

FRIDAY 20TH MAY 2023

With Lavinia Donling

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

This week was Mental Health awareness week, which is rather apt following on from PDA last week being all about anxiety, and GCSEs starting on the Tuesday. Exams do not define us, even though people will infer. Nor do jobs define you, despite often adults asking within 2 minutes of meeting one another for the first time, 'what do you do for a job?' Yet, both can have a very negative impact on our mental health.



ARCHIEVING A DREAM

I was watching an old series program last night about people renovating old commercial buildings into homes, but last night a couple demolished everything right down to the 12 acre apple orchard! But their dream was to have no mortgage, live outside of the city, and have their horses living on the land rather than working 12 hr shifts in a factory, working opposite shifts to their partner, and not having a quality family life. Achieving their dream was incredibly successful, but they were not mortgage free, or able to give up their factory job, although they were able to live in a beautiful home with lots of space with plans to be self sufficient on their land within the next 5 years. Why put yourself through all of this? Because doing it the original way was just too much on the whole family's mental health. I was wondering if the whole family was neuro-diverse with PDA throughout it all.....



SOME CHANGES

You may have noticed some changes happening for TMW and EPS. We have Yasmin to thank for all the visuals, and John working behind the scenes with training and implementing things, with fortnightly discussions with Charlotte, our Accountant (my head shrink), and, of course, my monthly meet ups with the NEDs.



I used to think, many moons ago, that you needed a Business plan if you wanted a business loan with the bank. Katy Fawcett was extremely kind and generous in helping me all through last summer and autumn get the Business Plan together, and now the NEDs are going through this with a fine toothcomb. It is more like an EHCP/IEP, if I am honest, as it is a living document that has evolved with TMW needs, and needs regular reviews. As we have evolved, there are many discussions with Charlotte, and then between John and Yasmin. We are approaching EPS 2nd birthday, and TMW's 3rd Birthday. It is paying off though as we now have an online shop! This is incredibly exciting, especially with Yasmin's art work - that college course is really paying off!

NOMINATION ALERT!

Last Friday an email came through telling me I had been nominated for Innovative Entrepreneur for small business award! I remember a Professor from a London University telling me in 2016 that out of Entrepreneurs, Mental Health was less than 0.1%!!! And this Thursday I received an email informing I have been shortlisted for the national Learning Disability and Autism Nurse 2023 award! Wow! That is simply awesome! But nominations do not come without some serious hard graft, and I know how much hard work I put in every day, never mind every week. But so do many of our parents with SEN children. Whilst the awards are lovely, well, actually, pretty awesome, some of the accomplishments are pretty awesome and are perhaps not as newsworthy, but, all add up to big news. For example, a parent telling me their child is now able to spray their floor despite their OCD (this is quite huge), another parent not stammering their way through the Initial Screening because they felt more relaxed with me, a young person having a meltdown but able to talk about how it had come about with their parents several hours later after reflecting on it overnight). Nobody sees the daily hard work, the toil, the upsets and the frustration, but when it finally works, there it is. What people forget is how long it took to get there. In the early days, my NEDs used to say, "Keep going" and we have a picture of just that.

VINTAGE RALLY - MONA

Last night, John and I were setting up at the Vintage Rally at the Mona showground on the Isle of Anglesey. An exhibitor was eyeing Hermes, the van, and then came over to ask 'excuse me' - brief story of knowing their child was different from the others in the first six months, Health Visitors dismissing, school dismissing, but talking about negative behaviour. At the end, she said, "I have learnt more in the last 10 minutes than the last 6yrs". So, if you live on the island or holidaying on the north Wales coast, come and have a great day out watching the Vintage Rally and see us whilst you are there!

Have a lovely weekend!