



ONE LAST STEP FOR  
YOU, ONE GIANT LEAP  
FOR THEM

**A NO NONSENSE GUIDE TO  
LELLING THEM GO  
WITHOUT LETTING THEM FALL**



BY

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# INTRODUCTION

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Supporting your teen or older child as they step into employment isn't just important; it is a make-or-break moment for both of you. Yet for so many parents, this transition feels like you have fought your way through one battle only to find yourself thrown back to the start, stuck in a fog of uncertainty, pressure, and no clear path forward, a constant gray area where nothing feels settled no peace, no calm, and no helping hand in sight.

What if it didn't have to be this way? What if this phase, tough as it is, could feel manageable rather than overwhelming? What if instead of stress and pressure, you had the tools, clarity, and support, not just for them, but for yourself too?

This book shares my experiences and challenges from raising neurodivergent children over the past twenty years. It blends honest reflections with practical coaching advice to help cut through the noise and focus on what works, facing the raw reality head-on, and equipping you with no-nonsense strategies to navigate this chaos with grit, empathy, and a clear plan. Because the truth is, this transition is brutal, but you don't have to do it alone, and it doesn't have to break you.

I have been through the trenches, from primary school battles to diagnosis, right through to the challenge of employment, so I know what it is like to lie awake at night, worrying, wondering and crying silently to yourself, what the future holds for your child. Then no sooner have you got through the school years, they are classed as adults, what little support and resources you had disappear and they are expected to leap into adulthood, into employment, into a world that barely made room for them as children, let alone now, without any proper support or guidance.

I've lived that quiet panic, watching other parents' kids move steadily forward while mine stayed stuck, misunderstood, and utterly drained from trying to squeeze into boxes they were never built for.

When your child hasn't been in school and has no academic qualifications, there is no roadmap to follow. No clear path to employment. Instead, there are endless Google rabbit holes and services that promise support but deliver disappointment. Many of these so-called support systems cause more harm than good, leaving both you and your child feeling more isolated than before.

You find yourself alone again, navigating your child's declining mental health while facing the harsh transition between services that take no responsibility for the next steps. The endless job searching and applications which are designed for neurotypical candidates. More systems that were never made to be inclusive. Meanwhile, you carry both your heartache and your child's potential, knowing there must be a better way forward, even when no one else seems to see it.

I created this guide because I desperately needed something like it back then, a brutally honest, no-bullshit account from a mother who has been exactly where you are. Someone who has made it through a life nobody chose, thrown into more storms and heartache than you can imagine. But through it all, that life shaped me into someone stronger, fiercely independent, and ready to take no shit.

This guide is for you, the parent/carer, because your role remains incredibly important. You are still their anchor, their safe harbour. But it is your child who needs to step into the driver's seat now, while you navigate the delicate shift to passenger.

I will guide you through the key transitions into adulthood with raw honesty and carefully crafted coaching prompts designed to cut through the noise. These prompts will help you challenge the limiting beliefs and unpick the deeply embedded patterns that no longer serve either of you.

Sometimes, the hardest part isn't helping them change, it's allowing ourselves to do the same.

# PREFACE

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I remember hitting this stage, the dreaded transition to adulthood, and, honestly, it scared the hell out of me. How were they ever going to get a job or be independent?

They were barely out of bed before lunchtime, hadn't left the house in what felt like forever, had zero sense of how the 'real world' worked, and after five years at home, their communication skills were... let us just say, "specialist."

The worries were endless.

So, there I was again, after barely surviving the nightmare that was the education system, facing Round Two: adulthood and employment.

With no guidance, no support, and no one getting it, I did what any battle-worn, fiercely determined parent would do. I stopped waiting for a miracle and started building my own damn bridge.

I got down to the gritty business of creating real, no-nonsense employment skills that made sense for them.

While they had not been given the chance to gain a formal academic education, they possessed remarkable personal strengths and interests that proved far more valuable. By focusing on these natural talents during their recovery journey, I identified unique skills that could be transferred effectively to various workplace settings.

Their specific abilities in model making, gaming, love of horses, and exceptional visual and cognitive memory became the foundation for exploring meaningful employment

opportunities that aligned with who they truly are.

This strengths-based approach not only supported their recovery but opened doors that traditional educational paths might have overlooked. I did not know exactly what I was doing at first, but I was determined not to let them fall through yet another gap. They had missed so much already. I was bloody determined my kids were not going to be written off, not after everything they had been through. They deserved more than just survival; they deserved a future where their unique abilities would be recognised and valued.

Fast forward to today: they are both settled in full-time meaningful employment with employers who have embraced their differences and adapted to meet their needs. My daughter works for the UK's leading supplier of Special Effects Costumes to the film and entertainment industry, where her creative skills and attention to detail have made her a valued team member.

My son is working for a waste management company and, after just 8 months, is starting HGV training. His exceptional visual and cognitive memory, the ability to recall complex routes and spatial information, are precisely the skills that make him excel in this role.

I share this glimpse into what is possible not to suggest the path was easy, but to offer hope and strength to those in similar situations. There absolutely is life after the challenges of the school years. While accepting that your child may follow a different educational path and their journey may take longer than their peers, remember that these detours are not dead ends; they are alternate routes to fulfilment. Your child's unique abilities are not deficits but different forms of brilliance waiting for the right opportunity to shine.

Trust in their strengths, advocate fiercely for adaptations that highlight rather than hide these abilities, and believe in possibilities beyond traditional measures of success. The world needs diverse minds and talents, your child's included, and sometimes the most extraordinary contributions come from those who travelled the least conventional paths.



# WHO AM I?

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I am you - a mother blessed with children who needed our strength, courage, and determination to see them through some of the darkest times.

Someone once said to me, "Children choose their parents." Looking back at the last 20 years, I can, with pride and deep self-reflection, absolutely agree. This challenging journey has revealed strengths within me I never knew existed, just as it will for you.

I created Spectrum7 to be everything I wish we'd had. No parent should have to navigate these turbulent waters alone. The holistic, person-centered support, coaching, and mentoring services I've developed bring together what was once fragmented across multiple providers into one accessible, empowering space.

Over the last 20 years, I unknowingly coached my children through life, adapting to their needs. They needed different approaches and strategies, and I learned to stop fighting their differences. Instead, I focused on strength-based solutions and encouraged them to make their own choices. That shift became the backbone of what I can only describe as transformative.

Traditional support services often miss the mark, relying on communication styles that create more barriers than bridges. Coaching, when done with a genuine understanding of neurodivergent thinking patterns, honors different perspectives as strengths rather than

problems to "fix."

I deliberately include parents and carers in the process because you are not just bystanders, you are essential navigators.

My coaching is different as I combine it with mentoring, think of it as a hand reaching back to pull you forward through unfamiliar terrain.

This unique combination provides neurodivergent individuals with tailored, practical strategies alongside empathetic guidance drawn from lived experience. Where traditional approaches often leave gaps, this integrated support creates a continuous pathway of understanding.

Like that steadying hand guiding you through fog, my coaching-mentoring approach empowers neurodivergent individuals to build confidence, navigate challenges with proven strategies, and achieve personal and professional success without having to stumble through the darkness alone.

Spectrum7 is the support I wish someone had extended to my family, now reaching forward to yours.

# FROM HOLDING ON, TO HOLDING SPACE

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## WHAT IF I FAIL THEM?

Moving into adulthood can feel even scarier than the school years.

Back then, you had IEPs, EHCPs, appointments, and professionals (even if they were not always helpful).

You had structure, even if it was flawed.

Now? It's you, them, and a whole lot of unknowns.

You have carried so much, fought for every inch of support, advocated, educated, and protected them for years. And now you are supposed to let go?

Of course, you fear failing them, it's a natural response after living in fight or flight mode for so long but let me normalise that and also reframe what failure means.

This is not about perfect parenting. It is about trusting the foundation you have already laid, and adjusting your role from protector to partner, from advocate to ally.

What if your role now is not to carry them, but to walk beside them, at their pace, their way?

That question alone can shift the pressure you feel. You are not failing them by stepping back, you're empowering them by creating space.

So, what does support look like now? Get curious, not controlling. Instead of asking, "How do I fix this?" ask, "How can I create the right environment for them to try?"

Support is less about what you can do for them and more about holding a safe space while they figure it out.

Challenge the narrative of failure.

"If they don't get a job in 6 months, I've failed."

"If they stay at home, I've failed."

Who said that is a failure? Is that your voice, or society's?

Reflect on your wins.

Coaching is not just a forward focus; it is also about acknowledging growth. What have you already done that you once thought was impossible?

Remember: Growth happens at the edge of comfort.

That goes for you, too.

Letting go can feel like a loss, but it is leadership. The quiet kind, the kind that trusts.

Practice compassion for both of you. You are not "getting it wrong." You are navigating uncharted waters with love, persistence, and deep care.

That is not failure. That is courage.

# THE FEAR YOU DON'T SAY OUT LOUD

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## EMOTIONAL BOUNDARIES & SUPPORTING WITHOUT SMOTHERING

Let them fail safely. It is how they will learn and grow, it is not your job to carry the weight anymore.

Time for a truth bomb: You are not their forever safety net.

That might sound harsh, but stay with me because what I really mean is this: When things get stormy. You are their launch pad - lighthouse - their anchor. But you are not their shadow, their spokesperson, or their personal crisis management team. Not anymore. It is time to step back, not out of their life, but out of the way.

If you keep running interference, answering for them, fixing every wobble, rushing to smooth out every bump, they will never build the confidence or resilience they need to do it themselves.

I get it. I have been there. We know how scary the world is for someone who does not fit its mould. The last thing you want is for them to suffer, fail, or feel inadequate. Again. But for them to grow, they need to fail. Safely. On their terms. With you nearby, just being their anchor.

When we hover, we send a message even if we do not mean to, because we do not quite trust them to handle it, that we are bracing for disaster, because it is all we have known. They feel that, and they internalise it.

They think, "If Mum/Dad/carer is worried, maybe I really can't do this." For some, it is the excuse they need not try; for others, it sends a message that they will never be good enough.

What if we shifted the vibe by saying? "I trust you to manage this. I am here if you need backup, not to take over, just to walk beside you."

### **Good Boundaries Are Not Abandonment**

Let us talk about emotional boundaries, not the dramatic 'cut them off' kind, but the healthy, quiet kind that says:

"This feeling belongs to you, and I trust you to sit with it."

"This mistake is yours to learn from, and I won't rob you of that lesson."

"This moment is uncomfortable, and that's ok. Growth lives there."

Boundaries do not make you a bad parent.

They make you a brave one.

Let us not sugar-coat it, it is going to feel weird at first. Unnatural, even.

You will watch them procrastinate like it is an Olympic sport. Panic over things you could solve in five seconds, even completely fluff it in a way that has you biting your tongue.

And every fiber of your being will scream: "Just let me fix it!"

"Say this, do that, oh for heaven's sake, give me the phone!"

But here's the thing... You don't say anything. And they will look at you, baffled. Possibly betrayed.

You are not abandoning them. You are giving them something far more powerful: trust in them that it is going to be ok.

But pause, breathe, and ask yourself:

"What will they learn if I step in now?"

"What might they discover if I let them ride this out?"



## What Does Smothering Look Like?

Let us not pretend we haven't all done one or more of these:

- Speaking for them during a phone call or an appointment
- Doing tasks, they could do themselves because it's quicker
- Repeating questions like "Did you send that email yet?" 17 times in a row
- Jumping in when they pause, instead of letting the silence stretch
- Emotionally spiralling for them because we can't handle watching them struggle.



## Supporting without smothering might look like...

- Sitting with the silence and trusting they will find the words.
- Letting the email go unsent and waiting until they bring it up.
- Asking open questions like "How would you handle that?" instead of telling them what to do.
- Watching them wobble, knowing that confidence is built, not gifted.

Try This Coaching Prompt:

"What am I holding that isn't mine to carry anymore?"

Say it - Write it. You will be surprised how impactful this is.

## **What comes next?**

Real Growth, confidence that's earned and stronger self-esteem that doesn't rely on handholding and the beautiful unfolding of a new kind of relationship, where you walk beside each other, not in front.

You are not abandoning them; you are empowering them. By stepping back, you are stepping up as a parent.

You helped, without hovering, without smothering and without losing yourself in the process.

You're giving them a powerful message.

"I trust you with your life, not just to survive it, but to shape it. I believe in who they are, not just who they might become. Even when it is uncertain. Especially when it is hard."

# HELPING WITHOUT HOVERING

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## PRACTICAL WAYS TO STAY INVOLVED WITHOUT TAKING OVER

Communication that builds confidence, not dependency. Be there but not too there.

The line between supporting and suffocating is so blurry, it may as well be drawn in invisible ink.

You want to help. Of course you do. You have spent years reading between the lines, filling in the gaps, and stepping in before the wheels came off. That kind of hyper-awareness becomes second nature, a sixth sense. And now you are supposed to step back and switch off all these acquired senses?

It is maddening. Like having to assemble IKEA furniture without the instructions. But here is the thing: real support, the kind that builds confidence rather than dependency, requires restraint. It requires you to stop solving and start coaching.

I understand this now because I didn't back then. I didn't have the coaching mindset, the boundaries, or the language I have now.

If I had had the coaching skills I now teach, I would have shown up differently, not better, just more resourced, and less burnt out.

### **What Does “Helping Without Hovering” Actually Mean?**

It means:

- Staying available, but not insistent
- Asking questions instead of offering fixes.
- Offering support without sliding into control.
- Accepting progress that looks nothing like your idea of “done”.
- Be intentional with your presence.

Coaching over control. How to Shift the Dynamic.

Instead of saying:

“Have you done your CV yet?”

Try:

“What’s the first step you would feel comfortable starting with?”

Instead of:

“Just call them, it’s not that hard!”

Try:

“What part of making the call feels hardest right now?”

Instead of:

“You need to...”

Try:

“Would you like some ideas, or would you rather try it your way?”

This shift takes the pressure off you being the fixer and lets them take ownership, even if it is a bit wobbly at first.

## **Be There, But Not Too There**

There is an art to showing up just enough. Think of yourself as their roundabout, not a satnav. You are not barking directions, you are simply there to help them choose a route when they are ready.

Here is what that can look like:

### **Ways to Be Supportive Without Taking Over:**

- Set a weekly check-in, not a daily interrogation!
- Sit nearby, but let them press send themselves
- Offer resources, not rules
- Let the silence stretch; it teaches them to fill the space
- Use “I’m here if you want to talk” as a go-to phrase
- Celebrate effort, not just outcomes

A coaching prompt for you:

“Am I stepping in because I’m uncomfortable, or because they need me?”

That question hits hard, I know, but it’s one of the most powerful things you can ask yourself.

Why this question matters.

When you hover, you might feel helpful, but what your young person hears is:

You still do not think I can do this.”

When you hold space, offer encouragement, and stay nearby without rescuing, what they start to believe is:

“I’ve got this. Even if I mess it up, I know how to come back from it.” And that belief? It is gold. It is what builds confidence. It is earned. It is internal. And it grows best in the space you leave for it.

So yes, stay involved.

Be the calm voice, the open door, the gentle “You’ve got this,” not the engine running behind them every step of the way.

# DON'T BE A NAGGING NORMA

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## WHEN TO SHUT UP AND LET GO (WITH LOVE)

Nagging Norma (noun, informal)

/ˈnɑːɪŋ nɔːmə/ Definition:

The well-meaning but overbearing inner voice of a parent who just can't help themselves.

The version of you that your younger, cool self said you would never become, and yet, here you are, nagging your 19-year-old to look for a job, do something, get out of bed!

Common traits:

- Repeat the same question until it becomes white noise
- Finishes their child's sentences (incorrectly, but confidently)
- Thinks muttering "I'm not saying anything, but..." is still saying something

I will lovingly deliver the hard truth: They will not learn to trust their own decisions if Nagging Norma is still doing commentary like a backseat driver with a megaphone.

You have to learn when to speak up and when to shut up!

Why is it so hard to let go? Because you have done everything. For years. You have been the memory bank, the manager, the motivator. They have been your career, and now they have reached adulthood, you are supposed to just... stop?

The silence feels unnatural.

Their procrastination makes you twitchy.

And their confidence? Sometimes it looks more like clueless optimism.

But here is what I know, and I say this as someone who absolutely used to hover like a well-meaning helicopter in a cardigan.

Nagging does not speed them up; it slows them down.

Nagging is anxiety in disguise, my anxiety, my worry, my control.

### Coaching over commentary

Let us try something bold, unnatural.

Don't say it.

Whatever you were about to remind them of again, just don't. Not because you have stopped caring, but because you are giving them a chance to start caring for themselves. Let the silence hang.

Let the discomfort bubble up like a passive-aggressive group chat and then... do nothing.

No sighing. No hovering. No, dramatically muttering into your tea. Just sit in a glorious, twitchy pause. That pause? That is where ownership begins.

That awkward quiet? That is where confidence gets a chance to say you're not vanishing, you're not being cold, you're simply creating the space they need to step up on their terms.

Even if their process involves snacks, six YouTube breaks, and asking ChatGPT how to draft an email for the fourth time.

So next time the urge to comment kicks in, try this instead:

"I trust you. I am here if you need me, but I know you have got this."

And then?

Put the mug down. Sit on your hands if you must.

You are doing the work by not doing the work.

Here is what that might sound like:

Instead of:

"You still haven't applied for that job!"

Try:

(Nothing.)

Then, when they bring it up:

"How are you feeling about it now?"

Instead of:

"You've got to stop putting things off, just get on with it!"

Try:

"What's making this feel tricky to start?"

You are not ignoring them. You are inviting reflection, not reaction.

The Nagging Trap Checklist:

Tick any that feels a bit too real:

- Reminding them of a task while they are doing the task
- Ending every conversation with "Don't forget to..."
- Finishing their sentences... because you already know what they are going to say
- Feeling anxious if they have not updated you on their to-do list in twenty-four hours
- Re-reading this chapter while side-eying them, ready to comment on yet another thing they aren't doing

If you are nodding right now, congratulations, you are officially human and you care deeply.

Sometimes, the most powerful thing you can do for them is get out of their way.

Let them mess it up

Let them figure it out

Let them surprise you.

You will still be there, but not as the fixer.

As the trusted presence who stepped back, so they could step forward.

What if they are not ready?

### **Reality Checks vs Unrealistic Expectations**

They are not on your timeline; they are on theirs. And that's ok.

Finding peace in the in-between shows signs of progress that aren't always visible

Learning what 'letting go' looks like in day-to-day life and learn to live with uncertainty.

# BEYOND ADVOCACY FINDING YOURSELF AFTER THE FIGHT

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## THIS TRANSITION ISN'T JUST ABOUT THEM. IT'S ABOUT YOU.

The truth is, it can feel unnerving. After years of being in crisis-response mode, you are no longer the first call.

You are no longer at the front of the room, bracing for another meeting that could break or save them.

Part of you is relieved, part of you is grieving, and part of you, if you are really honest, is a bit... lost.

You have been in survival mode for years. When you are an advocate parent, your own identity gets buried under logistics, fear, fire-fighting, and relentless stress. Your thoughts revolve around their needs, not yours.

Somewhere along the way, you probably stopped asking yourself:

- What do I enjoy?
- What do I need?
- Who am I?

And now, in this strange and quiet space, those questions echo.

You have been orbiting someone else's survival for so long now, you have the fear of stepping back into the world and embracing change.

Ask yourself.

Who am I when I am not fixing, managing, or advocating for someone else?

It's okay if you do not know yet. You might feel flat or unsure how to fill the time you fought so hard to have.

That's normal because identity doesn't snap back into place like a spring-loaded toy the minute your calendar clears.

Start small, reconnect with the things that you like doing.

Maybe it's writing or walking in absolute silence. Maybe it's sitting in a café alone and enjoying the radical experience of not having to explain anything to anyone.

You are still needed; it is just a different need.

You will always be a steady presence in their life. You will always be the one who believed in them long before anyone else did. But you are allowed to stop living in fight mode.

You are allowed to have boundaries.

You are allowed to have goals that are yours.

You are allowed to rebuild and find yourself.

And by doing this, it helps them too.

Because when they see you living, not just holding it all together, they begin to understand that adulthood is not just about stress, sacrifice and work.

It can be about rediscovery, having options and finding joy again.

# LIFE AFTER FULL-TIME ADVOCACY

## MY JOURNEY

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No one warns you that raising a neurodivergent child means stepping into a hundred hidden roles without pay, training, or even a thank-you. Here is a raw, real-world list that reflects the unseen CV of a parent navigating the world of hidden disabilities and neurodiversity:

### Key Skills:

- Advocate for special needs.
- Legal specialist / part-time barrister (especially reading EHCPs, tribunals, and directing "friendly fire" from clueless systems).
- Emotional support vessel / calm-in-the-storm coach.
- Professional crisis manager (including meltdowns, shutdowns, and misdiagnoses).
- SENCO, TA, teacher, and behaviour analyst.
- Speech & Language assistant (and translator of non-literal or non-verbal communication).
- Occupational therapist (with sensory toolkit in handbag).
- Full-time admin for appointments, reports, referrals, and chasing people who "forgot" to email back.
- Social story builder/life skills instructor.
- Expert negotiator (with everyone from CAMHS to clueless extended family).
- Self-taught mental health first aider (with bonus panic-mode de-escalation skills).
- Public relations manager for when your child is misunderstood, judged, or excluded.
- Personal cheerleader, even when exhausted.
- Residential care planner / "future proofing" researcher.
- Job matchmaker and advocate for inclusive employment.
- CV writer, job coach, and mock interviewer.
- Daily resilience generator (fueled by caffeine and stubborn love).
- Punch bag (emotionally speaking, for all the times they needed a safe place to fall apart).
- Expert in survival in systems not built for your child, while still holding space for their potential, every single day.
- Boundary setter, overthinker, hope holder.
- And somehow... parent, still, always and first.



## Finding My Way Back to Work

In late 2019, a friend approached me about a job with a local supported employment service. The role was a work coach for people with disabilities.

Initially, I thought, "Wow, this seems like the ideal job." I hadn't worked for 5 years, yet I knew I could do it; it was similar to what I was already doing for my children.

When I eventually applied, I had to overcome 3 months of battling constant self-doubt:

"What if my children fall apart again?"

"I'm not ready."

"What do I wear?"

"I can't do this!"

The excuses were endless until I thought, "Sod it. If nothing else, I've updated my CV and had the experience of an interview."

Writing my CV was harder than standing in court justifying my son's needs. Why? Because it was about me. Who the fuck am I? I'm forty years old, what the fuck have I actually done with my life?

And then it hits, the impostor. You know the one. The sneaky parasite that hijacks your logic and turns every bit of confidence into doubt. Just when you finally muster the courage to stick your head above water, it crashes down on you like a wave sent straight from the pit of despair.

I had all the skills listed above, but I felt underqualified and who would understand what I've been through? I convinced myself I had no value to offer the employer. For weeks, I procrastinated over whether I would ever be able to return to work. I doubted everything outside of my abilities to fight everyone who dared to challenge me or offer a 'well-meaning' opinion.

I had been in 'fight or flight' for so long that the fear of change was immense. Then I realised I had done this for my children, I used their strengths as transferable skills, I just had to do the same for myself, and that endless list of skills I had obtained over the last decade became the foundation of my CV.

My CV wasn't the most encouraging document to read at forty. It showed a scattering of jobs, none lasting more than a few years, and a blank "interests" section. A true representation of giving everything to my children to ensure their futures were not bleak. But the key skills section was strong.

On March 9, 2020, I started my new job. Seventy-two hours later, we were in lockdown! I had just dragged myself out of isolation for the last 5 years, and now I was back in it. You could not make this up.

As a friend says, "always look on the bright side of life". And one advantage was that while everyone was losing their heads:

- "Omg, how will we cope not seeing another human?"
- "What do you mean I can't come and go as I please?"
- "Who bought all the f\*\*king toilet roll?"

The world now has an inside view of what life can be like when your children don't look disabled.

We made it through the next 2 years. My daughter returned to her work, and my son was now supported by an EOTAS (education other than at school), so life was moving forward in a good way.

## **Professional Growth and New Challenges**

I was able to focus on the job and took the opportunity to apply for a Team Manager position eighteen months later. Ballsy, I know, but there were gaps in the service, especially for young adults, and I knew I could make a difference.

I got the job! Over the next two years, I transformed the young people's service. Eventually, I wanted to do the same for adults, so I moved teams and built a service that fitted the community. I loved my job. I was making real change for those who would otherwise have fallen through the gaps.

But I had done my job too well. I had ruffled my manager's feathers with results that outshone her own. Yet somehow, I was the problem. After one too many twisted attempts to devalue me, I was done.

I'd been through enough. I had fought the bullies who shamed me for being a single parent, faced the headmaster who said, "They don't look disabled" and took on the county council when I was told my son wasn't entitled to a specialist provision. Was I really going to take this crap from another bully?

No fucking way. I walked away from financial security, a job I loved, a team I respected, and a community I'd fought to support.

I will not be bullied. Not again.

I refuse to be defined by anyone who tries to diminish me. My worth is not up for negotiation. My value is inherent and unconditional. I don't need validation from those who want to tear me down.

I believe things happen for a reason. At the time, we can't always see it, and sometimes we must ride the storm to emerge stronger when it passes.

Everything I've experienced over the last twenty years has led me to build Spectrum7. This idea has been incubating, evolving, and morphing for a long time, patiently waiting for the right moment. And that moment is now.

It was not until I was free of that toxic environment that, for the first time in years, I did not have to be in fight or flight mode, I had taken my boxing gloves off and I was no longer restrained by corporate bullshit or controlled by a laptop delivering never-ending demands.

My family's journey is the reason I built Spectrum7. You, who are facing similar challenges, are the purpose.

# THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING GOOD

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## Who Am I?

I'm still you: a tough, determined parent who works hard, puts everyone before themselves, and battles that parasite known as imposter syndrome (or as a friend calls them, "roommates").

I'm forty-six, and I can honestly say I still don't have all the answers, and that's ok. I'm on a new journey now, building a business driven by integrity, passion, and lived experience. I'm here to deliver real results without the bullshit for parents and carers of children whose unique differences deserve to be nurtured and celebrated..

## A Message to You

I hope my experiences have given you the strength to accept that your journey may not follow the expected path. There will be ups and downs, but challenges will pass. Remember that the school years are minute compared to adulthood, so focus on a day at a time and keep an eye on the horizon, as one sun sets another arises and in time your child will be on their way and, you will be discovering a new stronger version of yourself who maybe one day will pass on your experiences and knowledge to others.

Your experiences are not just struggles to overcome; they are qualifications that prepare you for possibilities you may not yet imagine.

*"The strongest people aren't those who never struggle, but those who keep going despite it."*

Vivienne x

