

Delyth Evans

How to give it: Delyth Evans

The executive director of Dress for Success London says that a relatively small donation can go a long way



Interview by Mika Ross-Southall JUNE 29, 2012

Delyth Evans, 54, is executive director of Dress for Success London (www.dressforsuccess.org.uk), a charity that helps more than 1,000 women in London each year by providing clothing and training for interviews and jobs. Dress for Success will tour McArthurGlen Designer Outlets to give advice during Workwear Week, July 2-8.

How did your upbringing affect your views on charity?

I was brought up in the Welsh non-conformist chapel tradition and went to chapel every Sunday until I was 13. Looking after your neighbour was part of the message I was brought up with.

Have attitudes to philanthropy changed in recent years?

I don't know if attitudes have changed but I'm very aware of the difference between attitudes in the UK and the US. I would like to see philanthropy in the UK being more like it is in the US, where there is a real expectation that if you're doing well, you should give something back.

Why did you decide to focus your charitable work on supporting women?

I was looking for a high-impact charity in a field I cared about, so women and employment ticked two boxes. The clothes angle was a bonus. As far as I know, there are no other charities doing this kind of work in the UK, but every city should have a Dress for Success.

Is there a standout moment from your work with Dress for Success?

A few months ago, I helped a really lovely Somali woman believe in herself. She went for an interview to run a community centre and succeeded in getting the job. She rang afterwards and said I was a gift from God. No one's ever called me that before, so it's something that I've remembered.

What advice would you give to anyone who would like to set up a charity?

Go for it. If you've identified a real need that isn't being met and you have the skills and energy, you should go ahead. It's very rewarding.

What advice would you give to donors?

Work out what you care about and do your research. Working in a small charity, I know that a relatively small donation can go a long way, so it's really worth thinking about things like that.

Why do you think charities are important?

There are a lot of people out there who are living very tough lives at the moment and charities are often much better equipped to help people than the government. I see every day how a service can transform a woman's self-confidence and her chances of getting a job. I don't think that governments can do that in the same way.

What other charities do you admire?

I used to be a trustee of United Response (www.unitedresponse.org.uk), which is a fantastic charity that supports people with learning disabilities.

I really admire Barnardo's (www.barnardos.org.uk). But there are hundreds of small charities out there that are doing great work.

howtogiveit@ft.com

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