
Thrive

Learning from those trickier “bubble buddy” moments during lockdown

by DR KAREN JONES

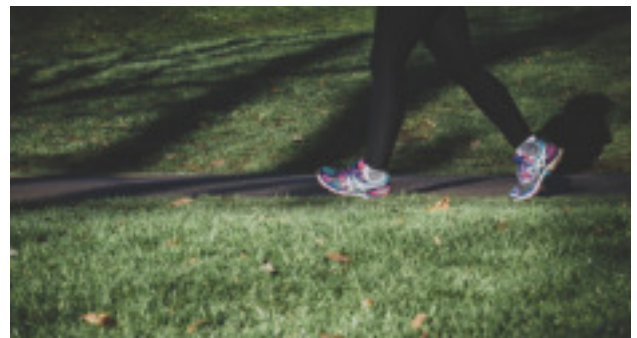
It's now been six-plus weeks since lockdown began and our bubbles were created. When announced, we tried to do the right thing and draw those nearest and dearest to us to make sure we looked after each other through this trying and scary time. However, even with the best of intentions and patience, there would be moments sent to try us!! And they did.

On a personal note, while my bubble buddies are kind, generous and generally supportive, I have found myself, let's say, challenged with some of the tantrums, sulking, and at times downright meanness displayed. I'm not talking about others' behaviour but my own!!!

Even after lengthy discussion and agreements at the beginning and throughout the lockdown to share home responsibilities - that is, washing and keeping the communal living space tidy - on many occasions these were ignored. Talk about frustrating. I tried the calm cool reminder, the more slightly noisy reminder, and finally the very loud reminder. Then came the bad behaviour I already mentioned, yet all to no lasting avail apart from feeling ashamed of myself and doing the tidying anyway.

As a clinical psychologist, I'm fully aware that clear communication is the foundation of maintaining strong relationships, so why have I clearly ignored all the sound and robust scientific advice?

It's simple. I'm human and not perfect! Who knew ☺



Secondly, these are of course my concerns. A tidy and orderly home are things that help me feel calm and provide a sense of control. Maybe the others don't see it as important as I do, or my level of “tolerably untidy” is much lower than theirs? Or maybe they like a bit of mess, it feels cosy?? Whatever it is, I now - after some vacuuming - reflect that we are all different and, when under lockdown, with day-to-day, minute-by-minute, and inch-by-inch contact, even those you love can wear you down.

SO, WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

- Go for a walk on your own. Even make an excuse that you want to ring your mother while out, if anyone wants to join you.
- Give yourself a break, be kind to yourself. We are not perfect.
- Those we love are also human, prone to faults that, especially when in very close proximity day-to-day, will get under your skin.
- It's normal, expected and a good reminder that imperfection is one of humanity's common traits. Embrace it and be kind!