

SATURDAY 23RD SEPT 2023

With Lavinia Donling

BUSINESS WITH A HINT OF PLEASURE

The last 2 weeks have been very busy and mixed with 'business and pleasure', although I cannot say that all the pleasure has been pleasurable. This is because moving house is very stressful, and to neuro-diverse hoarders (of which there are three of us), we appear to have hoarded a LOT of stuff - one box had not been unpacked since the last house move 2yrs ago, and another had not been unpacked since 5yrs ago - it was the very last box to leave the wood shed and had been a glass plate to go on a unit that I had been hunting for a good couple of years and resigned myself to being lost. There have been many incidents of feeling overwhelmed, let down, distressed, meltdowns, and then other moments of the exact opposite. Life teaches us that moments pass, and to try not to react, or, better still, seek solace from another who is not going through that wretched moment you

are. Sometimes, it is not so obvious why we are reacting, but we are aware that the feelings are deeply uncomfortable. For those of us who struggle with Interoception, this can be very intimidating, and something that can make us quite fearful. Whilst some people leave everything to the removal people to pack, move and unpack with other agencies coming into clean, I have only done that once. Whilst the service was very good, it was costly and I could not find things as I did not know what had been packed in what box as nothing was labeled. Time and patience is needed with moving, as well as great planning.



Whilst we have been moving in stages – in and around the big move 10 days ago, I have been grounded by my clients needs. Thank goodness for my clients who have provided me with a sense of normality in helping address their needs. Over the last fortnight, I have been screening parents of our ND children, and this has been particularly fascinating. You may remember I wrote a journal about the study of a family having completed the parents screening – it makes fascinating read – and can be purchased through our EPS Ltd site. Our parents need as much help as the young people sometimes, because they often do not know why they react the way they do, or indeed that they are doing something repeatedly because of their challenges in childhood. One parent wondered why they struggled to be heard with their directives, only for us to unpick that they make a statement and quickly follow that up with extra words that reduces the impact of the directive as unimportant. Another parent wondered why they had such a need to be a people pleaser and what steps they took, till in the end it broke them. Instead, they used maladaptive addictive coping mechanisms to help them cope, but which brought further distress to themselves and their family. Parents need care too, and I am very mindful of this. We need to guide our parents to care for themselves, especially our parents who are caring for poorly children, as they are role modeling all the while how to look after yourself. Sometimes, it is very difficult to look after ourselves, especially if we are unaware of what actions we do which might be harming us further. Yet, I see the parents under my care really beginning to flourish as they engage with understanding themselves better – having the patience, to take the time, to be able to see and hear how they can tweak their skill set to look after themselves and their children better is just fabulous to witness.



LOOK BACK AT '93

Thirty years ago, in September 1993, I started my mental health nursing. My Mum stated that it was pointless me doing the course, as I would never pass the exams. My Dad stated it was pointless me doing the course, as I would never stick it out. I will never know if what they said made me more determined to prove them wrong, or whether they said it having the knowledge it would push me to prove them wrong. What I do know, was that I fell head long into a deeply evolving career that has to date covered the last three decades and simply has not diminished.

Many of my peers have either left nursing to different careers, retired, or burnt out just plodding their way to retirement. My energy and enthusiasm has not waned, as I finally am doing what I wish to do in serving my community. My career has seen me return to university several times with differing courses as well as two further degrees at Masters and Doctorate levels. When I was clearing and cleaning my Mum's house 2yrs ago, John and I came across a copy of my Masters dissertation, which was weird to see given all her negativity. Our young people need to know that their life role is to not fit into society's demands and expectations, but, rather, find their niche, something they LOVE doing where it does not feel arduous. Doing something they love will entice them to keep trying, even when they face the challenges, and can carve out a career for a life time. This will help with their self-esteem, confidence and self-worth, which results in positive mental health. My new clinic room is enticing me with a view of a church, and warm coloured brick buildings along with pretty gardens. It is four times bigger, than my last office which had an amazing view over the Holyhead coastline. However, the size allows me to have my clinic desk, and my research desk in one space along with all my books and journals! So, exciting times ahead. Change is happening, having evolved and prepares us for the next three years.

N E D ' S M E E T I N G

Next month is October and our annual NEDs meeting to consider plans for the next year, which comes at a rather apt time with moving house to be in the centre of the UK. Next week, Sergeant Victoria Pimm and I will be announcing details about our first major fundraising event (so exciting) - at a very grand location.

Have a great weekend everyone!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lavinia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping initial 'L'.