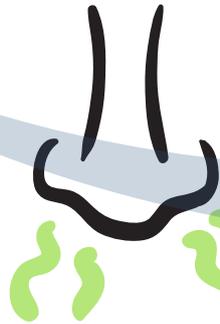


Sensory acuity for unexpected changes



By Eve Menezes Cunningham

When the unexpected happens, it is important to allow ourselves the full emotional landscape

My imagination used to be almost exclusively used for catastrophising. Thinking about what I *want* to happen and setting 'well-formed outcomes' still feels pretty radical.

Noticing how whatever we're doing is working for us (the 'sensory acuity' part) – and having the flexibility to adapt our approaches when we realise that what we're doing isn't getting us the results we want – was life-changing for me when I first trained in NLP.

While I've been coaching since 2004 and have long understood the benefits of visualisation, the past few months have compounded this for me.

Thinking about my future life on the west coast of Ireland, so close to the sea and mountains as well as being in a lovely town with loads going on, has become a daily delight. In the past, I struggled to maintain a visualisation practice.

Since first having the idea to move (five and a half months ago at time of writing), all has been moving incredibly quickly. I got a buyer for my flat within a fortnight of it going onto the market.

I'd been keeping an eye out on where I might rent when I first get to Ireland, attempting to not get too attached to a place I then wanted to buy ASAP. This can be the trickiest part, for me, of visualisation – the imagining what I want to happen and

then letting go of attachment to the outcome. I have many Pinterest boards filled with garden and décor ideas, helping me imagine my future home even more vividly.

I've been talking a good talk, telling everyone involved as I attended various leaving drinks and leaving lunches, thinking I'd be living on the Wild Atlantic Way by early August, that 'I'm not getting my hopes up. Just researching. Until we exchange contracts, I can't really do anything.'

Even so, I gave up the lease on my high street consulting room/teeny yoga studio. I was in touch with letting agents and auctioneers. I had the finances sorted in terms of setting up work to be able to accept euros, getting an Irish bank account and trial-running a small sterling-to-euro transfer via an FX company. I even had the movers booked, albeit without a moving date or address to move to.

Then, while literally making notes of questions to ask the solicitor about the contract I was about to sign in readiness to exchange, the estate agents rang to say the buyers were withdrawing their offer because of something that they had known about since before they made their offer, three and a half months earlier.

I'm in a massively fortunate position to have a lovely home I'll remain happy in until I move, but the delay has made

me very grateful for my NLP. I've been keeping my outcome in mind while being flexible – as I wrote for the last issue, I have been making my practice as portable as possible by only taking on new clients for online or telephone work. I'm now also offering single-session therapy as well as my breakthrough coaching sessions so I don't have to continue turning away people enquiring about face-to-face work.

I've been allowing myself to feel all the feelings but my NLP helps me to keep returning to that well-formed outcome. A flying visit to my future home town last week really helped but I am sad not to be living there already.

Having said that, I believe that everything happens for a reason and am reminded of the transformative little book, *Who Moved My Cheese?* by Dr Spencer Johnson. Even though it's nearly two decades since I read it, the (spoiler alert) tail (sorry) of the mice that starved because they kept going back to where their cheese *had* been instead of adapting their approach and finding more cheese elsewhere is sensory acuity personified.

When you think of your own life, what changes that weren't of your own making have you dealt with? What have you learned about yourself when dealing with change? What supports you in adapting to life and finding new sources of whatever your 'cheese' might be? ●