



0:00: Hey, it's your friend Sarah, and welcome, welcome to Stories of Survival in the Modern Age.

0:15: Bring me sunshine!

0:17: Well, I reckon most of us, of a certain age, will hear those words and automatically picture Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise skipping across our TV screens.

0:29: Well, yesterday, Brett and I found ourselves standing on the beach in Morecambe, dressed in black in 80 something degrees sun with almost 100 strangers, all of us poised in Eric Morecambe's famous skipping pose.

0:47: If somebody had told me a year ago, that's how I'd be spending a weekday in July, during the UK's 3rd

heatwave, I probably would have laughed.

0:58: And yet what happened over the next couple of hours left me thinking about something far bigger, far bigger than the Erics and that song.

1:09: That's right, it left me thinking about what it really means to bring sunshine.

1:15: Let me paint you a picture.

1:17: A couple of weeks ago, maybe about a month, on Facebook, I spotted a post from Morecambe Town Council to say that they were looking for 100 people to take part in a large scale performance art tribute, skipping out onto the bay, creating a joyful and unforgettable piece of imagery creating Morecambe's famous son.

1:40: Well, I thought that's how they'd like fun, so I signed Brett and I up, and when we got there, it already looked a lot of fun.

1:49: I saw there was a couple of chaps dressed in tails, top hat and tails, and police officers were there ready to join in.

1:57: There was even a lady wearing a t-shirt that caught my eye.

2:02: It said kindness changes everything.

2:05: People were leaning over the railings as we started to form, and people on balconies in the Midland Hotel were, leaning over and watching as well, clapping and cheering us along.

2:18: And it struck me that nobody, nobody seemed to be in a bad mood.

2:24: We were strangers, yet everyone seemed lighter.

2:28: People chatted as if they'd known one another for years.

2:31: There was no awkwardness, no rush, no expectation, no, just one.

2:36: And if you've ever watched Morecambe and Wise, you'll instantly picture, I'm sure, the ending of their shows, the music, the smiles, and the skipping.

2:45: I would sing it, but I'm not going to inflict that on you.

2:48: It was sheer joy.

2:50: And you know what?

2:51: That's exactly what we created.

2:54: Individually, none of us were the story, and yet together we were there to create one.

3:01: I lost count of the number of times I heard people laughing and shouting out, I'm playing all the right notes, while everybody else shouted back, but not necessarily in the right order, and every single time people around them smiled.

3:15: It wasn't just a catchphrase, you see, it was a shared memory, and it reminded me that laughter has this extraordinary ability to connect people who have never met before.

3:28: It also made me wonder whether Eric Moycombe's greatest gift wasn't simply comedy.

3:35: Perhaps it was permission, permission to be a little silly, permission not to take ourselves quite so seriously, permission to laugh, even, even when life isn't perfect.

3:49: Standing on that beach doing our dined us not to wobble as we attempted to balance on one leg, I can assure you that none of us looked particularly elegant.

3:59: In fact, I'm fairly certain we all looked a little silly.

4:03: And that was entirely the point, right.

4:05: How often as adults do we give ourselves permission to look a little silly?

4:11: Not very often.

4:12: And yet yesterday 100 people did exactly that, and every single one of us, I'm sure, came away smiling.

4:20: I know we certainly did.

4:23: And later as we headed home I couldn't stop thinking about the folks around me quoting some of Morcambe and Wise's infamous lines.

4:31: I found myself smiling again in part because of the lines, yes, but also.

4:38: Because for a little while, I was back in my childhood.

4:42: I could almost hear my dad laughing.

4:44: In fact, I said to Brett, He was looking down on us for sure, you know, he would knock his glasses off center.

4:50: He would do the paper bag trick, those familiar moments in front of the television, the Christmas specials, the simple pleasure of watching something together.

5:00: It all came flooding back.

5:03: I even looked up at the heavens and shouted, Did you enjoy that, Dad?

5:08: And I realized that it wasn't simply about celebrating a comedian.

5:13: It was about remembering the people we'd shared moments with.

5:18: It made me stop and ask myself a simple question, what does it really mean to bring sunshine?

5:25: If you remember, on last week's podcast, Nic spoke eloquently and beautifully about joy.

5:32: Joy isn't found in perfect circumstances.

5:36: It's the joy that's found in gratitude, in perspective, and in connection.

5:42: And well yesterday was a living example of exactly that strangers giving up part of their day, not because we were being paid and not because we were looking for social media followers.

5:55: Nobody was competing.

5:58: We simply turned up because one man's legacy had made our lives brighter, and how extraordinary is that.

6:06: More than 40 years after Eric Morcambe passed away, people are still, still smiling because he lived.

6:15: Which led me to another thought.

6:18: When people think about us, what will they remember?

6:22: I can assure it probably will not be our job titles, or our income, or what we look like on a certain day.

6:30: And yes, note to self, Sarah, it probably will not be how busy we were.

6:37: Will they remember that they laughed more because we were around, that they felt seen or encouraged, safer, perhaps kinder, more hopeful.

6:49: And perhaps that's what bringing sunshine really looks like.

6:54: I can tell you there was something beautifully symbolic about standing on Morecambe Bay, a place where the tides constantly change the landscape.

7:04: One moment everything looks different, then the water comes in and transforms it all over again, and it can be a dangerous place too, as we know from, from news events over the years.

7:16: And life can feel like that too, right?

7:20: Some seasons feel bright, and others feel heavy.

7:25: Some of you listening today may be walking through one of those heavy seasons right now.

7:31: Perhaps you're grieving, overwhelmed, sad, or even wondering where your own sunshine has gone.

7:39: Yesterday, that reminded me that even on an ordinary day, we can still become somebody else's light.

7:48: Sometimes that's simply a smile, a kind word.

7:52: Perhaps it's a text message to check in with a friend or a loved one or a family member.

7:57: It's holding the door open for somebody.

8:00: It's listening.

8:01: It's being fully present.

8:04: None of those things change the world, though they can completely change somebody's world.

8:11: One of the things I loved most about the day was that no single person could create the final image which at the time of recording we've not yet seen.

8:22: It only worked because everybody showed up.

8:26: And again, isn't that true of life?

8:29: Don't we often underestimate our contribution because it feels small?

8:34: Yet small acts multiplied by many or many people, become something special.

8:42: Like communities, like friendships, like families, just like hope.

8:48: Maya Angelou once wrote, people will forget what you said.

8:52: People will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

8:59: And yesterday a beach full of strangers reminded me just how true those words really are.

9:06: Perhaps our greatest legacy isn't what we achieve, it's how we leave people feeling.

9:12: So today I'd like to leave you with one simple question.

9:17: Who needs you to bring a little sunshine into their life this week?

9:22: Not in some huge dramatic way.

9:25: Just a small act.

9:27: One conversation.

9:29: One encouraging message.

9:31: One unexpected kindness.

9:34: Because we never really know, do we, what somebody else is carrying.

9:39: Eric Morkan made and still makes millions of people laugh, and I get that most of us, we're not going to do that, though every single one of us does have the ability to leave one person feeling just a little lighter than they did before, and perhaps, perhaps, guys, that is enough.

10:01: And so, thanks for listening, and if today's episode made you think of someone who has brought sunshine into your life, why not tell them?

10:11: I have a feeling none of us hear those words nearly often enough.

10:17: Thanks for trusting me and thank you for sharing this episode with people you care about.

10:22: And when you come back, I'll be here, ready to meet you where you are.

10:27: So as usual, until next time, stay safe, be well, and of course, be your own definition of amazing.

10:35: And as an add-on, wherever life takes you this week, see if you can leave just a little more sunshine than you found.

END