



Relational Inclusion blog #61: But You Chose This

This morning's dawn chorus is made up of daughters number one and two. Daughter number one asks something about a notebook I promised her.

"What time is it?" I mumble.

Apparently it's 6.30. I roll my eyes and they leave. Maybe it was just a dream.

When I do get downstairs daughter number one asks about the notebook again. So it wasn't a dream. The fact that she has more notebooks than WHSmith doesn't seem to matter.

The deal was this: If she does her homework every night without a fuss for a week, she gets a new notebook. Daughter number one is a bit careless with her spelling and grammar (a bit is probably generous- she really couldn't care less) but she shouldn't be making these simple mistakes and with SATs (it's not about SATs) this year - and two English teachers as parents - it needs sorting.

My wife asks her to write her five sentences. She says no. I remind her about the deal. She says she'll do them later. Which is her answer to life, the universe and everything.

I explain that she's got gymnastics and then her friend is coming round so there is no later.

She says, "But I don't want to go to gymnastics."

She has been moved up a group and is due to start her new class today, but she doesn't want to go because she went to her old class a few days ago.

Ok. Remember the deal. Homework and gymnastics or no notebook.

Now the amateur dramatics start:

"You're mean and I hate you!" (This is my daughter talking, not me.)

"Well, I'm *definitely* not buying you a notebook now." I know better but I can't help myself.

My wife tag teams in. She explains that all this is perfectly sortable. That daughter number one has made a few bad choices, but she can remedy them. We'll leave her alone for a few minutes to think things through.

"Daddy shoo," she says. "I don't care and I don't want to."

I bristle but manage to take myself away and shower. Oddly enough I heard a colleague explain how they use water to wash away stress and tension. I'd never really thought about it before, but it does seem to help.

She reappears with a stare and a growl - this usually means she wants to talk but doesn't know how to, so I open up the space.

There's a bit of tug of war and then she explains:

"It's just I don't want the same thing to happen as last time..."

Last time she changed groups she ended up in the wrong group for half of the session and then had to change - which I can imagine for a then nine-year-old was the most embarrassing thing in the world.

Active listening I tell myself. I have been a bit slow this morning. In my defence I've only been awake for twenty minutes.

We talk through a few different options. She doesn't like any of them. We talk about learning to ride a bike, falling off and getting straight back on again.

"Is that ok?" I ask.

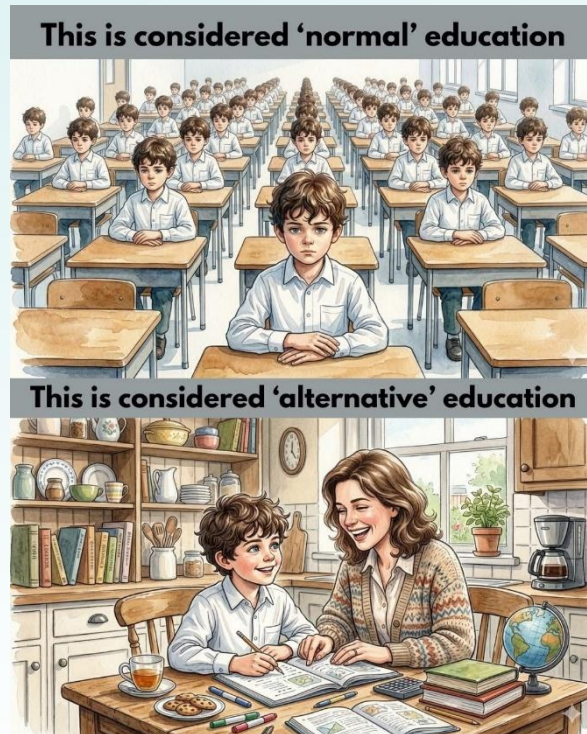
"I still don't want to. I went three days ago and that's twice in one week."

Behaviour, emotions and moods don't fit neatly into little boxes. Sometimes she needs encouragement. Sometimes she needs agency. Sometimes she just needs someone to slow down long enough to understand what's really going on underneath it all. Most of the time I'm still working out which is which, whilst trying to be curious and manage my own chimp.

My one a day quotes for this week are:

1. *It's not about managing your emotions, it's about managing your reaction to your emotions. (unknown)*
2. *Just because it is not happening in the timing you expected does not mean it is not happening. (unknown)*
3. *To be happy you must eliminate two things: the fear of a bad future and the memory of a bad past. (Quotopia)*
4. *We are always in the process of becoming a teacher.... The very best teachers continue to be challenged and transformed as they learn beside each child. (Sandy Miller)*
5. *There is no prize for finishing childhood first. They don't give out a trophy for making them older faster. It's okay to just let them be little. (@BUSYTODDLER)*
6. *Writing by hand is a full-body brain workout. It activates thinking, sensing, moving, and remembering, all at once. When you write by hand, you engage: fine motor control, memory systems, sensory awareness, focused attention. It slows you down in the best way, making learning deeper and more lasting. Handwriting isn't outdated, it's brain training. (Anthony Goldsmith)*
7. *We spend the first 15 years learning how to survive life with our family, and the rest of our lives healing from it. (unknown)*

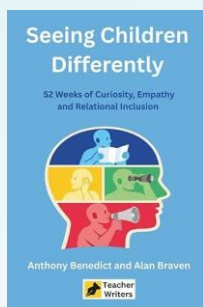
My two print and stick to the wall images this week are:



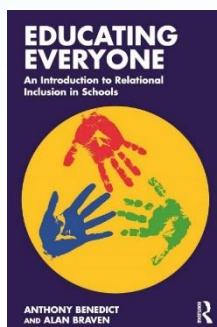
My recommended read this week is about [How Attachment Affects You: Relationships, Growth & Healing](#)

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

Our new book – Seeing Children Differently is out now. You can get it by clicking the picture:



Our first book, Educating Everyone: An Introduction to relational Inclusion in Schools is still available and you must buy it and tell everyone else to buy it too. It is available pretty much everywhere that sells books or you can get it here:



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

Don't measure someone's life with your own ruler. (unknown)

Thanks for reading
Anthony Benedict

CEO Ambition Community Trust