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Common Unity luncheon: Food for thought

by Jagad Samuel

When I first moved to Nimbin, I met Stevie Didge who explained the importance of asking an Aboriginal Elder for permission to run the Flourish Retreat on Widjabul Wia-bal land. He also gave me some other advice that turned out to be most prescient.

I spent a long time seeking out an Elder and eventually I got a blessing from Uncle Lewis Walker during the Aquarius Festival. Thanks Uncle Lewis.

All I know for sure is these people are my brothers and sisters and I want to get to know them better. So, when I saw a poster inviting the people of Nimbin to have a lunch with Aunty Liz and other First Nations people to "move forward together" I jumped at the opportunity.

I didn't have a clue what to expect and I suspect much of what was discussed I didn't understand, but I thought I



Binnah Pownall, Aunty Liz and Judy Hales

should share some of what happened at the 'Common Unity Luncheon' that Aunty Liz hosted.

The Common Unity luncheon was well attended. I counted 46 people at one point. There were a lot of First Nations people. A few people I had met before included Cindy Roberts, Stevie Didge and Binnah Pownall, as well as other Mob I hadn't met before including Aunty Liz, Mary Anne Roberts, Rhoda Roberts and Uncle James Henderson.

While I ate the provided lunch, many of the people I just mentioned spoke. There was talk about a treaty between the First Nations people and the town of Nimbin. This sounds like a great idea, but again I don't know what it really means. I saw the names and numbers of Elders put up on a chalkboard and us being encouraged to call them "when we are doing stuff".

Emotions climbed as there was talk of wanting Mob and us to "live together as one" and learn how to care for the environment, the trees and each other. There was talk of need for land for the aborigines, and then I was shocked to hear there was an Elder who had been living homeless in Nimbin for two years.

My ignorance means I probably haven't understood what was discussed, but I just wanted to share what I felt and my interest in a closer connection with the original inhabitants of the land I now live on.

Feasting

by Neil Amor

Feasts are special meals, food out of the ordinary in kind or quantity, shared among an enlarged circle of people. They are occasions for many kinds of activities, not only eating and talking, but musical performances, formal speech, prayer and sacrifice, politicking and commerce.

The earliest references to feasting in literature date to a Sumerian (3000-2350 BCE) myth in which the god Enki offers the goddess Inanna some butter cakes and beer.

A bronze vessel dated to the Shang dynasty (1700-1046 BCE) in China illustrates worshippers offering their ancestors wine, soup and fresh fruits.

In ancient Greek society, gift-giving was a primary feature of many feasts. This allowed leaders to establish their status by sharing grain, meat, and other goods with other leaders and household heads.

If feasts help define political hierarchies, they also demonstrate who is excluded from them.

Chances are you will have



An ancient bacchanalian feast

the opportunity to share with others over the coming weeks. Here are two recipes that are quick, inexpensive and will complement whatever else that may be on offer, as well as delight you and yours.

Caramelised Carrot, Corn and Coriander Salad

1/2 cup lime juice
1 tbsp cumin seeds toasted and ground
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
1 tbsp honey
1/2 cup vegie oil
salt and pepper
1kg carrots, peeled and quartered lengthways
4 cobs of sweetcorn, cooked and sliced off in chunks
3/4 cup chopped coriander
1-2 chillies, thinly sliced
3 limes, cut in wedges.

Preheat grill to med-high. Season carrots with salt and pepper. Lightly oil surface and cook until golden on each side and starting to soften. Remove and let cool. In a large mixing bowl add carrots, corn, coriander and chilli. Dress with lime dressing and serve with lime wedges.

Lime Dressing

Place the lime juice, cumin, mustard and honey in a mixing bowl and whisk together. Continue to whisk and add oil slowly until all incorporated. Season and chill until needed.

Snow Truffles (makes 5)

1 cup ground cashews
1 1/2 cup desiccated coconut

1/4 cup raw honey juice and zest of 1 large lime half pinch salt.

Blend cashews into a fine flour and add the coconut. Slowly add the lime juice and zest, then honey, until you have a smooth, even mixture. Roll into balls and chill until needed.

Hint: colour them with parsley and beetroot juice for a festive collection.

Big News for December from Nimbin Organic Food Co-op

The Co-op is a thriving hub and only exists through the efforts of its volunteers and the on-going support of the community.

In keeping with the gift of giving, the Co-op is happy to announce an extra discount for the month of December. That brings it up to a generous 20% off for all members.

But wait, there's more.

During the week of 16-22 December, any members who spend over \$10 will automatically enter a prize pool \$1,200. That's 10 x \$100 and a further 10 x \$20. One entry per member... we like to spread the love.

So, thanks again for your support and see you all in the New Year, and until next year, eat well.

The Za'atar

by Thom Culpepper

'Za'atar' is the Arabic name for thyme or more precisely, 'Hyssop' (*Hyssopus officinalis*), or Palestinian thyme.

General and common Eastern Mediterranean and West Asia recipes for the spice mixture of the same name, Za'atar includes: olive oil, thyme (dried wild Palestinian Hyssop), cumin, coriander, cardamom, sumac (berries), marjoram, savoury, toasted sesame seed, black pepper and a touch of chervil or fennel, dried mint and a pinch of cooking salt.

One Palestinian variety calls for the addition of caraway seed. All of these mixes are coarse mortar-ground and lightly toasted.

This spice mix is eaten on zeit (pita bread) as a morning breakfast, and regularly served over 'drained' yogurt or hummus, or to post-anoint grilled or Tagine-cooked sheep, goat, fowl or camel meat.

Za'atar, (hyssop) is mentioned in records as old as the documented history of the Egyptian dynasties. Mentioned of by early social-land-crop-husbanding-man, living on the silt plains and marshes of and between the two great rivers of Mesopotamia, the Tigris and the Euphrates.

Za'atar is a cultural signifier of Palestinianism. The Palestinian houses and tables are culturally 'warmed' by its very presence.

And so on to the plating, with which to address this culinary lovely:

Dress pita bread with Palestinian-green-olive oil, cover with Za'atar, lightly grill or flame.



Serve with drained yogurt, hummus, Palestinian olives, goat or sheep-feta-salsa and preserved green peppers, sliced onions, grilled aubergines, cucumber and garnished with mint and Lebanese preserved lemon slices.

This food is a 'core' food of the Arabs and Palestinians. Bread, olive oil and native plants and spices.

Peace, comrades.

thewholearthveg@gardener.com

Win-win with weeding

WEED WORDS

by Triny Roe

Gardening, including weeding, is beneficial on many levels.

First, it creates a beautiful outdoor space to relax in and enjoy. It also provides physical activity, and keeping mobile is one of the keys to good health.

Plants also exude beneficial chemicals called phytoncides which boost the immune system and micro-organisms such as *Mycobacterium vaccae* in the soil have been shown to reduce stress, combat depression and help you think better.

A stroll in the forest or a lush garden is efficacious, but if you combine it with weeding, everyone is a winner.

Weeding will always be a part of life, as new plants can appear anytime and anywhere. Weed seeds travel to new locations via many different routes. Some species have seeds which cling to fur or fabric, hitchhiking their way to new locations.

Farmer's friends

The seeds of farmer's friends, aka cobblers pegs, *Bidens pilosa*, have two or three tiny awns with barbs that readily attach to anything that brushes by the plant, giving it an extraordinary ability to spread.

This ubiquitous species originates from tropical America, but is now found worldwide and has naturalised in Africa, Eurasia and Pacific Islands.

During Captain Cook's second voyage to the Antipodes (1772 – 1775), Joseph Banks collected specimens of this species from Australia and several other Pacific Islands, and it is believed that it was



Plant natives in your garden: Hovea and Palm Lily

inadvertently carried here by sailors on one of many Spanish ships that visited in the preceding two centuries.

While it's a pest of paddocks, gardens, bush regen sites and disturbed areas, farmers friends do have some benefits. The young leaves are edible and this plant has long been used in Chinese and other herbal medicine.

It is also known to be a hyperaccumulator and can take up heavy metals so can be used to remediate contaminated soils. Therefore, be careful when harvesting for food or medicine and choose the site carefully.

Velcro weed

Another species with sticky seeds is silver leaf desmodium, *Desmodium uncinatum*.

This scrambling leguminous vine was purposely introduced to Australia as a fodder crop for cattle. Now considered an environmental weed, it establishes on creek banks, forest edges, roadsides, and other disturbed areas.

The hooked hairs on stems and pods have earned it the nickname velcro weed and it can trap small native animals. It can also arrive in mulch hay.

It's easy to carry seeds to new locations. When visiting national parks, ensure your shoes and clothing are free from weed

seed. When you discover seeds clinging to your trousers or socks and pluck them off, be careful where you throw them.

The bin is best, or you risk initiating a new infestation if you casually toss them off the veranda. Wind is another major distributor of weeds.

Cats claw

Cats claw creeper, *Dolichandra unguis-cati*, loves growing up trees, gripping the bark with pronged tendrils. The trailing vines can grow to thirty metres.

This species is an eco-transformer due to its ability to smother vegetation. If there are no trees, it forms thick mats on the ground, excluding everything else.

Cats claw creeper produces numerous tubers deep in the soil and is difficult to eradicate once it's established. And it's a super-spreader! The small papery seeds, up to 80 of them, produced in pods, love a stiff breeze.

Flowering in November, it is easy to spot the bright yellow trumpet-shaped flowers. Do yourself, and the neighbours, a favour and cut the stems to prevent the seeds from developing. Not be confused with medicinal cats claw, *Uncaria spp.*, this creeper does have some uses and the lengthy vines can be woven into sturdy baskets. Happy weaving!

Since moving to Tumbal Creek, I volunteer teaching yoga classes via Zoom to women in emergency shelters with the organisation A Sound Life. Through this opportunity I've been trained to deliver trauma informed yoga, a style that has really benefited my teaching in general.

Even contributing columns for the *Nimbin GoodTimes* is a way I continue to practise the craft of writing while serving my community. There are a million ways to volunteer now and you'd be surprised at what's available and how accommodating organisations are to have you on board.

The only attitude you need to have

One of my mentors was telling me about how she once had her elderly parents with a lot of health issues staying with her for a couple weeks. It was a stay that required a lot of strategy.

I asked her how she managed and she explained, "service. I just was of service the whole time."

While volunteering is a set time in a set place, being of service is an attitude practice. It's a way to take the ego out of our experience and just come from a place of wanting to help, wanting to offer kindness and comfort.

I find that when I'm working or looking after someone, if I shift my mindset to being of service rather than trying to figure out how I'm going

to get through the day, the whole energy changes and everything becomes easier. When in doubt, be of service.

The gift of service

There's a strange thing that happens when you find a volunteer practice that relies on your own unique skills and passions. You realise that serving is enjoyable.

There is something so powerful about making a difference simply by being yourself and using your own unique skills to help make life better for someone else that it just about always feels like you're the one on the receiving end of the effort.

And perhaps that's the reason why our son in Brooklyn gives up a well-deserved Saturday morning snooze to bake bread and create meals with his volunteer friends.

As we handed boxed meals out to his neighbours, many of the regulars blew him kisses of gratitude. For a few hours, a busy city had become a sweet little neighbourhood where locals and strangers alike cared for each other.

At that moment I couldn't think of a better way to spend a New York Saturday morning.

Susan Paget is a television producer, well-being writer and yoga teacher who lives in Tumbal Creek. Listen to her new podcast 'The Art of Practice'. More info at: Instagram: @therainforestfarm or email susanpaget@gmail.com

Plant of the month



Flame Tree
Brachychiton acerifolius

by Richard Burer

Summertime is here as spring turns summer into a humid subtropical landscape with this stunning endemic tree the Flame tree.

You can see how the Flame tree is so widely known, planted and revered on the east coast of Australia from southern NSW to Cape York, its individual trees colouring bright specks in the dense evergreen faraway rainforest gullies only spied from the eyes of the keen observer.

Often planted as a street, garden and landscape tree, the red showy panicles springing from the forks of the upper leaves are a stunning delight, carpeting the ground like a Bollywood wedding.

Often found on lowland subtropical rainforest, the Flame tree is very common in the area and often finds its way into my conservation plantings, including on the farm where I find it reliable and happy to live close by the house or in the bush where the lorikeets and bees keep busy enjoying its nectar.

It's reasonably slow-growing but in perfect conditions it can make excellent growth rates.

A large tree to 35m that can be easy to grow from the yellow seeds taken from the boat-shaped fruit available from late summer on, if you're keen on propagation.

This tree is often available from your favourite rainforest nursery like Whale Bone or Fire Wheel Nursery, and can put on stunning displays after only a few years. I've also planted trees that have taken two decades to flower like the one pictured, but it was always worth the wait.

Richard Burer is a Nimbin-based natural area restoration contractor and consultant: richard.burer@gmail.com

VOLUNTEERING

The art of practice

by Susan Paget

This time last year we visited our kids in Brooklyn, New York, where they've been based for a while.

I was looking forward to joining our son on his Saturday morning volunteering gig, feeding vulnerable neighbours through their local community kitchen program.

He's always had a bent for some level of volunteerism. When he lived in Australia, he used to regularly visit a nursing home to spend a little time with older folks, perhaps missing his overseas grandparents.

Why he's made it a point to serve others is something he decided on his own.

While most people on a rainy Saturday morning at 6am would be enjoying a sleep in, we headed over to the local church's basement kitchen and got down to the business of baking vegan bread rolls.

As baking bread scented the air, other volunteers joined us to begin preparing full, freshly cooked meals for handing out later at lunchtime.

My son's efforts over the years have inspired the practice of regular volunteering in my own life. As a long-time yoga student,

there's even a type of yoga dedicated to this idea of helping others called "seva" which translates in Sanskrit to "service".

Before I understood this concept though, my past volunteer efforts were more like doing time at the tuck shop when the kids were little or ticking the Good Samaritan box by serving a holiday meal to the homeless.

Since then, I've discovered that the best way for me to commit to a regular practice of service is to find volunteer work where I resonate with the organisation and where I can serve in a way that comes naturally to me.

Below are a few thoughts on the concept of being of service through volunteering and how it's made an important impact in my life.

Servicing a new career

If you ever feel stuck in your career or want to dive into something new but don't have the skillset, volunteering in your dream job is a way to step closer to that reality. I learned this, years ago.

When we lived in Sydney, I regularly volunteered as a coach and workshop facilitator for Dress for Success, an organisation that helps at risk women get back into the work force.

This experience provided me with incredible leadership opportunities, which carried over into my paid work.

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Susan Paget is a television producer, well-being writer and yoga teacher who lives in Tumbal Creek. Listen to her new podcast 'The Art of Practice'. More info at: Instagram: @therainforestfarm or email susanpaget@gmail.com

facebook.com/reclaimingdeath

Who will be the last person on Earth to touch your beloved? - Mimi Zenzmaier Founder & Funeral Director

LISMORE SHIRE - TWEED to BALLINA - EVANS - CASINO

Beetroot Kvass



by Magenta Appel-Pye

With the silly season upon us, our guts will be working overtime.

Thankfully I have discovered beetroot kvass. This drink is valuable for its medicinal qualities and as a digestive aid, as it is full of probiotic goodness.

Beet kvass is the result of fermentation by friendly Lactobacillus bacteria, which gives the brine a tangy flavour.

One cup morning and night is an excellent blood tonic, cleanses the liver and is a good treatment for kidney stones. It has been observed that sick people lack digestive juices.

The lacto-fermented foods are an especially valuable aid to cancer patients. The best are lacto-fermented beets. Many scientific studies have demonstrated that beets have a regenerating effect on the body.

The Russian lady at the Mullumbimby farmers markets is an excellent fermenter and all her produce is delicious, but it gets a bit expensive if you want to drink kvass every day. Which I do. So, I made my own and discovered that it is really easy.

You simply chop organic beetroots into ½ inch cubes and put them into a very clean 120ml jar. Leave the skins on and don't grate them as they exude too much juice which results in too rapid fermentation that favours the production of alcohol rather

than lactic acid.

Add ¼ cup of whey which is easily made by straining natural yoghurt through muslin. The liquid at the bottom is whey. Sauerkraut or kimchi juice works as well. You can make it without the whey but the fermentation process takes longer, up to a couple of weeks.

Add 1 tablespoon of good quality sea salt and fill the jar with filtered water. Stir well and secure the lid. Keep at room temperature for two days.

You may see bubbles inside the jar and brine may seep out of the lid, so place a bowl or plate under the jar to help catch any overflow.

If you are using a lid, open the jar once a day to taste the liquid and release gases. If any mould or scum has formed on the top, simply skim it off.

You can make another batch by leaving a little brine in the jar with the beets, add a teaspoon of salt, fill with water, and proceed as before.

Second and third batches can be made but will taste weaker than the first.

When it tastes strong enough for your liking, strain out the beets and transfer the kvass to the fridge. You may drink it right away, but it's often best after a few days. It will last for at least a month.

Easy, delicious and super healthy for you. I have noticed that my tummy has been feeling happier, which is a big ask after the ravages of chemotherapy.

Have a happy, safe and beautiful silly season.

Sage: A complex herb



Nature's pharmacy
by Trish Clough, herbalist

I was very excited to see a little flower spike emerge from my sage plant.

I've not had much success with sage previously. Heavy soils with poor drainage make life difficult for Mediterranean herbs.

However I am now growing a sage in a pot and it's going fairly well. Too small for a tincture harvest, but maybe next year!

I did manage a good haircut for my lemon balm, so it's currently macerating as a fresh plant tincture. I have it protected from afternoon sun, so I'm hoping it will thrive and produce a second harvest later in the summer.

Back to the sage. It has many uses, some well known and others not so much. Traditionally it's used for sore throats, for menopausal hot flushes with sweating, and to help reduce lactation when babies are being weaned. Some of these uses suggest it is a drying herb, however it is much more complex than that.

According to herbalist and

author Michael Moore, the properties of sage are different depending on the method of preparation. For example, a hot sage tea can encourage sweating, a lukewarm tea is better for infected sore throats, and cold tea is useful to reduce secretions (sweating, excess mucus production and lactation).

An interesting and lesser-known property of sage is that it improves digestion by helping with the absorption of healthy fats and oils. It helps create a better balance of oils and water at the cellular level. According to herbalist Matthew Wood's writings, sage combats drying and aging of the skin and tendons by building up the lipid (fats) and water content of the body.

In his book *The Earthwise Herbal*, he states 'a keynote symptom indicating sage is withered, dry skin and withered tendons'. Because sage improves the moisture content of the skin, it is useful in night sweats where fluid is lost and the skin becomes dry.

There are hormones which need fats and oils for their production and transport, which can be improved with sage. Matthew Wood similarly points out that sage 'helps the body switch from ovarian, fertility levels of estrogen to adrenal, maintenance levels' which occurs with menopausal changes. He cautions that sage is not recommended for prolonged usage, although recent published research studies state that sage appears to be a safe herb.

Traditionally sage has a long usage for memory and



cognition support. Recent studies with a sage tincture showed it to be effective in the management of mild to moderate Alzheimer's Disease, with no adverse effects from taking it.

Naturally occurring rosmarinic acid, a component of sage, has shown 'neuroprotective and antioxidant effects against amyloid beta plaques'.

These plaques have toxic effects on neuronal (nerve) cells in the brain. Another study showed an improvement in alertness, calmness and mood with the use of sage.

Sage has been used as a traditional remedy by people with diabetes in many countries. A study with tea infusions found sage to be as effective as the anti-diabetic drug metformin. The sage tea reduced liver glucose production as well as increasing the action of insulin.

A further study found an extract of sage to be effective

as an antibacterial against several species of bacteria that cause dental caries. Sage has traditionally been used as a mouthwash, so this is another example where modern science confirms the efficacy of a traditional use of a medicinal herb.

Although sage is generally considered safe, it is advised that people seek professional advice if they are considering taking it for any of the above uses. It should be avoided by breast-feeding women unless they are intending to reduce milk supply.

Trish Clough is a Lismore herbalist who has been practising for more than 30 years. She now conducts her own clinic practice in Iluka after relocating from Lismore.

Trish is available for consultations by appointment on 0452 219 502 or email: trishclough2@gmail.com

The information in the column is meant for general interest only and should not be considered as medical advice.



by Sonia Barton

A lot of people who come to me with jaw pain or have issues chewing, or with a clicking jaw, could have some blocked energies in that area.

Sometimes it is a physical problem, and sometimes it can be because you aren't speaking out about a problem; you've seen something you haven't talked about; or you're in a relationship where you can't speak your truth to your partner in case it upsets them. These are just examples.

Of course, it can be

What are you not saying?

something physical, maybe caused by a whiplash injury, having a fall and you've banged your head, or worn braces on your teeth, or you've had your mouth open for a long time having a crown fitted to your teeth, or having wisdom teeth taken out.

But back to the emotional issues... we can create a block in the energy field through feeling emotional about a particular event. Usually in the throat chakra.

When I was a child I suffered a lot with tonsillitis, and looking back it was because I couldn't speak out to my parents, it was like my voice wasn't being heard. I was from a big family and deep emotions weren't recognised so I ended up with a lot of sore throats caused by holding back my feelings.

As adults we can be more aware of what is causing our imbalances.

If you ignore the emotions of a sore throat or jaw pain,

then your body's intelligence can create something worse to make you aware of what you are doing to yourself. If it is ignored for years, then tumors and cancer could be created, through emotions not being cleared and acknowledged.

So, if you have any of the above symptoms ask yourself, "What am I not saying or addressing?" maybe I can help you with some body realignment through gentle moves with Bowen therapy. I use muscle testing to check the jaw and C1 vertebrae to see if they are in alignment.

I can help your jaw to balance and then in turn it will help to re-align the rest of your body. I say to my clients that it's like putting the brakes on – once your jaw is in balance the rest of your body doesn't have to change position and overcompensate to make up for the wonky jaw.

I can also check your energy field and chakras, especially the throat chakra,

to clear any block and balance everything for you. Only you can work on your emotional issues, but just having some awareness of what your issues are can start to heal your body and prevent anything nasty being created later in life.

I just want to close by saying a big Thank You to everyone who has been to see me this year for Bowen therapy, and everything else that I combine to help you to feel more balanced, pain-free and clearer in the mind, body and soul. Also thank you for all the referrals which mean a lot to me. You are all amazing! I love you all.

Have a restful and happy Christmas. Enjoy the company of your friends and family, and I send you good wishes for a prosperous, healthy and joyful 2024.

Sonia Barton practises Bowen Therapy and Reiki in Nimbin and Murwillumbah, phone 0431-911-329, bowenenergywork.com.au



Remembrance cocktail party

Christine Bartling-Clark
28/7/1960 to 26/6/2023

To all those who knew and loved this amazing woman and would like to celebrate her life with us, come dressed for cocktails and dancing on Saturday 9th December, 3pm at Moondani Bales, 199 Falls Road, Nimbin. BYO vegetarian food and drinks.

Law and the pdf



When three clients are men whose exes are fighting them over children, one can get confused between the rapidly growing files.

Our efficiency with the paperwork is growing, which is important when you're on legal aid rates. But the stress levels are high. I've started swearing aloud at coders.

The 'Amended Response' is one that has to be filed urgently. There's a list of pdfs the portal will accept. This, it seems, is not one of them. After spending too long too often on the Friday in question in a telephone queue or waiting on the chat thing, I have an idea.

I make a copy and take it across the bridge and into the building that replaced one still mourned by those who remember and up the flight of stairs to the actual Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia where a real person takes it across to a desk on the other side of the room.

Ten minutes later she tells me she's managed to file it, then explains that I need to file an Application in a Proceeding.

In another matter I've been dilatory in appealing a refusal of Legal Aid and we're in court next week. Somehow our

secretary has persuaded a person on a phone to get it to their manager who decides in our favour. We have funding for counsel.

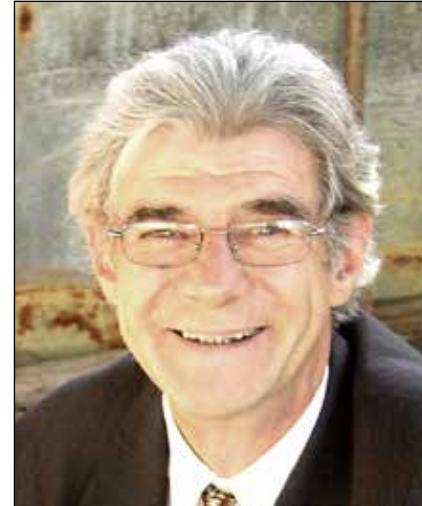
I ring my favourite one. Too late, she's acting for the mother. We waste a day or two searching. Then a clerk in chambers on the coast assists and many enquiries later finds one who's happy to act at such short notice and at legal aid rates.

I was a therapeutic masseur in Keen Street for years before chatting to a mate who is counsel but only does crime. He told me about the new graduate LLB and one thing led to another and now I find myself at the end of the week not looking forward to Monday, when we're nominally not in the office but it's list day in the Local and then the men with exes...

And me thinking I should get the website back up, but if we're flat-out with friends and friends of friends, why advertise internationally? Keeping a low profile has always seemed to me to be a good idea, not generally a profitable one, but less stressful? I wonder.

Spending too much time around parenting fights is not good for the mental health. One grows lazy, even rebellious.

I know this because last week a private client appeared and my fascination with



Legal writes

by John Adams

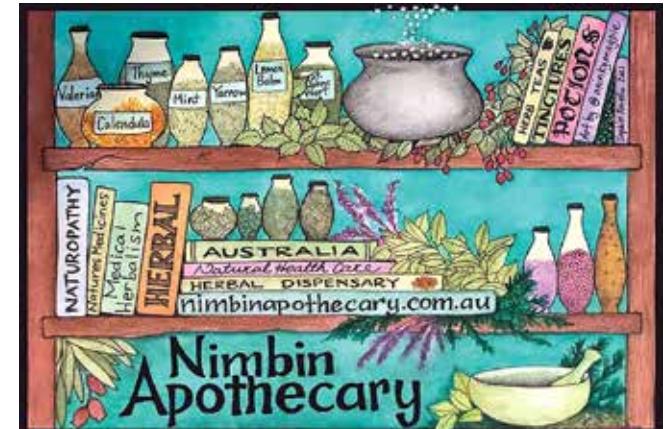
our massive and hugely complex system of laws was rekindled simply by diving into a whole new jurisdictional world, with money in trust and barrister already briefed.

My activist friend is leaving the country and has brought me a new matter. In the Land and Environment Court of NSW in its native title and/or land rights jurisdiction. I read the affidavits and court documents and have a look at the law which is... interesting.

My friend finds a barrister and I draft a Costs Agreement and give him my trust account details. When the client arrives, he takes the other two women up the back to complete their affidavits and I sit with her in our comfortable flood-relief couches and we tell each other stories.

We're in court next day. I waste an hour trying to file my Notice of Appearance on the portal and then send it off by express mail.

The next morning Counsel rings me after the mention: "The judge stamped your Notice in Court." All is well.



Dr Elizabeth McCardell

Dip Clin Hypnotherapy, BA, BA (Hons), M. Couns, PhD

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Psychotherapy, uncertain art, uncertain science

I used to be an occasionally good university teacher before changing careers to practising psychotherapy full time. This was over in Perth, Western Australia. We had a syllabus to follow, lectures and tutorials to run and they followed a pretty standard course.

For about 14 or so years or so, since then, I've worked solely as a psychotherapist. There are similarities to teaching – we want the best for those under our care – but the way we go about it is very different.

As psychotherapists, we observe and guide the other person(s), and we participate in their lives, aiming to bring forth insights, understanding, different ways of doing things, as well as strengthening their sense that only they are the authors of their lives.

Psychotherapy is art and science: fumbling, uncertain, creative, experimental; it's a growing body of psychosocial-spiritual knowledge, it's an understanding of the dynamics between people; it's sometimes methodical, ordered, and follows a clear beginning, middle and end; it's helped by therapist self-awareness (which is very important) and depends on just seeing what is effective and what isn't, it unfolds,

it explores, and it's not a journey that finishes with the last therapeutic session.

It's part of a lifetime of self-discovery. Those coming to therapy or counselling or whatever you call it should not expect clear cut outcomes all the time; it's not an anti-inflammatory pill for the mind, despite what some might tell you. A course of treatment is a dubious way of talking about what is a much more subtle and impactful process.

Here is a therapeutic conversation that has goals along the way, but they are reached via improvisation, intuition, acute listening and trial and error. That is the best therapy, as I and several others see it.

Yes, we can strictly follow the protocols of psychotherapeutic schools and models and rituals, but when we do so, we cease to actually listen to what our client is saying in her words, her body, indeed her whole demeanor.

When we get caught up in saying the 'right thing', we have stopped listening to what is. I fear I have missed quite a number of people as I've observed and participated in their therapeutic journeys, by doing exactly this. For that, I'm sorry.

One thing I need to say



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

with regards to not listening properly to a client is that it forces me to sit with my own discomfort, to tolerate uncertainty and the horde of ghosts of self doubt, but to also aim to be more present, more sensitive, next time.

Erving Yalom says of this that such is a prerequisite for the profession. Ours is a somewhat wobbly profession. We try to steer an even course through uncertain waters, while knowing that this goes against much of the common perception of what we do.

That idea is that what we do follows predictable, measurable pathways, but very often it doesn't work that way, and that's OK. The outcomes may be quite different from what could've been expected at the outset.

Though I speak of such

things, I also know that the journey we travel together isn't without a safety net, well, actually a few safety nets.

Psychotherapists have been trained (in my case, university trained at a post-graduate level), we have experience, we are monitored by a colleague or colleagues in supervision, we participate in on-going professional and personal development, we are bound by a rubric of ethics, we are insured, we abide by the laws surrounding our practice and, basically, we just care what happens to our clients.

Ours is a caring profession. We guide, we accompany, we share, but we do so from a fairly objective position. If we did it any other way, both of us would be lost. But in participating with the client in a deeply human way, we allow them, and us, to be changed at the very heart of the therapeutic encounter.

This is a rich, wonderful collaboration where both client and therapist are nourished in a journey that reintroduces the client to the authorship of their own lives, and that's good to be part of.

Dr McCardell has relocated to Fremantle, but is available for on-line consultations.
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Where tinsel meets tension

by Dr. Kim Gillbee, Psychologist

As lovely as this time of year can be, it also places additional stress, both positive and negative, on people.

While things like finances, planning, preparation and battling crowds contribute to this, what I've found most detrimental to people is the social stress.

For those missing loved ones, the grief is emphasised. For those coming together with loved ones, a minefield of expectation and emotion often reverberates through the festive symphony of holiday mingling. Below are my Top Three Tips to avoid jingling all the way to social exhaustion:

Reframe expectations

You're still you on the 25th, and so is everyone else. It's not realistic to expect ourselves to feel much different than we normally do.

When we go into something expecting a certain experience, we are more likely to place unrealistic demands on ourselves, and others, and suffer when our expectation of how things "should" be isn't realised.

Practise accepting what is, and finding a way to celebrate it, rather than trying to change or control things – you might just be surprised to find there are a multitude of paths that can lead to yuletide bliss if you allow it.

Prepare to manage triggers

Our subconscious is predominantly shaped by our family of origin, and the reality is that no-one gets out of childhood without picking up some limiting beliefs about themselves. This means that no-one is going to push your

buttons like the people you grew up with.

It's normal for our worst behaviour and biggest insecurities to come up around family. It's important to acknowledge this rather than resisting it. If you notice your composure unwrapping like unexpected presents, take a pause – our first reaction is rarely a helpful one.

This isn't about trying to prove anything to others, that's a dead end. Instead, the north star in the situation is that this angel in grinch's clothing has pointed you towards parts of yourself that probably make you vulnerable in other situations too, because they need some love, and has served you up the perfect opportunity to do this – be it in the moment, in reflection after the fact, or with the help of a friend or therapist at some point.

Know how to say "No" when you need to

Implicit social expectations around things like attending events, bringing certain dishes or gifts, or behaving a certain way can be immense at this time of year.

But if these things are done from a place of obligation rather than conscious choice, there will always be negative consequences – for your immediate well-being, and in the relationship long-term.

Ask yourself whether, all factors considered, you CHOOSE to do something, and if the answer is yes, do it without resentment.

If you can't find a place within from which you take responsibility for a choice, consider whether you could find a solution that does feel OK, like allowing yourself to leave early, spending less on gifts, or declining a certain invitation altogether.

It's also helpful to practice the micro "no", so when that passive aggressive co-worker bails you up, you smile, and let them know it's great to see them, but you really must help hand around some food.

This doesn't make you a bad person. We all only have so much energy in a day, and we choose where we invest it.

Sometimes people might not like our boundaries, and while this doesn't mean we shouldn't enforce them, we do need to be willing, and able, to accept the consequences that might arise from dropping a No-Ho-Ho in deciding what to do.

These skills require a certain amount of mindfulness. If you're too busy rushing around like a headless turkey to notice how you feel, how tense your body is, or what's happening with your breath, you're more likely to either bottle things up and collapse later or blow up and project your feelings on to someone else.

So amidst all the action, be sure to check in with yourself, perhaps whenever you take a toilet break, or pour a drink, to scan your body, take note of how tense you are on a scale of 1-10, label any emotions you might be feeling and why you're feeling them, and perhaps any physical or emotional needs you have in that moment that are going unaddressed.

Then remind yourself that your feeling makes sense, thank your body for telling you what it needs, and pat yourself on the back for doing the most important work of all in allowing your own cup to genuinely runneth over.

Because this, in my opinion, is the true spirit of giving.

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So they say

My oldest child is transgender and likes to be referred to as 'they/them/theirs'. I love they and accept them unconditionally, but have trouble because in my mind it refers to several people and I find it confusing. Are there better words?

– V Woolf, Barkers Vale

by Uncle Norm & Aunty Maj

Norm Says:

C'mon old girl, get with the program. Gender is a fluid thing these days and it's getting messy. It no longer has to do with which section in K-mart you go to buy your underpants from. It's all about what you identify with and how you feel on any given day as to what gender you choose to be.

The other day I was filling out a form at the doctor's and it asked what pronoun I want used. This made me nervous because "What's a bloody pronoun?" I thought it was some tool they were going to stick up my arse.

After walking out of there I was more bewildered than ever, and glad that I'm old and won't live to see where all this guff ends up in 20 years.

I'm not stupid however, and I've done two whole minutes of research and learned not only about pronouns but neopronouns as well. Ne/ve, ze/zie and zir to name a few. All these come from a list compiled, not surprisingly, by a student body from some uni somewhere. But wait, there's more: bun, bird, cat, dog and vakasalewalewa. Seriously.

The great Australian band The Masters' Apprentices in their classic song, 'It's Because I Love You', say "Be what you wanna be, do what you wanna do, ooh, yeah," and I say Amen to that.

In that spirit I have come up with my own pronoun for myself, and maybe your eldest child, that embodies my male and female sides as well as my neutral person. Shheit.

"Words belong to us, as much as we belong to them – and out of that mutual belonging arises our most fundamental understanding of the world, as well as the inescapable misunderstandings that befall the grand sensemaking experiment we call life."

– Virginia Woolf

Send your relationship problems to:
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Feelings about dementia

by Michael Brooke

It's clear to me that I am suffering a drawn-out relentless mental and physical breakdown. The decay of old age forces such anguish on many of us – dementia we label it, but it is more than that, more than mere madness.

Dementia is more than a haphazard set of mental and physical malfunctions; it is an inescapable decline, appallingly confronting because we know when it is happening. It is happening to me and it is strangely articulate – with awareness I struggle to regain normalcy, to re-

establish self-control; I know what is happening, despairingly I feel the loss.

Part of the mind (insanity is never of the whole of the mind) fights to regain life's imperatives, which are for continuing knowledge growth, an on-going search for self-understanding, the individuate reaching for spiritual or some other kind of enlightenment – which is not pretentious because in many, many ways it's a striving each of us undertakes.

We struggle; I struggle. I know, as the demented always do, and the knowing is an anguish, that my mind and body in

chaotic ways are betraying me. Dementia and chaos are becoming the same; chaos is acquiring a shape. I sense it and fear it, the strangeness of it, madness that is becoming my sanity.

I am inside a failing body; silently I scream; falling is awful. I fight when others attempt to control my thinking and my behaviours; to do for me what I am increasingly unable to do for myself. I clutch at the feather of sanity to stop my fall. I am plunging into an abyss of non-being.

When others try to drag me back to the old old familiar 'real world', they

heighten the sense of loss I feel and so I scream – their sanity is a feather which can no longer bear my weight. It is only when my madness is allowed that I feel safe. I am safe only with acceptance.

I sense it when others accept that my decline is normal, it's all okay, they allow it – acceptance is the only feather which can bear my weight. My strange behaviours need to be allowed without judgement or censor.

Acceptance is an expression of love; love which I need, the assurance that the abyss of non-being into which I am plunging will not hurt me.

The last of the Piscean predators

Shapeshifting

by Anand Gandharva

In raw nature, stealth attack is a winning strategy. Deception, surprise: victor, victim. That's how predators stalk prey, spiders and parasites attack. The economy in the Age of Pisces may sell snake oil, justify war, mean acts... greed supposedly is good.

Turn on screens today, often fake carrots still sell garbage and trinkets. Yet obvious subterfuge can be illegal in individual behaviour. Punishable, jails, police to enforce laws, fines.

Why then do many boast these skills, taking predator chemicals daily; jungle values? Practical in the past, but self-defeating and rotting community, environment. Life and self are fuelled by food. Character comes with birth, but

norms are cultural. What builds them up?

Most people's circle of care may be limited, but within circumferences they can filter out disturbing animal impulses.

Chemical urges can injure survival. Science today realises we are co-dependent on healthy ecology and can obtain all nutrition from plant-based sources with greater well-being, efficiency, budget savings, mental clarity and strength.

Peaceful co-existence for our future, as humanity evolves from sly marauders to wise gardeners.

Common good is weary of destructive individuals, yet sudden attack in the back, pretension, bluster and traps still may win short-term battles. But they are counterproductive. There are greater goods: love, forgiving, joy, justice.

Sure, humans look like mammals, primates in body. But what fuels our inborn minds? What we model is a personal choice: kookaburra, wallaby, bush turkey, warrior, rat, elephant, a bird of prey, songbird, shark, whale, dove, snake, ape, saint, mate, family member, teacher.

The choice is ours, no matter what social pressure. But where are we going?

Humanity moves from the era of Pisces to the Age of Aquarius. What does that mean?

Aquarius is more than music, respecting Gaia, creativity, tolerance, freedom, net zero, harmony, self-reliance, tuned hearts, sustainable ecology, exploring inner and outer space.

It also means people are taking the next step in community awareness: we are individuals, but also survive as a part of healthy

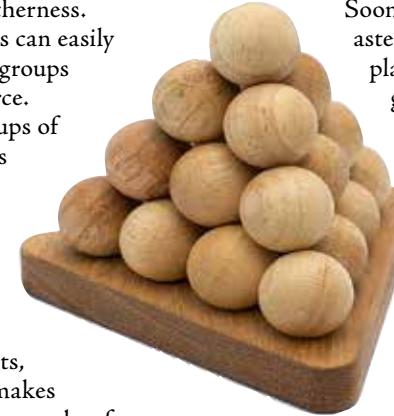
nature, in togetherness.

Alone humans can easily be defeated, in groups an awesome force. That's how groups of smaller humans overcame big beasts; working together.

One snaps at the heels, another distracts, number three makes fearsome noises, number four spins ropes and number five wires that rope to trip up the enemy. Or digs a hole. And so on.

Imagine trillions of specialties in a galactic state, where emperors have clothes. Community energy is strengthening.

Aquarius opens up the Milky Way, overcomes artificial divisions, conflict between tribes, solves limited resources such as scarcity of land that makes humanity fight for space.



Soon we harvest asteroids, occupy new planets, link with AIs, grow buildings, power clothes, eat plant-based foods from glasshouses rather than domesticate and harm animals.

Why eat like cave-dwelling predators, hurt and enslave mammals for use, when they are DNA family? Twigs off the same tree.

Prune like an herbivore multicultural meritocrat. Unnecessarily consuming mammals is so intolerant, so bad for ecologies, so cruel, not recognising our co-dependence... so Pisces.

It is like sawing off the branch we and our genetic family are sitting on.

Let go of the CEO



by Auralia Rose

CEOs and control freaks often have a lot in common. Almost always, a person's need to control can be traced back to childhood, and when we dig a little we usually find underlying trauma.

Loss of a parent, abuse, neglect, constant criticism and lack of approval, high expectations, authoritarian parenting, all can lead to an individual developing coping mechanisms as a way of creating stability and feeling safe. Many of these people rise to the top of their professions, grappling with the issues born from their need to maintain tight control or to find acceptance in a hostile world.

Here are two examples of people who came to see me for hypnosis to improve their overall health and relationships.

1. Alexander was CEO of a successful company, succeeding his father in the role

upon his retirement. Alexander commanded respect by instilling fear in his employees who understood they needed to either "shape up or ship out". He was seeking help with his health and relationships.

Born into a high profile family who had high expectations of Alexander, his father was a stern patriarch who berated him for every perceived failure, leaving deep-seated scars on his sensitive soul. Under hypnosis, Alexander recovered a memory of when he was five years old, wearing his shoes on the wrong feet. He observed his father belittling him, calling him stupid and useless, further humiliating him in the front of his playmates.

This was Alexander's defining moment, vowing to himself that one day he would make his father proud of him. Unfortunately his father never showed any appreciation for his achievements no matter how hard he tried, which only made him keep trying harder.

His need to prove himself had him working increasingly longer hours, with intensifying and unrealistic expectations of himself and his employees. Fuelled by a fear of failure and an insatiable desire for validation, the admiration he sought eluded him, his employees viewing him not as a leader but as a tyrant.

2. Emily eventually recognised her dysfunctional life was due to her controlling nature. She was CEO of her own medium-sized business, which was recently bankrupted due her excessively controlling modus operandi, which alienated employees and



customers alike.

Hypnosis revealed that her need for control was rooted in childhood trauma that had shaped her existence. Raised in a turbulent household with constant arguments, she recalled a particularly explosive argument that occurred when she was eight years old. Her parents were shouting and screaming, she heard the shattering of glass and things being thrown around.

Emily cowered in her room, clutching her favourite teddy bear. Endeavouring to find a sense of safety and security, Emily found solace in the only thing she could control – her immediate surroundings. She meticulously arranged her toys, organised her books by size and colour, creating a semblance of order in the chaos outside her bedroom door, unaware that she was laying the foundation of what was to become a vital need to micro-manage every facet of her life.

As happens with people who keep very

tight control of their life and emotions while enduring almost constant stress, my clients' health also suffered. With the help of hypnotherapy, and its unique ability to delve into the subconscious, Emily and Alexander discovered that true strength did not lie in an iron-fisted command over life but in the ability to navigate the unpredictable with resilience and grace. They identified and understood the root causes of their behaviours, fears and patterns that influenced them.

As the shackles of micro-management fell away, they understood that letting go of their former excessively controlling CEO mentality didn't mean relinquishing responsibility. Rather, they were liberated to explore new possibilities to have a richer, more fulfilling experience of life, in ways they could never have previously orchestrated.

Auralia practices in Murwillumbah. Please feel free to call 0422-481-007. auraliarosewellbeing.com

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Orange Ladies return to the Northern Rivers

Keep an eye out until the 10th December for the Zonta Orange Ladies in key locations around the Northern Rivers.

You will find them in libraries, sports centres, cafes and elsewhere. They are all part of the 16 Days of Activism to help eliminate violence against women and girls.

"It is an awareness raising campaign for our region," said President of the Zonta Club of Northern Rivers, Bobbi Crane.

"Violence against women is the most pervasive human rights violation around the world. There is more proof than ever that violence against women and girls is preventable."

The bright Orange Lady is the global symbol for Zonta's anti-violence message. The campaign ends on Human Rights Day, 10th December.

The Zonta Club of Northern Rivers meets at 6pm on the third Wednesday of the month at Alstonville Bowling and Sports Club ('Plateau Sports'), 10-14 Deegan Drive, Alstonville. For more info, go to: <https://zontadistrict22.org/district-22-clubs/zonta-club-of-northern-rivers-inc>