

SATURDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER 2023

With Lavinia Dowling

OVERWHELMING TRANSITIONS

Transitions are very hard sometimes, especially when neuro-diverse. Some are very short in time and repeated (e.g. leaving the house to go out) and some are more permanent (e.g. graduating/leaving school). When it is overwhelming, anxiety provoking and exhausting – it can sometimes just be too much where we might need to take a breath, a pause, or just reflect/process. John keeps reminding me that we are doing one of the top 3 most stressful activities. We are moving house! 5 cats, 4 dogs, 3 humans (adults) and 2 businesses – I won't mention how many vehicles as you will most definitely think we are bonkers or respectively Autistic.... TMW has been going for 3 years and EPS 2yrs and I need space to think, to write, to do podcasts as well as my clinics and workshops. I get tired of misplacing things in respective houses, as well as transitioning like a yo-yo where I feel permanently unsettled and John affectionately refers to me as 'the Bag lady'. It is most discombobulating for me as a neuro-diverse lady, and I need to be less so as well as manage my time in a smarter fashion. So we are moving! Processing needs time and patience. Grieving and saying goodbye needs time and space. Packing needs time and stamina. It has taken me a good few weeks to get my head around the fact that I am leaving a home that has given much healing to both Yasmin and I. Hoarding is a real issue when you decide to move after 5yrs, and realize some things have not been unpacked from the previous house of 4.5yrs, now making it 9.5yrs we have not used items. Oh dear. Yasmin has threatened to 'blow up the house' as there is just so much stuff to pack which at times has been tiring, annoying, and stressful.





Considering how many meltdowns, shutdowns, and nervous break downs we all could have had, I am actually surprised how well we are working as a team in getting things done. We all have our strengths, and our weaknesses are taken up by others strengths. John has successfully sorted the Wi-Fi in the new house already with the assurance that if there are any issues, the company will be there in 20 mins to sort! Part of the urgency in moving has been trying to get sorted before the new academic year started as it is our busiest time of the year.

BACK TO SCHOOL

This is not difficult to comprehend when young people return to school after 6 weeks off over the summer with sunshine, warmth, and no stressful demands around school. One parent advised that their child does not wet the bed in the holidays, only school nights. Another parent advised that meltdowns are considerably less with the pressure of having to wake early and homework removed - can't think why! A young person advised me today the urges around self-harming has reduced to zero over this summer holiday having left school for good six weeks ago. A new academic year means a next level, and if things have been tough the last year, without support it is probably going to feel even harder for the young person. Yet with the right support, in the right environment, it can be so different. I got sent a cheeky video of one young person who has not been downstairs for the last 3yrs - balancing on a stool strategically placed on the floor downstairs to avoid touching the floor with their feet! I will take that as success. Another young person asked their Mum their opinion showing respect, patience and consideration of a dilemma despite only being single figure age. I said to the Mum I think I need to sit in a quiet dark room in shock with their progress! Another young person has also shown their reasoning to consider perspectives of both Mum and I - that is success!

THE CHALLENGE OF SUCCESS

Part of the success of TMW and EPS is that the services provide hope for a better future, a better quality of life, by working in partnership in getting to grips with the issues and problem solving. All my clients know me for injecting humour in our sessions - we need humour to help us relax more and not feel so defensive about our difficulties as then we are more open minded and willing to consider change. Whilst change can be stressful, anxiety provoking, and discombobulating, it does raise hope that things might improve for the better. Whilst this is not always the case, there is always learning in the process, and these can be really empowering by helping us for the next time we face the challenge.

So, I know the question is 'where are you moving to'? Well, we considered houses in all 3 countries in the UK, and then counties from Aberdeenshire, Fife, Scottish Borders, Sunderland, Cumbria, Yorkshire Dales, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and Somerset. We even considered where the F1 teams were based- honestly - and really tried to search the main trunk of the UK where we could access everywhere reasonably, but, in the end, the house chose us.



We had whittled the choices down to 150 possible houses, of which 68 were real possibilities, of which we were able to view 8, of which the 7th house we were encouraged to view when we enquired about the 6th house. It was the wild card, but it was perfect for ALL our needs and is 10 mins from the A1(M), literally just on the border of Leicestershire. This means Yasmin has greater flexibility with her freelancing work, and we can see more clients without having a 2hr journey to get off the island. Whilst we will all be sad to be leaving Anglesey, we know this move will be a new exciting and necessary chapter for each of us and the businesses.

Have a great weekend!

Lavinia