

# SATURDAY 12TH AUGUST 2023

*With Lavinia Ponting*

## CELEBRATE LEO'S!

We are into August! It is Yasmin's, our Social Media Manager, Birthday this weekend. Whilst last year was a big birthday, this year has snuck up on her and she feels 'old' apparently. It does not appear to have reduced her Birthday gift list though. Yasmin, as you may have read, has discovered the art of growing plants out of avocado seeds! It is most impressive, and, like most



Autistic individuals, she is in a new creative phase and quite obsessed with ordering all things around gardening. Yasmin has worked extensively throughout for TMW and EPS and we are forever grateful for all her input across all our social media. So a huge thank you, Yasmin, for all your input. Have a lovely Birthday weekend from all of us at TMW family!

## BACK TO SCHOOL SEASON

The new academic year starts next week for Scotland. One young person told me he waits for his Mum to announce the day he is due to return back to school, and never asks when so that he does not have to worry. Another young person who is not attending school, due to them being in recovery with their mental health, feels stressed that they are not returning, but still feels 'weird' for not attending school like their peers. Whilst yet another young person is still making noises to their parents about the possibility to return to school, but yet has to find their rhythm in order to start repairing with their mental health. I remember Yasmin being at a distinct disadvantage with her years at school. Being the youngest in every school year, she was always behind her peers trying to catch up, and would finally catch up around Easter but then only have a few weeks before starting the whole painful process again. Whilst some are dreading returning to school, others have missed it dreadfully for the loss of structure and connections with their friends. It does not necessarily mean they love school, but rather the extras that the school environment provides. We should also remember that for some young people the summer holidays are the longest holidays when they feel hungry not being able to have free school meals.



One of the things that has struck me over the last few days is what TMW and EPS collectively offer, whether it is through therapy for the client or the Expert Parent program. It gives the client time to explore, unpick and experiment with allowance for observations, discussion and change. Perhaps what is so sad is that we are so busy with our lives, all too often we are on automatic pilot and do not consider our thoughts and feelings in any real depth. Action Research is a type of methodology and a very useful and interesting one that I use extensively with my parents when they are open to recording what they have observed. Some like doing journals, other like taking photographs, or putting it on their calendars. Action Research is very much about making observations, but then experimenting and then refining several times repeatedly to then have something firmly defined.

Personally I love it as it is not used often enough, but is such a simple formula once you get the hang of it. This week I have had quite a few of my EPP sessions and my parents have come to learn about my quirky sense of humour and take on things that allow them to shift their lens to support their child in a more conducive way to the

family. Learning to be a great parent to an Autistic child is not easy, something I was reminded by reading about the success of 'Super Nanny' who often resorted to having her charges sitting on the 'naughty step', no doubt ABA therapy following something similar, which is not conducive to many of our young people. Humour is the biggest tonic, both for parents who seek reassurance they are doing it right despite many others protesting they are not doing it the 'traditional way'. Humour and communication is the perfect blend treating our children with respect, compassion and consideration role modelling this through and through.

Action Research allows us to consider what we do and why, and then inviting us to stretch ourselves with experimenting and new learning in a hybrid fashion of tweaking what we already do well.

Have a great weekend everyone!

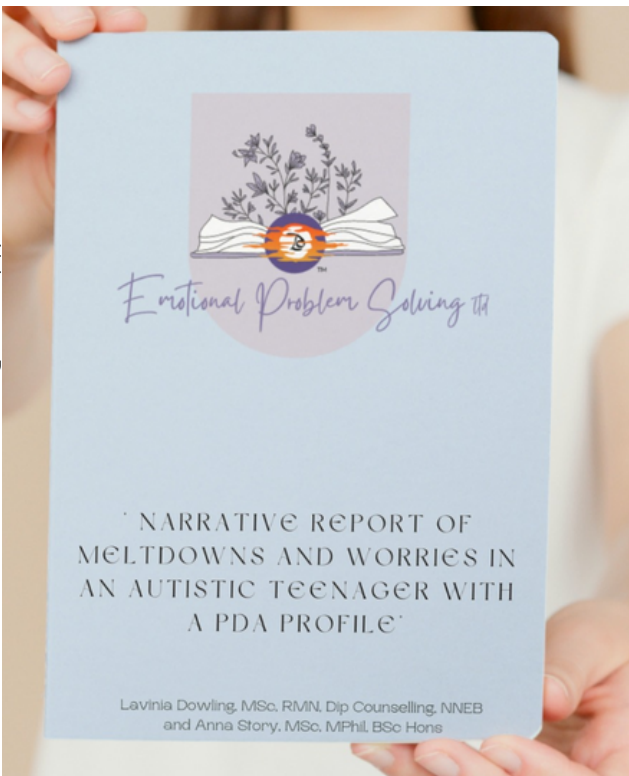
Lavinia

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