A blog from Jules Nicol

If I'm totally honest, as someone who has lived with depression for most of my adult life, the combination of Furlough and Lockdown made me very apprehensive. By depression by the way I don't mean a few days more grumpy than usual, I mean properly poorly.

But there is always a way to cope and make the best of any situation; it’s easy to focus on the miserable queue outside

Tesco or the sadness of not seeing those we love but wherever we have found ourselves locked down I wonder how many of us have secretly enjoyed the quiet of an evening walk and the ability to talk - I mean really talk - about the important things in life.

I'm not a counsellor or philosopher but thankfully I know some of the triggers which can see me plunge headfirst into a dark place. One of them is a lack of routine or structure, so here are my top tips for my mental health wellbeing and how I have tried to cope over the last couple of weeks.

First of all get up and make the bed - it’s the first accomplishment of the day and stops you getting told off by the other half. Have a shower, get dressed and, unless you are growing one have a shave, lounging around in my PJs watching Netflix till the afternoon is not a great idea.

If you live with someone and they are still working, be the one who gets up first and makes them a cuppa ... it’s only fair.

While some people are keen to say that the way to cope is to "keep busy" perhaps it’s better to "stay useful". In the afternoons I have been volunteering locally shopping for the elderly and collecting prescriptions for the housebound. This doesn't make me a saint by any stretch of the imagination I can assure you, but for me at least I am more able to look after my wellbeing by concentrating on someone else.

This is a crazy time, is it scary? Yes. Am I often genuinely worried? Yes, it's mad to pretend otherwise. But for all of us in the situation this is an opportunity we will, hopefully never have again. I'm lucky to have a garden, but wherever you are, take a minute to get some fresh air during your day ... even in the rain ... it helps me realise that the world continues in spite of what you might see on the news. Learn something new, read, write, and sing.

2020 has been quite a year already but, whatever happens this will change. So if like me you struggle sometimes, remember to be kind to yourself by being useful and kind to other people. And of course, as the Big Boss lady said "we will meet again"

Jules xx