

The Architecture of Trust

To Jordan, trust was an 'abstract concept' he said. 'Never experienced it from someone so don't know how to give it. Like love, isn't it. We're not born with it. You have to be given it to give it back'. Then he had walked on leaving the grown-up stunned at such a profound insight from a 14-year-old.

He had cycled through multiple foster placements that struggled to manage his defensive behaviours. He was communicating but not in ways they expected. He was said to be 'forward', but he knew he was keeping people at distance.

He arrived at the children's home convinced that like everywhere else 'in care' he would be leaving within a month.

The grown-ups though had spent time sharing their experiences of Jordan and had come to understand his anger as a shield for fear. Every time Jordan pushed back, the team responded with consistent, unwavering support. When he tore up his homework in frustration, a grown-up, David, sat down, taped the pages back together, and said, "Let's figure this out together." David stayed long after he could have left the house to help get the homework completed.

Jordan began to feel unsettled that he was feeling settled. He found he liked the structure, the reliable routine. He did not feel 'nervy'. It was an odd feeling.

Everyone celebrated his small victories—like passing a math quiz or learning to cook a full meal—with the genuine pride of a family. Grown-ups and children all said how proud they were of him.

He was asked to do small things, in the house, then outside too.

The years went on, he became the eldest, and on Jordan's eighteenth birthday, as he had prepared for, he was 'going round the corner' to the home's 'other house'. The home and people were still close as he still needed, but there was distance as he needed.' Distance is emotional, not geographical.' Another insight.

He looked at a photo album the staff had put together for him. It was filled with pictures of beach day trips, birthdays, and ordinary Tuesday dinners. Jordan realised the people of the home had given him something irreplaceable: proof that he was loved, trusted, worth staying for. He had stayed somewhere, they had grown together, the relationships and trust, he had a solid foundation to build the rest of his life upon.