

Relational Inclusion blog #25: A Near Miss

This week, maybe predictably, I'm going to talk about my summer break. More specifically about a 'near miss' which happened whilst I was on holiday in Spain. At the time it made me think of those memes which keep popping up - *why women live longer than men*.

My wife generally gets up around 6am. Somehow we ended up in one of those early morning 'talks' and I think I was getting a gentle telling off.

"Didn't you hear our son in the night?" She began. "He was up twice. And then you got up and whatever you were faffing about with woke me up. Again. Couldn't you organise your stuff the night before?" That was the general gist.

I mumbled something of an excuse and went back to sleep.

Now what really happened was this: I'd woken up about 3am. I'd been bitten the day before and the bite was itching so I got up to use some afterbite and take an antihistamine. We were staying in this kind of chalet type thing so there wasn't much room and putting a light on ran the risk of waking the whole family up. So, I was operating in the dark. And I was half asleep and maybe I'd had a glass of wine more than I realised.

As I came out of the bathroom I noticed a bottle of water on the table.

"That's a bonus." I thought. "I must have forgotten to put it in the fridge before I went to bed." I took a swig to wash my tablet down.

My wife doesn't like me drinking straight out of the bottle. She has asked me many times to not do this and generally I don't anymore. But I *was* tired and half asleep and it *was* there.

And here was the first of two problems. The potential dishonesty, closely followed by – and I'm still not quite sure of the order - that sinking feeling as part of my brain began to wake up and remember what was actually in the bottle I had just drunk, whilst simultaneously realizing this didn't taste like water and tasted much more like - well soap.

I quickly grabbed the glass of water from the side of my bed. Downed it. Opened the fridge. Grabbed the bottle of water (which I clearly *had* put in the fridge before bed) and drank another pint. As I poured the water, the bottle scrunched. And it was this noise which had disturbed my wife, and not me rummaging for tablets.

So, what had I drunk? Well, the night before, my mum and sister, who had joined us for part of our holiday, were packing up. They left us some of their things. Including a litre bottle of yellow washing up liquid. It was this *washing up liquid* of which I had taken a swig.

As well as the water, I thought it might be a good idea to have an indigestion tablet and then I went back to bed trying to reassure myself by thinking that washing up liquid can't be

that harmful, after all- we wash dishes with it. My throat did suddenly feel a bit sore. I mumbled - just to make sure I could still talk and went back to sleep.

Flashforward to 6am and I didn't really want to explain all of this to my wife whilst I was still half asleep.

When I did wake up, I ran what had happened by my new best friend, Chat GP. It said that the danger zone was 1 -2 hours and washing up liquid wasn't too harmful. It also offered to look at the ingredients. Which I dutifully shared after I'd waved my mum and sister off in their taxi.

Chat GP replied:

Thanks for sharing the label — this isn't actually washing-up liquid but “Fregasuelos aroma limón”, a lemon-scented floor cleaner.

So my mum had spent all week washing the dishes with floor cleaner and I'd swigged some.

Chat GP helpfully added:

Key point: These are *cleaning* surfactants meant for floors, not dishes — so they are not designed for even incidental ingestion. A mouthful is still unlikely to cause life-threatening poisoning, but you should treat it more seriously than dish soap.

At which point my stomach churned and I ran for the toilet.

You may by now be wondering how on earth this relates to anything *Relational Inclusion*? Firstly, it reminded me of the Atticus Finch's quote:

You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it. (To Kill a Mockingbird).

It made me think about how we never really know what someone else is going through; what has happened to them; what they might be hiding (either through fear or shame or stupidity - all of which I experienced that morning). How the narrative we tell ourselves makes sense of how we see the world (i.e. my wife's disturbed sleep and me being noisy) compared to my reality of having drunk washing up liquid which turned out to be floor cleaner. And how in many cases things can quickly escalate without either party really understanding where the other was coming from.

Anyway. I explained all to my wife who nearly choked on her toothpaste with laughter. Fortunately, I don't seem to have caused myself any lasting harm.

And I'll leave you with chatGPs final words:



You might end up with nothing more than a funny story about “the time I accidentally had lemon-scented floor cleaner for a drink.”

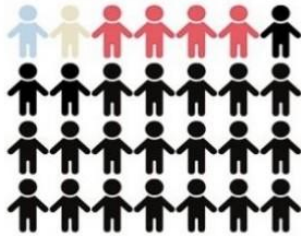
The quotes I thought worth sharing this week are:

- 1) *The same lesson will appear in different forms until you learn to respond differently* (Unknown)
- 2) *When things don't go your way, you have two choices, be bitter or be better. What you choose consistently will determine the life you end up having.* (@entrprenurshipfacts)
- 3) *You can't expect your child to regulate their emotions if you lose your temper. More is caught than taught. Your character is their most important curriculum* (Arsalan Moin)
- 4) **Shamed** brains can't learn
Scared brains can't learn
Pained brains can't learn
Feeling secure, seen, heard and empowered are human success skills and academic success skills (Jen Cort Consulting)
- 5) *In a society based on consumption, the concept of instant gratification is pervasive.* (Gordon Livingston)
- 6) *Still we are encouraged to believe we live in world where proper diet, exercise, and the judicious use of Botox and plastic surgery can dramatically slow the aging process. This modern pursuit of the fountain of youth bespeaks a lack of acceptance of our common fate. There is a desperate, superficial quality in trying to eliminate the gradual evidence of our morality.* (Gordon Livingston)
- 7) *As long as we measure others and ourselves by what we have and how we look, life is inevitably a discouraging experience, characterised by greed, envy, and a desire to be someone else.* (Gordon Livingston)
- 8) *If we believe it is better to build than destroy, better to live and let live, better to be than be seen, then we might have a chance, slowly, to find a satisfying way through life, this flicker of consciousness between two great silences.* (Gordon Livingston)

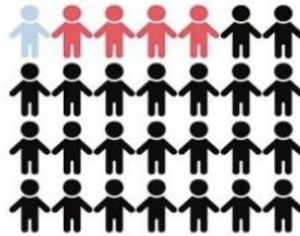


My two print and stick to the wall images this week are:

In a typical class of 28...



Six will be persistently absent, one will be severely absent and one child will be missing from education.



Five will have a special educational need, only one of which will have an EHC plan.



Six will be overweight or obese in reception year, rising to ten by year six.



Six will have a probable mental health condition.



Nine will live in poverty.



One will be a child in need.

WHAT IS CHILD TRAUMA?



NCTSN
The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Every child reacts to trauma in their own way. What feels scary or overwhelming to one child might not affect another in the same way. Trauma can come from a single upsetting event, ongoing stress, or at the hands of those children trust. It's important to recognize the kinds of experiences that can be traumatic to understand their impact and better support children. To understand the impact of trauma on children, youth, and families, it's helpful to understand the difference between acute, chronic, and complex trauma.

ACUTE CHRONIC COMPLEX

Experience of a single distressing event that occurs over a short period of time.

- Natural disaster
- Serious accident
- Loss of a loved one
- Assault
- Dog bite
- Medical emergency
- Hate-based violence
- School shooting

Experience of repeated or ongoing exposure to distressing events.

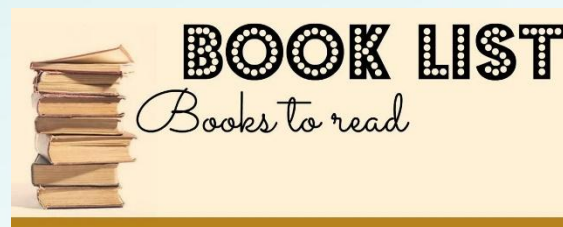
- Experiencing bullying
- Being in a war or combat zone
- Repeated exposure to racism
- Enduring community violence
- Experiencing homelessness

Experience of repeated or multiple distressing events over an extended period, often interpersonal in nature that typically begin early in life

- Child neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Impaired caregiving
- Trafficking
- Witnessing intimate partner violence

ACUTE, CHRONIC, & COMPLEX trauma can overlap and are not always clearly distinct. Experiencing multiple types of trauma can intensify their effects and make the healing process more challenging. Recognizing the interconnected nature of these forms of trauma is essential for delivering effective, trauma-informed care.

My recommended read is about the brain being a social organ. It explores how social and physical pain produce similar brain responses: [Managing with the Brain in Mind](#)

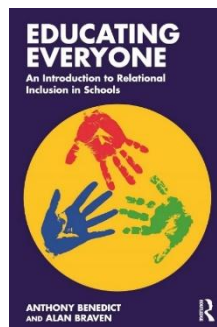


This week's *book to read* is called *Too Soon Old, Too Late Smart – thirty true things you need to know now*. It's by Gordon Livingston and the more observant of you might have noticed that the last four quotes were by him and are from this book. It's not what you might call a 'cheery' read but it raises some really interesting think points.

If you have read any interesting books which support / develop / further understanding of all things relational inclusion, please add a comment through Substack.

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:



Our third book study takes place on Tuesday 9th September from 4-5.30. We will be discussing chapter 4-6. It's free and you can book on here:

[Educating Everyone – Book Study Session 3 – Ambition Community Trust \(ACT\)](#)

You can subscribe to my weekly blog here:

https://open.substack.com/pub/anthonybenedict/p/relational-inclusion-blog-15?r=5ki35n&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web&showWelcomeOnShare=true

Finally, I'd like to share a word which has really stuck in my mind:



Ambition
Community Trust



9) ***Liminal***

*The transitional space between who you once were, and who you are becoming:
on the threshold of significant change.*

Thanks for reading

Anthony Benedict

CEO Ambition Community Trust