



## Media Information - Speech by Janine Barelds, 24 March 2007

**Good morning everyone!**

My name is Janine Barelds and I speak today as a clinical nurse in palliative care. I am working for the Royal District Nursing Service and also as a psychotherapist in private practice.

Today I speak to you more so as a fellow traveller as we all journey through life.

Why are we all looking for examples, mentors or role models all through our lives? Because we are often unsure of our own innate ability to guide ourselves. Our life journey can at times seem more of an obstacle course, can't it?

Most of us are working in environments where we are increasingly asked to make up our own minds and to look after ourselves. We have nowadays less middle management and fewer teamleaders or bosses looking over our shoulders. Good, we may think ...!

Yet it also means that we are more and more thrown back onto our own inner resources. We have to rely on our own ability to make decisions about what is correct or what is not correct. In work environments we have to do regular self assessments, do self appraisals and undertake self directed learning. But where does this self hold onto when seeking direction?

In my work I deal with issues around death and dying. I have the privilege to see individual people grapple with the meaning and purpose of their life. And I regularly observe people questioning themselves and question the values they have lived by. I promise myself not to leave that query unanswered for too long!

And that is where the human values we walked for today are the sign-posts that support my journey through life.

When I feel tempted to do the wrong thing I choose fall back on these basic human values of Love, Truth, Peace, Right Conduct and Non-violence. These values have become an anchor for me!

At times, life can be so complex that I am confused between what is wrong and what is right! So, I try to solve it by asking myself 'What is the path of least suffering here?' This becomes then an active practice of compassion, a sub-value of Love.

We are of course through the media bombarded with all types of value statements, sometimes blatant but often subtle.

Some examples of that are:

- economic rationalism [often greed]
- survival of the fittest
- giving in to our desires.

From this you can see that everything is value laden, everything has a value attached. I have given up the idea that there is such a thing as neutrality! Haven't you?

In times of extreme personal trouble and challenges, we are often put to the test. We may then find that we are able to do extraordinary things. Such crises can put us in touch with the deeper meaning of why we are alive.

A mother of a child dying from cancer developed the courage to walk through the desert with a group of her friends. They called it 'The Mum Walk' and it was a fundraiser for cancer research.

Today is not about raising funds. The National Walk for Values is to invest in our own life by reflecting on what the values mean as the signposts along the universal journey of life. We don't walk to protest, we walk to inspire and have a feeling of togetherness.

Just like Mother Teresa, she was not willing to attend a protest rally against war but she was happy to come to a peace rally!

The same goes for all of us here today, we want to go forward with goodness and direction towards love and harmony.

As the Chinese proverb says: **Don't curse the darkness, but light a candle!**