

Blogs - 2017

3rd January 2017

Greetings in this New Year and I hope that you achieve all that you wish for during 2017. As we start this year I am wondering if it will pass as quickly as 2016 did, or slower or indeed faster.

It seems and I feel that I have not yet fully crossed the threshold of this year of 2017 just yet. It is almost as if I am sitting here, waiting for something to happen to help me over the step and into the house of the coming year. I have no idea what or who I am waiting for but I have a growing sense of anticipation that 'something' will occur and I can begin to move forward. Until that point I feel able to sit, to wait and to be open to whatever comes.

If you feel a need for some exploration of your life to work out why your problems seem to have taken over, you have unanswered questions or you just need a listening ear and for you to feel more fully yourself then I hope you will think of me for your counsellor. I would very much like the opportunity to accompany you on your journey for a while.

If you want find a supervisor or try a new path as a supervisee, I would be honoured if you would consider my supervision practice and come along for a trial session.

I hope we can all look forward to the budding of this New Year of 2017 and be open to whatever the petals reveal when it blooms in full.

14th January 2017

I think I have finally settled into the year of 2017 as it was just this week that I did get back to remembering which day of the week it was, but it was later in the week.

So, as we are now settled I'd like to offer a little poem written on New Year's Eve and inspired by the colder nights we had been getting. I share it here because the feel of the poem is 'sharp', like the frosts out in nature in winter but also 'uncomfortable' although being 'open to feelings' as well.

New Year's Eve
The razor blade road
Cuts through the miles.
The knife edge smiles
Slice through my load.
Rapier light, now
A sword slash. How
It glitters in the moon's
Sharp edged rays and soon
Time will sleep
In its scabbard deep.

16th January 2017

Slightly behind with things still but I do know it is a Tuesday! I have been checking for interesting things that might be helpful and will again list dates and supportive organisations. January is 'Dry January', a campaign run by Alcohol Concern.

From this coming weekend, 22nd - 28th January, there is a week long campaign by Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust targeting prevention. Cervical cancer or fears about it may be very intimate for a woman. It may not be an easy thing to think about or discuss with those close to you but being diagnosed early can increase your chances of recovering. This charity has lots of information on its pages. The more people talk about it the better it will be.

19th February 2017

How good it is feeling now the mornings and evenings are getting lighter. I hope you are able to notice the changes and that it helps you feel a little better and invigorated.

Friday afternoon the sun illuminated my conservatory and bathed us in hopeful light. Because of the mainly north facing back garden, the height of the fence and angle of my neighbours house to the west of mine I don't get sun into my back garden between November and February. It makes me feel lighter and happier once I see the sun creeping down the back fence in incremental stages as winter ends. Once it starts to reach into my conservatory, which I use for my counselling, I think that spring is advancing nearer each day.

I will hope for sunnier and milder days so that I can get out without wearing so many clothes and take my camera on my walks to capture the signs of spring that are appearing. I will be aiming to take pictures and put a few new ones up on my website to refresh it and say that spring is nearing the time when winter will trudge off for another year and summer with book it's holidays here with us.

23rd April 2017

I am totally surprised by how fast this year is travelling or should I say galloping past! I seem to have fallen well behind on keeping up with my blog here, probably owing to things coming up in my own life that have taken some time to address. Hence my late posting about Prince Harry speaking out about having counselling for his grief when it became too much for him.

His revelation is no surprise to me as a counsellor but also as someone who has grieved and had my own counselling has given my clients and myself great benefit.

I believe so strongly in choice and the effectiveness of how I work as a counsellor to be with my clients that I struggle to comprehend the funding cuts and restricted therapies on offer. How much better the world might be with clients able to go to their GP, say they had found the therapy and therapist they wanted to work with,

NHS or in private practice and there would be money enough to pay for either for as long as needed, not just 6 - 12 sessions with a therapist you were allocated to and did not choose, or even never talking with anyone face to face just working through computer exercises alone. This is my dream but I hold it quietly most of the time.

While this 'perfect world' may never be I am able to offer you grief counselling, a place to talk about the deaths of those you have loved, if you need some time to come to terms with it, to share their importance to you and your life, to cry for them but also to celebrate the love you had. I am not afraid of death. I have worked with this area for nearly 20 years and it helped me come to terms with my own death that will one day arrive. If you are terrified by this event I can help you look at it and become 'less afraid'. We can talk or write about it, you can share photographs of your loved one, play music you loved together and it does not matter if you cry or feel afraid. I can be with you there, unafraid, alongside you until you feel ready to leave and continue on your journey alone. I say it takes as long as it takes and there is no set time for grief or pain to last.

28th April 2017

While reading the BACP journal 'Therapy Today' I noticed an item on Loneliness and Bereavement so followed the link to Independent Age and found it a very interesting read.

I could quote you a load of statistics here but the article itself has other sources of help if you are an older person and have been bereaved or are suffering from loneliness. Loneliness has been prominent in the news recently.

18th June 2017

I feel like I am running to catch up and not doing a very good job right now, but that is OK as I have family issues that require my full attention. I have put a note on my home page but will add it here as well.

I have also been aware of the low mood of many people and more generally, linked to the recent terrorist attacks in Manchester and London as well as the fire in West Kensington, London on top of a general election that shook the government, resulting in a hung parliament. There feels to be great uncertainty and instability in our lives, in our relationships and with our ability to trust others. While terrorists seek to frighten us and divide us, it is not succeeding. I have been struck by how communities have reached out and supported each other. How they have been willing to cross the usual boundaries of race, religion and politics to help those in need. Politicians in the governing party seem to be lacking in basic humanity and relational ability leaving communities to fend for themselves and this stokes the anger of those who feel neglected and disenfranchised, but it seems to be cementing those communities together more strongly.

While politics is found wanting community is growing stronger. Is that where our futures lie, in local initiatives where we can pull together to overcome adversity? If it is it may heal a world that is divided, think of the Referendum about the EU and the

election of Donald Trump. Maybe if we all hold together we may find our way through the uncertainty to a surer future.

19th August 2017 - is it magic?

It has been a very busy time with family illness and my work with clients and writing for wellbeing has taken more of a back seat these last few months. It felt like the universe itself realised that I needed 'less work'. Clients seemed to come to a natural end of the work they wanted to do and new clients were on holiday or taking time to consider their options, often checking out different websites for the best fit for a therapist. This meant that I had fewer enquiries. My writing for wellbeing seemed to take time out to breathe as well.

As a family we seemed to have arrived in a better place. I feel more able to step back up and into my work with some long-held ideas and plans coming to fruition. Only yesterday while taking a shortcut through Waterstones in Norwich I had some time to waste so looked on the spiritual/wellbeing shelves and found a book that jumped out at me, 'The 5-Minute Meditator' by Eric Harrison which is filled with short and inspiring quick meditations for a busy life. With the family illness we have all come to realise that life is for living and without that, purely just focused on work and 'doing stuff' then life just races by. I have made a promise to myself that I will not panic about how much money I am earning, how much I 'should' be doing, comparing myself to how much other therapists are making or doing. I am going to slow down my life and breathe more, enjoy going out into nature and walking, try to eat more healthily and organically. If I don't do this for myself no one else will and I feel I need this to enhance my empathy and understanding in my client work. After all, if I cannot do this then how can I expect my clients to slow their lives and look after themselves more. I would be something of a hypocrite and certainly not Person-Centred.

By not focusing on working or specifics with that I find that in that space, opportunities are coming to me. I will be giving a talk on 'The Cathartic Effect of Writing' at an annual business meeting for Norwich Cruse on 11th September and I am currently researching for that. I hope to work with a colleague to offer writing for wellbeing sessions for staff at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital and possibly the University of East Anglia as well.

I also still hope to set up a Facebook business page in the near future but am still a bit of a Facebook novice so am finding that somewhat challenging but I hope to have that live in the next month or so.

There are other ideas bubbling away around running some CPD writing for wellbeing sessions for therapist with the possibility of using Launde Abbey in Leicestershire for a weekend as well as things more locally if a suitable venue can be found. If I wait the universe may work its magic again.

16th September 2017

I am very excited and inspired to be able to team up with a counselling and writing colleague to offer a writing for wellbeing workshop at the Norwich Wellbeing Centre on Saturday 11th November, 10.00 - 16.30. It is focused on Christmas and different ways to deal with it. For some people the festive season is anything but so any ways we can make it better for ourselves is well worth a try. If you are interested in finding out more then check out my new Events page which has a poster that can be printed off and pinned up or saved and emailed to others.

It seems that writing is becoming a stronger focus for me now, though I still love my individual counselling work, but it is all part of my plan to have a 'portfolio' of different aspects of therapeutic work.

On Monday 11th September I was invited to be guest speak at Norwich Cruse Bereavement Care's Annual Business Meeting which was both a challenge and a chance to spread the word about the cathartic effect of writing. I found myself enjoying the evening and being more comfortable than I thought I would be reading some of my own poetry out to the audience. I have never done any 'open mic' work or consider myself courageous enough to think about 'performance poetry' but it was 'ok' to stand up and read my work. It was a great feeling to have feedback that I keep everyone interested and inspired some to think about writing for themselves. Even talking with Bill Armstrong, Norwich Cruse President and ex-Coroner about having a go at writing some poetry - "prose with bigger margins" seemed to help him.

So do have a look over my new events page and either contact myself or Lyn if you would like to discuss it.

25th September 2017

I keep forgetting to post on my blog here that this coming Thursday, 28th September, is National Poetry Day. With that in mind I wonder if people who are reading this might be willing to give writing a poem a try if they have never tried it before?

In my workshops when I say the next exercise is poetry I get a lot of responses like, "I can't write poetry, I can,t think of words to rhyme." "I'm not good enough to write 'POETRY'".

I always say in reply to that -"Poetry doesn't need to rhyme or have any structure. There are many types of poetry and I'd like you to think about it in this way to help you start writing. Poetry is simply prose with bigger margins! If you give it a try and keep writing then it will almost write itself". I then offer and read one of my own poems or read another poet to help those who have never even thought they could write poems see that it is possible and that it is a more contained way of writing than prose. Even unstructured free flow poetry has a structure and those boundaries can help with holding difficult or troubling emotions.

I've written poetry since I was 15. I think I got into that because my Dad used to read poetry to me as a child, so I grew up with it. It was never placed up on a pedestal as something unobtainable that only 'real poets' could achieve. I just wrote and used it

to explore how I was feeling and explain why I might be feeling that. It was never written for anyone else but over time, when I shared my work, it seemed to touch and speak to people of their own concerns and fears. I have come to believe that writing, poetry or prose, is a way of communicating at a deep level. It is often sharing issues that are too difficult to talk about but writing feels 'containing and safer'.

So just give it a go. I believe everyone can write. Remember poetry is simply prose with bigger margins!

Good luck

13th November 2017

I am sitting with a sense of disappointment that the event Lyn and I planned for last Saturday in Norwich had to be cancelled due to lack of interest. It has, however, been a learning experience in that we are meeting shortly to 'debrief' and plan for next year. We can learn from our failures, perhaps more so than our successes. It is sometimes easier to blithely sail on from a triumph and not really take the time to reflect. Whereas failure pulls us up short and gives us focus on the process to identify what went wrong and how we can move on from this place.

It is with this sense of learning and adventure that Lyn & I, as a partnership of writers and therapists, can develop and build on the workshop ideas for 2018, which is not that far off now.

So writing still occupies my mind and how I can offer it's therapeutic value to my clients, my colleagues, friends and family. It is always a work in progress, as is life, and that is what makes it exciting and enticing.

17th December 2017 - Christmas and looking forward to 2018

How fast this month is going. Time is slipping through my fingers, almost creating burns at the speed it whips along at! Christmas is approaching rapidly and the New Year 'celebrations' will be galloping in behind it.

It is not a 'happy', 'religious' or 'festive' time for everyone and I am holding those who are estranged from their families, alone, homeless, depressed, anxious and generally wishing to avoid Christmas in my thoughts.

I do not find that I have the same enthusiasm for the whole thing any longer. Inside I feel cut off from the 'buying presents', 'eating and drinking too much' and 'having to visits all the families'. I have been thinking and sitting with my feelings with this and come up with my own thoughts on why this is. I am older, though I am not saying wiser and I can admit that even as a child the season never matched my dreams and expectations. Now I am beginning to tire of the early start to the commercial aspects and how money seems to be a focus from about September. This year I have hand-made a present for my sister as we agreed not to spend much money this year. I hope she likes it.

With this in mind I seem to have slipped into the 'New Year's resolution' thing... or have I?

I have booked a place on a poetry course called 'Inspired by Film' that starts on 22nd January 2018 and runs for 6 Monday afternoons. I have been trying to give myself more time to write for me, some 'me time' but it has been too easy to let things encroach on my 'me' day of Monday. I know that by signing up for the course in Norwich, run by an experienced poet and tutor, Sue Burge, I will get the focus on my writing and find some new inspiration. In addition, I love movies...

I send you my best wishes for this time of year and hope you can navigate your own way through what may be a tough time and hope that the new year of 2018 offers you new inspiration, paths and hopes for your future.