

# SATURDAY 4TH NOV 2023

*With Lavinia Donling*

TURNING BACK TIME - WINTER IS HERE

So, the clocks went back last weekend, and now we wake in the dark and go to bed in the dark (in the UK). I hate it. One of my clients increases the use of their sunbed, and another has an Ultra Violet light to help them get some 'sunshine' into their body. It certainly can bring our mood down. However, the dark nights can also bring about a different kind of excitement, warmth and nostalgia - dim lighting in pumpkins (Halloween), dark skies peppered with bright colours (Guy Fawkes night), and soft lights twinkling (Christmas trees formal switch on in town centres). Some people prefer cuddling up and smooching in the colder evenings, which might go some way to explaining why many babies arrive in the summer.



One of the fascinating things I learnt very early on as a parent, was how my children, who were born in the summer, 'caught up' academically with their peers at Easter. For a whole term, they were back in the game of being aligned, but, within a few weeks, were becoming more tired and fractious. We would all be looking forward to the long summer holidays, needing a break from the endless yo-yoing: children struggling to go to bed, giving parents a chance to unwind before they retire to bed; children worrying about school the next day; children not wishing to get up the next day, clothes not feeling right or uncomfortable; struggling to get to school on time, children forgetting food, kit, books, homework; children struggling with food becoming more fuzzy or picky; etc - it was exhausting. I am sure many parents could add to my list of what they have experienced, but it was, and still is for many, exhausting. Groundhog day is the permanent theme.



## SCHOOL CHALLENGE

One of my clients, that I recently assessed, has found school very challenging. On the one hand, the young person is determined to fly below the radar with their masking at school, in their determination to avoid being seen as different. Yet, when things go wrong, there is mixed perceptions from school about their behaviour - usually negative. Most people do not wish to be seen in a bad light, least of all young people. When you get saddled with a negative reputation, it is very difficult to shift that perception. In this young person's situation, some Teachers feel that the young person is 'choosing' to behave negatively causing disruption, even though this young person is apparently being treated as though they have ADHD. The first question I have around ADHD is 'freedom to move'? - and that was not there, not unless you class being sent outside to sit in the corridor with nothing to do or isolation with nothing to do.

Another young client and I were talking about how much nervous energy someone with ADHD has. They get very anxious if there is nothing to do or 'worry about'. You have to view ADHD as a continuous humming light - you know, the noisy ones - and if you do not fill the vacuum of noise with anything different, your mind gets a little jumpy looking for some mischief to get up to. Believe me, the mind can get up to all sorts of mischief if not guided in a constructive manner. One Mum conveyed to me how she can never sit still for any longer than 15 minutes - even when she is watching tv. She uses the adverts to do a quick polish, wash something out, load the washing machine/tumbler dryer/dishwasher - and then resumes watching tv.



She has survived really well doing this, but it is exhausting to watch from her husband's perspective as she is 'always on the go', and 'never stops'. Yet, ADHD needs the brain being kept busy and any form of physical movement helps the processing be a bit more fluent. John has long since recognised when I am in 'deep tank think mode' as I rub my fingers together. Of course, I am sure there are many other things we as ADHD individuals do. It would be great to see what kind of things we do collectively as a group.



#### MONTY'S ADVENTURE

Monty escaped last Saturday morning. Yes, the call of the pheasant was just too much for him, and he used a large tree in the garden to launch himself through the hedge and over the fence. Some 90 minutes later, wet, bedraggled and knackered, he finally let me catch up with him! This morning he woke me at 02:30, and again at 06:00 to tell me I was late getting up (hardly surprising with broken sleep). He was very eager to go out looking for pheasants. Only this time, he could not use the tree as I had put extra fencing around the tree. So then, he went to the corner of the garden where he could see there was a potential opportunity, only to find I too have been there and put extra fencing. For an English Setter, who is supposed to calm down when he turned 4yrs old (nope, I don't think so, not with his ADHD), and not as fit now that he is 6yrs old (irrelevant when it comes to his sole interest in game birds because of his Autism) - you could say we have a bit of an issue?

Have a great weekend!

*Lavinia* 