

honestly **Woman**

RISK TAKERS · LIGHT SHINERS · CHANGE MAKERS

ISSUE 2: JAN - MAR 2017

Lisa Chiodo

A REALLY, REALLY
RUSTIC LIFE





"A creative and rural upbringing has created an ongoing fixation with the colour, composition and natural beauty of the Australian Landscape."

~ Jenie Fawckner – on Instagram as Jenie Fawckner Art

honestly *Woman*

For timeless women who want to redefine, realign, and create anew, Honestly Woman is a quarterly digital magazine about business, career and life reinvention, here to energise you with stories of risk taking, light shining and change making.

Honestly Woman celebrates women living large on their own terms – and re-invention knows no age boundaries.

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Founder & Editor: Bev Ryan
editor@honestlywoman.com
M: 0403 831 342

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One of the high points of the last few months has been the unintentional emergence of this new rally cry, thanks to American Democrat Senator Elizabeth Warren showing how it is done – ‘Nevertheless, she persisted’. I love it – it could well become our new tagline. Our stories are about women who persist, just like Ms Warren, sometimes in the face of tough circumstance and open opposition, as life usually deals out the rough stuff at some stage, and none of us is immune. My greatest hope is that our stories of beautiful and courageous women who are getting things done at their own pace and as their best selves, will give you a great feeling of optimism and inspiration. Like Lisa, an Aussie renovating in Italy; Sally, an international jewellery maker; Carolyn who runs the brilliant Slow School of Business; Louise who is becoming highly visible in law after a late start; Ludwina who is on the tech start-up frontier at 50; Jane who is applying old skills to a new passion and social cause; and much more. Keep persisting!



Bev Ryan, Editor

PS: If you prefer to download this magazine as a pdf, go to the vertical task bar on the left of your screen and click the down arrow.

HONESTLY WOMAN

REINVENTION CAREER SERVICES

ABOUT

Career reinvention or renewal is a process. It's not a chaotic and stressful collection of random steps that sap your energy but bring no results.

Whether you have reached a point where you know you MUST have a change of career (or you will do something you regret) OR your former job is no longer available and you are facing a void, you will be reassured to know that there is a series of logical steps which will take you through:

1. Gathering self-insight and data by looking at your own career and life so far
2. Connecting your past with a possible future in the new world of work as it slowly comes into view
3. Building your new professional profile
4. Recognising opportunities as you close the gap between your past and your future
5. Creating conversations which lead to distinct paths and new offers
6. Settling into a new role and a whole new attitude towards Employable You!

CONTACT

Contact me for an initial conversation about:

- ongoing support while you work through your career reinvention
- OR a full refresh of your professional branding

Bev Ryan
Certified Career Coach
Publisher
(business and career development)

PS: I work with men and women going through career transition, so please pass on my details if someone close to you needs help.

Text or call: 0403 831 342
E: editor@honestlywoman.com
LI: www.linkedin.com/in/bevryan/

CONTACT

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A scenic view of a mountain valley. In the foreground, a stone house with a dark, tiled roof is partially visible. The house has a rustic, weathered appearance. To the right of the house, there is a pile of logs. In the background, a lush green valley stretches out, leading up to steep, forested mountains. The peaks of the mountains are covered in snow, contrasting with the greenery below. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

COVER STORY

RENOVATING IN PIEDMONT ITALY

BY LISA CHIDO

"We still have a long way to go with our dream, but the wonderful thing is that we move towards it every day..."



Having renovated multiple properties in Australia Lisa Chiodo is now on her second in Italy. She lives the rustic life (really, really rustic) in a hamlet at the foot of the Alps in Northern Italy. Featured on House Hunters International, this Australian family are the slightly dysfunctional version of Under the Tuscan Sun.

HW: What are you doing now?

This is our fourth year living in Italy; in this time we've been busy restoring the borgata, or hamlet, welcoming guests to our loft apartment, and helping others with the process of buying a house here in Italy through our website.

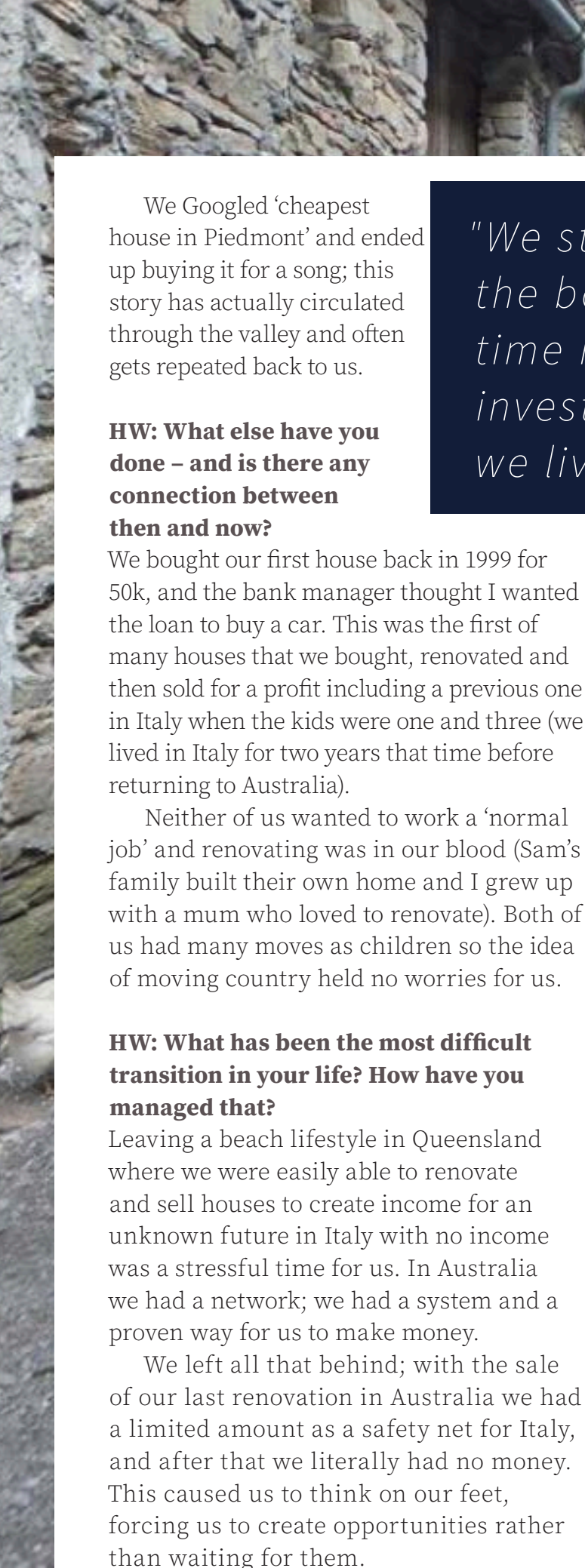
Our aim is to build a community feel in the borgata, and to have guests experience a rustic life in the mountains. With two houses and out buildings still to restore we have a big project ahead of us.

We hope our project will give people an opportunity to experience rural Italian life. To feed the animals, pick the vegetables from our veggie garden, apples from our orchards, to experience the simple life with us.

So many readers of the blog have asked for a book, so that is underway and a release date is planned for June 2017.

HW: How did you come to this place in your life?

We left our beach lifestyle in Australia (our home was a street from the beach in sunny Queensland) for the mountains of Italy. It was actually in a seminar when the presenter asked the audience to think about what they really wanted in life that we both leaned forward at the same time and said "Italy".



We Googled 'cheapest house in Piedmont' and ended up buying it for a song; this story has actually circulated through the valley and often gets repeated back to us.

HW: What else have you done – and is there any connection between then and now?

We bought our first house back in 1999 for 50k, and the bank manager thought I wanted the loan to buy a car. This was the first of many houses that we bought, renovated and then sold for a profit including a previous one in Italy when the kids were one and three (we lived in Italy for two years that time before returning to Australia).

Neither of us wanted to work a 'normal job' and renovating was in our blood (Sam's family built their own home and I grew up with a mum who loved to renovate). Both of us had many moves as children so the idea of moving country held no worries for us.

HW: What has been the most difficult transition in your life? How have you managed that?

Leaving a beach lifestyle in Queensland where we were easily able to renovate and sell houses to create income for an unknown future in Italy with no income was a stressful time for us. In Australia we had a network; we had a system and a proven way for us to make money.

We left all that behind; with the sale of our last renovation in Australia we had a limited amount as a safety net for Italy, and after that we literally had no money. This caused us to think on our feet, forcing us to create opportunities rather than waiting for them.

"We still have to think outside the box to get by. I see our time here as a long-term investment in our family and we live a very simple lifestyle."

Our second year here we created an apartment within our property to give us a little income. We were also featured on House Hunters International and along with the readers of the blog, the viewers of the program kept us booked out.

We still have to think outside the box to get by. I see our time here as a long-term investment in our family and we live a very simple lifestyle, growing our own food and making do with what we have.

We really are living a very uncomplicated life in the mountains of Italy.

HW: What has worked for you during transition and reinvention that you can share to help others?

My husband and I are total opposites; he is super organised, always thinking outside the box and loves nothing better than to be cooking a big meal for friends to enjoy. I am far more relaxed and don't really stress about the multitude of rules and regulations here in Italy, apart from when they impact on our children.

So having this odd balance in our relationship has worked for us – most of our friends and family never thought we'd last. Even through our worst times I have always known that things will work out, forgiving, creating and then recreating our life together with that end goal always in mind.

HW: What drives you to keep going?

It's a certainty, knowing that we move towards our dream each day; I couldn't move back to Australia now. I love our life here in Italy, not knowing what each day will bring, sharing with guests and readers of the blog, having people tell me that we inspire them to follow their own dream – all of these and more keep me passionate, keep me going through the tough times.

HW: Who do you admire? What motivates you? Why?

Without question the person who I admire most in the world is my Mum. She has such an inner strength, and is fiercely independent. My Dad died very suddenly just before Christmas when I was four years old; he was only thirty-eight. He left a widow with three children; myself, my brother then eight, and my older brother aged twelve.

Many years later she married again, to a man who had a gambling problem. We lost our house, our pets and our innocence, and my Mum was forced to declare bankruptcy. Once she took a quiz in a magazine related to things that are stressful and she had been through them all including the death of my brother five years ago and the death of our son in 2000.

HW: How do you re-energise when you feel yourself slipping?

For me it's all in the small moments; to re-energise I like to wander, to notice the world, the people, the daily little things going on around me. Often if I'm feeling down I'll sit in my favourite café and just people-watch and write, creating little stories about the people that catch my eye.

Connection is my way to re-energise; connection with nature, with life, with the little moments of my life, to be outside in



the sunshine, to slow down, to sit back and quietly watch life going on around me.

HW: What have you shed from your life that you were happy to see go? How did you do that?

Looking back on our life in Australia I see how tied up we all were with 'the system'. I spent much of my time in large shopping centres, and I could wander for hours window shopping (we never had any spare money). My husband had a nine-to-five job that he wanted to escape; our children were slipping away into the school system that I felt had no interest in their unique talents. In fact when I asked one of our son's teachers how he was doing at school her reply was that "he is going steadily backwards". After that I knew our move to Italy was the right thing to do.

HW: What gives you the greatest satisfaction now?

My greatest satisfaction would be watching

our children grow and develop in a new country.

Our daughter is totally fluent and when she started high school the teachers thought she was Italian. It was in English class – after putting her hand up with all the right answers – that her classmates finally let the teacher know that she is Australian.

Our son Luca, who is now 12, has high-functioning autism; he has a helping teacher with him at high school to help with the language.

One of the most moving moments of my life was hearing my 12-year-old son sounding out words and reading a full sentence. A whole new world is opening up for him; he has been unable to read at all until last year and even though he is reading in Italian and has a limited understanding of the meaning, he's finally reading!

HW: What 'rules' and/or cultural expectations have you ignored or thrown off in order to be where you are?

Having a child on the spectrum and then taking him out of the system in Australia caused much 'discussion' with friends and family. Most gave us dire warnings; he'd fall behind, he'd not get the same level of support, and we were doing the wrong thing for him. I don't remember many positive comments about taking him out of the school system.

We totally ignored this advice. I knew in my heart that we were doing the right thing for our family. I've never been one to follow the accepted advice given to parents of kids on the spectrum; if I had we would have stayed in the one house, never moved, always driven to school the same way, but none of this made sense to me.

I remember the vice principle at our children's school in Queensland telling

me that we'd be back within a year, and basically that our children would suffer. I'm happy to say that we proved her wrong. Our children were out of school for almost a year with the transition, which gave them time to adjust to the move.

HW: What advice would you give to another woman who is 50+ and feeling a huge pull to do something outside of ordinary, whatever that looks like to them?

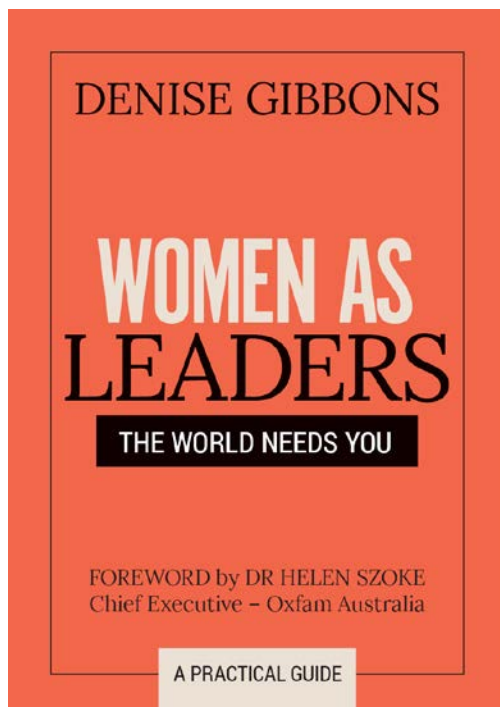
Many of my friends are 50+ and I see in them a longing for change. They often tell me "oh I'd love to do something to change my life but I'm not brave like you". Yet I'm not brave – we have problems, young children, limited finances, but we never gave up on our dream.

Our dream was to renovate a village in Italy, to create a community, to share what we learn, to live a simple life and leave the rat race. We still have a long way to go with our dream, but the wonderful thing is that we move towards it every day, not as a driven goal-type thing, rather as a simple love of what we hope to achieve and a passion for sharing what we discover on the way, both the ups and the downs.



Meet Lisa and her family at 'Renovating Italy'. www.renovatingitaly.com

BOOK LAUNCH



You are cordially invited to the launch of *Women as Leaders – The World Needs You – A Practical Guide* by Denise Gibbons

Denise Gibbons is dedicated to empowering women so that we build stronger communities and thus improve the quality of life for everyone. She has volunteered with Oxfam Australia for over 30 years so that she can raise awareness about world poverty and social justice issues, especially for women.

She is also the Founder of Integrity Wealth, a boutique sustainable financial services business in Brisbane, Australia and has been a business owner and leader for 25 years.

BRISBANE: Tuesday 7 March 2017

Novotel Brisbane Airport at 6pm for
6.30pm start

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS, PRIZES & BOOKING INFORMATION](#)

Brisbane celebrations will include a speech from Nina Collins from Oxfam Australia. Nina's work focuses on the intersection of gender and the impact of mining.

MELBOURNE: Friday 10 March

Queen Victoria Women's Centre, 210 Lonsdale Street for 6pm start

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS, PRIZES & BOOKING INFORMATION](#)

Melbourne celebrations will include a speech from Dr Helen Szoke, Chief Executive of Oxfam Australia, raising awareness of women's projects undertaken by Oxfam Australia. Dr Szoke has also written the foreword to Denise's book.

SUPPORTERS

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Donations to Oxfam Australia with your book launch ticket would be much appreciated. These donations will go to women's projects within Oxfam Australia.



THE POWER OF PUBLISHING

BY BEV RYAN

“Writing a (non-fiction) book also opened up a whole new career path for me; people began approaching me to ghost-write their books, so for a year I wrote books for four clients. It also secured me a writing gig for a well-known blogger, which has led to me working in an ongoing support role for them. This opportunity makes up a part of what has made it possible for me to live a laptop lifestyle and travel and live wherever I like in the world.”

~ Neroli Makim, author of [Your Inner Knowing: Unlocking the Secrets to Creative Success](#)



More than ever before, women are kicking stereotypes to the kerb and taking control of their own lives. More women than men are establishing businesses today – and surprisingly Australian women aged over 55 (and over 65 as well) are starting their own businesses at a rate unmatched by any other age groups in the last 10 years, according to research from Bankwest in 2013 and again in 2015.

Women in business are hungry to learn and succeed, and increasingly they are discovering the positive impact on their business of publishing their own expertise in print format. No, the book is not a dying art form. Just the opposite.

Technology now enables independent publishing in all creative fields, and we regularly see authors, musicians, singers and other artists launch and control the next stage of their burgeoning careers.

The beauty of your own book

If you wish to build or fast-track your career or business around your area of interest and expertise I suggest you take the bold step of publishing in that field to establish your name and credentials.

In fact, in the article ‘Is an MBA worth it?’ in the Financial Review in 2013, Lucinda Schmidt found that a formal qualification does not always guarantee doors will open. A thoughtfully-planned and on-target book however, seems to do that quite effectively!

Should you decide to write and publish a book to boost your career or business, you will embark upon one of the best self-paced learning programs available to

you – and the end result will be a tangible product which shows the world you know your stuff. (Because you will.)

Credibility; pulling power; a visible legacy; and sharing of hard-won wisdom and expertise are just some of the benefits of putting fingers to the keyboard.

Through publishing their expertise in a quality book, I have seen women:

- attract attention as well as expected and unexpected opportunities and invitations to speak, host, facilitate, partner – and more
- gain recognition for their uniqueness in their industry, so they are no longer competing with others for clients
- feel they are adding real value to the world through their work
- reach many more people than they ever dreamed they could.

Publishing a book can do the same for you: you can be as brilliantly creative as you wish and can stretch yourself to your limits – and yet it is a logical process which also appeals to the left brain, which likes to know there is a step one, step two etc.

“... self-directed learners don't wait for anyone's permission to begin learning. They write blogs, build start-ups, create art, record videos, teach their skills, and sell their services. They keep an eye out for the innumerable ways that they can improve someone else's life.”

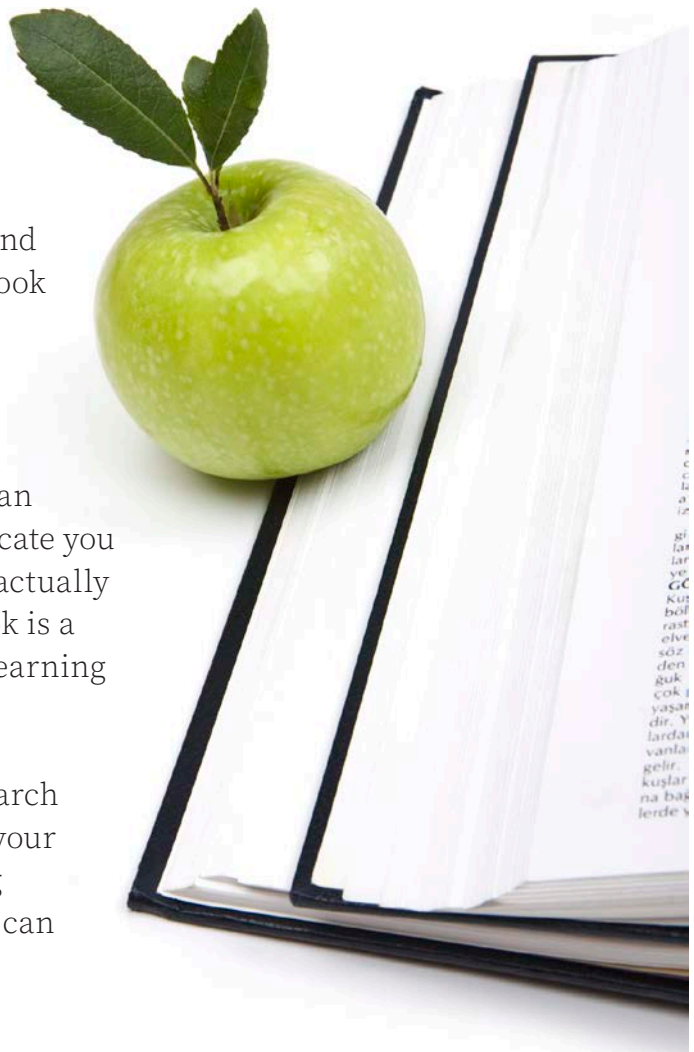
~ Better Than College by Blake Boles

Your book can roam the world and maybe take you along for the ride if you are up for it and should you be creative enough to find a way.

Your book can introduce you to places you might have never gone on your own, and can open conversations with people who look at you as if you know what you are talking about - because you do - and because you wrote a book about it.

A book can really change every part of your life. It can change you internally; it can change how the world sees you; it can educate you so that as you're writing the book you are actually transformed by the process. Writing a book is a big deal and a big project, a self-directed learning program of its own.

Best of all, when you combine your accumulated knowledge (and further research if needed) with your own experience and your real understanding of the true, underlying needs of your chosen audience, your book can change lives.



Find out more about Bev Ryan's group webinar program, 'Profit from Publishing', commencing in March, at www.profitfrompublishing.com.au.



PROFIT FROM PUBLISHING PROGRAM

THIS LIVE 15-WEEK WEBINAR PROGRAM PLUS PERSONAL COACHING SESSIONS GIVE YOU THE SUPPORT YOU NEED TO GET YOUR NON-FICTION BOOK UNDERWAY & PUBLISHED THIS YEAR!

Publishing your own non-fiction book is one of the fastest ways to become a highly visible, valued voice in your field AND build your professional profile while growing your business.

Publishing can also add exciting dimensions to your life, like invitations to speak and travel, unexpected opportunities and interesting collaborations.

Publishing is also about doing your most meaningful work and adding your legacy and lasting footprint. It's about shining your light to show the way for others, just as other writers have done for you.

I invite you to join our next *Publishing For Profit* coaching program, which consists of EIGHT fortnightly interactive, educational and inspiring coaching calls which will not only show you HOW to write and publish your book, you will also get your book & book cover well underway.

"... making a quantum leap is not mere gambling. You abandon your excuses. You reframe the problem ... revealing how the only thing of significance that has been standing in the way is you."

~ Price Pritchett in 'you²'

FIND OUT MORE



How to Connect with your Passion and Purpose at any Stage in Life

Are you feeling adrift? Are you struggling to identify just what you can do that will bring personal satisfaction and be of value to others?

Here's a simple exercise for you.

1. On one sheet of paper write down ten things that you absolutely love doing. Don't over-think it, just write down what comes to mind intuitively.
2. On a second piece of paper, write down ten things that you are really good at. You might not love doing these things, but you know you are good at them.
3. Prioritise the top five things on each list and write them in two columns on a new sheet of paper. Now think outside the box and play with ways to combine more of the things you love in one column with more of the things you are really good at in the other column.

I am Karen Brook, Results Mentor and Entrepreneurial Expert. Several years ago I was at a career crossroad and didn't know what to do next. I came up with this Passion and Purpose exercise and it really helped me to shift. Since then hundreds of clients have completed this activity, with amazing outcomes. I now offer it to you.

4. Ask yourself these three questions:
 - How can I combine more of the things I love with the skills I already have?
 - How might that look different to what I am currently doing?
 - What else could I be doing?

How could you be putting your skills to good use in the areas you are passionate about? What new ideas start to emerge for you? It's normal to feel a mix of nervousness and excitement at the prospect of what comes up here. That is a good thing – it means you are growing, and growth is the essence of life.

Now you've got to create some momentum, so download **8 Questions That Warrant Your Attention** via the link below and use them to pull it all together. How do you really want to live? What do you really want to be doing?

**CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD
8 QUESTIONS THAT WARRANT
YOUR ATTENTION**

**YOU ARE NEVER TOO YOUNG OR TOO
OLD TO START CREATING THE LIFE AND
RESULTS YOU REALLY WANT.**



PROFILE: SALLY BASS

A STEWARD OF SORTS



*“When the pain
of staying in an
unfulfilling situation
is greater than the
fear of letting go, it’s
time to take action.”*

~ Sally Bass



My jewellery informs my life and guides me to the next adventure. My job is to allow the pieces to tell their unique story. I'm a steward of sorts and can't think of a better role. There's nothing I'd rather be doing. I am so blessed.

I have lived in East Africa, England, Australia and America, and have developed relationships all over the world while experiencing different cultures. I absorb the colours, textures, patterns, rhythms and aesthetics of each and through that process of discovery, I have come to embrace the rich histories and beauties of ethnic expression.

I take the vibrancy of each piece, infuse it with experience and only then does the finished piece find its rightful home, not the other way around.

There are times I find an absolutely fascinating object that doesn't seem to go with anything and that's where patience comes into play. It's often years later that the perfect complement arrives to complete something totally unique and rich with character. Another life lesson is reinforced:

rarely does anything happen in my life that is just random chance.

The decision to make jewellery came long before it sustained me financially. It started with a pair of pliers in my backpack as I traveled the world. Along with my fascination with the expression of beauty in all mediums, that simple tool guided my intention to honor that beauty in every piece of jewellery I design.

With very little in the way of material possessions, I moved to the States in 1990 from Australia to begin a new life. In much the same way, I do this in my jewellery making by giving forgotten and recycled materials a new beginning.

Nothing is ever truly lost, just transformed.

I find the creation of jewellery a very spiritual and therapeutic process. The materials share their spirit with me and I invest some of my own into each piece.

Is there any connection between then and now?

My previous counseling practice prepared me for being out in the world. I create safe places for people to reveal themselves - the



jewellery provides the catalyst.

Through my traveling, I've developed relationships all over the world; other cultures, nationalities encouraged me to trust, as far as business goes and to hold on when it's tough knowing that it evolves.

It's a spiritual journey without sitting in a meditation room. Don't get me wrong, I love climbing the mountain to the ashram, but that's not where the real learning happens. All of it's intertwined – from the challenges of professional relationships to creating trade show displays in the wee hours to showcase my work, and covering expenses on top of it all; every facet brings up all of life's lessons right smack in the middle of my business.

What 'rules' have you thrown off in order to be where you are?

I shed my 9-to-5 job so I can earn a living with my art. For years I was told it couldn't be done. That it could only be a hobby, not a livelihood. But the greatest success comes

from not trying to do what others do, but by being true to who I am.

My work has been my best teacher... I've learned to never take a reaction to my art personally. I don't create to fill a predictable niche. I create to sustain my love of the rich diversity in every part of the world

I'm not a purist – I love mixing different eras, different cultures and seemingly disparate materials to create unified pieces – pieces that give a voice to beauty in their unique way.

Any awards or accolades come from the fact that I surprise the artistic jury process – it shakes up artistic paradigms and invites people to break out of the predictable industry's molds. Sometimes you have to smash the crate from the inside to discover the creative process.

What motivates you to keep going?

The materials I find always speak to me – they are my muse. Each piece I make comes with its own personal story. I consider myself very lucky: thinking up designs comes easily to me since I view each design is simply a story asking for the chance to be told.

I've always considered the next travel adventure a mandatory component for joy in my life. I have never shied away from

"Don't get me wrong, I love climbing the mountain to the ashram, but that's not where the real learning happens."

~ Sally Bass

the thrill of the hunt – from constantly seeking diverse cultural experiences and rich relationships to discovering long-forgotten found objects along the way.

I want to travel, find cool things, make them into beautiful pieces and sell them so I can travel more – it's a perpetual cycle that I have turned into a reality.

I love the hunt and creating jewellery BUT the most important things to me are the friendships that develop along the way. Those relationships have come to enrich my life in more ways than I could ever have imagined – from beautiful pieces of art came the enduring gift of deep, meaningful friendships.

How do you re-energize when you feel your energy slipping?

I re-energize by spending time in my studio, or by switching the TV off and spending time in nature, with friends and at the breakfast club.

I live in Tucson, Arizona, a beautiful place; I sit in my home surrounded by incredible artifacts. I think about where they've come from and the beauty that they've brought into my life.

I always try to put myself in a beautiful environment at home and in nature which serve to perpetually renew and revitalize who I am. I even find renewal at the end of a long show.. Although physically exhausted, I take the space and time of the drive home as a much-needed opportunity to decompress as well as recharge both mentally and spiritually.

What advice would you give to another woman who is 50+ and feeling a huge pull to do something outside of the ordinary?

I would ask them, "What have you got to lose?"

When the pain of staying in an



unfulfilling situation is greater than the fear of letting go, it's time to take action. Allow the desire to become bigger than the fear. Of course, change is scary yet if you want it enough the fear takes a back seat to the exhilaration of discovering a new path. In that process, surround yourself with people who let go of limitations – those are the people who become your advocates and biggest fan club. I've never been interested in people who are the naysayers in life.

Create a tribe of your own to support you and build on that foundation. Leave the tall poppy syndrome behind, and celebrate each other's success instead.



You can find Sally Bass and her jewellery at www.sallybass.com



PUBLISHING SERVICES

FOR AUTHORS OF NON-FICTION BOOKS

If you are writing your book now, or have a finished manuscript on hand, your next step is to reach out to the team of professionals you need to take your words and transform them into a beautiful, quality book.

WHO

At Bev Ryan Publishing we love to work with entrepreneurial authors of non-fiction who understand that:

- Your message will impact the world in a meaningful way.
- Your book is an essential part of your greater career/business/life plan.
- Your book will open exciting doors and create opportunities.
- You will make more money because of your book: and it's not all about 'bestseller' status.
- You are best to focus on your area of expertise while we help make your book happen.

WHAT

CONTACT US for a quote to provide full publishing services for your precious book, which include:

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- Professional book cover design
- Printing coordination
- Upload of e-book & print files to Amazon, (plus Google Books & iTunes)
- Establishment of a print-on-demand account
- Inclusion in an international book catalogue
- Advice about your online author platform

CONTACT



REASON FOR BEING

BY CAROLYN TATE

My first complete reinvention came in 2001, when my son Billy was three years old. I divorced, moved house, and quit my corporate job in marketing to start my own marketing company. I remember thinking that if I'm going to throw one ball in the air I may as well throw them all. I felt like I'd taken on too many mandated roles and I didn't really know who I was anymore.

While running marketing workshops and teaching small businesses marketing I wrote my first book, *Small Business, Big Brand*, which really supported the business growth and garnered much exposure for me.

In 2010 (after a total of 20 years in marketing) I just fell out of love with my profession. I really questioned marketing. I questioned my own work. I was also in a love affair that I wanted to end, and struggling financially as a single mum. I just felt stuck.

I clearly remember the morning of May 17th in 2010: I woke up and thought, "Well, I'm out of here." Within 90 days I had sold

my home, given away all my possessions, closed my business, and Billy and I had moved to live in Aix en Provence in the south of France.

My third book, *Unstuck in Provence - the courage to start over*, came from my blissful six months in France, where I could really think about what I stood for, what I was passionate about, what I believed in, where my work could take me, and what the world needed.

I came back to Melbourne, Australia, with a deeper commitment to make marketing a force for good in the world and to support more women in their journey, because I do think it's our time as more mature women to step up and lead – and we don't need to wait for permission from anybody to do that.

Now I have two businesses. The first is Carolyn Tate & Co, where my sole commitment is helping people and organisations unearth their higher purpose as the balance to profit, and I am about to release a new book called *The Purpose Project*.

“Ikigai’ is a Japanese word meaning ‘reason for being’, and finding it requires a deep and often lengthy search of self. Such a search is regarded as very important, since it is believed that discovery of one’s ikigai brings satisfaction and meaning to life.”

‘Ikigai’ is a Japanese word meaning ‘reason for being’, and finding it requires a deep and often lengthy search of self. Such a search is regarded as very important, since it is believed that discovery of one’s ikigai brings satisfaction and meaning to life.

My passion is really helping individuals find meaning at work and helping organisations develop a higher purpose to drive decision making and culture within.

There’s a lot of evidence now that over 70% of culture change programs in organisations are deemed to be ineffective by leadership. People are actually leaving their jobs because they don’t share the values with the organisation they work for. Companies are spending a lot of money on these programs but they’re not centering them on personal purpose or organisational purpose – and until they do that, it’s like trying to make the culture of the organisation better without addressing the fundamental reason for existence.

We need purpose-driven, conscious women leading from within existing organisations. We need strong women to actually start right where they are and bring purpose, heart and meaning into their current workplaces, rather than flee

and start something new. Too many good people are leaving.

The other business I founded is now a people-powered learning community called *The Slow School of Business* here in Melbourne; a community of like-minded passionate change makers who get together to learn and to share and collaborate.

Why a ‘slow school’? In a world where fast-profit and short-term thinking dominate, the slow movement advocates a shift to an ideology that espouses that fast is not better – and that a conscious and mindful approach actually yields better results.

The Slow School of Business (Slow School) is dedicated to teaching the skills required to build fully human organisations that are driven by a higher purpose than profit.

We also run ‘Talk on Purpose’, a three-day intensive course for current and future leaders in our world, where participants are supported as they bring their purpose to life through the power of storytelling and public speaking, with truly powerful results.

What is it that you want to fix in the world or make a contribution to – and what you can be paid for?

Carolyn Tate can be found at www.carolyntate.co and www.slow.school.com.au

TIPS FOR SLOW MARKETING IN A HYPED-UP WORLD

In this article Carolyn Tate addresses the overwhelm we feel in business when we compare our own marketing pace with the frenetic churn we see online and in social media.

I wrote *Conscious Marketing: How to Create an Awesome Business with a New Approach to Marketing* in 2015 to show how you can market your business consciously and mindfully, and in a way that works for you.

I believe that the key to marketing is really understanding your purpose and why you're doing what you're doing. People buy your 'why'. They don't buy what you sell, they buy what you stand for.

It's really important for everyone, whether you are a business owner, artist, professional, or employee, to be very clear on your purpose and 'reason for being', and to communicate that effectively using storytelling and conversation. In the digital world there's a lot of information overload.

I see so many programs out there teaching others to 'make seven figures in seven steps', and giving out 'blueprints' for this and that, without taking into account that we each have natural ways of marketing and promoting our businesses that suit us.

It's very important for women to be strong and to be bold, and to have a voice – even if others disagree with us. One of

our negative feminine traits can be that we avoid conflict at all costs.

I feel that the world needs strong, brave, fearless women operating from a feminine state, with a desire to make a difference, coming from compassion, from love. But we must stay powerful in our opinion and be unworried that people won't like us. We must stop fearing rejection.

Marketing is personal. Find promotional tactics and marketing tactics that work for you, and that you like. Shift from a push to promote, to the power of attraction.

Market research and awareness of competition is important. Who else is out there doing what you want to do? How might you be able to collaborate with and support to grow?

The new way to market is to build a cause, take a leadership role, support movements and community. Women are uniquely placed to do this. We are great connectors. We are good at building community and we are generally good at sharing and collaborating.

How can you work with, instead of against?

Carolyn Tate can be found at www.carolyntate.co



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NOT YOUR TYPICAL BARRISTER

BY LOUISE MATHIAS

“**Y**ou’re too smart for this job.” Every now and then someone comes along who dramatically impacts our lives, and those words certainly changed mine.

After six years working as a medical practice manager, I was employed in 2002 by a highly regarded Obstetrician/Gynaecologist, Dr Chris Bradbury at St Vincent’s Clinic in Sydney, where I remained for eight years. After a couple of years working with him, he spoke those fateful words, and went on to say, “Have you thought about doing some study as I’ll be retiring in a few years, and if you need some time off around exams I will assist you with that?”

I had finished school almost 25 years earlier and I had not started or completed any tertiary education in that time, apart from some TAFE secretarial/Microsoft courses and medical terminology and basic medical courses. Let’s be honest ... I didn’t even finish high school!

I was filled with self-doubt. Could I

do it? Did I have the brains to succeed or would I fail miserably? I thought about enrolling in medicine but felt I was too old at 41 to begin that long path. I knew nothing about law but it did interest me, so while working full-time as a medical practice manager, I dived in and gave it my very best. No matter whether the outcome was success or failure, I knew I could do no more than that.

* * *

My working career had begun in Woolworths after leaving school at 16, and I later moved on to a role in Westpac. Then in 1996, I had commenced working for specialist medical doctors in private practice.

I had gone on to hold Practice Management positions in various medical specialities with some amazing doctors and health professionals, until 2002, when I met the doctor who was willing to provide the encouragement and support I needed to realise the potential I didn’t even see in myself.



* * *

When I decided to study law, I had to first sit exams to determine if I had the required mental aptitude. I achieved the necessary marks and enrolled in the Legal Practitioners Admission Board (LPAB – USYD) course. I took only one subject to begin with, still doubting myself. Ironically, I achieved fourth place out of 500+ students in my first subject, so that gave me confidence to continue, albeit slowly.

I once again took on one subject, then enrolled in two subjects at a time and worked full-time. In the last 18 months of the LPAB course, I was studying four subjects and worked full-time. (I placed first in Family Law and Trade Practices, fourth in Wills/Estates and fifth in Employment Law.)

The process of study did become easier! When studying I didn't compare myself to

others, as I believed we all had our own strengths and weaknesses: I could only compete with myself and do my best, and I continue that philosophy in my business today.

The LPAB course, although not considered prestigious in law, is regarded as a rigorous course to complete, and those who complete it have the ability to manage whatever is placed before them. Why? You had to be a self-starter, disciplined and self-sufficient to learn law and complete the course, with very little assistance!

After 14+ years in medicine, my first legal job was as a Judges Associate in the Federal Circuit Court. Then I worked as a solicitor for about 15 months prior to sitting the Bar Exams. I was naive prior to enrolling to sit the Bar Exams, and I didn't know any barristers to chat to. I thought solicitors sat the Bar Exams and passed, (i.e. no one failed), and onwards and upwards they went, with their tutors 'assisting' them in their first year, establishing a successful practice after that. I did not realise what is involved at all.

I sat and passed all three Bar Exams in my first attempt. I moved into my first chambers as a barrister, not knowing one chambers from another, nor the reputation of one solicitor's office from another. I am no longer naive though.

“I thought about enrolling in medicine but felt I was too old at 41 to begin that long path. I knew nothing about law but it did interest me, so while working full-time as a medical practice manager, I dived in and gave it my very best.”

Breast Cancer

In June 2014, two years after coming to the Bar, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. It was a shock, as no one ever thinks that something like that is going to happen to them. I had to take time off work to have multiple surgeries and extensive treatment. I underwent a mastectomy, then 18 weeks of chemotherapy, five weeks of radiation and then an 11-hour bilateral breast reconstruction surgery.

I was out of Elizabeth Street Chambers for 11 months. It was a tough time, physically! Some people in law advised me not to tell anyone I had breast cancer, as it would affect my legal practice negatively. I thought, law has to be more human and accepting of human frailties, so I continue to be honest and open.

I returned to chambers in May 2015 with the prospect of having to start again, and get my small business – that of being a Barrister – underway once more!

Last year, in 2016, I had my first full year back at Elizabeth Street chambers, post cancer treatments and surgeries. I have to credit the Directors of Elizabeth Street chambers (and members) with having exemplary humanity: they

were very supportive of me during my time away from chambers and on my return, and for that I will always be very grateful!

Business Owner

My early naivety at how the legal world works meant that as a new-comer to chambers in my mid-40s, with no old-school network and connections built over years of practicing law, I received few briefs from lawyers needing the services of a barrister. In law I am ‘new’ – as if my previous 30 years of work and life experience had little significance.

Originally, I tried to make contacts and connections by cold-calling legal firms. I soon realised that I had to find another avenue; my best strategy was to attract lawyers. There are very strict guidelines in this field, and advertising is not an option, so I began studying and applying the best strategies of content creation and client attraction.

I am now very clear about my professional brand, and work consciously to build that in a way that is congruent with who I am and where I want to be. I now have a smart website as my online

base, speak at webinars, write content regularly for other publications, blog on my own site, and take the stage when I am invited as a guest speaker at a Conference or other event.

I am now a trained mediator and family law arbitrator, providing opportunities to clients to resolve their disputes by a variety of methods, in addition to litigation. My business is on my own terms, and I am very proud to say I am not your typical barrister. I am driven to humanise law, accept human frailty, and generally treat others with dignity and respect, encapsulating emotional intelligence. I believe in leading by example, acting in a way you would like to see changes occur.

I also love tutoring and mentoring others, particularly young women starting out or and older women who are changing course like I did. I know first-hand what support they need.

I have been provided with wonderful opportunities in life by the kindness of others who took a chance on me and gave me my first medical role, and my opportunity to work and study law in a supportive environment. We all need opportunities, regardless of career stage.

Let's all think about how we can provide real opportunities for others who live outside of the usual stereotypes – maybe you can support someone in your office already, or someone applying for a job. Opportunities to help others are everywhere.

*Louise Mathais can be found at
www.sydneybarrister.net.au*

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CHANGING THE FABRIC OF LIFE

BY JANE MILBURN

Self-innovation is about being the best you can be. It involves making changes and taking risks.

With a working life based around family commitments, I understand now that I have been constantly self-innovating and upcycling throughout my career. Beginning with an agricultural science degree, this work spans decades of rural reporting, writing and editing, communications and campaigning as well as 10 years in leadership roles with the Rural Press Club of Queensland.

Today I am the founder of Textile Beat and a sustainability consultant working with individuals, groups and governments to influence change in clothing culture, reduce our material footprint, and divert textile resources from landfill.

I have learned from experience that leadership is an action we take, not a position we hold. Our actions speak louder than words – and so do the clothes we wear.

Earlier this year when I met Japanese artisan Akiko Ike in Brisbane we had no language in common, yet the denim

pinny I wore communicated our shared commitment to treasuring natural fibres.

As a result of that meeting, I travelled to Japan to learn about reviving textiles through boro stitching and absorb the SAORI weaving philosophy of celebrating imperfection and expressing ourselves through the garments we make.

Almost everything I wear is handmade or upcycled – not because I can't afford new clothes, rather because I enjoy the creative, individual, mindful and sustainable process of reinvention.

Four years ago when our third (and last) child finished school, I went through a growth process by reflecting on and absorbing lessons from the past then looking forward to align values with work, knowledge and skills before setting off in this new career direction.

I came to understand my core values – which are authenticity, creativity, autonomy and purpose – through professional and personal development gained from the Australian Rural Leadership Program.





Start where you are, use what you have, do what you can. Using observation and instinct, I joined the dots and created a fresh science-based narrative about clothing to which I apply communications and advocacy skills.

My view is that clothes do for us on the outside what food does on the inside – they nourish and warm our body and soul. In the same way that conscious eaters are sourcing fresh whole food and returning to the kitchen, conscious dressers are seeking to know more about the provenance and ethics of clothing, and are curious about how it is made. Every day we eat and we dress to survive and thrive, and it is not just the style that matters – substance does too.

Fast and processed industrial food has had a dramatic impact on our health in recent years and similarly there has been transformational shift to industrial factory-made clothing, the social and environmental impacts of which we are

"Start where you are, use what you have, do what you can. Using observation and instinct, I joined the dots and created a fresh science-based narrative about clothing to which I apply communications and advocacy skills."

only now coming to understand.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation reports that at least one-third of food produced is never eaten and creative solutions are emerging to divert and reduce that waste. In the same way, there is growing evidence that a third of clothing is wasted, with much potential to upcycle and redeploy



it. My purposeful work is bringing awareness to these and other material issues.

More than 90 percent of garments sold in Australia are now made overseas, mostly in Asian factories. Most people buy off-the-rack or online, with very few making anything for themselves to wear.

As a natural-fibre champion, I am troubled that synthetic fibres made from petroleum now dominate the clothing market at a time when research shows these plastic clothes are shedding millions of microplastic particles into the ecosystem with every wash.

To be sustainable, we can borrow from Michael Pollan's guide to eating and say "dressing is an agricultural act" because unless we are wearing natural fibres, we are wearing synthetics derived from petroleum.

I created Textile Beat in 2013 based on social-enterprise principles and began this journey into creativity, empowerment, thrift, sustainability, ecological health and wellbeing – woven with threads of childhood education, professional expertise, networks and nature.

Textile Beat is a platform to discuss ethical issues around clothing culture which include: burgeoning consumption; changing fibres; waste and pollution; modern-day slavery; and a loss of understanding and knowledge about how clothes are made.

In 2014 I undertook an action research project called Sew it Again which won the social media category of the Queensland 2015 Excellence in Rural Journalism Awards, with the judges commenting that it engaged the community, had a call to action, was transformative, and actually "made a difference in the world".

In 2015 I developed the Slow Clothing Manifesto as a summary of 10 ways (think, natural, quality, local, few, care, make, adapt, revive, salvage) to thrive in a material world and began presenting workshops and talks with teachers, local councils and community groups.

During 2016 I implemented The Slow Clothing Project to share stories about Australians choosing to make some of their own clothing, partnered with Brisbane City Council to create ReviveBNE at South Bank as a pop-up preloved fashion event for young people, and presented the figures behind fast-fashion consumption trends at a textile recovery workshop in Sydney.

Continuing to be open to change and taking risks, exciting opportunities are being woven into the 2017 calendar – including a keynote speaker role at the Home Economics Institute of Australia conference in Melbourne.

LIFE UNDER CO

“My life has changed immensely since then, I have changed immensely since then. Deep down I knew these things were happening for me, not to me, and I had to work with these changes in order for me to live on purpose.”

Just over a year ago, at age 54, I lost both my long-term job and my long-term relationship within two weeks of each other. Each of these things on their own would have been earth-shattering but the fact that they happened so close together left me in pieces.

To find myself in that situation at 54 years old pressed all my buttons and left me broke, broken open, raw and fragile. I was without a home, without a job, without money.

I felt completely exposed and afraid. I felt as if my pain and heartache were on show for all to see, like there was a sign on my forehead that said ‘Under Construction’.

I felt like a total failure at life and alongside that, sat shame. I must have shed a million tears and I was in so much pain I couldn’t actually think of anything to say to people so I just crawled into a hole within myself and hid from the world.

I am very lucky in that I had an inner

circle of gorgeous people who opened their arms, hearts and homes to me, giving me a place to sleep, food, hugs and love. I am very aware that there are many others who don’t have that – even more aware now than ever. My beautiful children, friends and even a few people I didn’t know very well at the time loved, supported and helped me put myself back together again.

Given the extent of my fragility and my commitment to rebuilding myself authentically, it is no surprise that there were a people I also chose not to be around. I was no longer willing to be around anybody who didn’t value or respect themselves...or me. I was totally rebuilding myself and anybody who wasn’t part of that process constructively just didn’t belong. I felt unsafe around those people and became very protective of my energy and how much of it I gave them.

It took a few months but I finally got another job which made me join the real

CONSTRUCTION

BY FI SAUNDERS

world again and eventually allowed me to find a place to rent. This in itself was exhausting because I was still in the early days of grief and I found myself working for someone who had absolutely no respect for me or women in general, without a shadow of a doubt I knew working there was an invitation to look at my own feelings about who I was and how I valued myself. Like attracts like. Once I saw that clearly, I was offered another position working for somebody who is respectful, conscious, honest and communicative. This showed me I was moving in the right direction.

My life has changed immensely since then, I have changed immensely since then. Deep down I knew these things were happening for me, not to me, and I had to work with these changes in order for me to live on purpose. Once the shock wore off I realised this situation was a gift. Previously I had been working so hard at keeping the status quo for so long that I had been ignoring my own truth.

I'm a big believer in having your eye on the big picture and allowing the Universe to figure out the small picture details to show you how you are going to get there. I knew that if I took small steps one by one as I was able to, I was working with the bigger picture instead of fighting against it.

This has been my year of full immersion in the University of Life. I went back to my roots and made space for meditation... watching the waves roll in and watching them roll out, just being, reading self-development books written by some of the masters of our time, checking in with myself regularly to see that I am living and speaking my truth, being kind and loving to myself, consciously finding things to laugh about, being around people I feel good being around and who I can be honest with, being fully present in each moment... and writing.

I know now that I'm not alone in going through massive changes at this stage of life. I've met plenty of people who either are in or have been in similar situations in their 40s, 50s and 60s, having to start again at a time when they hadn't expected to be doing so. It's not an easy situation for anybody to be in but it does offer incredible opportunity.

It's only been a year and I'm still rebuilding myself and designing my life, coming from a much different platform. I've stopped hiding out now and am loving being out in the world, meeting and talking to people again. I feel happy with where I am, grateful for everything and excited about life.

You can find Fi on her website www.numerologyblueprints.com

Reinvention

BY TARA SOPHIA MOHR

There is always the possibility
of reinvention
sometimes born of longing
sometimes offered faintly,
like birdsong in your ear
sometimes—
born of pain.
Life is long for a reason.
So that every chapter swells
with a new chapter of us,
so there is time to change
the meaning of your name
to everyone around you,
and especially
to you.
When the name that once meant
tired girl comes to mean
she who rose again,
—then
art begins.
I met a woman
whose house burned down
and in the ashes
she found the blaze of her self.
Now it roars
still angry, sometimes uncontrolled,
always a blinding light.
If you see her on the street,
bow to her courage.
Stare back into her flickering animal eyes,
and know, she is fighting a fight.

Tara Mohr is the author of *Playing Big*.
You can read this poem on [Tara's website](#).

LETTING GO IN LADAKH

“**N**o way I’m getting on a horse!” I stated vehemently, stomach churning. I enjoy riding normally, but we were in Ladakh, on the mountainous Tibetan Plateau. Trails are narrow dusty threads along steep cliffs and slopes, or rocky traverses of landslides and glacial torrents. We had already watched in horror as an over-laden pony-sized pack horse slipped while struggling up a loose steep winding trail, tumbling backwards over the edge, screaming in pain from fatal injuries.

I was still muttering “no way” next morning as menacing clouds dumped rain and bits of hail on our camp. At 4,700 metres altitude, we needed to cross another 5,200 metre pass that day. My handicap was a nasty antibiotic-defying chest infection, making breathing feel like glass shards stabbing my chest. Waiting for me left everyone exposed for longer.

The fear of being on a horse over that terrain, up those scary slopes and tumbling down with it was strong. So was my ego insisting I should trek, not ride like an

invalid. Such was my self-talk as I adjusted my hiking pole, pulled my rain jacket closer and strode off. An excruciating 30 minutes later, in tears, I made myself ask to ride.

Mounted, I put my mindset training in action taking the focus off my scary stories, and on to helping my horse keep moving up. Feeling part of a team, I actually started enjoying the experience. After all, how special is horse riding in the mountains? Adventure is what I love, what I’d come for, and this was certainly adventure!

A herd of wild deer darted across the ridge top, and a huge bone-eating vulture soared overhead. The view on the pass was literally breath-taking – a dramatic drop, soaring up to snow-capped jagged peaks of a much higher range. My precious mount was exhausted. I found her a couple of mouthfuls of cloud-kissed moist vegetation, then she napped in the sun while I soaked it all in.

We have choices, even when we tell ourselves otherwise ... sometimes we just have to put our fears and ego aside, and find a different way forward.

Sue Lester is the author of The Face Within – How to Change Your Unconscious Blueprint and is now working on her second book Answering The Call To Adventure. Sue is also a mindset coach at www.GrowingContent.com.au.

WOMEN IN TRUCKS

BY MELISSA BARNETT

What is it about the long, straight, seemingly endless roads that criss-cross Australia that capture our hearts and imaginations? With rail freight in steady decline, trucks have become the main means of moving everything from fresh food to furniture on the tarmac arteries of our country and cities. Driving these great behemoths was once the monopoly of blokes in stubbies and blue singlets, but that is changing. There are more women in trucks – in coal mines, quarries and cities – than you think, and they love their jobs.

Maralyn Bierwith

Maralyn Bierwith's seen more of the open road than most of us. The 71-year-old has only just retired from driving her big Kenworth 909 triple trailer road train the 2,834 km-long Stuart Highway from Adelaide to Darwin twice a week, delivering freight to supermarkets in Darwin. "Oh, I hate not being able to drive my truck but my doctor's warned me, so I better take his advice." The independent Maralyn had a fall in 2015 while she was hooking the trailers onto her beloved truck,

fracturing her vertebrae. She may not be able to drive anymore, but the friends she made while truck driving continue to drop in for a cuppa and a chat. "I love to have a chat. The other drivers always knew when it was my turn to drive because I was always on the two-way having a chat. It gets lonely on that road in the middle of the night."

Until her retirement Maralyn used to drive 'two-up' with her husband John. Husband and wife driving teams are

"When you stop in the middle of the desert at night and look up at the stars, there's nothing like it. It's wonderful. I just love it."

~ Maralyn Bierwith



becoming increasingly popular with long haul freight companies. According to Maralyn this is because they work better as a team than two men. "Husband and wife two-ups don't fight about who's the boss that day. I know a number of women in their late forties and fifties who have been married to truck drivers and then when the kids leave home, get their licences and start driving as two-up partners."

Maralyn has been driving a lot longer than twenty years. Her father had an earthmoving business and it was Maralyn, not her brother, who helped move the



equipment on weekends. “It’s in my blood I suppose. I haven’t always driven trucks; I worked in hospitality while I was rearing my boys but when my first marriage broke down I was left with nothing. I said to my dad, ‘I think the only thing I can do now is go truck driving’ – he wasn’t happy about my decision but I’m good at truck driving and have made a good living from it. The blokes would say to me, ‘We know you’re a damn good little truck driver and you work really hard.’”

Lisa Lloyd

Starting in the truck driving business young seems to be a common theme. Lisa Lloyd started driving tractors on the family farm at sixteen and got her semi licence at twenty-two. “I didn’t do much with it when I got it; I think it was more for the challenge.” Lisa married a station manager and drove cattle trucks, loaders and tractors in the partnership. When her marriage fell apart she moved to the Northern Territory and worked in a major supermarket chain, eventually working her way up to manager in the bakery section. After a nasty injury she left that job and started work as a tour guide around Uluru and Katherine Gorge. Finding herself unemployed during the wet season a friend offered Lisa a job driving a water truck for a local earthmoving company. “They gave me a broken down old Mack that took me three days to find third gear in but by the time I left I was driving an eighteen speed rigid water truck. The company helped me get a multi-combination licence which meant I could drive side-tippers, doubles and triples.”

While Lisa can obviously hold her own in a ‘blokes’ world, it hasn’t been without



its challenges. “Other than perfecting the proper load of gravel or mastering the water truck, my main challenges haven’t been mechanical or the isolation but the old men; one told me I should have been in the kitchen and I replied with ‘I’ll go to the kitchen when you go to the old folk’s home!’ We were good after that. Really, the men I’ve worked with have been awesome. I owe it all to the men who have had the faith to give me a go; without them none of this would’ve happened.” Now 52, Lisa lives in Port Augusta and drives a Kenworth AB triple road train running supplies to Olympic Dam. “I still love driving but no more six weeks on, one week off, driving all over the state. This job means I’m home

in my bed every night and get to see my girls and gorgeous grandson.”

Lynn Haysom

Lynn Haysom was happy she was going to be home for Christmas; usually she is driving two-up with her husband Tony on the 2,721 km run between Melbourne and Perth. The round trip takes 40 hours. “It’s funny, we fight all the time at home but when we’re in the truck we never have an argument.” Lynn carries general freight across the Nullabor in a Kenworth 200 B-triple road train and while she now partners with her husband she used to drive single between Sydney and

Melbourne. “I’ve never had any problems being a single women in this business. I’d pull up at yards to unload and men would always help if I needed it, same with breakdowns or changing tyres. Sometimes people ask me why I’m doing a ‘man’s’ job and I tell them because it’s dead easy, that’s why.”

Lynn has no thoughts about giving up long haul truck driving, “I take time off every now and then but even then I’m driving. I like to have a proper look at the places I see from the truck but never have time to stop and look at properly. I can’t really explain why I love truck driving, I just do. I love the views, nobody looking over my shoulder, the chats, the pride in the job but I think it’s the freedom of the road I love most. It’s like therapy, being out there on my own, knowing what I have to do, the quietness, it’s just beautiful. It’s the best.”

Author: Melissa Barnett, 55yo, lives on a cattle property in the South Burnett. She had a mid-life crisis and decided to do journalism ten years ago. Currently she writes for a business web portal, and runs a farm stay business and a cattle enterprise. She bought a pottery wheel several years ago and still hasn’t thrown a pot – but lives in hope.

www.taabingastation.com.au





MONEY IS NOT A BAND-AID

BY SUSAN SALEEBA

I don't think anyone really dreams of building a school for 500 or an orphanage in a third world country; they may think it would be nice, but that is as far as they go. So why oh why was volunteering and 'changing the world' a dream of mine?

This is a question I constantly ask myself when the responsibility I feel presents sleepless nights, fear of failure, lack of confidence and self-doubt.

Almost 11 years ago – when my own two children, Adam and Sarah, grew into independent responsible young adults with dreams of their own – I felt that I had the time to actually live out my own dream. I began by volunteering with an international organisation; luckily I was relatively stable financially and could afford the exorbitant outlay to pay for airfares, accommodation, donations, food, inoculations, anti-malarial tablets ... the list went on and on. The promise from the organisation I went with was that a portion of the costs would end up



“Starting with just an idea, we actually do save lives, and we see that education is the way forward. My life is completely different now.”

in the school where I would be spending my next three months.

That did not happen. I was sent to a school in the slums of London in Nakuru, Kenya. It had mud floor classrooms, and unsatisfactory quality food was given to the 260 children who lived near – and sometimes ate from – the dumpsite just three dirt tracks from the school.

I had requested a percentage of my payment be relinquished so that at least I could assist by pouring in a cement floor and purchasing proper food, but this was not to be. Needless to say I felt that I was taken advantage of, as are so many

volunteers with big hearts and life savings.

I did put in the floors and so many other necessities using my then husband’s gold-coloured piece of plastic, with his approval.

My first three month volunteering came to an end, and I felt that I had only just scratched the surface of what really needed to be done. I travelled back and forth to Kenya on my own, making friends with various Kenyans to see where the needs were the greatest and what areas I could best improve or assist with. HIV-positive women who were ostracised into their own out-of-town communities, and orphanages where children had been witness to their

parent's murders and deaths during the political upraising in Kenya in 07/08 were of particular concern. However, each time I returned, all the work that needed to be carried out was not being carried on; there was no sustainability. You cannot just band-aid a problem with money. This was my first lesson.

The Kenyan women work hard. These women's lives are defined by their love for their children, but caring for them often leads to prostitution, alcoholism and battering. The most effective way to give back their self-esteem, hope and dignity was to teach them a trade so they could seek employment and be able to provide for their own children. The most cost-effective option was sewing and dressmaking, and once again that plastic gold card came in handy.

Right at the beginning of my placement in Kenya I met a young man who today is still my best friend, my right hand man, and now my School Director, Christopher Makokha. Christopher and I located a small rundown house on the edge of the slum of Checkpoint and Kaptembwa. It was here that we began our Learning Centre, called Gabriels – named after my children's grandfather, who had passed away only a few days earlier in my hometown of Perth, Western Australia. Gabriel was the epitome of a family man; a man who loved, cared for and provided for his family. These were the same qualities that I wanted to instil in those our project helped.

Christopher and I went out into the slums meeting many women who lives were devoid of hope, having been abandoned themselves with children to care for, no food, no water, living in hovels without power or sanitation, their next meal coming from well-wishers or the local

dump site.

We invited 50 destitute women to begin their journey to change their lives; to learn Kiswahili, how to read and write English, study mathematics, and to sew. All this in 9 months – it was more difficult than giving birth, but at the end of the 9 months they would indeed be reborn with a skill, a key to unlock their future.

There was a small garage at the side of the rundown house which I thought would be the best place to begin a pre-primary school. We used the same method of selecting each child, ensuring that the most destitute of children would attend. These children would be provided with two meals a day and have medical assistance, which so many needed so often with malaria, typhoid, cholera and the common cold prevalent in the area.

Over three years from 2010 to 2013, 300 women were educated with an 85% rate of employment in factories, shops and home sewing, and over 90 children who began in our pre-primary went on to a primary school in the same area – all funded by Gabriels.

My life seemed to be one big fundraiser, finding ways to extract the forever elusive dollar to be able to do all that was needed; to pay our then staff of five, and provide the food and sewing supplies. Everything from art auctions to quiz nights, comedy nights and dinners. Slowly our bank balance began to grow, and we were eventually able to purchase 4 blocks of land in the hope of building our very own school. Whilst we continued the nightmare of fundraising, we grew much needed vegetables on our newly acquired land to help feed many hungry mouths both in our school and within the community itself.

2013 was a significant year; plans



Susan Saleeba with her students

were drawn up by a Perth architect, Tony Casella, volunteering his time, listening to all my needs and wants for a school, and giving me a paper version of my dream, which was on the way to finally becoming reality.

We poured our first bucket of hand-mixed cement into our footings in March 2013. Eventually our school building grew to two stories and included 8 classrooms, an ablution block, kitchen/dining room, administration office, orphanage and a homestay area so that volunteers could come to give their time and stay free of charge, with no exorbitant costs. Word of our work spread, and donations slowly came in.

The building of our school – Gabriels Learning Centre/Orphanage – was funded by large and small donations from those

friends that believed in my dream, helped me through my days of despair and frustration, and soothed me during late night phone calls and ‘what am I doing’ outbreaks.

On July 2nd 2014, Adam and Sarah – direct descendants of Gabriel – officially opened my school. My own children were giving back to the children of one of the worst slums in Nakuru, Kenya called Kaptembwa; it was our new home for the future of so many children.

It is now 2017, and we are educating 300 children; we will cap our number at 500 in two years. Our orphanage is completed and provides a secure and much loved home to 50 orphans. We have a 3-acre farm to grow our much needed food, and provide 1,800 meals per week. Our volunteer homestay programme is highly successful, with repeat visits from so many volunteers from all over the world. We currently have 24 Kenyan staff, and care for over 400 families in the community providing housing, food and medical assistance.

Starting with just an idea, we actually do save lives, and we see that education is the way forward. My life is completely different now. I am no longer married, living with my two dogs, working from my garage and not able to afford those little luxuries that were once enjoyed. It is a far better life, and such an amazing journey I am on. Each time I return to Kenya and enter our school through the brightly yellow painted gates I hear hundreds of voices calling “Mumma Susan”. Yes, there are still sleepless nights, and many personal losses experienced along the way, but would I do it all over again? Yes!

Find out more about Susan’s work, and read how you can help, at www.nakuruhope.org.



NATURAL EVOLUTION OF A STORYTELLER

BY ANNABELLE BRAYLEY

I grew up with four brothers on a small farm on the western Darling Downs in Queensland, Australia, and all I ever wanted to do was head further west. I also wanted to train as a hairdresser but my father thought that nursing or teaching were better options, so off I went and started my nursing training in Brisbane. I bailed out and, after a break of two years, transferred to Charleville Base Hospital in south west Queensland where I finished my general nursing certificate.

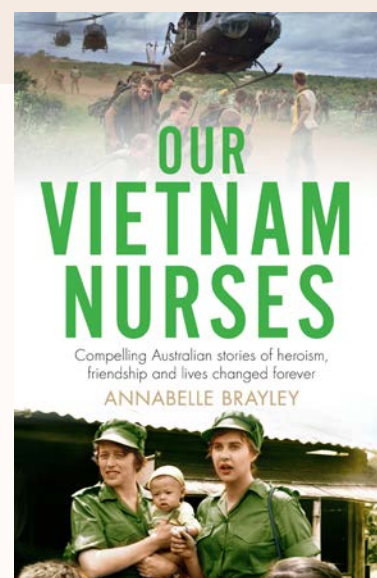
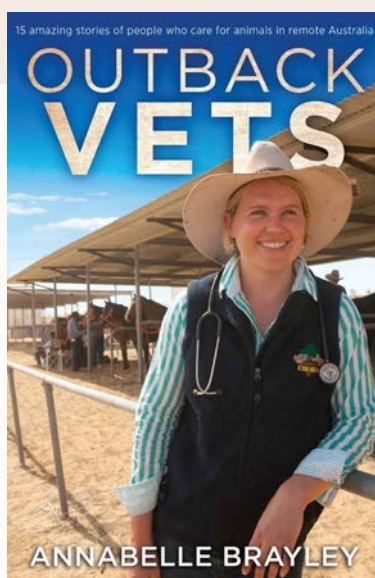
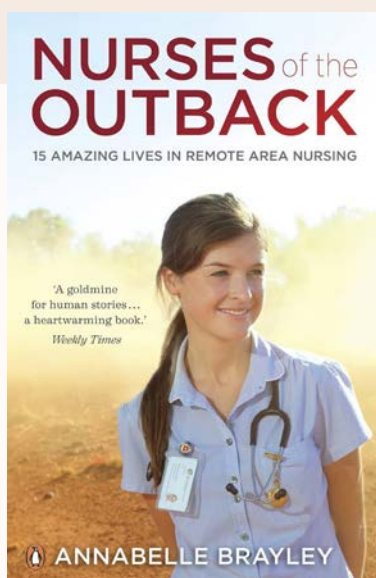
Although I loved living out here, I really didn't enjoy nursing whereas 'real' nurses clearly love what they do. They are passionate about caring for people, about looking after them and guiding them to better health, about advocating for them and rescuing them when required. Me? I just wanted to sit on their beds and chat! I definitely should have been a hairdresser! After all, doesn't everybody tell their hairdresser everything? They are the world's natural counsellors and I've always been curious about other people; why they choose whatever it is they do, or don't do, in their lives.

Happily for me, I fell in love, married my lovely husband Ian and, in 1980, went to live with him on his family's sheep

station 130 km from Charleville. Although I 'nursed' our children when they needed it, I never assumed a clinical nursing role after that. I spent my days multitasking through the broad job description that is the pathway of most women on the land. We sold out in 2001 and moved north a couple of hours to the Morven district, where we now live.

I pretty much fell into storytelling after pitching a story to RM Williams' OUTBACK Magazine, about the centenary of the Victoria Downs Merino Stud, in 2006. Located here in the Morven district, since the Stud was established, the Lord/Roberts families have played an important part in the wool industry in Australia and I thought it should be recognized. One thing led to another and I discovered an aptitude for telling other people's stories. I think it is vital that we record stories for future generations, especially in this modern, fast-changing world.

I don't believe in luck as such, unless it's winning the lottery. Even then you have to make it happen by buying a ticket. I believe that hard work teamed with making the most of opportunities lays the foundations for good things to happen. That said, in early 2012 I was stunned when I found a



message on our phone from an editor at Penguin Books asking if I'd be interested in speaking to them about a project.

I didn't know then that this wasn't entirely unusual. One of the publishers had read a story I wrote in OUTBACK about rural and remote health and asked me if I would like to collect, edit and collate a selection of stories about nurses working in rural and remote Australia. No way was I ever going to say "No"! So BUSH NURSES evolved, published in March 2013. It's a social history of nursing in inland Australia, based on anecdotes collected from various people and sources across the last hundred years.

After that, NURSES OF THE OUTBACK seemed a natural progression. It is biographical stories of fifteen amazing nurses who work in the 'modern' outback. They're gutsy, committed, resilient people and their stories were mesmerising and a privilege to write. They are, in fact, ordinary everyday people, albeit well trained and highly experienced, who step up and do extraordinary things when needed. In my view, nurses are the backbone of the country and, along with other emergency service workers, they are the real heroes of the world. It was

an absolute joy to tell their stories and celebrate the enormous contribution nurses make to the sustainability of the inland.

Likewise, writing OUTBACK VETS made perfect sense to me as so many nurses did vet work I wondered where all the vets were. They're definitely 'out there' and they're an incredibly bright and intriguing

"Nurses are the backbone of the country and, along with other emergency service workers, they are the real heroes of the world. It was an absolute joy to tell their stories and celebrate the enormous contribution nurses make to the sustainability of the inland."



Annabelle at the Nurses Memorial in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra
Photo by Megan McNicholl

group of people who work unbelievably long hours to deliver excellent health care to both large and small, feathered and furred, scaly and sleek domestic, wild and farmed animals. The really gobsmacking thing is, their patients can't tell them what's wrong ... they were fascinating!

And then there is my most recent publication, *OUR VIETNAM NURSES*. As I said in the introduction to that book, I'd never thought about nurses being in Vietnam even though I trained as a nurse, and I'm old enough to remember that particular war. I remember the soldiers, the protests and the vitriol that was directed at Vietnam veterans, but I don't remember ever hearing any mention of nurses. I quickly realised that, unless they had a connection to a Vietnam veteran, most other people hadn't either. So my self-

appointed mission began.

I have met the most wonderful people in the last two years as a result of hearing and sharing these stories. And as dramatic as it might sound, if I never publish another word, I will always feel as though I've done something really important in bringing to light the stories of these Australians who nursed in Vietnam.

Storytelling has been a wonderful experience for me all round and I've learned a lot about the craft of writing and the processes of publishing. And with all this experience writing about nurses in particular, I've come to know for sure that I really should have trained as a hairdresser! However, since my journey has led me to telling other people's stories, I now can't think of anything I'd rather be doing.

Annabelle's books can be found at <https://penguin.com.au/authors/54-annabelle-brayley>. On Facebook you will find her at Annabelle Brayley - Australian Outback Storyteller.

“There are resources
you can access that
cannot be seen,
and they are far
greater and more
powerful than the
resources you might
readily observe.”

~ Price Pritchett



BROKEN SOLDIERS

BY BEV KURKOWSKI

They were arranged in formation. Eight thousand of them. Each face telling its own story. Young soldiers gazing into a future full of adventure; older infantry, guarding the flanks, grimmer, determined; cavalry, their hands gripping the leather bridles of solid, sturdy horses; archers kneeling, their bows at the ready. The Emperor surveyed them with pride in his power and conviction that this display would serve him well when he entered the afterlife. He ordered them buried in thatch covered pits, his terracotta army, their bright colours, their chariots, and their weapons, guarding his tomb for eternity.

And two thousand years later, a farmer digging a well discovered them. The rest is history. The Terracotta Warriors are one of China's major tourist attractions and the city of Xi'an boasts a museum built like three aircraft hangars over the pits where the warriors stood. Thousands, if not millions of people visit them every year, and there is a roving exhibition that has been touring the world for years.

But that's not the whole story. Because when Mr Yang's discovery was unearthed, every one of those eight thousand terracotta figures was broken, smashed to pieces. The two thousand or so that are on display in the front section of one of the pits are the ones that have been carefully removed by archaeologists; reconstructed, like life-sized three-dimensional jigsaw puzzles; and carefully replaced to stand as

they originally stood. Most of the army is still broken and buried, and will remain so until technology develops sufficiently so that removing them will not come at the cost of the deterioration of their beautiful painted colours.

Why are they broken? After Emperor Qin died, there was an uprising. The pits were broken into. The thatched roofs and everything wooden – like the chariots and bows – were burned and every warrior, every symbol of the emperor's power, every reminder of his war-driven unification of the five kingdoms that became China, was destroyed.

Those broken soldiers haunt me. I wonder who smashed them. Was it vandalism, part of the mass chaos of revolt? Was it the workers enslaved for years to build them, coming back to vent their frustration and hatred of what they had been forced to do? Did some soldiers come back and seek out the hated image of themselves in a role that they didn't want immortalised? Destroying the person they had become.

Outside Xi'an, there's a factory where they make souvenir warrior figures and where they demonstrate the actual process by which the life-size figures were made. In the courtyard outside, there is one of those tourist photo opportunity devices where you stand on a step behind a headless life-size warrior and "become" a warrior for the camera. When one of the men in our tour group took his place for the photo, the resemblance was uncanny. With his moustache and dark colouring, he could have been a warrior reincarnated. In that moment I realised that each individual face of the Terracotta Army memorialises a real person, and that the reconstruction of his figure pays a kind of homage across the

ages to his service and his sacrifice.

A typically Aussie spin? Terracotta warrior meets ANZAC. Broken soldiers are a sad fixture in our lives these days: some physically damaged beyond repair; some using a hollow bravado, alcohol and medications to hide the cracks. After sixty years some, like Paul Tibbets, the pilot who dropped the atomic bomb, say they go to their graves without regrets. After forty years some, like Vietnam conscript Barry Heard, in his book *Well Done Those Men* (Scribe, 2007), can reflect on their experiences and the price they paid, face the reunions, and catch up with fellow conscripts. These days from Afghanistan and Iraq, from East Timor and the Solomon Islands, they are coming home. We meet them at parties where they drink too much and tell endless stories that nobody wants to hear – again. Unlike their older counterparts who courteously fell apart in silence, they choose the socially less comfortable option of sharing their pain as rooms empty around them. I wonder what they would do if confronted with a life-sized terracotta replica of themselves.

Our guide told us that he has been coming to the museum for years yet he has never seen the archaeologists at work, although he occasionally sees the results of their efforts. There is a work area at the far end of one of the pits and the collection there of partly rebuilt figures and horses evolves over time. Out of sight, someone painstakingly collects the broken pieces and works to restore them to the truth and dignity of their real nature.

I like that image: working quietly in the background, with love and respect, honouring the truth of the soldiers. Not as broken, but as worthy of and destined for repair.



TECH START-UP

BY LUDWINA DAUTOVIC

Over the years, I have had many business opportunities presented to me. It's hard to know what exactly triggered these opportunities. However, I've always had this desire to give my time and offer help without expecting anything in return. In hindsight, I can see this has helped me because more often than not, I have found this approach has organically created many opportunities and opened many doors. Some might call this Karma.

Through my business journey, I've always had a love of technology and all things digital so I am not surprised I have now found myself as the CEO of my own tech start-up, The Room Xchange. It's an exciting time to be in the tech space and a journey I so passionately enjoy being a part of.

This is not my first foray into tech. In fact, I've been in this playground for almost 15 years. Over the past few years I've begun investing in a few tech start-ups, two of which are Manalto and Spondo. Prior to this, my experience of business had only been small business. I became extremely curious as to how a tech start-up works, what's involved in making it a success and

hopefully learn enough to make smart investment choices myself one day.

So, I offered my help. I figured this was a good way to start to learn the ropes. It was a gentle step into their world and helped me make smart choices about the companies I invest in.

Turning 50

I turned 50 last year. For some it's a birthday they'd wish to forget. For others it's a reminder of what they haven't yet accomplished in their lives. For me it's a very exciting time in life.

I spent the first 25 years of my life figuring out what I wanted to do. I spent the next 25 years working at making a name for myself in the digital industry. So what's next now that I'm entering 'the next chapter'?

It turns out I'm not the only one who's been kept up at night, tackling this question. Many of my friends, colleagues, and clients have said "I have no idea what I'm going to do in my 50s. What next for me?"

For me it is The Room Xchange. I took the plunge and called on the key

relationships I had built over many years to kick-start the process. I needed a team of like-minded people who could bring this to life. I needed developers, web designers, PR agents, marketing pros, legal advisors, insurance experts and investors.

As I sat around the table, with my army of experts, I realised I am leading a digital start-up as a woman at 50. It's one thing to be female in tech but another to be 50. Where are the other women of my age?

Studies have shown us that half the workforce (eg woman) find their career opportunities stall and are forced to make a decision: career or children. Men, like women, are hesitant to take paternity leave, as it has a direct impact on their careers and ability to earn. This, combined with the fact that statistically, women in tech earn less than men, can see many women, later in life, without the cash to start up their own venture, despite the fact the kids have flown the coop.

Although I appreciate it can be scary and requires a considered risk, we create our own opportunities. They are all around us. The digital age we live in provides us the channel do that.

You have to have the certainty in knowing what you want to do, back yourself and be willing to put yourself out there. The Room Xchange was borne from the way I lived. After much thought, research and due diligence I put myself out there by gathering people around me that filled the gaps in areas that I am not an expert in.

I am not surprised at 50 years old, after raising two children and 25 years in business, that I am now a CEO and founder of a tech start-up. I've spent two decades proving myself in the tech fields. I've launched businesses; managed digital campaigns and even created media companies from scratch. I've worked really hard to make a name for myself. And now, I am using all this to launch a global business with a social impact that will change the way people live.

If the concept of me, at 50, launching a start up from scratch, gives confidence to other woman with decades of experience, knowledge and wisdom to start something of their own, well, that's inspiring to me.

It's never too late to start. So, what does your 'next chapter' look like?

Find out more about Ludwina Dautovic at www.ludwina.com

"As I sat around the table, with my army of experts, I realised I am leading a digital start-up as a woman at 50. It's one thing to be female in tech but another to be 50. Where are the other women of my age?"

~ Ludwina Dautovic

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