

# 9 THINGS I'M LEARNING FROM THIS TIME



**IAN SANDERS MAY 2024**

ONE

# HAPPINESS IS AN ACT OF DEFIANCE

After the death of his son Arthur, musician Nick Cave and his wife Susie made a choice - to get on with their life in a positive way.

‘Happiness is an act of defiance’ is how he described it. Even in adversity, we can regain some control over how we feel. I find that reframing useful - it’s like it’s a wilful act, to stand up to things in the face of adversity.

TWO

# WHEN YOU CAN'T SEE FAR AHEAD, JUST LOOK AROUND

Right now I'm not sure what the rest of the year will bring. So instead of trying to second guess what's ahead, I've found it helpful instead to look around. I'm focused more on being enriched and uplifted by tuning in to the little moments and everyday experiences.

**THREE**

# **NEVER UNDERESTIMATE BEING IN THE GROOVE OF LIFE**

This is another Nick Cave-ism. This refers to that wonderful sense of when things are going in your direction and you move from one thing to another with ease, with the wind at your back. Life has a semblance of order. It's an empowering feeling. And then on the flipside, how easily disrupted that can be. I'll be sure to appreciate it more when I'm in the groove of life.

## FOUR

# CHALLENGES BRING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

A few days after coming out of hospital I wrote in my notebook that I didn't want to go back to how things were before. I wanted life to change. In a good way. I'm taking strength from this opportunity for post-traumatic growth, thinking about how I want to transform and what I want to do differently.

**FIVE**

# **YOU CAN HOLD TWO OPPOSING THINGS AT THE SAME TIME**

When I see people I know in the street and they ask how I am, I tend to answer, “I’m good thanks. And I still have cancer.” I’m fortunate right now I’m fine in myself even though I’m not yet clear. Things in life are rarely black and white and I’m trying to get more comfortable with the duality.

**SIX**

# **LOOK AT THE WORLD WITH A NEW PAIR OF GLASSES**

I'm noticing and paying attention to things with greater clarity than before, as if I'm putting on a new pair of glasses. Paying attention, knowing what matters and choosing where to put my attention is necessary - and wonderful. Post-traumatic clarity is a gift.

**SEVEN**

# **GOOD THINGS HAPPEN WHEN YOU ILLUMINATE TOUGH TIMES**

I'm glad I've chosen to be open about my journey and to speak about it publicly, whether on here or on the podcasts I've been on. And that's because of the positives that have come out of it. One such thing is that 11 men - a mix of friends, work contacts, social media connections - have so far told me they've had a PSA blood test after hearing my story.



**EIGHT**

# **BE PREPARED WHEN THINGS DON'T GO TO PLAN**

The plan was neat: that the surgery I had should sort me out and rid me of cancer. But I haven't got the all-clear and there is more treatment to come. It wasn't the news I wanted, but I've had enough experiences to know the stories of our lives have plenty of twists and turns.

**NINE**

# **CHOOSE WHAT YOU LET IN**

Negativity breeds more of the same. Cynicism can be toxic. I'm being much more intentional about what I let into my life now; and negativity and cynicism has no place within it. Toxicity can do one! I've had loads of good feedback and amazing support, for which I'm incredibly grateful.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ian Sanders is a storytelling trainer, author and coach. He works with some of the world's leading organisations, creating positive change through the power of stories.

Resolutely independent, curious, open-minded and rebel-spirited - it's led to a pretty unconventional career. The author of five books on working life, his latest, *365 Ways To Have a Good Day*, is out now.

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