saying yes to life

'll explain to you later how and why I changed. If you are of the same generation as me, you know that we are not condemned to be affected by the same evils all our lives. If you're younger, I want to tell you that some of the things that cause you anxiety are up to you, alongside the perception you have of them. You can free yourself from some of the evils that afflict you in spite of yourself; just as a sky full of lightning is frightening to those who fears the wrath of God, a sky which meanwhile has no effect on the one who knows it's only a natural phenomenon.

The little boss only has power over the one who takes him seriously. Once you understand that this contemptuous person is acting out of a need to dominate, to reassure the scared child inside him or her, you can take it more lightly. It's easier to say than done, I realise.

When you have identified what it is that arouses discomfort in you, and while seeking to be less troubled by what is affecting you, and simultaneously aspiring after all to be more at peace, only then you will have good reason to seek to correct yourself. It is not easy; it is a path on which you progress slowly. Every action has an effect, so you have a chance of succeeding if you try hard enough and don't give up. For me, it works and I still persevere. I have not reached the end of the road.

As a teenager, I was ashamed of my mother, who talked to everyone, as if... as if *what*? I remember that in the supermarket, she would pick on people who were nearby, which made me feel uncomfortable. I didn't understand why she did that. Today, I understand her all the more because I act the same way, but she is no longer there to discuss it with me. Something has shifted in me. I see the discomfort that my attitude can create for the man who shares my life, or for my sons. But I do what I have to do, it's not against them and I'm sorry to embarrass them sometimes.

A short while ago, I went to order a takeaway pizza. With this new feeling inside me, despite my awareness of the world's ills, I smiled at life. The music helped, I even started to sing while waiting, directing my gaze to whoever wanted to receive it. A delivery man was waiting for his errand, our eyes met, I smiled. Going back home, his scooter stopped by my side. Understanding what it was about, I asked: "What do you want me to say? I like people. I give smiles. I have a husband and children. It's free." He smiled back, said nothing and walked away.

It's no wonder that some people feel attacked when you just ask for the time or directions, or that others read a gratuitous smile as an attempt at seduction. When we are approached in the street, we are afraid that we will be asked for some change, a cigarette, or that we will be bothered in some way. That's why everyone walks without looking around. What does that mean?

Is it really better for everyone to abstain from intervening and to only take care of themselves, in a mode of *"everyone for themselves, I don't give a damn about your life and don't you dare take care of mine"*? What is the mode of relationship between people? Distrust? Prejudice? In a society that suffers from individualism, wouldn't it be better to open up to others and dare to open up?

How can we change this if not by raising our eyes, looking around, giving kind looks to those who are ready to receive them, and giving what we would like to receive? It doesn't change the world, but it already changes the world around me. That's why I'm telling you. If I have changed, you can change too. And if you are one who already knew it, you can tell it to others. It takes time, but sincerely, saying yes to life, smiling, talking, telling and listening without prejudice changes everything.

"You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time."

ANGELA DAVIS