



Pandemic Memories!

For me the anxiety was building from the beginning of March 2020, when I got ill with bronchitis, yet wondered deep down, if it was really Covid??

As I was recovering the week before schools closed, the walks to school were becoming more scary, the apprehensive looks were clear between parents, whilst trying to smile for their children, teachers looked on edge, and everywhere you looked the headlines were worrying. I remember Friday 20th March dropping my children at school, knowing today was the final day at school – for how long, well we had no idea. Some felt just a few weeks, some a few months and some predicted September! I'm glad I didn't know when I left school that day with my two children that it was going to be September before they returned!

And so the days began – this bizarre “bubble” of all being together every second of every day. Yet you would go for a walk, the sun would shine, the birds would sing and for a brief moment life felt normal, yet underneath you knew it wasn't. It got to about June, and I realised I was literally going through the same motions day in day out. I was home schooling two children, providing snacks and meals, and cleaning up, the same routine day in day out! So in a bid for ‘me time’ I began yoga on Zoom. It gave me an hour and a half a week to just relax and do something for me – and it was bliss!

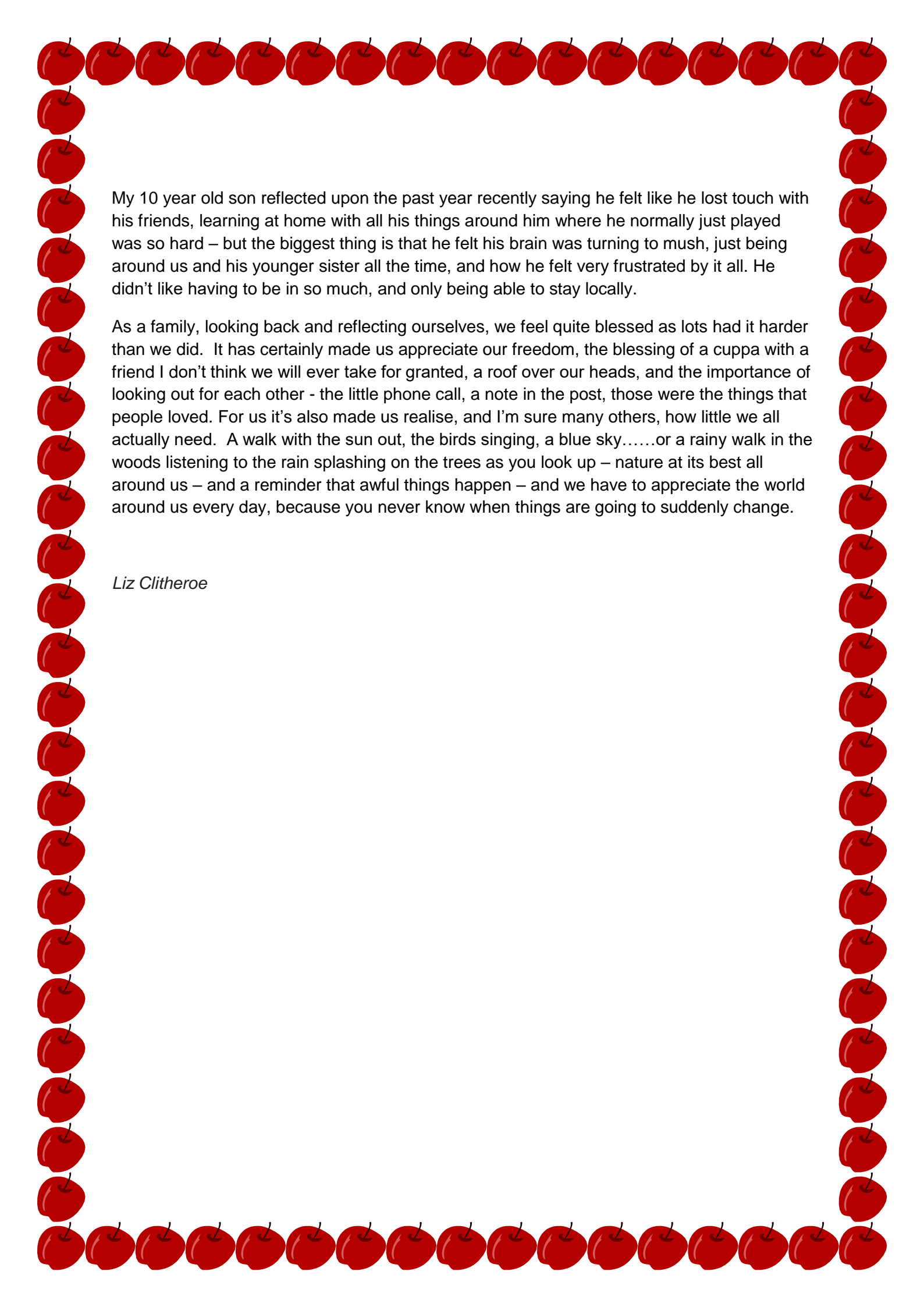
We had good days – we had sad days, we had days we loved being together, and days it was too much. My husband was still going out to work 4 days a week as a train driver, so for him he still had the normality of work. I probably worried about him going out there more than he worried about being out there! He felt very safe at work, and was doing his bit driving round keyworkers doing vital roles.

A couple of things that kept me going was the fact I ran a local toddler group pre-covid so began doing pre-recorded monthly singing videos and later zoom sessions, and providing little packs of stickers or goodies through the doors of the families that came as we went for our walk! I also began doing pre-recorded videos for the Children's Church group I help to lead. And in fact these things gave me a different role to being a Mum for a while, they gave me a purpose to reach out to others in this challenging world.

School holidays became hard to vary with such limitations. I don't think there is a toy, game, or craft material that hasn't come out this past year – and weekend films became part of our week!

In September when my children returned to school – life seemed a little brighter! But not for long, as come October the effect of bubbles at school going down, track and trace notifications that I had been in contact with someone with covid sent more anxiety racing, and then as we reached the next lockdown, as well as the one after Christmas when the children didn't return to school – life became hard again.

For us the Jan/Feb lockdown was far harder especially for our eldest son. He was fed up with being at home and living in this confusing world around him, where nothing lasted anymore, and everything changed instantly. With Autism and ADHD this was even harder.



My 10 year old son reflected upon the past year recently saying he felt like he lost touch with his friends, learning at home with all his things around him where he normally just played was so hard – but the biggest thing is that he felt his brain was turning to mush, just being around us and his younger sister all the time, and how he felt very frustrated by it all. He didn't like having to be in so much, and only being able to stay locally.

As a family, looking back and reflecting ourselves, we feel quite blessed as lots had it harder than we did. It has certainly made us appreciate our freedom, the blessing of a cuppa with a friend I don't think we will ever take for granted, a roof over our heads, and the importance of looking out for each other - the little phone call, a note in the post, those were the things that people loved. For us it's also made us realise, and I'm sure many others, how little we all actually need. A walk with the sun out, the birds singing, a blue sky.....or a rainy walk in the woods listening to the rain splashing on the trees as you look up – nature at its best all around us – and a reminder that awful things happen – and we have to appreciate the world around us every day, because you never know when things are going to suddenly change.

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