

# Leo's apology to mother for dead daughter error

TAOISEACH Leo Varadkar has personally apologised to the mother of an Irish woman who was murdered in India, after his department was reluctant to assist because they thought she was British.

Andrea Brannigan and her daughter Jolene met Mr Varadkar last night at the Bishop's Gate Hotel in Derry.

Mr Varadkar described the meeting as 'constructive' and said the Department of Foreign Affairs is assisting the family.

Danielle McLaughlin, 28, from Bunrana in Co. Donegal, was found dead in a secluded spot in Canacona, an area of Goa popular with holidaymakers, in March last year. Her mother

By **Rebecca Black**

had requested a meeting with Mr Varadkar to discuss how families could be better supported when a loved one dies abroad.

But Ms Brannigan said she was told by Government officials that it was 'probably not worthwhile' as her daughter was not an Irish citizen.

The distraught mother was advised to contact British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt.

In a statement, the Department of the Taoiseach said officials 'incorrectly concluded' that Ms McLaughlin was a British citizen as Ms Brannigan said she was travelling on a UK

passport. They apologised to the family over the matter.

Speaking after the meeting yesterday, Mr Varadkar said: 'I had a very helpful and constructive meeting with Ms Brannigan and her daughter Jolene. I offered my condolences on Danielle's tragic death. I also apologised for the error my department made.'

'Ms Brannigan gave me several examples of how the Government could better assist her and other families in similarly difficult circumstances.'

'I agreed to follow up on these matters and a contact person has been assigned to her in the Department of Foreign Affairs.'

# Dr Mark Dooley



## MORAL MATTERS

# You are what you think... so avoid poison of negativity

**I**T has become something of cliché to say: 'You are what you think.' But isn't that precisely the nature of a cliché, that it contains a core of truth? And who can deny that reality is essentially shaped by our thoughts?

That's right: the way you think directly influences the way you experience the world. You have a stream of negative thoughts driven by anger, sadness or foreboding. Not only will everyone around you be affected by these thoughts, but the world itself will appear threatening, unkind and inhospitable.

Worse still, such thoughts will have a negative impact on the body. You may not be able to touch a thought, but its effects are apparent everywhere. The artist thinks of his dead mother and produces a painting rich with heartfelt emotion.

Likewise, when your thoughts are full of pain, anguish or fear, they will manifest in pain, anguish and fear. People can, quite literally, worry themselves to death. The tortured thought very often translates into a tortured body.

I would even go so far as to say that negative thoughts are poison. Fill your mind with them and, sooner or later, they will pollute your bloodstream. Some of the worst diseases have their source in black thinking.

Children are particularly threatened by this poison. They hear bad news or watch something dark and their little minds become deeply troubled. What they ingest through the eyes can release deadly toxins in mind and heart.

Put something bad into a tender mind and it is almost impossible to get it out again. One image can lead to a lifetime of tormenting thoughts. And when a mind is that tormented, a person's health must inevitably suffer.

What you think is what you are. That is why you must let the sun shine in your mind. You must draw aside the drapes and let the light in.

It is true that the world is full of hardship, despair and suffering. Some will say that this is reality and we should not shy away from it. But how can we help change the world unless we - you and me - bring peace and joy into the midst of pain.

Wherever there are negative

thoughts, there is pain and misery. Wherever there are positive thoughts, there is health, beauty and kindness. There is happiness that heals both body and mind.

The world of the positive person is bright and fresh. Good thoughts have created a reality that is life-giving and wholesome. In this light, the toxins of negative thinking cannot survive.

None of us can hope to change the world overnight. All we can do is try to change our own little patch of earth. That means letting the sun shine on all who live and surround you.

We tend to think it will be a beautiful day if the sun shines outside. But we all know that even if it is a summer scorcher, our world can still be very black. A really beautiful day is one where the sun shines inside.

The rain may pour, and the winds may howl, but, if you let the sun shine from within, it shall be a glorious day.

Yes, the storm clouds may gather in the mind, but, so long as you continue to look on the bright side, they will soon disperse.

**F**OR that is the power of positive thoughts: they bring happiness, healing and harmony to all who bask in their glow.

I know a man who is suffering with a serious disease. Many of us, were we in a similar plight, would simply succumb to our suffering. He, however, is living life to the optimum.

To be in his company is to be filled with joy. He smiles and laughs and lifts people's spirits to the stars. He is a radiant source of sun and light.

Be like that and watch how your circumstances change. Where there was hatred, you will find love. Where there was despair, you will find hope. And where there was sadness, you will savour joy.

You are what you think because the thoughts of a single person can make or break a life. If we choose to dwell in the dark, we risk the health and happiness of those we love most. Our world becomes a place where the sun never shines.

But if we opt to think in love and peace, our homes will become sanctuaries of healing and sunlight.

From a beautiful mind will flow a beautiful life.

—mark.dooley@daily@mail.ie—

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