

Relational Inclusion blog #: 14 What We See

By Friday morning, there had been no incidents of road rage, my children hadn't particularly dysregulated and, other than the 4-year-old next door who always has her shoes on the wrong feet (which might be one for the future), I had nothing to write about.

And then, of course, it happened. It was 7.30 am (we need to leave the house by 7.40) and I couldn't find my little boy's shoes. I looked EVERYWHERE. Now in times of stress and pressure (as far as finding things our children have lost are concerned) my wife and I seem to have slipped into playing the blame game (isn't that interesting? We know about blame and shame). Now this works just fine for me when things have gone missing on her watch - but this, it seems, had happened on my watch. Not good.

I tried the 'there's a prize for anyone who finds his shoes' angle. This motivated the girls, but the shoes remained lost. I dug out his old shoes which don't fit, as my wife announced, unhelpfully, that *his shoes do need finding* - closely followed by, "I have to go to work now." My sympathetic nervous system started to growling - fight flight was ready to kick in - I wanted to say, "Well you can't go to work until we've found his shoes!" But of course that wouldn't be fair.

Then my middle daughter said she remembered seeing them outside. I look outside - nothing. And then again in the usual hiding places. Nothing. But as I walked back up the garden, a flash of red caught my eye. There was one of his shoes hanging in a bush.

I walked back in. "I've found one," I announced, "In a bush."

"Oh yes. I remember now." My middle daughter stated. "We were playing shoe bombs. I know where the other is."

We found the second shoe in the apple tree. My wife explained to my daughter how *shoe bombs* probably isn't the best game to play. (I'm not sure why she hadn't left for work). My daughter explained it was my son's idea. My wife replied that he's four, so maybe his ideas aren't always to be acted upon.

And I practice the pause.

The *old me* would have probably argued with my wife about whose responsibility my children's shoes were. Then I'd have been cross with my children for losing the shoes, my window of tolerance would have narrowed, and we'd all have had a rubbish start to the day. The *new me* allowed a glimpse into *their* world: One of shoes becoming bombs and exploding in bushes. How wonderful.

At that point, my middle daughter appeared with my work keys and asked if she could have the tadpole keyring that hung on them. The tadpole was actually a luminous pink sperm that one of the kids at the PRU had given me after what I presume was a PSHE lesson.

I heard myself saying, "That's not a tadpole, it's a sperm," whilst thinking, "I really don't want to have this conversation at 7.35 on a Friday morning."

“Why do you want it anyway?” I asked.

“Because it’s pink!” she grinned.

And it just made me think- *what we see completely depends mainly on what we look for.*
My morning could have escalated very quickly. And I’d have lost all those lovely moments of what it is to be a child. **Relational Inclusion** really is everywhere.

Which I think links nicely to my first quote. I found this last week and it’s one that has really stayed in my mind:

- 1) *If there’s one thing our children truly need, it’s for us to **slow down** and model a lief that values presence over pressure.*

*When we stop treating urgency as a virtue, we give them permission to do the same – to **breathe**, to **rest**, to **exist** without always racing to keep up.*

*The world won’t fall apart if we **pause**. But if we don’t ... we just might. (Inside Parenting).*

My second quote I think also reflects my morning. It’s all about habits and habits are totally within our control:

- 2) *People do not decide their futures, they decide their habits and their habits decide their futures. (F.M. Alexander)*
- 3) *It’s not the feeling that’s the problem,
It’s the meaning you give to the feeling.*

Pause the story.

Tell yourself it’s okay to have a feeling or a reaction – what’s here is allowed to be here.

Find it and feel it in your physical body.

Meet yourself in that moment with compassion, your presence and curiosity.

(@theeqschool)

My print, cut out and pin to the wall images this week are:

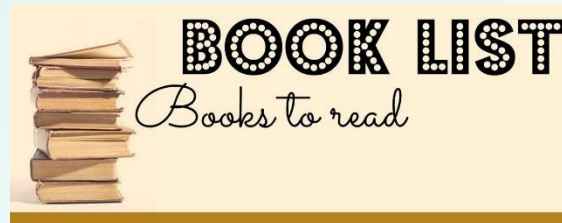


And this one really stood out for me. It had a caption, but I think it speaks volumes without:



This week's recommended read is a paper by ARC called Engaging Our Children and is about 'relational approaches', 'universal entitlement' and the 'connected system'.

<https://the-arc.org.uk/Media/Engaging%20Our%20Children.pdf>



I would recommend the book 'Poor' written by Katriona O'Sullivan.

This autobiography follows Katriona's life through poverty and trauma, and how she overcomes these barriers.

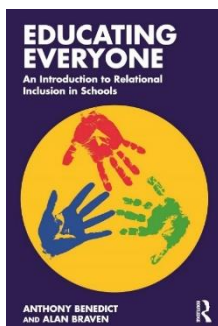
The middle of 5 children growing up in harrowing conditions, Katriona battles homelessness, drug addiction and pregnancy.

The book highlights the need for strong relationships and support systems, and shows the importance of safe, supportive environments.

A sad but fabulous read!

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

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 get it here:



Thanks for reading

Anthony Benedict

CEO Ambition Community Trust