

LASTWORD

No such thing as can't...



WITH JANINE ADAMSON

“ Having a slightly overactive brain at times means I struggle with the concept of standing still. Not literally, more in terms of how I meander through life. As such, I can be guilty of chasing the next ‘big’ thing, goal or achievement.

Musing this at a deeper level, it's not about gratification or having a pat on the back from my peers, it's simply because I revel in testing myself. For example, why do one post-graduate qualification when you can do two, pretty much consecutively?

I regularly joke that I accumulate hobbies like kids collect Pokémon, but it's true; I can't help myself. And, as soon as there's stability in my life, I throw it all up in the air – move house, change jobs (fear not, that isn't on the cards I hope), start a new project.

Why can't this girl let herself rest?

It's not as though I can't handle being

bored – after all, I'm an only child and we specialise in keeping ourselves entertained. I spent hours

‘colouring in’ my nan's red brick garage wall with a bucket of water and an old paintbrush. Don't worry, the joke isn't lost on me.

Anyway, I recently decided to channel this restlessness into something meaningful, rather than take up life drawing or apply for my third master's degree. Having reflected, I'd also noted that in the past, I've often strived to achieve something achievable, as in, the risk of failure was reasonably low. Essentially, while these were indeed challenges, deep down I knew they were within the realms of possibility.

So instead, I assigned myself two objectives – one work-related and one personal. The aim being to boost my self-confidence and hopefully achieve something that I'd previously said no to, or believed I couldn't do.

Now, this may surprise you. While I appear an inherently positive, can-do, solutions-focussed individual, I have little self-belief. ‘Can't’ is very cosy in my personal vocabulary, certainly when I've nudged myself out of my lane.

Firstly, for my work challenge, I decided to attempt to write about

machinery; after all, I love heavy metal...

However, as CPM readers, you'll be acutely aware

that ordinarily, this wouldn't be my favourite thing to pen. In fact, I palm that section of the magazine off

onto my good and highly experienced friends Charlie and Martin. But surely as editor, I should be able to tackle such topics if I wish?

As such, I bounded off to a tractor launch open day. Other than no one knowing who I was, and wearing a completely inappropriate outfit for riding around in a field (who knew deck shoes wouldn't cut it?), I almost pulled it off. The lexicon wasn't completely foreign and while I still have to write it up, I feel it'll be okay-ish. Remind me again, what's torque? Joke!

Then, for my personal challenge, I decided to stop hiding backstage and finally make my theatrical debut. While I've assisted with makeup, costumes and prompting for years, I've never delivered a line of my own.

The reason for my reticence is I have a terrible memory – the result of a lifelong illness and the fact I'm in the throes of a certain point in a female's life. What joy! In fact, I forgot how to spell my own name recently. Not my surname, which is still reasonably new to me, but my actual first name. J...a...n...nope it's gone.

Subsequently, the thought of learning a script filled me with existential dread and so I've steered clear. But, you know what's more important to me than pandering to my own inadequacies? Helping out a friend in their hour of need. In this case, they were struggling to cast a specific part and handily, I met the demographic.

Well, I only went and did it. Just like revising for BASIS, I spent hours upon hours reciting my lines. The dog

walkers of Staffordshire must think I'm a complete lunatic, given my out-loud repetition of “This his own blame! Hath put himself from rest and must needs taste his folly”. Complete with gestures; one can only imagine.

My performance wasn't faultless, I forgot the same line twice in fact, but apparently I blended with my fellow thespians well. No one suspected it was my maiden voyage, I got away with it.

And while the high of closing night has long gone, what the experience taught me remains: it's not too late to be the person I want to be. Argh, I feel emotional writing this. If I'm honest, I've always wanted to try acting, but I never believed I could do it. Furthermore, adjusting to living with an illness made it feel even more beyond reach.

I often feel invisible – ladies, I'm sure you'll hear me here – but for that week, I wasn't. I held my space and turned that can't into a can. I don't need more random hobbies or to change significant parts of my life; I need to listen to my heart and put the fears aside. ●

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.