

Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board Manager's Blog

July 2017

Small wins along the way

April 2017 was the second anniversary of the implementation of the Care Act, which shifted the guidance on safeguarding adults to statute.

In those two years we've travelled a long way and I believe we *have* got things done, including:

- raising the profile of safeguarding adults across Norfolk
- strengthening existing networks and looking to develop new ones (see [February 2017 blog](#))
- talking more critically about what we are doing and the best way to do it (introducing a data dashboard to help us do this)
- raising the level of challenge among our partners and generally pushing the profile.

Having a plan and knowing where we are heading for is vital. As required by the statute, Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB) has a 3 year strategic plan with an annual business plan for each year ([read the strategic plan here](#)).

These documents are helpful to paint the bigger picture, but talking to colleagues, I feel there is a disconnect between this big map and what we see on the ground.

I was reminded of this during a short presentation I gave to a partner organisation recently, on the role of the Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB). In it I outlined NSAB's ambitions, as set out in the plan. These are:

People are able to live a life free from harm, where communities:

- *have a culture that does not tolerate abuse*
- *work together to prevent harm*
- *know what to do when abuse happens*

One of the audience members said that while it was very helpful to have the task ahead mapped out, it was a bit overwhelming and too big to get hold of. What they really wanted to know was, what do we do next? Yes, it can seem *too big* to get hold of, particularly when we are thinking about topics like culture.

So, it was timely to be reminded of the importance of [small wins](#) when I was re-reading some of [Oliver Burkeman's](#) columns.

Burkeman highlights the observation by the organisational theorist Karl Weick that sometimes convincing the world that you're fighting a *very serious problem* actually makes it harder to solve. In a paper called [Small Wins: Redefining The Scale Of Social Problems](#), Weick argued that perceiving challenges as huge made people seize up, which disabled *"the very resources of thought and action needed to change them"*.

Burkeman notes that breaking big challenges down into chunks isn't original advice, of course. But he mentions research findings by Amabile and Kramer that show the disproportionate relationship between the size of an achievement and the happiness it delivers. The striking conclusion is that a sense of incremental progress is vastly more important to happiness than either a grand mission or financial incentives. Small wins *"had a surprisingly strong positive effect, and small losses a surprisingly strong negative one."* (In the context of safeguarding adults, the word 'happiness' maybe a little misplaced - a sense of achievement may be better?).

Burkeman puts it neatly, saying *"the challenge is remembering to notice the smaller things you've achieved. Keep a 'done' list, as well as or instead of a to-do list"*.

So, how about the following small win? In September NSAB along with Norfolk Trading Standards and Norfolk Fire and Rescue are hosting a conference on financial abuse and scams. [Download the flyer](#) and get a partner organisation you have a link with / work with to attend. Easy. [Click here for more info](#).

Or try these [5 "small wins"](#). They are easy.

If you have your own suggestion for a 'small win', please email it to me at walter.lloyd-smith@norfolk.gov.uk.

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