

## A time to reflect

As Autumn creeps upon us, the earth bares its fruits and curls up to rest and rejuvenate over the Winter. This can also be a time when we start to notice the stresses and strains that we have been carrying. Clients often come to therapy when they become aware that life is not going quite as they want it to, that they no longer feel the spring in their step that they once did. Perhaps their relationships are unfulfilling, or they may not be getting the recognition that they are hoping for at home, school or work; maybe they feel stuck or anxious. Generally speaking, we are not in a position to change the world around us; however, we do have control over ourselves.



Our behaviours serve a purpose, but they may not always be the most effective way of achieving what we need. For some of us, getting angry served to keep painful experiences away; for others, being subservient meant that we were not noticed and, therefore, avoided uncomfortable situations. The *effects* of the defensive behaviours can become problematic as we grow up: our angry outbursts are not acceptable in school, with loved ones or in the workplace; we are so reserved that others think we are disinterested or not contributing to the team. However, the *reasons* that such behaviours developed in the first place are often not recognised.

Counselling can help us to understand *what* is getting in our way, and *how* or *why* such thought patterns and / or behaviours developed in the first place. Understanding this then gives us a *choice* for the future. It can free us from the stories that we constantly re-play in our own heads and allow us to live in the moment, appreciating what is, right here, right now.

Counselling is not a magic wand. Any change is hard work. Developing new thought patterns and behaviours is as hard as developing any other new skill, such as learning to play a

musical instrument, or learning to drive a car. As with learning other new skills, the rewards can be plentiful and lead to a more satisfying life experience.

Karen offers psychotherapeutic counselling to children and adults and can be contacted on 07497 679477 or via Riverside Wellbeing.