

LASTWORD

The age of contentment

to sit it out in my lifejacket indulging in a share bag of luxury crisps and Classic FM.

I've abandoned any fashion-related inhibitions and adopted what's coined 'dopamine dressing' – this includes donning a bright lime green fuzzy coat nicknamed 'The Kermit' and footwear from a collection labelled 'shoes my husband hates'. I jest, he's simply not keen on Dr Martens, despite the kindness they offer one's metatarsal.

Life goals now include attending Glyndebourne Festival, owning a modest motorhome and finally scoring enough Morrisons More card stamps to cash in for a 'free' item of lidded Pyrex. Each would undoubtedly offer a varying level of joy.

However, this clarity of mind is a relatively new concept. If someone asked me to re-live the torment of my 20s, I would wholeheartedly, and perhaps not so politely, tell them to do one. Oh the drama and uncertainty – why does no one warn you that it'll be one of the most ricochetingly ridiculous times of your existence? Bouncing from one chaotic crisis to the next?

Well, that's how it was for me. The juxtaposition of living life as a fully-fledged grown-up yet having very little experience of how to do so. Plus so much change – from leaving home and working to establish a fulfilling career, to hopefully settling down and finding 'your' people. At the end of the day I had little clue about who I truly was, and it probably showed.

It's not until now, in my

late 30s, that I'm starting to understand what it takes to achieve contentment, and a contributory factor towards this has undoubtedly been therapy, which I'm not afraid to admit.

Talking to a professional has been one of the most bountiful investments I've ever made. It's allowed me to bury the skeletons residing in my closet, off-load more baggage than Heathrow's lost luggage department, and has helped steer my trajectory towards the path of self-acceptance.

However, it's also been emotionally draining and one of the toughest tasks I've ever set upon. Soul-searching isn't a pleasant amble in the park, at times it's similar to wrestling a shark while in an electrically-charged swimming pool filled with jelly cat food. It takes you to the places from your past which you'd rather poke pins in your eyes than revisit; it can be rough.

It requires a whole new level of commitment, and while I'm nowhere near perfect, my mind is now far better equipped to overcome life's undulations... albeit I'd rather avoid a riptide. I also have a huge sense of gratitude for the person I've uncovered during the process; it's been worth every penny.

So although my forehead is starting to resemble that of a shar-pei, and my hairdresser has taken to snipping greys out when I'm not looking, I'm starting to believe those who state growing old is a privilege – evidence suggests, this could be the case.

Through life experience and a conscious effort to



WITH JANINE ADAMSON

“There are so many instances where I'm reminded – despite how young I feel at heart – that I've slowly morphed into the next era of my life. While a more youthful Janine may have felt exhilarated at the prospect of a cheap wine-laced night on the tiles, the current iteration takes great pleasure from the sight of a pair of bullfinches on the garden bird feeder.

I catch myself complimenting someone's luxurious wool Berber carpet, selecting a shoe based on its bunion sympathy levels, scrutinising the thread count of bed linen (even better if it's Egyptian cotton), chastising motorists exhibiting road rage, especially if it's a Sunday. And you know the best part? I really don't give a fig.

Although I feel far from qualified to master the concept of adulthood, it would appear that I have indeed grown up. And it's the quiet confidence that comes with maturity which I'm enjoying the most.

Maintaining inner peace has become a priority – thus I proactively choose to sweat even less of the small stuff. Rather than begrudgingly say yes to a social occasion which really doesn't float my boat, I opt



As displayed by mini me, a good dose of dopamine can always be found in a snazzy outfit.

work on myself, I've gained the confidence to express who I truly am which is cathartic indeed. I'm unsure if I'm early or late to this party, but with no time to waste, I'm extremely pleased I've had this epiphany.

I never wish to seem evangelical in my musings for this column, but if you feel you're at a crossroads in your life, it might be worth opening up that conversation with someone. Either way, it's an investment which will always return. ●

YOUR EDITOR

Janine Adamson began her journalistic career writing obituaries for a local newspaper but fast found her stride within agricultural communications. Now, more than 15 years later, she finds herself at the helm of *CPM*. A proud Staffordshire girl from the Moorlands, Janine takes pride in tackling subjects which although aren't exclusively farming, affect everyone.