



Dear Reader

Let's Talk... Lockouts, Chasing Squirrels and Getting Real

Happy Wednesday!

You know those days you look back on and think, honestly, you couldn't write it? Well, I had a couple of those this week.

I had plans. Proper plans. Plans mapped out on my new whiteboard with coloured pens and Post-It notes in assorted sizes, because nothing says "I've got my life together" like colour-coded stationery.

Sunday evening started well enough. I had the apartment to myself and some peace and quiet. Then Mr B needed to go out.

Well he was already in a mood having been stuck with his lesser favourite human. He probably sensed I was itching to get back to The Plan, and, tragically for him, I wouldn't let him chase squirrels. So our toddle down the street was a touch dramatic.

As I was already outside, and in my infinite wisdom, I thought I'd nip into the garage to check on something. That one innocent decision set off a trichotomy of errors that ended with me locked out of the garage, locked out of the apartment and handing over a tidy sum to a locksmith. A locksmith who, it turns out, is freaked out by mice. And apparently we have one in the garage - which reminds me of the time I suggested a cinema trip to a new date to see Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, oblivious to the fact that he suffered from arachnophobia...but I digress.

On autopilot, I'd turned the garage handle to the lock position on the way in. Then, in full menopausal brain fog, I popped the keys on the potting station instead of in my pocket. A text pinged and I did the very thing I tell the children not to do. Instead of taking a minute, I replied instantly whilst walking out of the garage and slamming the door shut behind me.

Without the keys.

Oh, the joy when that penny dropped.

The rest of the pennies quickly followed. My car keys were inside the apartment I couldn't get into and I was supposed to be picking up my son in a few hours. Hubby was a 90-minute drive away and would have to abandon his dinner plans to rescue me, all because I'd been, frankly, a bit daft. None of my friends who are happy to have dogs in their homes were picking up and my phone was on 18% battery power and depleting.

Fast forward to Monday when I had another plan.

Hubby would walk Mr B so that I could be at my desk by 8am, and then leave him with me before heading out to work. I could work while Mr B happily snoozed on the sofa by my desk and I would see to the workmen coming to fix the property drains.

Simple, seamless and, dare I say it, colour-coded.

Well, that didn't go to plan either. Hubby decided he wanted to be here when the workmen arrived, which meant I went on an hour's walk with Mr B, nursing my irritation that, after losing the previous evening to 'the great lockout', I wasn't getting to The Plan any time soon.

My only consolation was that during our walk I could grab a killer coffee and pastry from the lovely local bakery.

It turns out that the bakery is closed on a Monday.

Would someone please just cut me a break!

I had also underestimated the noise and vibration of the drilling from the workman which set off the intruder alarm in the apartment below. Loudly. The neighbours, wisely, were out. Then the car alarms on the street joined in, one by one, like they were goading me on purpose.

So, have I got to The Plan as I sit here writing this? No. No, I haven't. I haven't even got to the second colour on the whiteboard.

But, you may be surprised to hear that I'm actually OK about it. Because last week I got real about what tasks I needed to do on each weekday, and I wrote it all down. In doing that, I'd already accepted that Mondays and Tuesdays would be my flexible days.

Wednesdays and Thursdays became my non-negotiable full work days, because they're the days with no late after-school pick-ups, no evening activities and no racing to get dinner on the table early.

It's exactly the same when you're entertaining at home. When everything you need to pull together is whizzing around your head at 200 miles an hour, of course it feels stressful. And that's the point where so many people give up and decide they just can't do it.

So write it down. Make a plan. Be realistic about what you can achieve in the weeks before. Don't choose to host a four-course dinner party if you haven't got time to prep ahead and stash a few dishes in the freezer. But don't avoid having people over either because you don't think you've got the time. There's always a way to make it work, even if that means keeping things simple.

If you're still not convinced, then my Power Hour for the Reluctant Host is where we sit down and turn the chaos into a plan. A realistic one that works around the school run, the dog and whatever else life chucks at you that week.

I can't stop car alarms or open your local bakery on a Monday, but I can help slow down the thoughts spinning around your head.

Take a look at The Power Hour [here](#).

Until next time.

Much Love,

Evie x