



Use all Five Senses

This week was a very calm, routine sort of week where nothing exceptional happened. In the middle of all this normality I bought a new winter coat for my daughter. It was a very ordinary, practical waterproof coat as far as I was concerned. Yet for my little girl, the coat was looked at, modelled, talked about, smelt and touched. A number of her senses contributed to her experience of getting a new coat.

Watching her brought me back over twenty years when I taught a child psychology course to a number of young parents. As part of the course we were considering how children experience their toys. The participants brought in blindfolds and a number of children's toys. Having put on the blindfolds they were each handed a toy. When deprived of their vision their other senses came into focus, and the texture, smell and even taste of the toys was tried out.

Young children engage all their senses when they experience new things. As we get older we tend to rely on our visual sense more than the other senses. In doing so we can lose some of the richness of experience that is available to us. Have you ever noticed how popcorn tastes better in the darkness of the cinema? Have ever looked at food and because you did not like the look of it, decided that you would not like the taste of it? Have you ever looked at an item of clothing and because you didn't like the look of it on the hanger did not try it on?

In the routine of our daily lives we can develop patterns of experiencing the world that mean that we only partially use our senses. If we engage all our senses we can have much richer experiences even in the ordinary routines of daily life. My challenge to you this week is to take three routines from your daily life and create the opportunity to fully appreciate those routines with as many of your senses as possible. For example you could take a favourite food. How would you describe its smell? When you put some in your mouth, close your eyes and experience the texture and the taste. Another example that you might like to consider is a favourite item of clothing. Take time to consider its smell, its texture, and the sounds it makes when you wear it and brush your hands against it.

All of our senses contribute to our sense of well-being. By taking the time to really appreciate how our senses are interacting in our daily life, we can enrich our experience of routine in our daily life.

I hope that you really enjoy the challenge this week.

Warm Wishes

Mary