



Relational Inclusion blog #62: 21 Again

Last week daughter number one announced she was going to enter the school cross country running competition. It came a bit out of the blue as she's never shown any interest before. But all exercise is good exercise, right?

One of the brilliant things about being ten is that you can make decisions like that one day and just do it the next. No prep. No training. Just have a go.

Over a hundred and fifty kids entered and she surprised herself by finishing 27th. And that set something else off in her. Round two was next week and if she finished with a combined place of under 60, she qualified for the next round. Things were hotting up it seemed.

Not one for exerting excess effort and energy I was surprised when she said, "Daddy, will you practise with me at the weekend?" She was starting to take this semi-seriously.

As it happened, it turned out so were a few of her friends, as the stories seeped through of lots of year 5 and 6 children taking their parents for a run.

This was my first lesson. When she asked, I didn't give it a second thought. I'm reasonably healthy, I don't carry too much weight, I play squash pretty regularly and I used to be a pretty good cross-country runner.

And here was my mistake. I'm 52. In my head I probably think I can still behave like I'm mid-twenties. And she's ten. A ten-year-old. Running with them will be easy. I'll have to go slow.

We get to the park to run the same course, and she points out roughly what we have to do and I'm not taking too much notice because this will be a piece of cake.

And then we set off. I've told her about pacing herself and breathing with her footsteps. And we begin. And I very quickly realise three things 1) she's actually pretty quick 2) she's laughing and chatting and falling over and she's **still** pretty quick 3) we're not halfway round and I'm going to have to concentrate just a little bit harder (a lot).

We finish and I've brought no water and I need to catch my breath. She dances about a bit and then is ready to go again with her mum.

The next day I wake up and I'm stiff as a board and my back hurts. To make matters worse, I've promised we will run again later.

It makes me wonder. How much of our lives do we live inside our heads? How much is real and how much is simply our perception of reality that we then somehow make real.

How much of what we think about ourselves is actually a story we've constructed — what we're good at, what we're bad at, what we can do and what we can't?

And if we do this as adults, who knows what goes on inside our children as they begin to narrate their own stories. The voices that surround them ultimately shape the voice they hear inside their own heads.

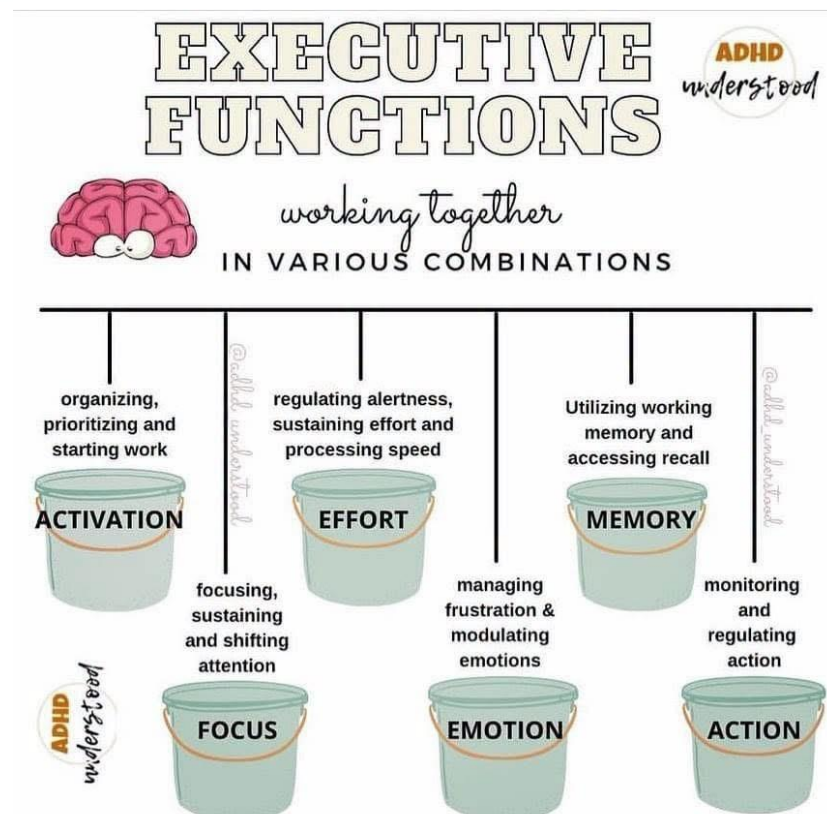
At ten years old, anything and everything really does feel possible.

And isn't that what we want for our children? To grow up telling themselves stories about what might be possible, rather than filling their heads with what isn't.

My one a day quotes for this week are:

- 1) *You're not done meeting everyone who's going to matter to you. Some of the best moments of your life haven't happened yet.* (UnknownLifeLessons)
- 2) *You can't change the past, but you can ruin the present by living in the past and worrying about the future. Let go. Live now.* (unknown)
- 3) *Somewhere out there, someone is listening to birds instead of breaking news — and the world feels a little more hopeful there.* (unknown)
- 4) *The person who loves walking will walk further than the person who loves the destination.* (unknown)
- 5) *Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.* (WARREN BUFFETT)
- 6) *Smile, breathe, and go slowly.* (THICH NHAT HANH)
- 7) *He who cannot bear his reflection calls the water a demon.* (unknown)

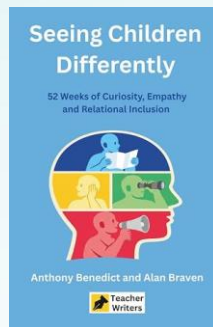
My two print and stick to the wall images this week are:



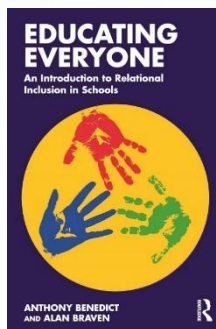
My recommended read this week is about [Four types of thinker have been identified. Which one are you? | Consciousness | The Guardian](#)

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

Our brand-new book, [Seeing Children Differently](#) is out now and available from Amazon.



Our first book, *Educating Everyone: An Introduction to relational Inclusion in Schools* is also still available 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:



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

Only when the tide goes out do you discover who's been swimming naked. (Warren Buffett)

Thanks for reading
Anthony Benedict

CEO Ambition Community Trust