposed to Churchills' views. The greatness of the leader was his ability to put the right person in the right job, regardless of his personal opinion of them. Such stature in the worlds' leaders seems to be sadly lacking today.

To end this piece on bringing people together, I have to mention Greta Thunberg, who has united a massive slice of a whole generation, not to mention a fair proportion of other generations to alert world leaders to the imminent existential threat of the Climate Crisis. To start from a lone protest outside the Swedish Parliament building to encouraging millions of people worldwide to put pressure on the politicians to take the drastic action required now for the sake of humanity and the natural world is little short of miraculous and has the politicians worried especially when they know the truth yet still pretend the problem will somehow go away without the 'pain' that it will cause a lot of people.

As a footnote, I would like to thank all those who attended the recent AGM. A prime example of togetherness that truly gladdened my heart.

By Jeff White