Returning to Work.

Day one of going back into the office.

Conversations in my head-

“Do I need to trim my beard?”

“Who shrunk my work trousers? Surely the button has been moved? Blimey, they are tight. Could I wear my joggers?”

“Will there be a supply of biscuits? And crisps?”

“Why are my work shoes not as comfortable as my flips flops? Could I wear my flip flops to the office?”

“Why are these trousers so tight? How does material shrink in the wardrobe? I can’t bend over in case they split”

“Do I need to take biscuits? And crisps?”

“Why am I so nervous? I love my job, but I’m really nervous”

“If there’s traffic on the roads, I’m turning around and going home”

“If the kids look upset that I’m leaving, I’m going to stay at home”

“No, you need to do this. It’ll do you good to get out of the house and stop watching the world go by out of the window”

“It’ll be great to see people. I mean really see people. Not just a six inch version of them on my laptop screen”

“Do I need to wear a mask? How do I get to my office without touching anything? Do I speak with people in the office?”

“I can’t do this. I’m going to stay at home. I’ll eat biscuits, be safe and put up with six inch versions of colleagues”

Then, Benjamin my six year old speaks up;

“Daddy, you look smart today. Are you looking forward to going back into work?”

“Thanks son. Yes, I am. It will be good to try new things and be brave. I’m looking forward to getting out”

That’s it. Done deal. I am leaving the house.

As I drive down the A63 towards the office, I’m amazed by how quiet the roads are. The commute is great. Oh, how I’ve missed my morning drive. I have a purpose. I feel great.

I pull into the car park and struggle to get out of the car. Bloody trousers. Are they Benjamin’s?

I get closer to the door. How do I open it? Who has opened it before me?

I put hand gel on my hands, push my fob to the wall and open the door. Oh great, hand gel on the wall. I take a squirt.

There are arrows on the floor, directing me around the building.

I feel safe and calm.

I get upstairs and I’m ok. Well a little bit out of breath. I’ve done very little Joe Wicks in lockdown and a little too much living the good life.

I sit at my desk. My work home. It feels good.

Computer on.

Time for a brew.

A sign on the door reminds me of distancing and another tells me if the kitchen is occupied or free.

I don’t have to worry. I hardly have to think.

Kettle on, I look in the cupboards for biscuits and crisps. There are none!

I reach the end of the day. Happy. Happy, I made the effort, happy that I pushed myself. Happy that a six year gave me a push.

Will I be back tomorrow? Yes.

Will it be easier? Yes.

Will it be easy? Not just yet, but it that will come. I’m confident of that.

Five weeks later and everything now just comes naturally. I don’t over think them.

The signs help. A lot. As do the other staff.

We are back to being a team again. A proper team.

“How was your weekend?”

“How are you doing?”

“Are you wearing your son’s trousers?”