

LISA conference 2026 – Change through the lens of self-kindness – a reflection

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In June 2026, I had the honour of being awarded a place to attend the LISA conference 2026 which had the theme of change through the lens of self-kindness.

This was a wonderful opportunity for me to meet and engage with peers in a profession that is very new to me. I chose a career change when my original role as an editor at a legal publishing company was made redundant. Being able to hear about other people's journeys into libraries has been very interesting and rewarding.

After a lovely welcome and introduction from the cpd25 Task Group, we went straight into a workshop from Helen Rimmer, the Kind Brave Leader, on 'Kindness in times of change'. Defining kindness as "The act of doing something with the intention of benefitting someone else." We learned that kindness is not the same as niceness. Kindness is sometimes having to have the hard conversations, to make boundaries, to support rather than take over. Self-kindness is especially important in times of change, so self-reflection is necessary to make sure that you are looking after yourself as well as that which is within your control. This resonated with me in past jobs as well as my current role so will be making this a key tenet for me.

Visit to grand and imposing Senate House library to see their exhibition space (currently a printing exhibit on the printer, Caxton), the impressive reading rooms, and some of the collections.

After a lunch and a chat with fellow attendees, was Neil Johnstone's (UAL) workshop on 'How do we respond to change? This was an interactive session with a lot of self-reflection on why change feels hard. It highlighted the cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioural responses we have to change, the psychological factors involved, and how we can more easily embrace change. We learnt that by being aware of the patterns and issues, we can be more kind to ourselves when dealing with change and our responses to it. I found this inspiring and took some useful tools for times of change.

We then had some interesting and informative lightning talks from peers sharing their experiences projects they were involved in dealing with change at a strategic or smaller level:

- Rosemary Johnson (Global Banking School) – Thriving through change
- Aneeka Shezad (University of Birmingham) – My library journey: 4 years on
- John Stammers (Royal College of Nursing) – Updating FAQs project

Then was another great, interactive, session from Thomas Pratt (University of East London) on 'Career development in uncertain times'. Thomas provided lots of useful context and advice for thinking about our careers. Teaching us to be mindful of sustainable career development and to consider direction rather than having a specific destination in mind. That sideways moves can be the strategic choice, and that being open to and taking opportunities when they arise can develop necessary skills. As someone who has changed career recently, it was reassuring to hear that non-linear careers can help in career development and taking opportunities to 'learn from many voices' is important. Careers are built not climbed.

My key take aways to share with my team:

- Resilience is not endurance; resilience is capacity.
- Reflection is useful after experiences as it allows you space to understand yourself and your responses better. Looking at what you enjoy and what you find difficult can be helpful in developing and with searching for relevant opportunities to grow. Be fully present in the moment.
- The career compass:
 - Direction (look at what matters to you/your purpose)
 - Capability (what to do you want to build/experience)
 - Energy (what sustains you)
 - Support (what people help you – allies/mentors etc.)
- Kindness is important and should be implemented throughout life and work and especially to yourself. Think about KIND acronym:

The KIND framework

A simple way to stay steady when change feels noisy.

Know what is happening inside you

Invite care and connection

Name what is within your influence

Do one kind, brave next step

Source: Helen Rimmer

The practical tools to share with my team are:

Practical tools for change-heavy days

Boundary phrase

"I can do X by Friday, or Y by Monday. Which is the priority?"

Clarity phrase

"What is the decision, what is still open, and what should I tell users?"

Repair phrase

"I think we may have missed something. Can we revisit it?"

Recovery phrase

"I need ten minutes to reset before I respond properly."

Care phrase

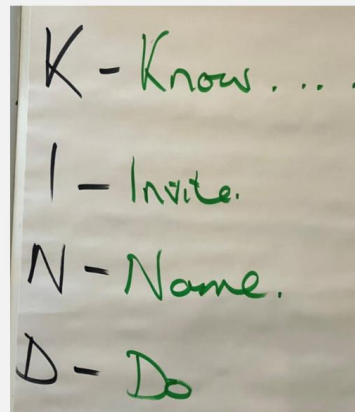
"This is hard, and your response makes sense."

Source: Helen Rimmer

What helps people embrace change

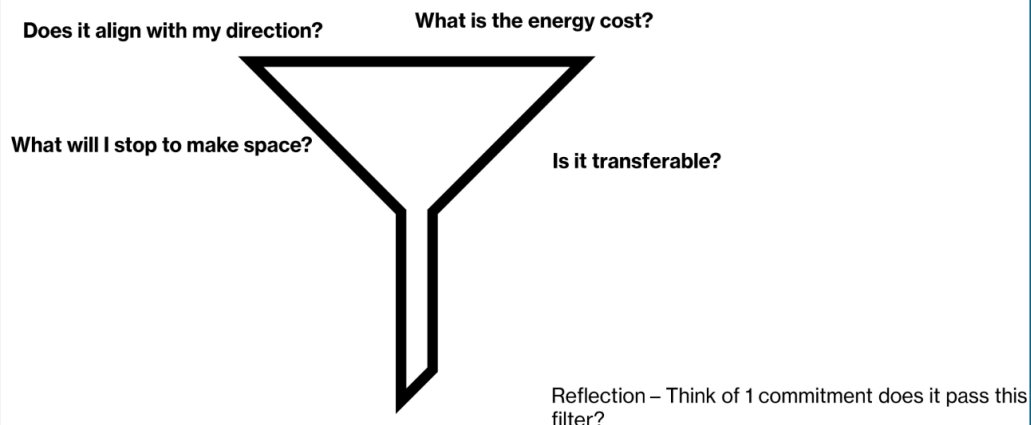
Five enablers

1. **Clarity** — reduces ambiguity
2. **Autonomy** — increases control
3. **Support** — builds confidence
4. **Time** — allows adjustment
5. **Meaning** — connects change to purpose



Source: Neil Johnstone

Should we always say yes? Using a Career Development Filter



Source: Thomas Pratt

Personal reflection – What? So What? Now What?

Source: Thomas Pratt

What?	So what?	Now what?
○ Name the opportunity ○ What has happened	○ Meaning ○ Challenges	○ Action planning ○ Apply

Final thoughts:

I feel that the conference met all my hopes for the day. I found all the workshops and talks useful and engaging. It provided lots of thought-provoking information, and practical tips and tools to use and share with my team. Thank you to all the cpd25 Task Group for making it an interesting and enlightening day.

And finally, in a very hot London, on a day with the theme of kindness, it was reinforced when another kind attendee shared their fan with me. Thank you to him, it was a much-appreciated moment of kindness.