

What do I value and love in the world?

Nathan Bryon

I value really good chicken wings; everyone who knows me knows I know a good wing and I know a bad wing. But let me put my love of chicken wings to the side briefly as I could easily spend 500 words explaining my criteria for chicken wing excellence, and whilst I know some of you would love to get into that, I know some of you probably aren't meat-eaters.

On a deeper level, I really value talking to people, not just people I know, I'm talking about talking to everyone and anyone. I think having a big picky afro on my head, I just have one of those approachable faces and my girlfriend is forever saying I am making friends wherever I go. When I was younger, I hated random people talking to me because as a Londoner you just think those randoms are crazy and gonna kidnap you, but now I have gotten older I have put the fear of those fears to the side (slightly).

I'm forever meeting new people here, there and everywhere, and instead of running away from them, I hear them out and forever learn new weird, wild things. I remember this one day when I was in New York, everyone had their headphones on and this school kid, who was like 17 years old, was inviting everyone on the subway to his birthday party, but like individually asking passenger by passenger. I didn't go to his party and I

wish I had, but after that interaction I wrote a radio play about it called *Bilal's Birthday*.

I really love listening to how people construct sentences, and hearing funny weird turns of phrase. My girlfriend's mum is from Doncaster and I love some of the turns of phrase she uses, like if we have been lucky she calls us 'Jammy Dodgers', or if someone has ripped her off she will say she has been 'diddled'. I LOVE SLANG. I love how it evolves, how different areas in England have different slang; I love how it pops up in music, I love how it blends with speech, I love that for some people they hear slang and they feel isolated around it and some people hear slang and they feel right at home.

YEARS and YEARS ago I did a thing called 'The Midnight Run', created by the genius that is the writer Inua Ellams, where you go around an area at midnight doing various activities. I did a Midnight Run in Shepherd's Bush where I was born and bred. I thought I knew Bush like the back of my hand but that night I saw bits I had never seen before; I really took time to notice my surroundings. I loved that and it made me want to take time to really look at places that I take for granted, instead of running around like a headless chicken.

I LOVEEEEEEE random acts of kindness, people being nice and coming together; clapping for the NHS during the coronavirus lockdown made me well up, and you know when someone falls over on a high street, I love when everyone gathers around and helps them up. I love that these random acts of kindness extend to Bossman giving me an extra chicken wing for free in the shop – damn, I promised I wouldn't talk about them again but there you go.

Nathan Bryon

Nathan Bryon is a BAFTA-nominated writer and a *Sunday Times* best-selling author and actor, who grew up eating as much Uxbridge Road Caribbean food as his bank balance would allow. He is best known to viewers for his role as regular character Jamie in *Some Girls* and Benidorm's sunniest holiday maker, Joey Ellis. Nathan has written for critically acclaimed CBeebies' animation *Rastamouse*, BAFTA award-winning *Swashbuckle* and on all three series of BAFTA-nominated *Apple Tree House* CBeebies alongside BAFTA-winning *Gigglebiz*.

Nathan's first book *Look Up!* (June 2019) was the number 1 picture book from a debut author and illustrator in 2019, on the Sunday Times Bestseller list, and won the overall Waterstones Children's book prize in 2020. *Clean UP!*, the follow up, was published in July 2020.

Nathan co-created BAFTA-nominated comedy series *Bloods*, a series about a group of south London-based paramedics. Nathan's debut feature film, co-written with Tom Melia, *Rye Lane* will be out in cinemas in 2023.

A recording of this talk can be found at **writersmosaic.org.uk**

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