

## Relational Inclusion blog #13 – The Red Mist

This week I want to talk about what we are doing to ourselves - as grown-ups, as adults, as people who are supposedly social animals and yet act in increasingly anti-social ways. More specifically I want to talk about roads and cars and the impact the traffic of life seems to have upon us as human beings.

One morning, last week, I was driving to work. I was in that auto-pilot kind of semi-dream, I-do-this-journey-every-day state. I am at a point where the road reduces from three lanes to two, with the outer lane filtering into the middle lane. I have to be honest, I wasn't particularly taking much notice, trundling along in fairly slow-moving traffic.

I let the car in front of me shuffle in and then notice there's a car next to me trying also to squeeze in. In truth I could have just let them in as well but isn't there a sort of unwritten rule where everyone let's one car in? If we stop to let every car in, we'd never move and the cars behind would get impatient. My internal dialogue said something like: I've let one car in, you're in a lane that soon isn't a lane, you chose to be in that lane knowing this so you can come in after me.

Then I'm jolted out of my autopilot daydream as the driver next to me (the one trying to squeeze in) starts beeping and shouting and gesturing and then does that *crazy speed up in slow moving traffic* thing that cross people do when the red mist has descended and forces his way into a space that isn't actually there.

Now my nervous system starts to kick in - I can feel the polyvagal system kick in - ready for fight - blood pumping heart pounding. I half notice irony of the metaphor I use to explain the polyvagal theory about a car shifting through its gears and then I think - what on earth am I doing?

It's 8.30 in the morning. I don't know this now very angry man - why am I even bothered?

To be fair I also, at that point, chose to blow him a kiss. I guess this was just a little bit passive aggressive - it resulted in more furious gesturing and finger signals from him but made me smile and actually stopped me getting angry and shouting – a bit of self-regulation which maybe needs just a little more work.

But why on earth would any of this make me or him angry. We're both in our cars, presumably on the way to work. I certainly don't want to get into a fight with anyone, I'm not a racing driver and the traffic wasn't particularly moving anyway.

What has happened to us? Why are we so quick to fire over absolutely nothing? And, if we can helicopter ourselves above the situation and look down – isn't it all a bit ridiculous? To quote my new favourite old prose poem:



- 1) *Whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy. (Desiderata)*

This week's theme is about keeping the red mist at bay.

- 2) *It's simple:*

*Treat yourself well,  
While not harming others*

*Treat others well,  
While not harming yourself. (artofpoets.com)*

- 3) *The world around you is beautiful when the world within you is peaceful. (unknown)*
- 4) *What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make. (Jane Goodall)*

I came across this somewhere and thought it was a lovely grounding exercise. Definitely worth a go:



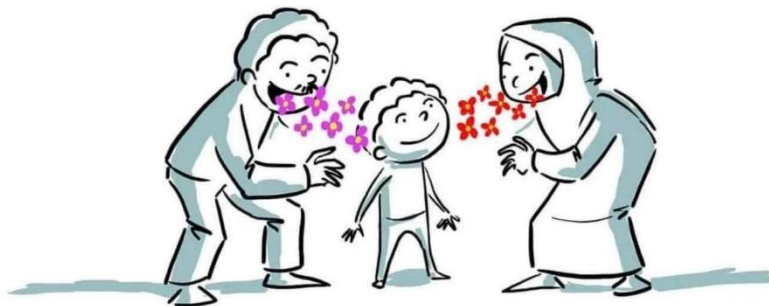


My two images to print out and stick on your wall this week are:



(Maybe blowing kisses to angry drivers doesn't count)

And finally – it's always about the children – and **all** the children are **our** children:



My recommended article this week is about belonging:

[https://open.substack.com/pub/thebelongingcollective/p/belonging-is-the-answer-whats-your?utm\\_campaign=post&utm\\_medium=web](https://open.substack.com/pub/thebelongingcollective/p/belonging-is-the-answer-whats-your?utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web)

I have two ideas moving forward. The first is to move this to Substack – if you have a strong feeling on this either way please let me know – otherwise next week's will be a Substack trial.

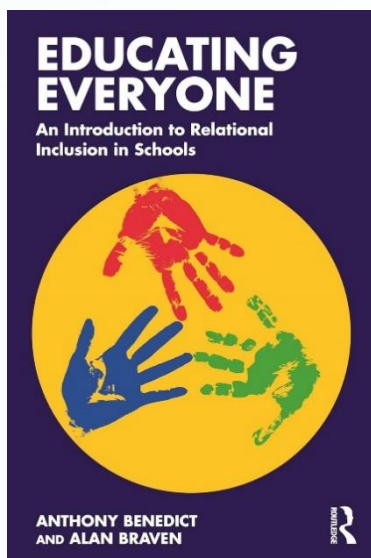
The second is to introduce a book corner. I thought it might be useful if we shared all things Relational Inclusion – so if you've read a good book or article and think people would benefit from reading it, send me a quick outline, who might enjoy it etc and I can add it each week.

If you find the Relational Inclusion blog useful, feel free to share with your networks.

If you would like adding to the mailing list please email Hannah:

[h.holt@ambitioncommunity.uk](mailto:h.holt@ambitioncommunity.uk)

Our book, *Educating Everyone: An Introduction to relational Inclusion in Schools* is out now and you must buy it and tell everyone else to buy it. It is available pretty much everywhere that sells books, or you can click below:



Thanks for reading

Anthony Benedict

CEO Ambition Community Trust