

## Smile for the Debrief

### Time for Some Clarity

We hope the last research debrief you were in made you smile or even laugh. If it didn't then we believe it was unlikely to have been a very good debrief.

Research debriefs are rarely known for rip-roaring hilarity and sadly we can't promise that either, particularly in these drab days of January. They are a serious business, dealing with issues and ideas that can have a significant impact on organisations and people's lives. But research is about looking at life and behaviour and that should make you smile.

#### **Always See the Ridiculous**

Often comedy is described as tragedy at a distance. Life can be very much the same; from a distance it can be seen as ridiculous. Or at least it is not entirely rational. In the UK people are often keenly aware of this.

Whilst they want to be taken seriously, irony isn't lost on them. They will look on life and their lives with a wry detachment. They will tell stories against themselves. They will even laugh at themselves for what they do or have done.

Only Britain would have had Eric Idle singing 'Always Look on the Bright Side of Life' at the Olympics opening ceremony, knowing full well that this was a country confidently laughing at itself.

#### **Humour is Human**

It's essential to see and respond to the humour in situations, because often that is where the understanding and insight is. It's where people in this country are most human and disarming.

To do that well you have to see the ridiculous in yourself and your situation. Take yourself too seriously and you risk missing the point.

So the next time you are sitting in that research debrief, we very much hope it makes you smile, or even laugh. Not because you are laughing at people, but because there is that spark of recognition or surprise at life and the way we all live it.

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