

Sunday the 16th September 2018.

This morning our profoundly autistic 12 year old son said 'YES drama today.'

Given that Kelly's one week drama course was 6 weeks ago, and our son rarely if ever articulates anything, illustrates the profound effect it had on him.

It was extraordinary, that week in the summer. I had deliberately stayed away for the first 4 days. Our son is usually negatively distracted by my presence anywhere.

But my elder son who also joined on the course was evangelical about what the course was doing for my youngest, he kept telling me how he was sitting with the young actors, and actively seeking them out. Curiosity got the better of me, and I came with them on the last day. When I arrived on Friday morning I was ASTONISHED. I have never, ever seen him behave the way he did. He was seeking out, sitting with and CUDDLING his new young adult pals, with whom he had obviously formed a strong bond in this short space of time. He was engaged, and inordinately happy.

I was trying to explain to my husband the significant difference in him, but it had to be seen to be believed. I cannot stress this enough, this engaged, entirely committed child was like no other version of my son I have ever seen.

He still beats his little chest to say hello and goodbye!

I have no idea what it was in those sessions which so grasped him and awoke the part of him which wants to interact. I would LOVE to talk to someone about it. I just know it was the nearest I have seen him to 'play', if that makes sense. It is certainly the most communicative I have seen him.

My eldest son was really affected by it. he is, to all intents and purposes, an only child. He loves his brother, but he doesn't have a fraternal partner in crime. That week, he felt like he did. He loved the young actors, they were the perfect age for a 14 year old boy. He didn't feel patronised, or like he was in a 'special needs' environment. [you would not believe some of the things we have done.....] He felt involved, on a level, and had some great laughs. Which is very important to our family!

We all felt joyful, and grateful for the experience. Which I will be lobbying to repeat!

Very best,

Our Family.