

# HONEYBEE



LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

I AM ME!

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*Founder, Women's Recovery Community*

# Welcome

to "HoneyBee Magazine" for Chronically Inspired.

First Words from Founder  
and Editor-in-Chief  
Melissa Dumitru



Hello my lovelies, and welcome to the Spring edition of our new lifestyle magazine HoneyBee.

**Fresh, beautiful, inspired and put together all for you!**

It's kind of ironic when you think about it.

The theme for this edition is **I AM ME.**

So what does this mean to me?

For me it has been a journey. A journey back to me after a devastating trauma, creating a new me, accepting me, being comfortable with me, being in recovery with me.

I am continuing on my own personal development journey and along with that have come some very interesting observations.

Have you ever thought to yourself that you didn't quite know who you were, or what you were actually meant to be doing in this life? That you didn't quite evolve into the person you just knew you were meant to be?

I have done many things in my 50+ years and they have all contributed to what has brought me to what I am doing now.

I have discovered my one true passion is to be a storyteller using this gorgeous magazine. To give a safe haven for people to come and immerse themselves in. (I expand on this on the last page).

Consequently every edition of HoneyBee is evolving in its design, and growing with the content from our contributors, who all have a lived experience.

With every edition we can offer you more and more from our community..

I am bringing together some really interesting and experienced contributors from both here in Australia, and now internationally!

This edition brings you a new initiative called **The Platform WA** a community organisation for young adults living with intellectual disabilities.

The journey their **Founder Marie Williams** takes you on is heart breaking and inspiring as she is determined to be a change-maker and influencer at the coal face to change societies general view of intellectual disability and bring it into the light.

Then there's the magnetic **Jacqueline De Grussa Founder Women's Recovery Community**, who will leave you feeling totally inspired by stories of strength, resilience, courage and raw emotion.

The beautiful and talented **Jackie Rowe from Focus Coaching** is back with her first contribution to our theme for this edition "**I Am Me!**" Which is all about acceptance of self, learning and growth opportunities to add to your personal toolbox of life!

I am really delighted to share another strong and incredible woman with you, **Hayley Solich** who is a multi-award-winning Community Engagement and Lived Experience Professional who is nationally active in advocating for change in the mental health system.

As **Vanessa Vajana our UK contributor** takes a self care break from this edition, I welcome aboard our new **USA contributor Erica Huntzinger** who works in the space of advocacy and awareness for **pulmonary hypertension**, the disease I am living with.

I have been on a journey of learning and growth into other areas of our community and sector and while it has its challenges, I am grateful for all the opportunities to evolve personally and share my gains with you, which I will share with you over the coming editions.

I am excited that spring is here and the weather will start to warm up and the sun will shine again after this long winter. I have settled into my new home with my gorgeous husband and adjusted to my new role caring for my elderly mother who lives with dementia. It has been a long year, one filled with so many moments of emotion, gratitude, adjustments, fear and growth.

I sincerely hope you are enjoying the direction we are taking with our new publication, and I am so grateful to our sponsor Gaby Worthington for helping us make this a reality in hard copy. I encourage you to share this edition and welcome others to subscribe so our community can continue to grow. Don't forget to read the last page of the magazine, which is where I have decided to do my last words to you each edition.

Please write in and say hello as we love to hear your feedback and comments.

I will sign off for now and wish you all continued stable health, improved health, and a little extra joy from the offerings in our magazine that we have lovingly put together for you to read and enjoy. I truly hope this edition lifts your spirits in some small way.

*Love and blessings always*

Be yourself, let yourself glow...

There is so much more to life than we see and know.

Keep learning, stay curious and aware.

Be true to yourself, thoughtful and kind.

Most of all, BE YOU!

## Meet Our Contributors...



*Jackie Rowe*



Qualified Mindset Coach - Training Facilitator  
Advanced Psych K Practitioner - Motivational Speaker  
Certified Women's Circle Facilitator  
focus\_coaching@outlook.com - www.focuscoaching.com.au

Jackie is a University qualified Life Coach, Strengths Based Practitioner, Psych K Facilitator, and Women's Circle Facilitator. With a background in Early Childhood Years, Families and Community, Jackie now works predominantly with women to empower and inspire. Her vision is for all women to realise their amazing true potential, to speak their truth without fear and live a life they love.



*Hayley Solich*



Connecting Communities to make positive change  
Consultant Advisor Mental Health Sector  
linkedin.com/in/hayleysolich - Website hayleysolich.com.au  
Blog goldenpen.com.au

A multi-award-winning community engagement and Lived Experience professional who is nationally active in advocating for change in the mental health system. Hayley builds capacity and awareness to create social change by listening to the perspectives of others, validating and uplifting them. She uses her creativity, communication, leadership, facilitation and engagement skills to influence change at the highest levels.



*Jacqueline de Grussa*



Sociologist specialising in the area of Trauma, Addiction & Recovery  
Founder Women's & Men's Recovery Community  
Founder and Director Recovery Collective Ltd  
Facebook.com/womensrecoverycommunity

Erica is an Associate Producer for phaware.global and participates in the planning and delivery of projects including podcast series and PSA videos, She is involved in Project Coordination, Patient support group Survey's to determine topics of interest for future podcasts and conducts research as needed in the field of pulmonary hypertension in the USA.



*Erica Huntzinger*

Public Relations Awareness Ambassador phaware.global  
Contributor for The Mighty online magazine  
Website phaware.global



*Marie Williams*



Founder The Platform WA  
Intellectual Disability Change-Maker  
Mental Health Educator for WARCA  
E theplatformwa@gmail.com W theplatformwa.com.au

Marie is the Founder of the Platform WA a new community group based in WA, and focused around intellectual disability for young adults, like her daughter Laura. She has been undertaking Leadership Training, and completed her mental health education to become an educator for the WA Recovery College Alliance where she is co-designing courses aimed at people in our community living with intellectual disability. She is a change-maker working at the coal face to improve perception and awareness. She has several years experience working in the non-profit Charity sector.



*Vanessa Vajana*



Chronic Pain Coach - Chronic Illness Coach  
Invisible Illness Advocate - Transformational Coach  
vanessa.vajana@gmail.com - www.vanessavajana.com/

I help you live life to its fullest potential and to NOT be defined by your long term health condition(s). I will support you to understand yourself better; learn about your health, how to best manage this, and ultimately move forward so that you can achieve the life you dream of and deserve.

## Thank You, to our Sponsors & Supporters



Honeybee Magazine is proudly sponsored by  
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Gabrielle Worthington

### Testimonial from a reader....

Reading this magazine was like receiving a warm hug, the approach is so welcoming & personal....Milena



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Chronically Inspired Tastebuds Club  
Support Group WA is proudly supported by the LFA

### HoneyBee Magazine is produced by

Chronically Inspired - Life.Beyond.Disability  
Founder, Editor-in-Chief & Consultant Melissa Dumitru  
Facilitator for "The Tastebuds Club" Support Group (WA)  
& Mental Health Educator for WARCA

*Chronically Inspired*

LIFE.BEYOND.DISABILITY



Chronically Inspired would like to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First People and Traditional Custodians. We value their culture, identities, and continuing connection to country, waters, kin and community.



inspiration awaits....

Welcome to  
the Spring Edition  
"I Am Me"



Hello  
my lovelies...

From your Founder &  
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Melissa Dumitru

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make it  
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Turia Pitt's Lessons for  
a happy, healthy life





# Angel Wings



Hello everyone, I have some sad news to share with you... this small acknowledgement is for some of our beautiful friends who we've lost this year. I have known these beautiful women for many years, some for over a decade from when they attended our inaugural support group meeting back in 2010. Brilliant, strong, courageous, amusing, dry witted, interesting and gorgeous women, surrounded by loving family and strong supportive partners.

I can hardly believe we have lost them.... and they will all be missed so much by me, and many of our members as we spent so much time together over the years and formed great friendships. I extend our sincerest condolences to the families and friends who have suffered these enormous losses, and thank them for sharing the stories, eulogies and pictures with me of these remarkable women. *Forever in our hearts, Melissa xx*



*Wendy Lunt  
March 2021*



*Terry Sevier  
April 2021*



*Jill McGimpsey Evans  
May 2021*



*Ann Nizielski  
May 2021*



## In Loving Memory

Lucas Van Wormer: Jan 28, 2002 - May 2, 2021  
Pulmonary Hypertension Warrior  
Artist - Advocate - Adventurer  
*"The five most important things I want in life are Love, Confidence, Passion, Energy, and Humour".*



I was completely gutted when I saw the post for the memorial plaque for Lucas recently. In 2021 we seem to have lost a lot of our pulmonary hypertension PHriends.

Many of my readers will know exactly who Lucas is and the incredible work achieved by him and his family and their organisation phaware.global. We will remember him as the boy in the poster for the **"60 second straw test challenge"**, who helped us raise awareness here in Australia.

Lucas and his dad Steve very kindly gave us permission to take their campaign, and with a small grant create the first fundraising and awareness tool in Australia, to educate and raise awareness about pulmonary hypertension.

Anyone who attended one of our PHNA events will remember joining in on this exercise. The realisation on the faces of people with healthy hearts and lungs at having to struggle for breath was quite revealing. And that was after only 60 seconds.... it gave clear insight into how hard it is to not be able to breathe.

Lucas and his family created an enormous network in the USA to support the work and innovative practices they introduced with raising awareness and educating the public. They achieved great heights like nobody has anywhere in the world.

We are so grateful that the work continues, we extend our sincerest condolences to the family and friends who have suffered this enormous loss. We thank you for sharing this remarkable young man with us... RIP Lucas

Take the PH Straw Test

- UNWRAP A STRAW
- HOLD YOUR NOSE
- BREATHE THROUGH THE STRAW FOR 1 MINUTE

are you #phaware?  
www.phaware.global

THIS IS HOW A PH PATIENT FEELS 1,440 MINUTES A DAY!

# Community

## ALL THE LATEST

Introducing Laura Williams  
Founder of the new Support Group  
"The Platform WA with Laura"

I would like to introduce you to this gorgeous young woman who is the face of a new community support group and my cover girl for this edition. Laura's mother Marie (who is featured later in this edition), is the Founder of The Platform WA, a new community support group for young adults living with intellectual disabilities. Laura has her own closed support group page on Facebook that she is growing, and hoping to have outings to fun places like mini golf, the movies, and eating out so she and her members can socialise and live their lives to the fullest. The key objective of her part of this new initiative is inclusion and in-person gatherings to build friendships, socialise and live life not just view it from the sidelines.



## LOVE

One of Laura's most favourite and loved things is the Band One Direction, their music, quotes and in particular she loves Niall and Louis. Laura and I filmed a segment on "Laura's Couch" that covered this topic and was a lot of fun to talk about. Check it out on her Facebook page.



Laura loves to travel. She has been fortunate enough to travel within Australia, and to the USA, New Zealand and Asia and all by the ripe age of 20! She really misses travelling due to the Pandemic and cannot wait to return to Disneyland in L.A, which was her favourite destination to date.

## GLOW



Laura is obsessed with the UK medical drama, Casualty. We did a segment on this topic for "Laura's Couch" not long ago. She enjoys downtime on Sundays and binge watches her favourite show each week.



Laura and I have been working together on her various projects and she is making great strides forward. Many people are starting to become very interested in the work she and her mum Marie are doing.

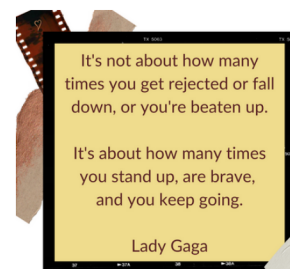


Every fortnight after Laura has been to Speech Therapy with the gorgeous Emma whom she has been working with for about 17 years, we indulge in a lovely afternoon tea at Miss Maud's Cafe. I look forward to seeing what Laura is going to order as it changes every time. I learn so much about her while we chat. She has a fabulous sense of humour, is very cheeky and loves her food!



Laura is currently working on her cookbook, which is made up of tasty treats for everyone to enjoy. I have to admit I cannot stop baking her vanilla kisses! We hope to have this ready for marketing and sale by Christmas so look out for it as it is filled with easy to make recipes with several variations to each recipe. Presented in a handy flip format for ease of use. We can't wait to showcase this. Laura has been working hard in her test kitchen on her recipes to perfect them, and her support workers are helping to make her cooking dreams become a reality.

The work that Laura and I embarked on many months ago has been a journey for both of us. Me because I am still in recovery for my PTSD and living with my own physical disability and chronic condition, and Laura because she is being challenged in many new ways that are both exciting and uncomfortable. Laura has a desire to be treated as "mainstream" and just wants to be included and hang out with, well anybody. Just like you and I she wants to have friends and go out and have fun. Her entire team of support workers along with her parents are making her vision to be a role model for those in the disability community and the general community. Her desire is to be included, to be heard, and to have a voice. Our objective is to guide her through this process and watch her grow, blossom and live her life in full, not just view it from the sidelines.... Melissa



Quote of the Week



FOUNDER LAURA WILLIAMS  
THE PLATFORM WA



# Let's Talk

with Erica Huntzinger



**Erica Huntzinger** is an Associate Producer on the "I'm Aware That I'm Rare" podcast for the **phaware global association**. She has spent the last decade raising awareness about **pulmonary hypertension** through public relations campaigns including PSA's (public service announcements), for national television, legislative advocacy and the **phaware podcast**. Erica has an MPH in Health Policy and Management from UCLA.

Erica was a **Carer** to her mother who she lost to pulmonary hypertension.

*I am so excited to have Erica on our team so she can share all things pulmonary hypertension with our community from her personal lived experience, and those she represents in her stories.*

**Connect with Erica:** [www.phaware.global](http://www.phaware.global) - Public Relations

## "When I Understood the Importance of a Rare Disease Support Group"

"When you hear the sound of hooves, think horses, not zebras." This phrase is taught to medical students throughout their training. In medicine, the term "zebra" is used in reference to a rare disease or condition. Pulmonary Hypertension is considered a rare condition and so PH sufferers are known as medical zebras.



## "The Cool Kids"

I had never been to a support group before. When my mom was sick, she opted to create her own support system and forego joining a support group. She chose to spend her time with her family and friends as much as possible. We had attended a large, organized event for pulmonary hypertension (PH) patients, which she found a bit overwhelming, and she decided it just wasn't her thing.

Years later, my friend **Steve Van Wormer (Co-Founder of #phaware)** asked me about going to the local support group. He was surprised to learn I had never been to one. I told him my mom decided to forego that. My mom passed on by the time we were having this conversation, and I wondered what it was like and what happened there.

*Somehow my impression of a local support group had some resemblance to a therapy session, like on "Frasier," "The Sopranos" or reaching way back, "The Bob Newhart Show" of the 1970s.*

As a daughter of a patient that passed on and not having PH myself, I felt like I shouldn't go. Steve said, "I really want you to meet these people." So I said "OK, I'll go if you go."

The group met at a restaurant that looked out on the ocean. The agenda went something like lunch, guest speaker/medical topic presentation, announcements, formal close and then everyone hung out and socialized. The group leader was Tiffany, the quintessential California girl in her jeans and a sweater and her O2, with her hair and nails done. I also met Ornah, an attorney with a megawatt smile and a spring in her step, and Phaedra, Ornah's BFF, quiet and dignified but also steadfast and no-nonsense.

Ornah seated me at a table next to Bruno and Bill, young men who looked like GQ models, and across from her in-laws who were visiting from out of town. As I looked around the room of about one hundred guests, there were people of all ages and ethnicities. At a glance, it was hard to tell who was a patient and who was a caregiver. Some might have had their O2 with them, and some might have brought a rollator or more. Some brought their kids because families were welcome. Aside from the medical presentation, there was not much about this gathering that was blaring "**rare disease**" at you. It was a group of pleasant people enjoying each other's company.

As the afternoon progressed, I said to Steve, "*all the cool kids are here.*"

A **PSA (public service announcement)** we had worked on just launched on television, and many of the people in attendance had seen it. Steve introduced me as the person who had gotten the PSA on television during announcements.

True enough, I had called PSA directors all over the country and pitched the PSA to them. I smiled and waved a little as the room erupted with applause and cheers. Not for me specifically, but because patients and their families want to see more about awareness for PH, especially in the media, they were excited to see it happening on television.

I told Tiffany and some of the others that I felt kind of weird being there, not being a patient myself. "No, we really want you here," they said. Someone took me by the hand, sat me down, and told me their story of having both PH and scleroderma. Others wanted to know my connection to PH. Most of all, they wanted me to feel comfortable coming back to future group meetings and to connect on social media.

Driving home, I thought about how this was not really what I expected. No Tony Soprano. No Dr. Frasier Crane. No Bob Newhart. No going around the circle talking about your feelings. And that's OK. Instead, I had lunch with a hundred new friends.

Many cities don't have enough people to have a local support group. That's why online support groups are so important. Patients all over the world are welcome in any number of PH support groups online, and family members are welcome too. It's a place for moral support, learning, sharing, celebrating and sometimes a place where we grieve. It's the friends you didn't know you needed. It's where you don't have to explain anything anymore about what you go through because they get it. Some people have found love and romance in a support group, meeting their significant other, and some have even gotten married.

*As we move towards November Awareness Month 2021, let's make sure we recognize the vital contributions of support groups that show us what being cool is all about. Until next time, Erica.*





HAYLEY SOLICH IS

# CANDID



**CONNECTING COMMUNITIES  
TO MAKE POSITIVE CHANGE**

## *A little background on Hayley*

Hayley is an import to WA, having completed performing arts training in Sydney in the late 80's and working for *Moving Images Performing Arts Company* in the early 90s. Touring schools and public venues in WA, Hayley loved working with young people. She was also an *Ambassador for World Vision*, appearing on Chanel 10. She says her highest moment in performing arts life was receiving a standing ovation from 17,000 people at Perth Town Hall.

Hayley began her first stint with the Public Service in 1993, working for the Education Dept, Office of Seniors and then WA Police, where she got to hang off cliffs, run leadership development camps, conduct a State-wide survey on the needs of youth and travel the state coordinating a \$500,000 funding program for local solutions to local crime issues. Not a bad life for a public servant with an adventurous spirit!

Marriage interrupted, and seven years and four surviving babies later, Hayley walked through the wilderness that loss of personal interests, financial hardship, constant physical and emotional demands from parenting and postnatal depression delivered to her door. *No stranger to struggle*, as having a child with an undiagnosed disability and experiencing a series of random and very traumatic events in her family, she learned the skills of resilience.

One of these skills included the ability to reinvent herself. She obtained two Certificate IV qualifications over a period of three weeks (because she says she could)! No mean feat. With her Cert IV in Training and Assessment and Cert IV in Small Business Management, she delivered business training for TAFE and job networks, as well as, a foray into the world of publishing where she was a contributor, then rising through the ranks to the role of editor of *National Australian magazine*. Finally at 40 Life Begins. She also published several magazines, including Pearls Women's Magazine, Golden Pen Magazine and Golden Pen for Christian Women Magazine, contributing her design, editing, photography and writing skills.

She also sneaked in a stint of radio announcing for 82.9FM community radio. Investing a decade into helping women in business through her business 'The Creations', she honed her product development and publishing skills.

In 2016, Hayley discovered the world of *Mental Health*, working for a public mental health service where she fell in love with systemic advocacy and carer representation. Becoming a State and then National advocate, working on committees at the highest level in Australia, Hayley is the current Carer Co-Chair of the National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum. She also works for HelpingMinds in WA as a Carer Peer Engagement Officer and is a WA Recovery College educator.

Hayley is also the founder and chair of Women Can International Inc, an empowering women's association in Perth, where she is engaged in mentoring young women and creating connections for women in the community. ([www.womencaninternational.com](http://www.womencaninternational.com))

Recipient of the City of Stirling Community *Citizen of the Year Award in 2019* and the WA Mental Health Award for Consumer Impact Inspiration Award for her advocacy work, Hayley lives community development and loves to empower others through the sharing of wisdom.

Hayley can be contacted via email [hayleysolich@outlook.com](mailto:hayleysolich@outlook.com) or via her website [www.hayleysolich.com.au](http://www.hayleysolich.com.au).

I welcome Hayley as a Honeybee contributor and look forward to the challenging, informative and candid subjects I know she will be bringing us. I am so humbled to have on our team. Melissa



# The Honeybee and Me

Story by Contributor Hayley Solich

## Do your mission, achieve your purpose

The famous Mary Kay pointed out that aerodynamically speaking the honeybee should not be able to fly - yet it does. And how true is this of us who have faced and are facing challenges with our physical, spiritual, mental or emotional selves?

The honeybee has a mission to gather pollen to create honey. Yet in accomplishing its mission it fulfills its purpose of keeping our ecosystems alive through cross pollination.

And likewise, as a Honeybee contributor, I feel like I am doing my job of gathering wisdom and in the process of sharing, I am causing a ripple effect on our readership and fulfilling my purpose of creating abundance for all. Thank you, Melissa, for this wonderful invitation to be a contributor to this magazine whose purpose is the cross pollination of communities with inspiration and uplifting sharing of stories and wisdom.



## Just One Flight Away from Achieving Your Purpose

As figurative honeybees, we are always just one flight away from achieving our purpose in life.

For many of us, who are facing challenges, be they physical, spiritual, mental or emotional, that one flight can seem like the hugest, most difficult task to achieve.

### May I speak openly and frankly?

You have all probably heard it said that there is always more that we can do or be. Isn't that what we are told every day through social media? You can have it all - the money, the body, the house, the car, the partner, the children and the list goes on. But what if you can't? What happens then?

What if now is as good as it gets, and now is not pretty and perfect? How then do we live?

### What if we can't fly anymore, no matter how hard we try?

As a woman who has come through literally a lifetime of trauma and challenges, I want to challenge some of these not so inspiring nor uplifting requirements to overextend ourselves in search of a perfection that none of us can attain and sustain.

Let me free you from that bondage. Quite frankly, you are not perfect and never will be. So, I give you permission to get over yourself and I will do the same. Then our imperfections can be points of interest in our lives instead of points of shame and embarrassment. Agreed?



## Achieving Your Mission

I have a mission in life. Are you at all interested to know what it is?

My mission is to help people understand life and embrace the challenge of creating legacy. I thought I'd pick a really easy, small goal in life, right?

For survival, it is a very necessary part of life to be part of a colony and to have an individual part to play in that colony. I want to encourage you to value your part. It is not insignificant. It is necessary and important.

It is critical that you be you - all of you, warts and all - and that you bring **you** to the colony. Your contribution is valued.

I am thrilled to be able to bring another dimension to this little beehive of information and activity.

It is my mission to always be candid, so I have a few questions for you to reflect on:

- Do you accept yourself, just as you are?
- Do you see your value?
- Are you connected to the colony that is your human ecosystem?
- Are you valuing yourself, your uniqueness and contribution?
- And are you valuing others?

It is time to flex your wings and prepare for flight? Until next edition...

Cheers Hayley



# THE GIRL IN THE

## *Silk Green Dress*



**Moonlight** shimmered across the damp bitumen as I tread quietly down a deserted alleyway. The walls were littered with tattered posters that flapped pitifully at every hint of a breeze, and I kept my body close to them as I moved, avoiding murky puddles and ensuring each foot placement was as silent as the night.

It was certainly not easy to achieve in the stilettos I'd chosen; a pair of six-inch black pumps that were made to make heads turn. Well, that, and to ensure the woman who wore them was pained at every step she took. Oh, how I longed for my sneakers. But, alas, they would not have paired well with the sleek silk dress. There were few items in my wardrobe that varied from sweaters, track pants, and what one would consider lounge-wear, but I'd purchased this little number especially for tonight. I'd made an exception for the greater good.

I used a hand to smooth out the silky green fabric and sighed, causing a wispy cloud to emerge from my lips. It was colder than it felt tonight, but then, the cold rarely bothered me these days. It was hard to feel chilly when your body was in a constant state of hot flush. A woman at the age of 24 wasn't supposed to experience hot flushes, but then, *I was no ordinary woman.*

The crunch of a nearby footstep halted my movement. A crisp leaf or a sheet of paper, flattened against the pavement under a heavy boot. He was earlier than expected tonight. I couldn't see him, but I knew he was lurking around the corner at the end of the alley, waiting patiently for an unsuspecting pedestrian to cross his path.

I took a small breath, then lifted my chin in determination and moved forward, this time allowing my heels to announce their presence. They clicked firmly and purposefully against the hard ground, the sound bouncing off the walls and travelling down to the end of the lane where he concealed himself.

His cologne hit my nose before I rounded the corner. It was floral and applied too heavily; the kind of scent that left a bad taste in the back of your throat. He was leaning casually against the wall when I approached, talking animatedly into the phone against his ear.

When I came into his vision, he feigned surprise and then smiled lightly, the motion accentuating each crease on his weathered face.

"You all right, love?" It was a friendly tone; almost fatherly.

"Fine, thanks." I gave a nervous smile and pulled my handbag tighter underneath my arm. His eyes remained on me as I moved. The click of my heels hastened as I continued past him. And then, all too quickly, his hand jolted out towards me.

### **But I was ready.**

The one distinct advantage of being a woman is that society expects you to be weak. A woman like me, barely 5 feet tall and significantly underweight, has even more in her favour. So, the last thing Mister *Too Much Cologne* expected was for me to use his grip on my forearm to pull him closer towards me and thrust the base of my palm firmly against his nose.

I felt the crunch as much as I heard it, and his pained cry told me the bone was well and truly broken. Before he could even think about retaliating I kicked his legs out from under him, causing him to land heavily on his tailbone.

Another cry told me he'd be down for a while, but just to be sure, I pulled a set of heavy-duty handcuffs from my bag, rolled him onto his stomach and secured his hands tightly behind his back.

His phone lay cracked on the ground beside him. Collecting it, I dialed in three numbers before pressing it to my ear.

**"000, please state your emergency."**

"I'd like to report a citizen's arrest," I glanced down at the groaning man on the ground. "A perpetrator of several assaults and robberies over the past few weeks. He's restrained and at the corner of George and William Streets."

I ended the call and dropped the phone to the ground.

"Who... are you?" The man wheezed, his face still stuck to the pavement.

I turned to make my way back to my car, pausing I replied, "*Just a girl in a silk green dress.*"

\*\*\*\*\*



I didn't feel the exhaustion until I walked through the front door of my house. It was like a switch had been turned off and every limb just suddenly wanted to stop working. I managed to drag myself to the couch where I'd left my oxygen and looped the cannula tubing around my ear lobes and into my nostrils. I took in a long, deep breath, and then fell back into the couch, my body no longer wishing to be upright.

"Come on, lungs, don't let me down." I whispered, wrapping a throw rug around my body for added comfort. I didn't know how long I lay there, just focusing on steadying my breathing, but when I heard the front door unlock and my eyes fluttered open, warm sunlight was peeking through the slats of the blinds.

"Tell me you didn't sleep on the couch all night?" My housemate Kayla frowned down at me, her blonde ponytail loose and her blue uniform tarnished with dirt.

**"Big night?" I asked.**

She rolled her eyes. "*Suspect did a runner through a muddy field. Idiot didn't stand a chance of escaping, but it didn't stop him from making three of us ruin our uniforms just to get to him.*"

I laughed and sat up slightly against the arm rest of the couch. "*Anything else exciting happen during your shift?*"

Kayla opened the fridge, analyzing the contents for a few minutes before pulling out a small tub of yoghurt.

"Yes, actually," she pulled a spoon from the kitchen drawer and dipped it into the tub. "*That guy who's been attacking civilians in the CBD and stealing their wallets.*" She shoved a spoonful of yoghurt in her mouth.

"What about him?" I asked casually.

She swallowed and collected another scoop. "*Someone took him down, made a citizen's arrest.*"

"Really?" I feigned surprise.

"Yeah, crazy, right! *We've been tracking this guy for weeks, and some random ends up catching him.*"

"Crazy," I nodded, adjusting my oxygen tubing to hide the smile hinting at my lips.

Kayla lifted the cushion at my feet, peering under it. "*You haven't seen a set of handcuffs lying about, have you?*"

**I shook my head innocently.**

"Damn. *It's the third set I've lost this month; the sergeant is going to kill me.*"

*The girl in the silk green dress will return....*

A motivational quote is centered on a background image of a mountain range. The mountains are partially shrouded in mist or low clouds, creating a serene and atmospheric scene. The text is in a clean, white, sans-serif font, making it stand out against the darker, muted tones of the landscape. The quote is a well-known piece of advice by Zig Ziglar.

**"START NOW.  
START WHERE YOU ARE.  
START WITH FEAR.  
START WITH PAIN.  
START WITH DOUBT.  
START WITH HANDS SHAKING.  
START WITH VOICE TREMBLING, BUT START.  
START AND DON'T STOP.  
START WHERE YOU ARE, WITH WHAT YOU HAVE.  
JUST...START."**

# THE LAST OF THE INDEPENDENTS



Story From Contributor Marie Williams - Editing Melissa Dumitru

## *From the Editor-in-Chief Melissa Dumitru*

I would like to welcome you to a beautiful, heartbreaking and courageous short story from our new contributor Marie Williams. This article is all about her journey as the mother of a daughter with an intellectual disability. From birth to 21 years later, she will share the incredible highs and lows with us. If you take away only one thing from this story, please let it be that you start to view people from this part of our community with more humanity, dignity and inclusion.

I look forward to sharing more stories from Marie and Laura as their Community Group establishes and grows, hopefully from strength to strength as she tries to change things at the very coalface of our society.

***"It is only through the change-makers, and the courageous provocateurs that change can truly take place".*** Melissa Dumitru

For more information please email: [theplatformwa@gmail.com](mailto:theplatformwa@gmail.com)  
Visit their Social Media at: [Facebook.com/@theplatformwa](https://www.facebook.com/@theplatformwa)  
Instagram - YouTube - Website are all coming very soon...

***I am the founder of a new community initiative called 'The Platform WA'*** and Melissa (*the Editor-in-Chief of HoneyBee Lifestyle Magazine for Chronically Inspired*), asked me to write about why "The Platform WA" was created and share some of my personal story.

When you become pregnant especially for the first time, you have all the positive emotions and excitement of what the baby is going to look like, no negative emotions, it all a joyous experience. However, my positive emotions ceased the moment my daughter was born, all because her chromosomes got confused, and gave her one more in every cell, she was born with Down Syndrome.

One word **LOVE** or two words **UNCONDITIONAL LOVE** for my daughter, who was born over 20 years ago and will be 21 in September this year. When my daughter was born, it took me on an unexpected journey, one I was ill prepared for and where I discovered a community that has been invisible to the majority of society, including me, until my daughter was born. That community is ***the intellectual disability community.***

As a result, her birth was not worthy of a celebration, as she was not perfect, she would not fit into society, she was a failure and so was I.

It was shocking to discover that we as a society still largely accept that this is a community that has to live in the shadows, co-exist at some schools and not be included in the community at all, nor have meaningful employment. All because our children are different, won't be able to academically achieve, some may never talk or walk, we are told this continuously....

This became abundantly clear by the poor and inappropriate behavior and communication skills of the health care professionals we experienced from the moment she was born. It also compounded an already challenging situation and added to what was a very traumatic and negative experience for both my husband and me.

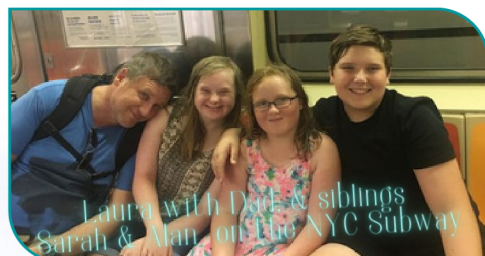
They don't deserve to have a vision, a dream or purpose, because we through various social media platforms do not give them any positive role models they can follow every day. They don't deserve it and that's ok, because what can they teach? What do they have to offer?

This unfortunately was only the start of the discrimination and judgment we were confronted with after having a daughter born with Down Syndrome. Next, came the questions, "did you know she had Down Syndrome before she was born? Would you have terminated the pregnancy if you did?".

They can remind us of what humanity is actually all about, ***empathy, compassion and to treat one another with respect and kindness.*** Just because these people have an intellectual disability it does not make them any less human. In fact they are more real, as they don't pretend, they don't lie, they tell the truth, they live in an innocent world, they don't wear a mask, they are untouched by the iniquities of this world.

They are placid children, they are funny, they are stubborn. God only gives you what you can bear, "God wanted you to have this special child, she won't amount to anything", the list went on and on. I didn't want to hear it, I wanted people to say "what can I do to help"? but that never came, just judgment, silence, whispers, and pity, followed by years of trauma and unresolved feelings and emotions.

We need your help to change society's perception of what intellectual disability is. There is no hope for a cure, our children can't change who they are, our only hope is that you are willing to change your perception, but the choice is ultimately yours.



Laura with Dad & siblings Sarah & Alan on the NYC Subway



Laura with Dad Jim, whom she adores

# "THEY CAN REMIND US WHAT HUMANITY IS ABOUT. EMPATHY, COMPASSION & TO TREAT ONE ANOTHER WITH RESPECT & KINDNESS".

Her first birthday came and went. There was a celebration but I didn't want to celebrate. What was there to celebrate? So, I sat there holding her, smiling on the outside but crying and devastated on the inside because of how awful her life would be, there was no hope for her to live a normal life, no expectations.

As she got older, I wanted her to be included in groups, so I put on a brave face and went to playgroups, but that only reinforced how different her life would be. Other mum's talked about their children's future, when they first walked, when they first talked, what sort of life they could have. I saw how easy things were for their children, and my daughter just sat there, unable to talk or walk. The mum's tolerated me but there was never friendship only pity, sorrow and discomfort.

Although she attended school, she had no friends, no invitations, she only had her siblings. Her birthdays came and went and on two occasions, no one turned up, so I never hold birthday parties for her anymore. We celebrate them on our own, with only family members.

When she turned 18 and was able to vote, I took her to a polling place. The electoral officer took one look at her and told me my daughter didn't have to vote because she had an intellectual disability. I was stunned, shocked, in disbelief, and traumatized again – so much for inclusion.

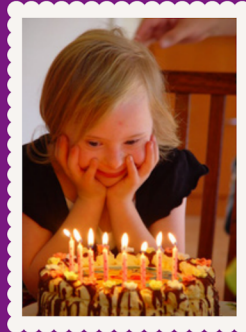
I have received several responses from government departments to my various questions and concerns, which have been unacceptable, so I am now left with little faith in the government being willing or able to change things. I am unable to have faith in the current system, where an agency/service provider could oversee everything, as it has failed once, how can I trust it not to fail again.

Our daughter is very lucky because she is currently employed in open employment. It's only for nine hours a week but as she develops more skills the company will give her more hours, and they have advised that they are committed and willing to support her in her career.

With the assistance of her support workers, our daughter is setting up an online support group for people living with intellectual disabilities, producing a cookbook and a YouTube channel, which will share her cooking adventures and follow her life. She wants to be a role model for others, for their parents/families so they have a role model they can identify with. She has a goal, purpose, dream, and vision and she has a name, **Laura**. She wants to live and experience life, not just view it. She wants to be included and be part of the normal world.

My journey has been filled with sadness, anguish, frustration, disappointment, isolation, despair, and pity BUT maybe now one of HOPE, as my journey is continually evolving and changing. However, that will only happen if people/organisations/stakeholders are willing and want to positively impact and change the lives of people like Laura and others like her.

We need support from people like you to start joining your voice with ours and begin to change the public perception of intellectual disability. To start to see the person, not the disability. The world has the potential to become a better place if we start engaging with, and including people like my daughter Laura.



*The year is 2021 and the a new initiative is born...*

## **Name of Community Support Group**

The Platform WA

Engage - Lead - Inspire

## **Mission Statement**

Empowering people with intellectual disabilities to experience life, not just view it.

## **Motto**

More than Coffee!

## **Founder**

Marie Williams

**Co-Founder "The Platform WA with Laura"**

## **Support Group**

Laura Williams

The logo I created is based on a cubism design that sums up what "The Platform WA" is about. By using shapes to form a face, it represents the many different stakeholders that are coming together to support that one person. The coloring/shading of the logo is deliberately left imperfect as we are portraying people whom society views as being less than perfect or normal.

So in answer to Melissa's question "What is the goal of The Platform WA? It is, instead of me standing alone, I want others to join me, and stand beside me, so we can become a choir. So I no longer feel like I am the lone voice fighting for the rights of those who are unable to advocate for themselves. I will not surrender. I want you to come with me, so that Laura's world will not only be a world of pure imagination, and only living there will she be free.

At the moment "The Platform WA" only has a Facebook page, so please LIKE, FOLLOW and SHARE our journey so you can be part of the revolution and take a stand beside me and change the future of my daughter, Laura and many others like her.

*Here is a little about Marie from your Editor-In-Chief,*

*Marie is an accomplished painter and photographer. She has painted some of Monet's most prolific work and some of us have been incredibly lucky to receive her pieces as gifts.*

*She enjoys creating a beautiful garden so this is part of her self-care routine.*

*Marie has two other gorgeous children, Alan who is 17, and Sarah who is 14, who are very bright and quite delightful. She lives with them and her lovely husband Jim whom she has been married to for 30 years, in the beach side suburb of Quinn's Rock in Perth WA.*

*Marie has trained as a Teachers Assistant after being out of the corporate workforce for many years. More recently Marie completed Mental Health Educators Training at the Recovery College Alliance WA. She is currently co-designing courses aimed at our intellectual disability community for inclusion, growth, and fun! She recently completed the Empowered Leadership course through '30 Foot Drop'.*

*I can't wait to share these stories with you over the coming editions of our magazine. Melissa*

# WOMENS RECOVERY COMMUNITY

Vol. 01

## INTRODUCING A MAGNETIC NEW CONTRIBUTOR TO HONEYBEE MAGAZINE

I am Jacqueline du Grussa  
and this is my story

### A LITTLE BACKGROUND

Jacqueline is currently consulting for an Indigenous organisation developing various new culturally specific recovery based projects. Jacqui is also the *Founder of Women's Recovery Community and Men's Recovery Community* which offer 24/7 support for women and men in all forms of recovery in Western Australia, interstate and overseas. She is developing a parent non-profit called *The Recovery Collective*, as the success of WRC/MRC has yielded many collaborations with other organisations. She is Chairperson for Narcotics Anonymous Public Information Committee. A mother to three children, documentary buff and passionate about all things that empower our most vulnerable on their recovery journeys.

### BACKGROUND & CONTACT FOR JACQUI

Sociologist specialising  
in the area of Trauma, Addiction  
& Recovery

Founder Women's & Men's  
Recovery Communities.

Managing Director  
Recovery Collective Ltd.

Facebook.com/womens  
recoverycommunity

OWNING  
your story  
is the  
BRAVEST  
thing you'll  
ever do  
-ORENE BROWN

JAKET GWEN



5972855474111



Empowered  
Women  
Empower  
Women

*I am a Recovery Warrior.*

Stories such as mine are unique and common at the same time, and as they say it is always best to start at the beginning.

I was born on Christmas day, 1980 in South Australia.

By 8 months old I had moved with my family to an Indigenous community on the fringes of the Simpson Desert, Aputula (Finke). They are the Pitjantjatjara mob who also refer to themselves as the Anangu people. This is Uluru country.

I lived there until I was 5 years old and during this time I was bilingual and truly a child of the red desert. My parents worked with the elders to make it the first 'Dry Community' in Australia.

*My life from then on was one of two tales. Firstly, a woman who has achieved so much and secondly a woman who has survived even more...*

I excelled at school and received a scholarship to law school, which ended up being a Bachelor of Clinical Psychology and Criminology. I was a proficient Violinist who was accepted into WASO at 17 and to the despair of my mother (and due to a huge amount of performance anxiety) I quit, and I moved out of home.

I have worked for multi million dollar industrial projects for billion dollar companies.

I have worked with the chronically ill and differently abled in search of better qualities of life.

I am a mother to three beautiful little girls under 10 and have lost three babies along the way.

I am a survivor of sexual abuse by different people over a 20 year period.

I am a survivor of domestic violence.

I have been homeless more than once.

I have been a patient at almost every psychiatric facility in Perth.

I have been to the long stay rehabilitation twice.

I live with Complex - PTSD.

I am over two years clean from all drugs and alcohol, having been on a journey to beat my addictions now for over 15 years.

*I am now working as a Sociologist, specialising in trauma and addiction for large scale Indigenous projects in Western Australia.*

I am the Founder of Women's and Men's Recovery Communities. The Managing Director of The Recovery Collective and Chairperson for Narcotics Anonymous Public Information Committee.

I am a Recovery Warrior and I now live my life in the relentless pursuit of creating a Recovery based movement that works on the empowerment of all in their journey of recovery.

“

*We are all recovering from something, rather than focusing on our differences, we can unite in our common healing.*

”

As I look back on my life, now at the age of 40, I am able to see the beauty in the struggle. There was a time when I felt I was a failure. As a woman, as a mum, and as a survivor. You see I was recovering from more than just one thing, as life is a patchwork of experiences, so was my search for healing. I tried everything you can think of, every discipline, every approach. Medical, mental health, spiritual, self-help, 12 step, services and organisations. I realised that there was no panacea, no one quick fix to rescue me.

*I had to learn to find peace in the chaos, to dance in the storm, to find joy in the madness.*

I had to find my own formula, my own combination of what resonated with the woman I was and eventually, I learnt that what I had been searching for, all this time was within me.

I created my cornerstone for healing out of desperation, *Women's Recovery Community*, which even today is my saving grace. In the beginning of 2018, I had three children under five years old, in an unhappy marriage, a rural location, no money, no available services, desperately trying to stay clean and slowly losing grip on my sanity. I created a closed Facebook group, which is now nearing 1900 women and collaborating with over five services. It covers all types of recovery. From addiction to illness, grief to disability, mental illness to divorce...we are all recovering from something. *And rather than focusing on our differences, we can unite in our common healing.*

During the last two and a bit years I had a brief relapse after my marriage broke down, after almost four years clean, I had to start again (again!). There is so much I could say about this time, so much I was furious about. But I have learned so much more and am finally at a place where I can see the 'reasons', I have found forgiveness and can feel the benefits of my journey. I have finally found peace and acceptance and love in all areas of my life. It feels so damn good.

*I still live with a chronic mental illness that my corporate coach has warned I should never disclose due to the profound stigma that is attached.*

I know now that my story is not to be feared. It will not sit in the shadows while I pretend to be only half of myself. My challenges and experiences are my triumph, they have no impact on my ability to excel in my field, in fact they are a source of strength. My 'Super Power' if you will. When you have managed to recover your life after so much pain, nothing seems unachievable.

I have the ability to see things from both sides of the fence. I can see solutions and provide a path forward that all can experience the benefit. A way of recovery that works and a way that gives hope to those who are societies most vulnerable.

We are Warriors because so many of us live a daily battle that no one else can see or touch. A battle that lasts so much longer than the critical event/s. We as a community can provide the 24/7 support for each other, love and carry one another until we are able to walk our own recovery path.

*So now I no longer see myself as two different women. I am whole and perfect just as I am.*

Jacqui





“EVERYTHING  
HAS BEAUTY,  
BUT NOT  
EVERYONE  
SEES IT.”

-CONFUCIUS



# Feature: "I AM ME"

**Editors Note:** This edition our feature subject is "I Am Me", and when I chose this it was in line with my new vision for this magazine, our gorgeous cover girl Laura, and the stories from all our amazing new contributors. This feature is about acceptance of self and others, just as we are. But, with the ability to learn and grow and improve, therefore living a richer, happier and fulfilled life. This can take a lifetime to achieve and something that is constantly being challenged and changing. It is a marathon not a sprint. This journey must be honoured by you so you don't miss out on all the little wonders that occur along the way...

The article Jackie has written for us touches on this subject in much greater detail and offers real insight into the statement "I Am Me". It means something different to everyone, but is something we all need to consider and to accept. Being yourself opens you up to vulnerabilities, but like me I know you are brave enough to sit with any discomfort so you can grow and live truly as yourself. Enjoy this short article and contact Jackie if you would like to work with her on your journey the way I have. Melissa



Let's imagine 'I am me' is your response to the question, 'Who are you? The response we give to this question often differs depending on what seems to fit in the moment, or what we believe others want or will accept. We adjust the 'me' to try and fit in to be accepted. Sometimes we adjust it in the way we dress, the language we use, how we engage, or not.

We are human and we are wired to connect with others. To be part of, to be included, to be accepted. Feeling a sense of belonging is vital to our overall health and wellbeing, it gives us stability and purpose. When we feel a loss in our sense of belonging it is like any other loss and can create grief, a sense of abandonment and loneliness.

All of our life we work hard at belonging which begins with attachment. From our early years we adjust our infant and child behaviours in order to receive the love and connection we need from our significant care givers. We need to attach, it's about survival, but to live a good life we need to thrive not just survive. To thrive which is so important for the 'Me' in all of us, we need to feel accepted, loved and included.

As life goes on we continue to change our behaviours based on the belief and needs of others defining our sense of self and identity to fit in. We are all conditioned through our life's journey to become the 'me' that we see. The inner true self is at the same time waiting for you to find your way back. The inner self calls to us, it's our voice within, our intuition the authentic self. Our inner self only wants the best for us and we all get moments and opportunities to take a step in the right direction. Maybe a new job opportunity, a new relationship, a new business, a new move a be a new 'Me'.

But as much as we consciously want to take a leap of faith in the 'me' within we often don't. The moment we even contemplate the change we feel fear, we feel unsure and vulnerable. The fear and the vulnerability works like glue, holding us back from growth, from a new way of being.

Vulnerability is not winning or losing,  
it's having the courage to show up  
and be seen when we have no  
control over the outcome.

 Brene Brown

To stretch and grow and find and be seen as the true 'me' within, we must be willing, even though we feel vulnerable and scared, to try. To try just taking one step towards the 'me' we feel deep within that longs for change. Where we find vulnerability we also find courage, so no matter how many times we try and don't succeed, courage will be there. To be the 'me' we want to be and to live a life of our choice and not one of conditioning, we must step out beyond the boundaries of our familiar existence.

Many people stay stuck with a 'me' they don't particularly like for years, but the moment a crisis hits they create the change. When the pinch gets too great we will make the change. But why wait for a crisis, why wait to feel the pinch? Why not begin to make the change right now.

I would guess your mind just flashed to the one thing you want to change and the familiar limiting beliefs started to emerge, *it's too late, I'm too old, I'm not fit enough, I'm not smart enough etc...* This is the voice of the conditioned self, the 'me' that wants to hang on to the life that is familiar and safe.

Life is about choice and we can choose to make change at any point along our time line. We can learn to love the 'me' that we see every moment of every day no matter what, whilst allowing the true authentic 'me' to emerge. Life is about choices and you get to choose to value and love the 'me' that you see regardless of life's journey. Set your intention to create change, let your intention align with and support your goal, your desire. There is no one in your way except the 'me' you see and the choices you make. *Take care Jackie x*



nourished

with  
Jackie Rowe



# BOOKISH EDITORS PICK

You may know Turia Pitt for the courageous way she overcame life-changing injuries.

In 2011, while competing in a 100-kilometre ultra-marathon in Western Australia's Kimberley region, she was caught in a grass-fire and badly burnt. After suffering full thickness burns to 65% of her body, Turia was placed in a medically induced coma for a month and was not expected to survive.

Since that day she has undergone more than 200 surgeries and has gone on to become the leading authority on the 'magic of mindset'. She's also an author, motivational speaker, philanthropist, and paid ambassador for the health and beauty supplement brand *Kynd*.

We asked the 33-year old mother of two to share some of the most significant lessons she's learnt along the way.

## 1 Happiness lives in small, everyday moments.

"When writing my book *Happy (and other ridiculous aspirations)* I learnt that happiness is an outlook, not an outcome. There's no final destination. The most important thing I learnt was that it's not so much the big things that we think are going to make us happy, like getting a new car or getting married. We've got to be able to find happiness in our everyday lives and the little moments. It might be my kids playing on the carpet, or my cup of coffee, or the exciting work I'm doing that day."

## 2 You can create a foundation for happiness.

"While happiness can be found in small moments, you do have to set up a good base for your own happiness. You've got to eat well, look after yourself, get enough sleep, and move your body. Then, on top of that foundation, I find if I start my day off with a grateful mindset, pull out and focus on certain things, I've got more energy, enthusiasm and happiness for the day ahead.

Because we can always focus on the bad things - *this person was supposed to send this email, and I was supposed to get and didn't*. To a certain extent we are wired to focus on the negatives, so it takes effort to change that and instead think about what is going well.

What is working? Who are you grateful for in your life? Who in your team has been really amazing?



## Turia Pitt's lessons for a happy, healthy life.

Nine lessons in health, well-being, and creating a powerful mindset from Bestselling Author, two-time Iron-woman & Humanitarian Turia Pitt.

Story shared with you from the Coles Health & Beauty Winter 2021 Edition

## 3 Lean in to all of your emotions

"I'm mostly at peace with what happened to me, but that's not to say that I don't have bad days or get down occasionally after I have a surgery. Sometimes if I can't open a jar of sauce (*Turia lost all the fingers on her right hand, and two fingers on her left after the fire*), I get angry and annoyed, but that's ok.

There's all this focus on being happy and positive and upbeat, which are really great emotions, but you can't have those without feeling sad or disappointed or hurt or angry sometimes, too. You can't cherry-pick your emotions. You've got to accept and acknowledge all of them."

## 4 Wearing your heart on your sleeve can inspire others to do the same

"People are a lot more open about their mental health these days, but we've still got a long way to go. I just try to be open about my emotions and how I'm feeling, and I hope that empowers other people to do the same."

## 5 Speak to yourself as you would your children or best friend

"We're our own worst critics and our inner voice can be really nasty, but over the past few years I've gotten better at speaking to myself with more compassion and empathy. Now, I try to speak to myself the way I speak to my kids, and before them it was the way I would talk to my best friend. I don't get it right all the time, because I'm not perfect."

## 6 We all have an inner strength we are not even aware of

"Resilience is like a muscle - the more we use it, the stronger it gets. We don't always get to discover how resilient we are, though. We all wish that bad things didn't happen, but they inevitably do. It's important to know that we all have the inner resources to be able to cope with whatever life throws at us."

## 7 Don't try to find the silver lining right away

"Don't put pressure on yourself to try and find the lesson in a bad situation straightaway, because that's another thing we do in our culture. We try to find a silver lining immediately, but we can be doing ourselves a disservice. It's really important to acknowledge what's happened and allow ourselves to sit with it, even though it's awful and uncomfortable and we don't want to be there. Trust that you will find the lesson. It might be years later, but you will find it eventually."

## 8 Everything does *not* happen for a reason!

"I hate that saying. We're not very good at talking about grief, death or loss, and I get it, as they're awkward topics to talk about. It's not comfortable visiting someone who's just had a cancer diagnosis or whose child has passed away. You don't know what to say, but actually a really good thing to say is just, *'I'm really sorry. I don't know what to say.'*"

## 9 Becoming a mother has helped me drop my perfectionism

"Before I had kids, I used to get up early and write. Now I normally get woken up by my children and my day is kind of a run at their behest. But I think motherhood has actually made me more efficient because if I've got 20 minutes and that's all the time I have, I just have to get it done, whereas before I was probably a bit of perfectionist. It's Parkinson's law - if you have all day to do a task, it'll take you all day. If you have an hour, it's going to take you an hour."



## LAST WORDS

*From the Divine Ms M*



**Welcome** to my new blog page for HoneyBee Lifestyle Magazine. I put myself last (literally) on this page to end the magazine on a high note and for my inaugural article I wanted to share with you why I do this work, and in particular this magazine.

Recently someone said to me "**What is this magazine for, and why should someone subscribe to it?**" The answer was simple, "it is a place where you can come to feel safe, included, accepted, and inspired."

*So read on and let's get inspired together!*

**Welcome** to a refreshing new lifestyle magazine for people living with chronic illness, disabilities, mental health challenges and those who care for us.

**This brave and unique step forward** into an exciting exchange of stories bought to you from writers with a lived experience, will pave the way forward for those of us who's voices have been silenced or diminished due to the chronic conditions we or a loved one or friend live with.

**This magazine is a great read for anyone in our community**, but in particular those of us living with extra health challenges, and in Australia that is around 47.3% of us living with one or more chronic conditions, and 1 in 5 Australians living with disability.

**You deserve** a lifestyle magazine that makes you feel special. That allows you to feel included and excited to receive each edition, as it lifts your spirits, and includes you in it's approach to empower you as you walk your through your journey.

**Why you should subscribe to HoneyBee Lifestyle Magazine.** It gives you a time out to treat yourself and relax from the day's stresses with opportunities to immerse yourself in the stories, information and helpful hints and tips on how to manage your life and health a little easier. This is done in a beautiful calm and relaxed fashion that in non-medical.

**I compile this magazine** from scratch four times a year and for each edition I search for contributors with a lived experience to share stories, information and ideas with you. I have assembled a small and incredible team of Contributors who are all featured in this edition, and I hope to grow this team and broaden our story base to be even more inclusive and interesting. Entertainment is also on the cards...so stay tuned!

**Another valuable approach** is to interview individuals and organisations that are doing inspiring work and assisting people living with a disability, mental health condition, or chronic illness, and highlight this in a story all about them. This way everyone's knowledge of different areas within our community get a chance to shine and share their story with you.

**Hopefully** one or more of the articles or growth activities is helpful to you in a more meaningful way that you can then implement into your everyday life, to make the changes necessary for you to learn to live your best life with what you have to work with. It can be done, it is being done, and we are here to support you through that journey with our stories and experiences. So please join us today at Honeybee Lifestyle Magazine.

**Announcement: Brand New Website, podcasts and advertising opportunities coming soon.....**

## *Congratulations*

To our long term **sponsors and supporters Craig & Sarah Vanderplank from #weighnpay** we would like to extend our congratulations on the birth of their first child, a son named Theodore. We are all so incredibly happy for you and wish you all the best as you become a family. Love Melissa and the Tastebuds Club members. xxx



### *Why I chose this work*

I am a courageous provocateur and change-maker with a passion to strive to improve the lives and bring inclusion to as many people as possible with a lived experience of disability, chronic illness, and mental health conditions.

### *My Intention*

Is to inspire and empower others through the stories of those with lived experiences of disability, chronic illness and mental health conditions, and to raise awareness within our entire community.

### *My Role*

I am a patient expert and I act as a storyteller, net-worker and consultant in the self-help and support groups, community services & mental health sectors.

### *Who Benefits*

We all do, but in particular individuals, families and friends of those with a lived experience of chronic illness, disability, mental health conditions and those who care for and support us.

Join in with our  
social support group today!

## tastebuds club

HAPPY MIND BODY AND SOUL

A wonderful new way to connect with others while socialising and receiving support and fellowship, all while enjoying a lovely meal together. The "Tastebuds Club", is available in WA only. Contact me directly for more information. Anyone with a chronic condition, disability or mental health issue is welcome! Please contact me directly for more information and to become a member.



Connect with us...



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