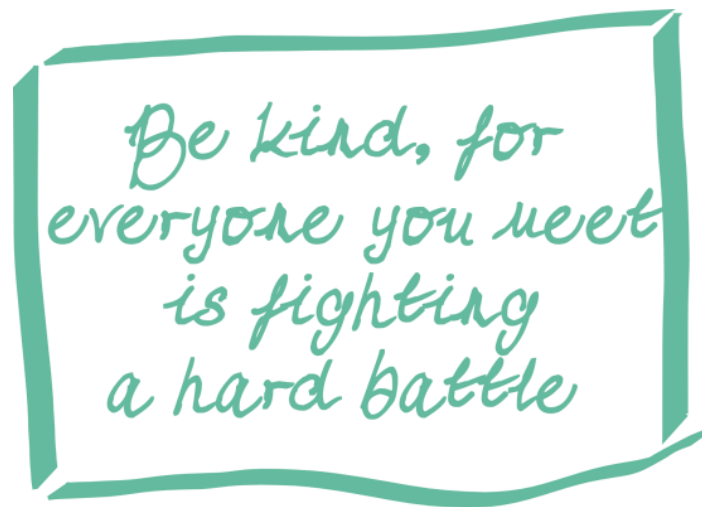


## Be Kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle – April 2018



Lately this quote has been buzzing round my head. It seems to originate from Plato, though google has a few sources claiming it!

It feels important to me to keep this in mind at the moment. I know so many people who have been having a rough time of it, with all sorts of challenges to face and crosses to bear. And that's just in my little orbit, there is a whole world with people living with pain, in poverty, in conflict zones and the list goes on.

All of our little interactions with people matter – in fact I've been listening to some interesting research lately that shows that the quality of our relationships and interactions can literally have an impact on our physicality and longevity, of course more so in our intimate relationships, but also those day to day snippets of conversation, eye contact, smiles and acknowledgements. (*Elissa Epel and The Telomere Effect*)

And how do we know what is going on in the world of each person we pass in the street, each shopkeeper we buy from, each car that pulls out in front of us and makes us want to honk and yell? Perhaps when someone is grumpy or careless they are simply rude or annoying, but perhaps they are sad and in pain, perhaps there is something they are struggling with that is making them distracted or out of sorts and they are not coping. Perhaps they don't have a suitable outlet for their feelings and so it slips out in other ways.

Kindness can essentially show compassion, even if we have no idea what is going on for someone or have any real understanding of what their life is like. I think it also makes the giver feel better, a positive way of engaging with the world and often a smile will trigger a responding smile so we might spark off some joy.

My colleagues Audra and Philippa wrote their last blogs respectively on Spring detoxing and Spring into Life – both of the saying that Spring is more of a 'new year' to them than 1<sup>st</sup> January. So perhaps we can make a 'new year's resolution' to step out with a little more kindness and see how it makes us feel.