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**PARKINSON'S<sup>UK</sup>**  
**CHANGE ATTITUDES. FIND A CURE. JOIN US.**

**Guildford and South Surrey Branch**

Hi Folks,

Welcome to this festive edition of the members' monthly newsletter. As Noddy Holder of Slade says, "it's Christmas". ☺ Let me start by saying, **"On behalf of everybody who has some degree of management responsibility for the branch, we wish you all a peaceful Christmas."**

One reminder for this month:

- **The Occam Singers have their Christmas Concert on Saturday 10 December** at St Nicolas Church, Guildford. **We are fundraising for the Branch after the concert** by providing a bar in the Church Hall. Occam Singers tickets and more details of all these events can be found at either
  - <https://www.occamsingers.co.uk/>
  - <https://thelittleboxoffice.com/occams>

Now I find the run-up to Christmas a little stressful as there are so many things to do and so little time to do them. One activity that causes maximum stress is the pressure to find highly applicable, high quality and what end up as expensive presents for members of the family. To reduce the pressure, we have an agreed-upon policy that, in general, everybody buys 'pre-loved' presents from charity shops. Okay, they may be rubbish but they tend to put a great smile on everyone's face on Christmas Day and given the meagre cost you can always take them back to the charity shop in the New Year, especially if you leave the price on.

For those who know me well, you will realise that the above is simply a way for me to segue into a new conversation about the connection between two rather different topics: 'A recent present' and 'The Shalford Monthly Meetings'. If I told you the present was a book called "The boy, the mole, the fox and the horse" by Charlie Mackesy- do you get the connection? Kudos to anyone who realises the connection is two of my loves in life – friendship and cake!

The book is described as "A book of hope in uncertain times". My favourite phrase in the book is:

"Is your glass half empty or half full?" asked the mole

"I think I'm grateful to have a glass." said the boy.

positive thinking.

I thought I'd do a Google search to see what I could find out and I saw an article which I thought I would share (I'm not certifying this as true but it seems plausible to me).

### **Staying Positive When You Have Parkinson's**

Parkinson's communities and researchers emphasize that a positive attitude can make living with Parkinson's disease more tolerable. People with Parkinson's can live an active and productive life.

When you hear the diagnosis of Parkinson's disease you may feel despair and be inclined to focus on the concept of a chronic neurodegenerative movement disorder. None of those words sound encouraging. It is natural to think about a life that could limit your independence, presenting difficulties with everyday tasks or performing your job. Knowing you may experience psychological and motor challenges can be frightening. These are all concepts that may impact your life plan and that of your family.

Although it is normal to experience a loss of hope or fear about what the future may hold, keeping a positive attitude and maintaining a positive outlook can make life more enjoyable. This approach is actually beneficial for everyone, whether or not they have Parkinson's, or care about someone else who does.

### **Do things that are uplifting**

Be Engaged – Make sure you have plans with people, don't become isolated

Get outdoors – take a walk, enjoy the sunshine

Listen to music – uplifting music can be joyful

Make a new friend

Do something for someone else – It feels good to redirect your efforts to do nice things for others

Stay hopeful – a positive attitude can make each day better

Participate in activities – ones you are involved in or try something new

Socialise – join a group, being around people keeps your brain busy

Be a decision-maker – participate in your care

Advocate – for Parkinson's research

### **Coping mechanisms:**

Have hope!

Find a safe place to say what's on your mind, to speak freely

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keep a gratitude diary

Find ways to compensate for your deficits

Use special accessories available to make living with Parkinson's easier, e.g. creatively designed kitchen tools

Exercise, it's good for you. Try relaxation techniques or yoga

Compassion is a skill and a feeling

Focus on the positive

Staying positive and reducing stress can help control your symptoms. Surround yourself with supportive friends and family. Let people know if you don't want to talk about your condition.

Plan for your future, including some necessary adjustments. Parkinson's affects each person differently. Follow your own path.

So, if you get something from the above, let me know, as it will encourage me that I have "done something for someone else". If you think it's a load of old codswallop then accept I have deficits and offer me your compassion.

Keep well, keep happy, exercise, socialise and keep those Brain Cells ticking over.

**Merry Christmas!**

David

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