

Relational Inclusion blog #7: Easier said than done

What I've realised, of late, is that unintentionally I can be quite grumpy. Obviously, there's a bit more to it than that. If I'm engrossed in something - something I'm reading, or something I'm working on, or something I'm struggling with, then I get totally absorbed. If someone interrupts my focus or my train of thought, I can be just a little bit snappy. I think I've probably always been like that.

There are positives to this. It means I can totally focus on the matter at hand. It means I get things done - it means I'm a 'finisher' I suppose. It's possibly part of the reason behind how I've got to where I am. Equally it means I can be difficult and awkward. For many years (if I'm truly honest, most of my life) it was always someone else's fault, after all, they had interrupted me. In essence I was blaming everyone else for my behaviour.

I suppose what I'm trying to say is - now I know how to see things differently. I didn't before - and that's the point - we are always learning. I'm still a bit rubbish at applying Relational Inclusion to myself - at *living this new way of thinking*. I keep getting it wrong. I'm more conscious of my behaviour sooner (not that I like to admit it) but it's difficult to change my ingrained habits. It would be so much easier to go back to my default - which is basically shouting, stamping and snarling.

So why are we so hard on our children? How many times do we ask children to do something and expect them to comply immediately without question - even though, for them, our requests have come totally out of the blue? As I've said many times, *children do as they see*. We must be careful what we model for them.

This YouTube clip is well worth a watch, it's called *children see children do*:

https://youtu.be/jOrGsB4qG_w?si=wC53tO8egvL-Tn_g

Relational inclusion doesn't just apply to the children we work with. It is so important that we apply and model its principles to ourselves and to everyone around us.

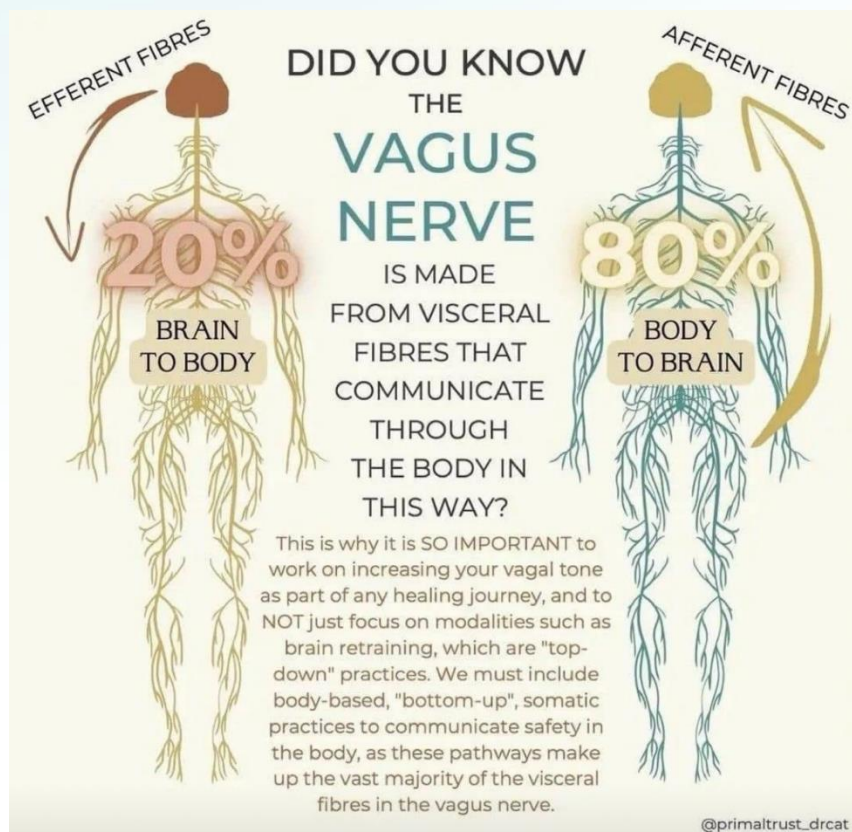
As this week's title suggests, this is often easier said than done. I've found a few quotes and pictures to hopefully put things back in perspective and maybe help us take a step back, put the brakes on and breathe.

- 1) *It's a serious thing
just to be alive
on this fresh morning
In this broken world*
Mary Oliver

I don't know where the second quote came from or who said it. It's really simple and it's good advice. It's also the hardest thing to do when we're right in the thick of it.

- 2) *Stop.*
Unclench your jaw.
Soften your brow.
Relax your shoulders.
Breathe

We live so much of our lives inside our heads. I think the image below is important. We need to remember to take care of our bodies as well.



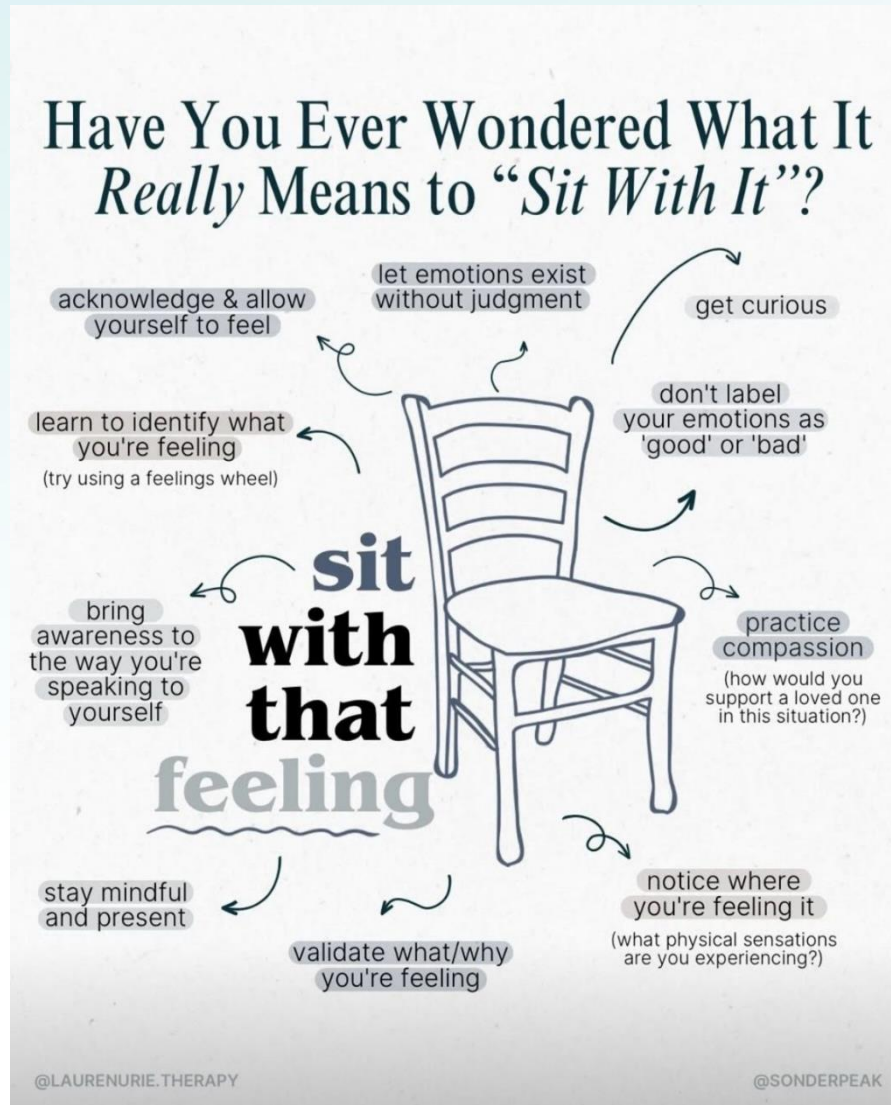
When you over think, remember this quote:

- 3) *Worrying doesn't take away tomorrow's troubles, it takes away today's peace*

whilst remembering, you're not the only one who feels like this at times:

- 4) *You would be surprised at how many times a person just sits for a minute and thinks, 'I just can't do this any more' then takes a deep breath, wipes their face and goes back to doing whatever it was that felt too much to handle.*

We spend a lot of our time thinking about so many other people and children. How much time do we give to sitting with ourselves and thinking about what that means?



And though this week it is about 'us' we must not forget our children; the big and the little ones; those who are going to shape our world and our future.

5) Respecting a child teaches them that even the smallest, most powerless, most vulnerable person is worthy of respect. And that is a lesson our world desperately needs to learn.

L.R. Knost

This week's articles highlight the reason for, and the importance of, Relational Inclusion being about a change in culture and ethos. They illustrate why this cannot be just another initiative – it's not a quick fix – and the quick fix approach can actually cause more harm.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-wellbeing-programme-findings?s=09>

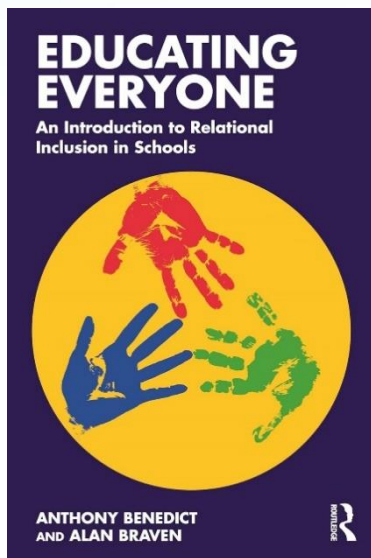
<https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/general/mental-health-in-schools-quick-wellbeing-interventions-don%27t-work?amp>

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

If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please email Hannah:

h.holt@ambitioncommunity.uk

Our book, *Educating Everyone: An Introduction to relational Inclusion in Schools* comes out in April and is available to pre-order here:



Thanks for reading

Anthony Benedict

CEO Ambition Community Trust