

Blogs - 2016

1st January 2016

I wish everyone a peaceful New Year and hope 2016 brings to fruition all your wishes.

I wrote a few lines of poetry just after midnight and felt it would be perfect to share the moment.

New Year - 2016

Half an hour into a new year,
Wondering what it will bring.
Walking the path of sadness or cheer.
Whatever the voices will sing.
There will be chances to take.
Beginnings and endings clear.
Decisions will form and I will make
A choice from the voices I hear.
As the music rises and dies,
And our world descends to sleep,
Dreams of possibilities fill my eyes
Leading me to laugh or weep.
An hour onwards. Will things change
Or will time run on as fast
Before I can reach out and arrange
My future different to my past?

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14th February 2016

I been working on the website quite a bit and so have not posted to this blog for some time so decided to offer something a little different this month.

If you find your head is full of overpowering thoughts, if anxiety seems to rule your life and you feel stressed the whole time, then perhaps using a very easy and simple writing for wellbeing exercise might help. I often have had clients and colleagues say "Oh, I can't write" or "My writing is rubbish or no good". Well, this exercise bypasses that worry and fear. No one else will see what you write and you don't have to worry about your own hand writing or anything like that. This is just a way to get your thoughts out on paper no matter how or the order they are written on the page so they are not going round and round in your head.

This is not Creative Writing where the end product is the focus, Writing for Wellbeing

is about the process of writing only and there is no focus on the end product, but that is not to say that some do not take their work and develop it further.

Find yourself a comfortable seat where it is easy to write, I use my dining room table, and paper and pen which can be a notebook and any pen or pencil you wish. When you are ready to start write for six minutes only. Do not worry about spelling, punctuation, grammar or syntax but you need to keep writing for the full six minutes. Don't think about what you write just write what is in your head and DON'T STOP, keep going and if you can't think of anything to write just write "I can't think of anything to write" until it clears and it will. The most important thing is to keep going, don't stop to think or worry about what is on the page, for the full six minutes.

If you do this for a few days you will most likely find things becoming clearer for you. I have experienced clients who have then taken up journalling or become more interested in writing in general. I have known a client who did the above exercise on the computer but for me, it is the physical process of getting the pen onto the paper and letting whatever is there unfold without the barrier of technology.

Give it a try and see if it helps and if you'd like to know more then get in touch with me and I'd be happy to talk more about it.

5th March 2016

Sometimes, lines of a poem or story can come out of the blue and are striking in the way they convey feelings and emotions and perhaps some fears. I wrote these few lines after working with a long term client a few days ago. What her experience triggered in me led to these lines.

Fragment
...Thought hits the wall of mundane life,
Where boredom leans, smoking a cigarette
Just for something to do,
Before it saunters off to follow you
So you do not forget that stale smell of
Old Sunday's smoke....

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16th March 2016

With my interest in working with the dying I subscribe to a newsletter from an organisation called Soul Midwives and this months' edition had a link to a very interesting blog from a practising Soul Midwife, Antonia Rolls, who talks about her work as a Soul Midwife, artist and author. It focuses on her new exhibition 'A Graceful Death' and it will be part of the Dying Matters Awareness Week in May down in Brighton. Here is a link to the blog [click here](#) and I hope it may help all of us think about dying and look at our fears around it so it begins to lose some of its terror.

The Dying Matters Awareness Week will focus on the Big Conversation and highlight the importance of talking about dying, death and bereavement, which runs from 9th - 15th May 2016 and there will be an event held in The Forum in Norwich on Thursday 12th May 2016 from 9am - 4pm.

21st April 2016

I seem to have fallen behind in posting to my blog recently but I know I have been busy and my weekend encounter group with the Person Centred Approach Network this year left me with a lot to process for myself and explored a new 'centredness' that I have become aware of and that is a continuing process, it never ends and that is the exciting. Finding new things out about myself helps my writing and my clients.

Over the weekend of 8th - 10th April I found that writing helped me start to make sense of things going on in me and around me in the group. I knew the poem attached was important for me and some of the other group members and I knew that I just had to create not just a poem to show the journey but that is also had to be visual to explain what had happened. I played around with Word and eventually ended up using Excel so I could change text direction to represent the fall. It is attached below in PDF format.

The Edge in the poem relates to Curbar Edge which is a wonderful limestone escarpment that sits behind Cliffe College near Calver in Derbyshire.

25th May 2016

I am investigating something new for the website - being able to offer counselling via video link for clients who cannot come to my house in Wymondham or clinic rooms in Norwich for whatever reason. I have become aware that clients out of the area have wanted to work with me but other than telephone sessions I have not been able to offer them any visual connection.

I have not worked with this before as I have had concerns about security and confidentiality of links. Most people use Skype but I have always had problems with it dropping out, stalling and taking too long to buffer. As well as this it can be accessed by Microsoft and anything used for their publicity and promotions so it is certainly not confidential, because of these reasons I have not offered this way of working previously but, now there seems to be a secure alternative to Skype and I am looking into this.

The system is called VSee and it is used by the medical fraternity for video conferencing, consultations, teaching and surgical procedural observations and appears to be encrypted at both ends so cannot be hacked into by others. Apparently it uses a narrow bandwidth than Skype so there are not the problem of drop-outs or stalling to contend with. I have installed it and will be testing it shortly. It is also free to download and use.

If my testing is successful and I like the system I will be able to offer this method of working to clients in the future and will update my website with respect to this, so watch this space!

6th July 2016

I seem to have fallen behind in my blog recently which I am putting down to preparing to retire from the NHS and having to ensure all my documentation was up to date and submitted on time. I will finish there on 29th July and will then work on my counselling and writing for wellbeing full time. It already feels much better to have that therapeutic focus rather than splitting myself every which way.

This week is Sarcoma Awareness week and I hope to try and post items related to my interests and work more often in the future. If you have an interest in this type of cancer or wish to donate or even volunteer [here is a link to their website](#).

24th July 2016

Today is Samaritans Awareness Day, [here is a link to their website](#) . They are a 24/7 service that are a vital lifeline to people who feel so hopeless that there is nothing much to look forward to in life and suicide seems the only option. They are there day and night to listen and support people.

5th September 2016

The light of the sun cast longer shadows as it sits lower in the sky now that we are officially in autumn. Summer holidays are over and we have to face the thought of winter approaching with longer nights, darker and colder days. Perhaps at this time it is reassuring to hold in our thoughts that we are not alone. There are others out in the world who may think and feel as we do but sometimes it is hard to connect.

To help with this connection September is Blood Cancer Awareness month, for more information [check out this website](#)

Saturday 10th September is World Suicide Prevention Day and the Samaritan's will have more information on their website [here](#)

So as autumn settles in and winter waits in the wings connecting with others may help lift the darkness a little and counselling or writing goes some way towards that.

6th October 2015

It is heading into autumn now but we have had some lovely late summer sunshine recently which makes the winter seem shorter. I have realised I have not updated this for over a month and 'stuff' has happened, visits have come and gone and my supervision training has commenced.

I have been wondering if it is just my perception or if other people are feeling similar? As we near the end of the year it seems to me that time is picking up speed, like a snow boarder on a steep slope, and racing down hill much faster than before so that I don't feel I have enough time to get all that I want to do done without jogging. I feel like I would like a Tardis so I could be in two or three places at once on the same day to get everything done!

On Sunday 25th September I went for an overnight stay at Launde Abbey in Leicestershire [here is a link to their website](#) It is a religious retreat house but any religious belief is not expected. All are welcomed irrespective of beliefs. It is in the middle of nowhere and very quiet, except for the sounds of sheep. I went for a 'writing encounter' with a colleague who has now become a firm friend. We ate, we talked, we wandered round the grounds amongst the free-roaming sheep and we wrote when the inclination took us. Although it was less than 48-hours it was transformative and restorative. I may look at Launde Abbey as a venue for a future writing for wellbeing weekend for therapist interested in the subject and for CPD but it may not happen next year as it appears you need to book over a year in advance! A free writing exercise I undertook is attached below and is very different to my usual writing as I am not known for my humorous writing!

As mentioned earlier I have commenced by Certificate in Clinical Supervision on 1st October. I had been thinking about it for some time and was looking for the right course without the need to travel huge distances or rack up the cost with needing to book accommodation for the weekend. LIFE-FORCE from Colchester run a BACP endorsed course and have brought it to Norwich which was perfect for me. It is challenging but invigorating and I am reassured my brain still functions and I am learning again. Once completed I will be able to offer places to supervisees. To assist with my training hours I have set up a supervision group for volunteers at the local Star Throwers charity here in Wymondham as they are currently minus support.

14th November 2016

The cold grey blanket of November
is remade on the bed
of this winter sky.

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As the weather becomes more like winter each day I am left wondering about the sense of uncertainty I am picking up and hearing about from clients, colleagues, friends and family. I have been told that the world has "gone mad" with Brexit and now the election of Donald Trump to President of the United States of America. I have no intention of making this blog into a political platform but I am aware of what others are feeling. There is a feeling of instability, uncertainty and fear about what the future holds for our countries but also for us as individuals. I am seeing the fear manifest itself and different cultures starting to fracture off from each other, like the tarmac of roads, splitting after an earthquake.

While I may not have any answers that are a "one size fits all" type of answer. I can offer points to think about for questions that are being raised that might help others find their way. In times of uncertainty people may turn to things that have stability, perhaps family or work or even home or city they are familiar with. It is that sense of familiarity that I have found in my work that can ground us and almost envelope us protectively. I realise that this is not the same for everyone. Each of us will have something that we are familiar with that we can hold onto or anchor ourselves to stop us feeling so cast adrift.

For me it is poetry, both reading and writing it, that gives me firmer ground to stand on and a strong anchor to keep me steady. Writing about what is happening to me on an individual level helps reassure me that I am still here in this world and my imagination can serve as my safety and the path for my future.

With that in mind I have been reinvigorated by the Clinical Supervision training course I have been taking. It has stirred my creativity and opened a new door on a new road. I am heading towards the end of the training now and in the New Year, once I have passed the course and got my certificate I will be looking to offer supervision to other counsellors. Watch this space and my home page!

6th December 2016

I always seem to be playing 'catch up' on this blog and that is most likely down to my reluctance to spend too much time on my laptop at the moment. I am trying to give myself some time away from the technology that seems so demanding of my time. When I think "I will just take a few minutes to update something" it ends up being a much bigger job than I thought or more complicated than I envisioned.

I now have some good news. I have completed my Clinical Supervision Training - Certificate course and have passed all assessments and have received my certificate to tell me I am now a Supervisor. I will be updating my website and directory entries over the Christmas break but I am able to take on supervisees from this point on. It is both exciting but has me wondering where this new path might take me to on my journey.

It seems that when one thing moves in my life other things follow. I am now running a supervision group for the volunteers at Star Throwers, the local cancer support charity where I offer counselling to the clients who use the service. I have also set up a Peer-Supervision arrangement with the other counselling therapist there so we can develop what we offer at the charity. I have also been in touch with Wymondham library and will be running a monthly Writing for Wellbeing group there, beginning on Tuesday 24th January 2017, 09.30 - 10.30. It will not be a therapy group but writing can be therapeutic and to hold the group if difficult issues arise is a big part of the work. I hope to have both young people and older persons coming along once word gets out into the community.

I think my preparations for all of the above things has paid off and my plans are coming to fruition now. It does mean that I need to take care of myself and

recognised the hard work I have put in and how tired I am feeling as the year draws towards its end. I am looking forward to visiting family for Christmas and having a restful New Year. **With that in mind I will finish client work on Wednesday 21st December 2016 and recommence on Wednesday 4th January 2017**

18th December 2016

As we draw ever nearer to Christmas I decided I would bite the bullet and spend some dedicated hours updating my website and this meant learning how to acquire new pages, move those pages and remind myself how to create quote boxes and use basic HTML. Although I have been in NHS administration for many years creating website content is a whole new kettle of fish but with the great help manual that WebHealer supply I get on reasonably well.

I did make a decision a while back that I didn't wish to spend all my spare time online using social media even though I have been advised it is a good way to 'grow your business'. I created this website and have my entries on Counselling Directory and the BACP 'It's Good to Talk' Directory alone and for the moment that is sufficient for me.

I try to have a break from the computer and spend time reading a book, not my Kindle, or getting out in the garden or walking in Nature to try and clear my head of the 'technical energy' if feel takes over at times. In my work I strive to offer clients, and now supervisees, a quiet, reflective and restful space without the pressure of 'keeping in touch with everyone on Facebook or Twitter' all the time.

If I am rested from this energy I will be more able to create a quiet and peaceful space for others. Sometimes it is hard when the world around me seems focused on rushing around to get a multitude of things done in as short a time as possible. I seek to slow myself down and reduce that multiplicity so that I can provide as much space as I can and hold the boundaries for each client or supervisee to breathe more fully and have time to think and feel and just be.

With that in mind I would like to wish you all a peaceful, restful and restorative festive season whether you celebrate it as a religious festival or simply time to share with the family. I hold the hope that 2017 may pass slightly more sedately than I feel 2016 has and be fulfilling for you.