



This is a transcript of the video “AFC Connection Blog 12”
from Alec at in8.uk.com

See: <https://www.in8.uk.com/2019/11/do-you-really-expect-me-to-believe-that/>

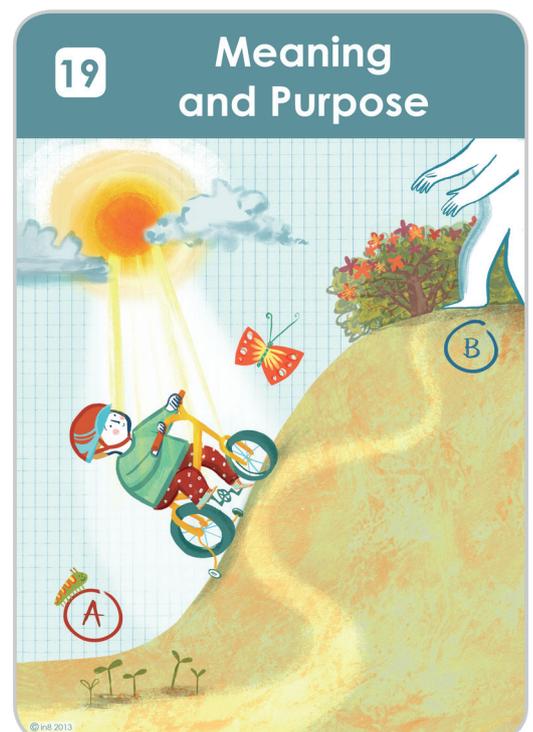
Do you really expect me to believe that?

Hello again. I don't know if you know this, but the first Wednesday in every November is National Stress Awareness Day, so I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about an event that happened back in 2002 that changed everything that I thought I knew about stress. And what started out as extreme skepticism on my part turned out to be hugely significant for me and actually shaped the next 15 years of my life.

Now this is the 12th video in a short series where I'm going back over significant events from my own life, mostly in chronological order, to illustrate why I believe I've got sufficient knowledge and experience and training to help others who are struggling with stress or struggling with life in general. And this is because although I'd never say I've got all the answers, after all, what is life, if not growth, I do feel that I've reached a level of stability and understanding where I can cope with pretty much whatever life throws at me. And I really want to help as many people as possible and help people to deal with stress and anxiety so that they can live better quality lives too.

And the card I'm using from the Anxiety Freedom Cards pack today to illustrate my message is card number 19, Meaning and Purpose. And the reason I'm using this card is because this experience I'm going to share with you actually gave me a whole new sense of meaning and purpose in my own life, and it was really important.

So let's go back to 2002. Bindi is working as a health visitor in the NHS, and I'm writing software as an independent contractor. She's helped me sell my narrowboat, which you may have read about in an earlier blog, and we've set up house together in Oxford. And at this point, we've got her two teenagers living with us, and my two teenagers are living just down the road



with my first wife. And Bindi, one day, invited me to attend a talk in London, and at first, I thought, “Well, what is this talk?” And it was about depression, and I said, “I thought this was about your health visitor work? “Why would I be interested?” And she said, “Well, you’re always talking about how people think “and how people perceive the world and how brains work. “You might find it interesting.” So because she’s got really good intuition, I went along with it, and I went down to this day-long workshop, or seminar, in London.



And I saw a man called Ivan Tyrrell stand on stage and say the most outrageous thing I’d ever heard. I was a bit affronted, to be honest. He stood up in front of 100 people, and what he said was this, “Of course, we now understand what causes depression. “We understand why people get trapped in it. “And best of all, we know how to help people overcome it “and come out of depression relatively quickly.” Now, if you’ve been following these blogs, you’ll know that after my first marriage fell apart, I became quite depressed. And my GP would never have claimed to understand depression and what causes it and how to help people. They’ll give you SSRI drugs like sertraline, citalopram, Prozac, but the idea that we understood depression was a little bit controversial, and I thought, this is snake oil. This man, he’s selling something, you know? I was very skeptical.

But you will know by now if you’ve been following these blogs that I’ve got an inquiring mind, and I wanted to understand it. I wanted to get to grips with it. And I also thought, “My goodness, if that’s true, “that’s very powerful information.” So something resonated in the way that Ivan presented his talk because he told me something about depression that I’d never heard anyone else say, and he explained exactly why it was that when I was depressed I would wake up feeling exhausted. Now, I’d never heard this explained to me, and yet, it was completely true to my own experience. I used to wake up feeling utterly exhausted, even if I’d had a reasonable number of hours sleep, and I was completely unmotivated. I couldn’t do anything. I couldn’t pick up the phone. I couldn’t make decisions. I couldn’t prioritize. I couldn’t think. I’ve talked about this as an earlier one.

So I went back to see a second talk in London a week or two later, and I learnt more. And it was Ivan again, and he was talking more about these topics, and there were more resonances, things that I knew to be true from my own experience, so it kind of had more credibility. At that time, my work was stagnating a little bit. I was writing software. And you might remember in the blog where I talked about why I’d never been unemployed, when I was about 15, I looked around and thought, “What can I do to earn a living? “What kind of opportunities are there “for someone who thinks the way I do?” And I chose electronics at the time because it was happening. It was growing. I knew that I had an interest in it, and I knew that I could do well at it. And I chose electronics, and that was the degree that I studied. And that’s how I got into engineering and then eventually into software. But actually, I always wanted to work with people. And when I realized that Ivan Tyrrell was telling me how to help people who were struggling with depression, a little light bulb went off and I kind of thought, “Wow!” Or went on, let’s say. I thought: Wow, this is a really powerful tool. If this is true, then I could use it to help so many people. So many people I know struggle with anxiety, with stress, with depression, and if there’s a real clear model for understanding it, then what a fantastic tool to be able to apply. And I’m a tool user. Electronics was a tool, software was a tool. But an understanding of how the brain works, and an understanding of how depression works, what a powerful tool that would be.

So my software work had stagnated because it had become very compliance-oriented. In fact, I wrote a program that took me two weeks to write, and I spent 10 months trying to get it approved, trying to get the paperwork through the quality assurance department. And they were being kinda draconian, and it was breaking my heart because I couldn’t do my work, really. So I was looking for something new, and I was also looking for something that was scalable because at that time, I was working long hours, through choice. There was a lot of work to be done, and I was well paid for it, but I was very aware that if I was working five, six days a week at the moment, as I got older I

wanted to be able to scale down. I wanted to do five days, four days, three days, and in my 90s, maybe one day a week. But software was not ever going to allow that. If you were any good, they wanted you seven days a week, really, and if you were average, they didn't want you at all. So there was no gradation, if you like, and I wanted something that I could... I didn't want to suddenly find that I was suddenly out of work because I wasn't prepared to work six days a week. I was looking for something new. I was looking for a new sense of meaning and purpose.



And realising that Ivan was actually holding a nugget of gold in front of me gave me a strong motivation to drop everything that I was doing and retrain as a psychotherapist, and that's what I did. And later on, using these tools, it took a couple of years to learn what I needed to learn and to train and to qualify. But a couple of years after that, I remember seeing a client who was struggling with depression.

His name was Tim. He won't mind me sharing his name. He's been very grateful for the help I gave him. When I first met him, he wouldn't look me in the eye. He was staring at the floor. He hadn't really spoken to anyone other than his wife in two years because he'd gone through some traumatic experiences that had really closed him down, and he wasn't interacting with the world. He wasn't working. He was in a really awful place, and he'd almost lost his voice. And I applied what I'd learned, what I knew, from the Human Givens training, and in as few as five sessions, Tim came back to life, and he engaged with life, and he never looked back. In fact, he said that the breathing exercises that I'd taught him had saved his life. And after five sessions, he was ready to go back to work. He was energetic. He was full of enthusiasm. He was back to his old self. And that blows me away that we have the knowledge to be able to help people like that. Now, everybody's got their own journey, and not everyone has such a dramatic turnaround, but it really made me realize that this is a true calling, and it works.

So, anyway, what's the teaching in this? The teaching is there are nuggets of gold out there, but you have to go looking for them, and sometimes you have to scabble through the dirt to find them. I wasn't expecting to find a nugget of gold when I went to this talk, but there was Ivan telling me the most outrageous thing, and it turned out to be true. And so I would say that having a sense of meaning and purpose is absolutely crucial. If you know why you're getting out of bed every morning, the rest is easy. And my meaning and purpose now is to spread these ideas as far as I can in order to help as many people as possible.

So if this makes sense to you, if you find it inspiring or helpful, please could I ask you to comment below. Scroll down and leave a comment or share it or like it. I want to reach as many people as I can. I've been through depression. I know how awful it is. I now know that there are tools out there that really do work and that help people like Tim. So if you interact with this video, then it will help me to reach more people and help more people. So please scroll down, leave a comment, and whatever else you're doing, don't forget to keep breathing.

Thank you.

