January 2021

water matters

FOR MERCHANTS, CONTRACTORS AND DEVELOPERS WHO EXPECT THE BEST FROM THEIR SUPPLIERS



Constantly improve

In the absence of a chance to get the whole Graf UK team together for an end of year Christmas party, I opted to prepare a gift package for all our staff as a thank you for their effort and contribution throughout 2020. ➤

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It seemed inappropriate to do nothing. They all deserved thanks, as I'm sure you do in your business. In fact, they all deserved a great big Christmas party and a night to remember! But sadly, for obvious reasons, that wasn't an option.

Rather than your typical Christmas Hamper, or gift voucher for somewhere some of them may never use, I wanted to make the gifts personal to us as a team. Something that meant something. Something that would be useful and something that could help us in the future.

If you're a regular reader of Water Matters, you'll have already learned of our Company Values. They're 5 values that - if focused on - can help to keep all team members on the same page. Working together. Going in the same direction.

Having recently added them to some blank wall space at our head office, they're a big focus of mine for this new year. I want there to be constant reminders of them all around everyone in our team.

As you can tell by this month's front cover, they're also the focus of the next few editions of our newsletter. This month being; Constantly improve.

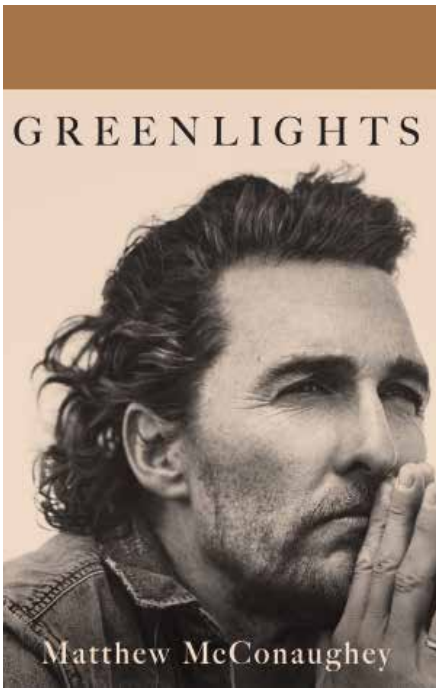
To help our team focus on constant improvement, they each received a personalised journal for them to use in 2021.

Do you ever use a journal?

Have you experienced the benefits of journaling?

A big inspiration that led me to creating this journal for all my team to use this year, was reading Matthew McConaughey's book GREENLIGHTS. Even before reading the book, I'd heard Matthew say that this book was a story of his life so far, in his fiftieth year, put together from all the journals and diaries he'd kept for the past thirty-five years. Here's what he said about it...





> "I've been in this life for fifty years, been trying to work out its riddle for forty-two, and been keeping diaries of clues to that riddle for the last thirty-five. Notes about successes and failures, joys and sorrows, things that made me marvel, and things that made me laugh out loud. How to be fair. How to have less stress. How to have fun. How to hurt less people. How to get hurt less. How to be a good man. How to have meaning in life. How to be more me."

It was a helpful reminder to me of the power of keeping a journal.

Imagine having access to a collection of your own notes from decades past, about successes and failures, joys and sorrows, things that made you marvel and things that made you laugh out loud in your own

life. Lessons about how to be fair, how to have less stress, how to have fun, to hurt less people and get hurt less. Your story, written down. So you can read it back and remember. And if you choose to – just like Matthew did – use as a blueprint for your very own book.

You see, it's interesting to read about the life of a famous person who you may be fond of because you feel like you've gotten to know them from watching hours of them on the big screen, but it's far more interesting and impactful to read and write your own story.

We can spend so much time watching others, especially "celebrities" and "influencers", that we forget we're also writing our own story. The story of our lives. The story about someone much closer to you and everyone you care about, than the likes of Matthew McConaughey!

Don't get me wrong, these stories about other people serve as great inspiration. But to get the most from them they must be used as inspiration – i.e. they must inspire you to act.

Too much time spent being a spectator can only prevent you from really focusing on playing in your own game of life.

Write your own story. Record your own lessons and experiences. Document your own journey.

After a few years you might read back through your journals and diaries and learn a few lessons about someone rather important in your life – you! The lead character. The person all viewers want to win. Want to see live happily ever after.

> You're the main character, in the most important story you'll ever read, and keeping a journal can help you make sense of it all.

You won't necessarily know the importance of something in the moment, but if you write it down so you can be reminded of it in the future, you get to connect the dots. It's easy to connect the dots looking backwards and by enabling yourself to do this, you will reinforce your trust and faith that the dots will somehow continue to connect in your future.

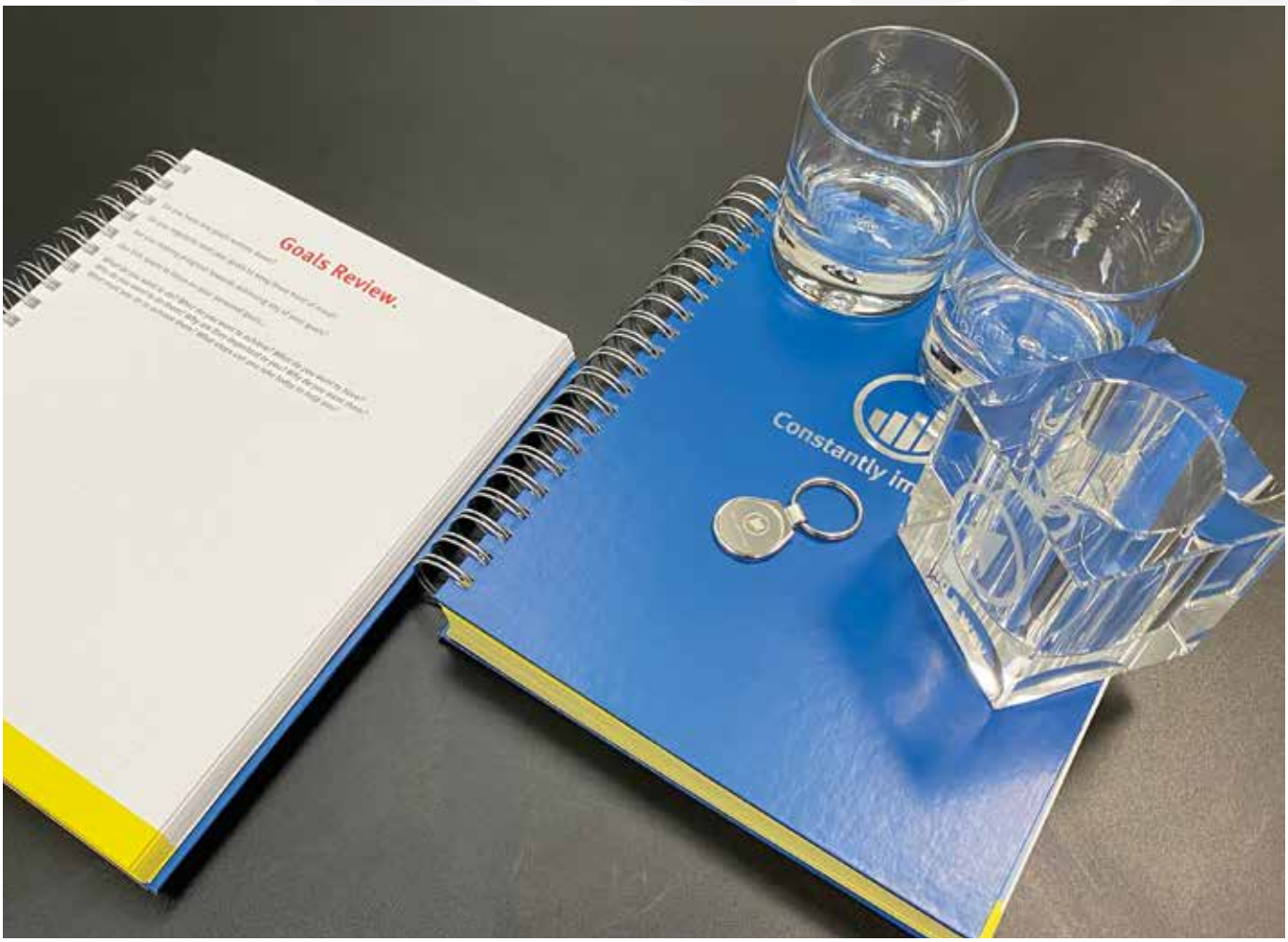
At the start of this brand new year, I hope that many of my team will use their new Constantly improve journal. I also hope that you might consider keeping your own.

Your story is way too important to leave unwritten. Keep notes. Jot down your feelings. Give yourself the chance to look back with clarity in a years' time, two years' time, perhaps even 10 years' time. To see how you've improved. To remember what's shaped you. The lessons that continue to guide you forward.

January is a typical time to consider your habits. New ones you might want to create, as well as bad ones that you might want to break. Perhaps a new habit of journaling could serve you in the future? If the only thing now stopping you is the lack of a journal, drop me an email at mrolph@grafuk.co.uk and I'll send you one of the spare blank copies of our 2021 Constantly improve journal, so you can get started.

Happy New Year to you! And have a great start to 2021.

Matthew



Sharing Our Values – Constantly improve

Here's a few recent examples of our team living up to our value... to Constantly improve.

Debra Butler... *our new video expert!*



Debra Butler

A few month's ago, Deb embraced the move to digital communications and has since had great results using BombBomb video emails. These emails basically mean that you send a short video of yourself talking to the recipient, rather than typing your message and sending in written form. The benefit being that it's much more like a normal, face-to-face conversation. You can make your point better, you can be you, nothing is lost in translation or miscommunicated through use of angry CAPSLOCK or too many !!!!!!!, it's more like having a conversation just like we used to (pre-March 2020) when we could see each other in the same room!

As well as these video emails, Deb also learnt how to use Doodly videos earlier in 2020, which are white-board, explainer videos that can be very helpful to explain things. They're often used for 'how to' videos, etc. I'm sure this new skill of Debra's will be utilised this year and that she'll continue to *constantly improve* in this area.

Well done Deb!

Callum Vallance-Poole... *our new ClickFunnels & Ad Manager*



Callum Vallance-Poole

In the final quarter of 2020, CVP invested in himself by buying all 3 of Russell Brunson's books - Traffic Secrets, Dotcom Secrets & Expert Secrets, as he started his journey towards becoming a member of the 2 comma club. For those of you who don't know, the 2 comma club is an exclusive club, which can be gained access to only through creating over 1 million dollars with ClickFunnels, Russell Brunson's online sales funnel builder. Callum started using ClickFunnels in our Garantia business a couple of months ago and we're already seeing great results. He's learnt and learnt and learnt and is truly living our constantly improve value.

As well as this, CVP also started using AdEspesso for some of our paid-media marketing since August 2020 and this is having great results too. Like most businesses in 2021, we still have loads to learn to fully embrace the opportunities that the internet presents to us, but with team members like CVP who are committed to being 'better every day' we will *constantly improve*.

Well done CVP!

Steve Righton... *our newest wastewater expert*



Steve Righton

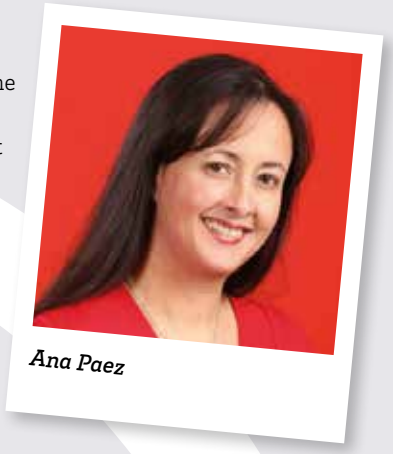
With only a little over 1 year's service within Graf UK, Steve is fast-becoming our in-house expert on all things wastewater treatment. Given just how much there is to learn about sewage treatment plants, not to mention the fact that Steve had very little experience of this technology before joining us, he's learnt so, so much over the past 15 months.

It's this kind of commitment to constant improvement that enables us to help our customers with their individual requirements. Rather than just sticking to a core range of products and making our customers adapt to suit our solutions, Steve has flipped that approach and learnt about our products to such an extent to help him make them suit our customers' requirements. Putting their needs first and finding ways to help them. Every day there is something new to learn and that can get exhausting, but Steve exemplifies our value to *constantly improve* and keep on growing in knowledge and ability to help others.

Well done Steve!

Constantly improve

Ana Paez...
our in-house AutoCAD expert


Ana Paez

Throughout the second half of 2020, Ana invested in herself by taking some online courses to improve her skills & knowledge. The first was a LinkedIn AutoCAD Assessment, which she passed with flying colours! The second was to earn herself a certificate from Innovyze Education by completing a course entitled; WATER TALK: The gold standard for SuDS - how far have we come 5 years on from The SuDS Manual?

This is the perfect example of living up to our value to *constantly improve*. No one asked Ana to do these courses. There was no reward within the business for Ana passing these courses. It was not a requirement of her job to spend time pushing herself to do this. Ana just decided to do it, because her ability is important to her. She wants to be the best she can be. She wants to *constantly improve*. She's a shining example in our team and continues to get 'better every day'.

Well done Ana!

Just four examples for now - I could have shared many more, but it's not about us... it's about you.

Do you share our value to **Constantly improve**? If so, tell us how. We're sharing this article on our LinkedIn page and we'd love to hear from you in the comments. Search for #constantlyimprove on LinkedIn or visit our page and find the post, then share your examples with us.

Are you doing anything to improve? Have you made any new years' resolutions to help you become better? It's a popular topic at this time of year, sadly often forgotten by the start of April, but if the goal's important enough to you and you have a clear plan ahead, you can make whatever change that's important to you. It's up to you! Share with us on LinkedIn, we'd love to hear from you.



Our self-builders' guide to help build the dream

Do you deal with self-builders in your business?

If so, this new guide that we've written might be helpful for them and suitable for you to share with them as a useful resource.

Given the benefits that a self-build project can bring, it's no wonder 1 in 7 Brits (about 7 million) are currently looking to custom build their own homes. In fact, this approach to home projects is on a massive rise in the UK, with over 13,000 self-build projects completed in 2017, and numbers expected to rise by 35% during 2019 to 20,000.

By the end of October 2019, the local planning authorities had planned to have granted over 18,000 'Right to Build' to custom-builders in London alone, and over 40,000 throughout the UK.

As of April 2019, only 8% of the homes in the UK were custom or self-build, but with the issuance of 'Right to Build' on the rise, it's clear to see that the government is determined to help self-builders.

Self-builders are a growing customer group for our business, particularly for wastewater treatment plants and rainwater harvesting systems. We are dealing with more and more self-builders and as such we want to provide resources to help them. Our new guide ***'The Top 10 Things Every Self-Builder Should Know Before They Start'*** is available as a download on our website. It includes the following chapters;



Chapter 1: Understand what's involved

Chapter 2: Understand your building site

Chapter 3: Decide what self-build route you'll take

Chapter 4: Get your finances right

Chapter 5: Hire the right people

Chapter 6: Hire a designer

Chapter 7: Build with resale in mind

Chapter 8: Get insured properly

Chapter 9: Choose your ideal construction method and systems

Chapter 10: Communicate constantly

Take a look at www.grafuk.co.uk/self-build to download a copy, or share this link with your self-build customers.

Eliminate worry for your wellbeing

Here's a lesson that I believe many of us learn over and over and over in our lives.

***Why do we repeat it?* Because it's really hard not to.**

It's possible, but it's really hard.

What is it? well, here goes...

Worrying about stuff we cannot control. And worrying about things that in the end, often don't even happen.

Here's my recent example. (and I apologise right up front because it contains the 'B' word!)

BREXIT...

Were you worried about whether there would be a deal or no deal? I was.

Not like, sleepless nights kind of worry - I was confident that we'd find a way whatever happened - but I was also very aware that it would be easier if a deal was reached.

I'd be lying if I said I hadn't had some pretty negative thoughts about the consequences of tariffs etc. My mind had definitely gone to some worse-case scenarios and it had come up with very little to make me feel better about the potential situation ahead!

It would have been very easy to worry. Like, really worry. Whether you were a strong believer in the likelihood of a deal being reached, we had every reason to doubt it's existence. They all kept us guessing for a very long time!

Of course, as we now know, the worry was for nothing. Like so many things we can get concerned about - building up to big problems inside our own mind - it didn't even happen. What we worried about most, turned out not to exist. It was but a figment of our imagination.

It's important to recognise this, because it happens so often. We worry about things that don't even exist. It seems so silly when you say it out loud - why worry about something that hasn't even happened yet and you don't even know whether it will happen?!



But we do. Thanks largely to our 2million year old brain. It naturally runs to the worse-case scenario so it can protect ourselves against it. But we don't need to go there. We have alternatives!...

Consider these 3 questions next time you're faced with worry.

1. What are you going to focus on?

2. What does this mean?

3. What are you going to do?

We get to choose what to focus on. We feel whatever we focus on.

We also get to choose the meaning we give things. Is this the end or the beginning? The meaning you give things instantly creates emotions in you.

We get to decide what to do. Even if you're really not sure what to do, trust your gut and take some kind of action. If it turns out to be the wrong action then at least you'll find out quicker and then you can change it.

Worrying has to stop. It's bad for all of us. It's a lesson I'm focusing on this month and perhaps it's one that will help you too.

Are you worried about anything right now? If so, consider the 3 questions and take action to help your wellbeing. Just like a no-deal outcome, it might never happen.

Shoe Dog

Have you heard of Phil Knight?

Have you ever heard of Blue Ribbon Sports?

Do you know what it takes to start & build a $30 Billion+ revenue business?

Do you have any idea of what you're capable of as a passionate human being with a desire to do something important to you?

If you are interested in what it takes to build a big business, and more importantly a brand, plus you answered "no" to some or all of the above questions, then you're in for a treat. You're lucky to be you. You're in a great spot.

Have you ever really enjoyed a new TV series or Netflix series and having watched the whole thing you get talking to a friend who has never heard of it?

They've not watched a single one. Then you recommend it to them and you find yourself so envious of them, because you know what they have to come? You know they are about to experience the whole series - from start to finish - and you know how good it is, you wish you were in their shoes because they're about to enjoy what you've already enjoyed!

You know that you could also re-watch it and start from the beginning, but it wouldn't be the same because you'd be watching it a second time. You already know what's going to happen. Your friend though, they're going to be watching for the first time and you know all the good stuff they're about to go through!

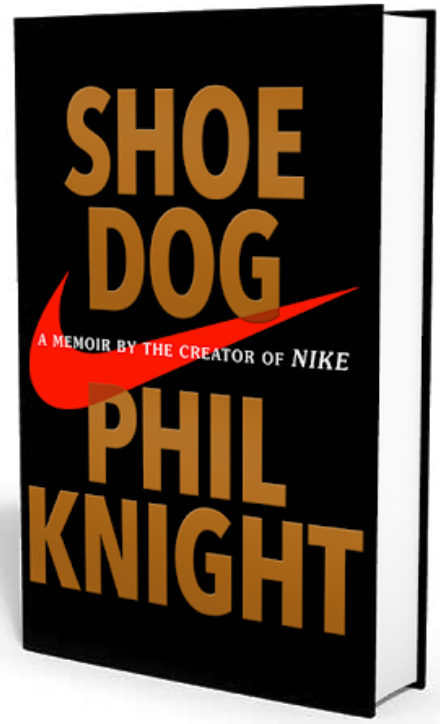
If you've ever experienced this feeling, that's exactly how I'm feeling when I recommend this book.

I'm jealous of anyone who hasn't read it before.

You have no idea what you're about to learn!

The story you're about to be absorbed in. The often-unbelievable tale of how one of the worlds biggest brands came to being.

I am amazed it took me so long to decide to read this book. I had been seeing it come up in many lists of 'recommended books' but for some reason I always looked past it. Then, just before Christmas I decided I would give it a go. Thank goodness I did!



I had no clue about any of the history of Nike.

I had no idea that it started out as such a small business - not even a proper business for the first several years! It was more of a part-time hobby.

Talk about an unbelievable story. Especially knowing what we know about Nike now.

How big a Company it is.

How big a Brand it is. How many 'raving-fan' customers and followers it has. How much it's influenced the sports & clothing world.

I do not over-exaggerate when I say that if you don't know the story of how Nike came to life, but you decide to read this book, you're in for a real shock.

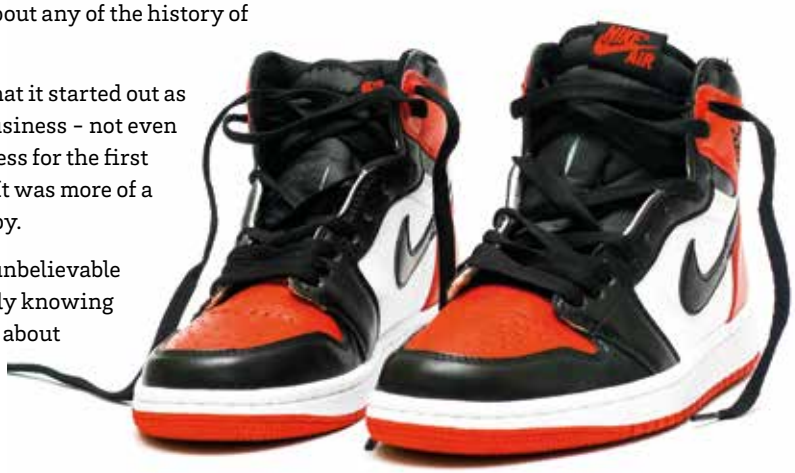
You won't believe the struggles they fought through. The obstacles they were up against. How close they came to failing.

The power of perseverance and an unwillingness to quit.

It would be impossible for me to get even a snippet of this story over to you in a brief article such as this. If you're interested in finding out more you simply must read 'Shoe Dog'.

It will be one of the best decisions you've made so far in 2021! Trust me!

If you do read it, please let me know what you think. It's well and truly towards the top of my list of favourite ever books, perhaps even topping Sam Walton's story of Walmart. I couldn't recommend it more and can't wait to hear what you think once you've read it too. Go get it now & start reading! You won't regret it. ■



What happens in Graf UK? (month #1)



Emily

Well, after my short time here I have gained a vivid understanding of how the company works and the core company values that we all stand by.

During my apprenticeship I will be visiting every team within Graf UK, including our Scotland branch. Currently I am with the Order Processing team. The team is split up into product groups so that each team member processes orders for different products; my responsibility is Garden orders. Over the last few weeks I have been taught how to use our processing software Sage, which I use on a day to day basis in order to raise sales and purchase orders. The amazing Alicia has been guiding me through my first month in order processing and showing me the ins and outs of Graf UK simultaneously.

Although I have only been at Graf UK for a month, I feel as though I have been here forever! I have been welcomed by all and I believe this is because of everyone's strong beliefs in the company values. We have five main values; to constantly improve, to treat others how we want to be treated, to take ownership, to find a way and to enjoy the journey. Every member of staff here at Graf UK stands by these values with both customers and colleagues and seeing how every team comes together to help each other out is truly inspiring.

I am very excited about what is to come and I'm looking forward to joining the Garden team next where I hope to gain a deeper understanding of the Garantia range.



Dear Role-model...

Do you ever think about the people you learn the most from? More importantly, do you ever thank them?

I think about it quite a lot. Perhaps because I aim to read at least one biography book a month. Therefore I'm always thinking about someone else's life and their experiences, which are being shared with me in a book, which I'm then able to learn from and benefit from.

I love a good role model! People who you can look up to whose behaviour, example and success you can try to emulate.

They can come in all shapes and sizes. Not just celebrities and influencers, but also parents, grandparents, friends and older siblings. Even the 93 year old lady who I recently read an article about who'd just retired, believed to be Britain's oldest postmistress, having worked at the same post office since the age of 14.

Imagine, 80 years working in the same job, in the same place, doing the same thing. Well, there will have been many changes. I know from my own grandparents who ran a post office for many years, they had to roll with the changes. But the consistency and commitment to spend such a long time doing the same work, year in and year out, there are lessons a plenty we could learn from Kay White, I'm quite sure.

Lessons which we could jot down in our journal. Thoughts, feelings, ideas they inspire. All worthy additions to your journal or diary. All freely provided to help you learn from their experiences.

I've occasionally thought to write to say thanks to some of the role models I've learnt from. I've messaged on social media and left glowing reviews on their books and videos, in the hope that they understood my gratitude for them.

What's more important though, I have come to believe, is the action that their stories invoke in you. What you do because of it? How you proceed because of them?

When considered in this way, you can learn from them, benefit from them, then go on to become one yourself to help others close to you.

That has to be the ultimate thank you gift. To become a role model yourself - because of them - so you can help others, just as they helped you.

I'm sure you could list out several people who've served as a role model to you, perhaps without you even realising it. People who have influenced you. Shaped you. Helped you. Perhaps it's now time to consider thanking them, through your own actions. To continue the ripple effect by becoming a role model to others. Be the change you wish to see and be a shining example for others to look to when they need it most. ■

Shropshire postmistress to retire after 80 years

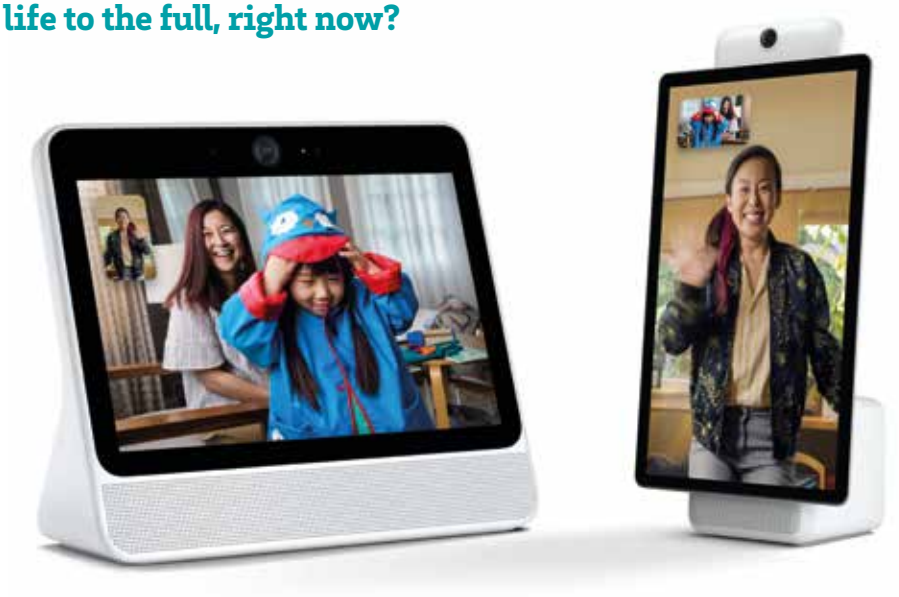
Kay White in the 1940's, the decade she started work at the post office in her home village of Claverley, and this year at the age of 93.





Making the most of now

Do you feel like you're living life to the full, right now?



OK, maybe not right now as you read this, but now in general. Yesterday, today, tomorrow, are you living your most full life? Maximising what you're doing. Making the most of it. Living your wildest dreams?!

If not, what's stopping you?

And don't say the 'C' word, or mention tiers or restrictions. None of that is stopping you, it's just an excuse.

You can still do lots of stuff. You can still see lots of people. You can still communicate with people you love, like and care about. You can still improve yourself. Try new things. Experience various activities. Find things to enjoy.

You might need to do some of them differently, granted. But you can still live life to the full. Do not put life on hold!

Making the most of now may require some slight changes and tweaks to adjust to the current normality, but you can still do it, and you should.

Like many families will have over the Christmas holidays, we held a few group video calls to share this time together. All of them were great, in general, as we were seeing some people we hadn't seen for sometime, however some were definitely better than others. In this new world of video calls, technology and equipment matters.

In the first lockdown, my step-father Bob, got himself a Facebook Portal. It became the subject of many, many conversations and WhatsApp exchanges in our family group as he became the best salesman Mark Zuckerberg had ever had! And when I say "best" salesman, I mean most relentless. A conversation didn't go by without him mentioning his Portal. It does this, it does that, it's so easy to use, we should all get one, etc. etc.! It was hilarious making fun of how much he loved his new device! It kept us all laughing during a very trying time.

However, fast-forward around 9 months and do you know what, he was right.

I've now got a portal. As has my step-sister and one of my aunts. Bob turned out to be a good salesman after all!

When it comes to making the most of now, which is currently a world of video calls and digital communication, little things matter and can make a lot of difference.

Things like good equipment. Good cameras. Good microphones. Good speakers. Simple things like turning off, or down, any background noise. Focusing on the video call only, not on another conversation that's happening in the same room, within ear-shot of your microphone. Engaging fully in the video call conversation, or excusing yourself and leaving if you're not going to get involved and want to make noise elsewhere!

Making use of great equipment, like the Facebook Portal, is one thing you can do to help make it easier to make the most of now. I'm extremely confident that in a few months time we're going to look back on this point in history and bits of 2020, and remember them fondly. Quiet times. Times when we had less to do. We weren't rushing around. Juggling multiple things at once. Time spent with family who we don't always see as often as we'd like.

If you agree with me, remember that we're still in that time, right now. We can still make the most of it, before it's a distant memory.

If there are ways you can help yourself to make it more comfortable and more enjoyable, then make them. Get the right equipment. Agree on some 'group-call rules' so everyone is engaged. It might sound like "organised fun" but in these circumstances it will help!

When making the most of any time or any situation, I find it helpful to remember this formula...

E + R = O

Not that I'm one for maths, it was never my favourite subject, but some formulas I like and find useful, and this is definitely one of them.

E + R = O

[EVENT] [RESPONSE] [OUTCOME]

The useful thing to remember is that you can change any outcome by changing your response to any event. You have no control (or certainly very little control) over the E (event) - I'm pretty sure that 2020 is proof of that fact! But in order to influence the O (outcome) you have full control over the R (response). As with any formula, you change one of the numbers and it will change the result. Simple. This gives you the power. You're in charge. You're responsible.

If you want a different outcome to the one you're currently experiencing, look to your response to the event and you'll be on the right track. Change your response (and keep changing your response if necessary) until you create the outcome you desire.

And that's the final word.

Matthew



Graf UK team Q&A

Your chance to get to know our team a little bit better – this issue, Neville White.

What's your nickname people call you?
Nev mainly although I have been called many things.

What is your favourite food?
Probably roast beef, otherwise good old maccie cheese and chicken.

What is your favourite TV show?
Only fools and horses, I can easily watch it all day.



Who is your idol?
Brian Clough, simple but great.

What is your best achievement?
That must be my son Henry.

Who is your favourite singer/band?
Quite widely spread but mainly The Jam/ Paul Weller or the Who.



What is your favourite holiday destination?
Greek islands or most recently Playa Blanca, Lanzarote.



What is your favourite animal?
Boxer dogs, they are just nuts!

What was your dream job when you were younger?
Professional footballer as a child and then an Ice cream man at secondary school, we even priced up the vans!

What is your biggest pet hate?
Drivers who stay in the middle lane on a motorway, get over!



Contact us:

We'd love to hear your feedback on this issue of *Water Matters*, and the sort of things you'd like to see in future issues, so drop **Callum** a note at *callum@grafuk.co.uk*.
We look forward to hearing from you soon.

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