

ISSUE 4 | DECEMBER 2021

The Carer's Champion

*Easing the Caring
Journey for all!*

In this issue:

LIFESTYLE

Experts sharing
their wisdom to
help you live
your best life.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Sharing about the products
and services available to ease
the caring journey.

**SPECIAL FEATURE:
THE CHRISTMAS
GIFT GUIDE**

**Tips, Traps, and
Tricks for Carers!**

WHY I DO WHAT I DO

Talking with people across
the aged care sector to
find out why they do what
they do.

FEATURE STORIES

Maggie Beer - Changing food
in Aged Care Homes
Getting Ready for Christmas

*Merry Christmas from
The Carer's Champion*



DECEMBER 2021



The Carer's Champion



Editorial

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Cover: Maggie Beer

Feature Story: Goodness and Pleasure

Maggie Beer shares her passion for providing food that enhances the lives of our aged loved ones.



Finding the right support for you and your loved ones.

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DECEMBER 2021

Editor's Note

Welcome to the fourth issue of The Carer's Champion. A space for you!

This month as we prepare for Christmas we share tips to make the festive season easier.

We have a couple of Christmas recipes.

We talk with the amazing Maggie Beer.

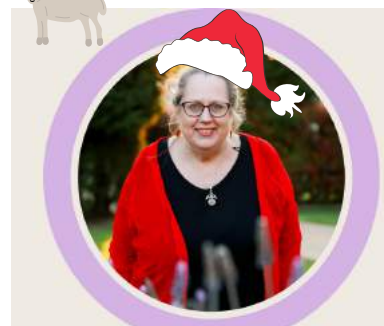
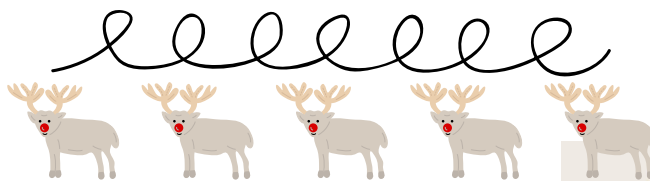
This month we also have a Christmas Gift Guide to help you with buying gifts for all your loved ones this Christmas.

Something for everyone. It doesn't matter if you are caring for your aged loved one in your home, their home or a home it is tough and we are here to help ease the journey for you and for them.

In this issue, I shine a light on some truly amazing services and products.

The Original Nursing Barber provides a caring Hot Towel Shave for men.

Michelle Cochrane shares information about essential oils.



Photography by @traceymurrayphotography

Dave from Care Food Co talks about Textured modified food that always goes down well.

Thanks to everyone who entered our Bling Giveaway - the winner has been notified by email.

We have a new columnist - Catie Chung who joins the magazine from the US.

I wish you all the very best for the festive season.

Be kind to yourself and remember that this time of year can be emotional for everyone especially your aged loved one.

Merry Christmas,

You matter to me!
Rita

Christmas Gift
Guide page 61



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Meet the Columnists



Alyson Williams

Trained Transformational coach,
Relationship coach, Neuro-linguistic
Programming (NLP) Master Coach,
Extended DISC Behaviour Analysis
practitioner and Hypnotherapist and
Bling Angel

Deanne Brennan

Wellbeing and Mindfulness Coach, Mum,
Runner and total Coffee snob. Her number
one priority in life is to take care of herself
first.

Janita Lloyd

Rodan + Fields consultant, a melanoma
survivor and a Certified Bling Angel. Janita
is passionate about empowering young
adults to find the fire and love within
themselves to achieve great things.
And she has a special giveaway for you this
month too!

Yvonne Heitz

Words in Harmony book review provided
by Word Harmony Proofreading and
Editing Enterprise.
Providing support for carers since 2014
with Aged Care with Ease.

Rita Merienne

Editor, author, podcaster and the main
person behind The Carer's Champion.
Here to support you on your caring
journey.
You Matter to Me!



Upcoming Events

The next Issue
of The Carers
Champion will
be available on
1 January

New Year guide
January Issue

Tips for what to
update, change, know
as we head into the
new year!

Contact me
now to find
out how to
advertise in The
Carer's Champion



Meet the Columnists



Dr Gina Kingston

Qualified Personal Stylist specialising in people with health issues. Gina's mum had Multiple Systems Atrophy a Parkinson's Plus disorder and Gina has scoliosis.

Catie Chung

Helping US families deal with the health system and aging parents. As a nurse case manager, Catie has lot of advice and information to share.

Lisa West

Lisa is a Mind and Body Coach, Yoga Teacher & Ayurveda Lifestyle Consultant

Mel Kovacevic

Mel provides nutrition for weight loss and healthy eating using a functional nutrition and intuitive eating approach

Upcoming Events

Have you thought about how to manage Christmas with your aged loved ones.

Rest breaks
Food
Activities

A bit of planning will help the season fun for all!

Starting in December The Carer's Champion will be including ads for services and products.

Contact me on agedcarewith ease@gmail.com for all the details

Check out the
Christmas Gift Guide
on Page 61

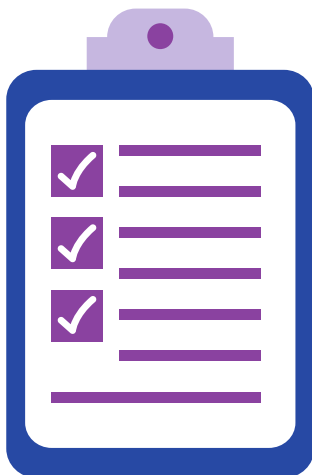


Carer's Chitter-Chatter!



Future Stories

With the new year just around the corner I am planning upcoming articles. What do you want information on? Is there anyone you suggest I talk to? Send your suggestions to agedcarewthease@gmail.com



Workshop Participation

Last month I participated in the development of quality measures for aged care workshops. Where I got to have input into the star ratings for residential aged care. It was a good robust discussion where participants were able to raise issues and make suggestions on what the star rating should cover. I will keep you updated with any information about changes.

Aged Care Assessment

Before you can access government-subsidised aged care services for the first time, you need to apply for an assessment. Using the online application is quick and easy and will only take 15 to 20 minutes to complete. It's the same form to apply for all types of care and support – including help at home, short-term care, and care in an aged care home.

You can complete the application yourself or on behalf of a family member or friend. If you'd like to set up an ongoing representative, you can also do that here.

<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/assessment/apply-online>



Photography by
[@traceymurrayphotography](https://www.instagram.com/traceymurrayphotography)



Preventing
Burnout!

Taking a Break
Before
You
Break!



Merry Christmas

Goodness and Pleasure

When you chat with Maggie Beer AM you just know that you will receive words of wisdom.

Maggie Beer AM is an Australian cook, food author, restaurateur, and food manufacturer who is passionate about enhancing the food experience of all Australians especially our aged loved ones.

I've always had a very soft spot for Maggie – the work she does to enhance our aged loved ones' lives by shining a light on the importance of food for their wellbeing, the fabulous Maggie Beer Foundation, the amazing recipes, the many books and all the products in her shop are just the start of it.

But for me, Maggie holds a very special place in my heart because the last holiday our Father took was to Adelaide with our sister Marilyn to stay with Yvonne (my other sister). They visited Maggie's shop/restaurant and although Maggie wasn't there Dad attended the cooking demonstration and tasted the mushrooms.

For many years after the holiday, he would reminisce about "going to Maggie's place" where he had the most amazing mushrooms he had ever tasted. Thank you Maggie for creating such a wonderful memory for our father.

Goodness and Pleasure!



One of the (many) things that stood out for me when I was speaking with Maggie was how food is the quickest way to wellbeing for everyone but most importantly residents of aged care.

I asked Maggie for her suggestions on changing aged care homes' focus to food being for wellbeing of the residents. It isn't easy. However, it can be done.

Working with a two-prong approach - Management and cooks/chefs. Both have to believe that the quickest way to wellbeing for residents is through food.

It's not just about nutrition. Food has to look good, taste good, smell good and be good to make a difference for the residents.

Goodness and Pleasure!



Goodness and Pleasure

The meals need to be attractive to residents and that way they will want to eat it which will be instrumental to increasing the wellbeing of residents and the reduction of some suffering from malnutrition.

It is said, by various organisations, that the level of malnutrition is 57% of residents in aged care.

There are a range of complex issues for this staggeringly high percentage which includes oral health.

As discussed in the October Issue of The Carer's Champion with Jacquie from Senior Dental Care – good oral health is important. Are the dentures fitting properly or does it hurt when they eat can affect their enjoyment of food?

It just might be easier not to eat!

No, it isn't easy and there isn't a simple wave of a magic wand and everything will be perfect. It doesn't work that way however by approaching things differently you can make a difference.

One small step at a time and the most important thing is to be aware of the issues because when we know better we do better.



The vision of the Maggie Beer Foundation (MBF) is to ensure that all residents in aged care have access to fresh, wholesome, seasonal food, abundant with flavour.

To achieve this, MBF engages with and educates cooks and chefs, as well as those decision makers, in the aged care sector. Check out the website for more information about MBF - <https://maggiebeerfoundation.org.au/>

Cooks and chefs in the aged care sector often have a bad reputation – through no fault of their own!

In the food industry being a cook or chef in an aged care home isn't one of the most sort after roles nor is it a great paying role, there is no specialised training for the aged care is sector and it is a tough gig!

But it can be one of the most satisfying roles where you have the ability to influence the wellbeing of many people. It isn't just about sustenance it is about enhancing the lives of our aged loved ones by providing good food that is the quickest way to wellbeing for residents. Something to be very proud of.

Goodness and Pleasure



Pride in your work no matter what you do is important, having someone tell you how much they like what you do will not only make you feel good but will make you try harder to do better.

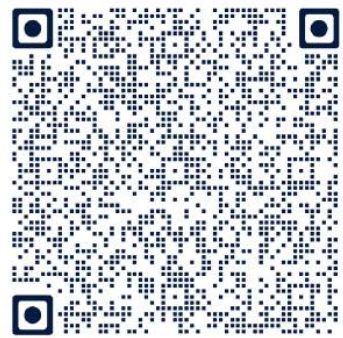
We all want to know that our efforts are being appreciated and what we can do better.

No blame, no shame, no guilt, no judgement
– just feedback and understanding!

Feedback for cooks and chefs is important and none more so than in the aged care sector, one thing that Maggie suggested was that time should be spent with residents while they are eating.

Seeing what they are attracted to, what doesn't hit the mark but more importantly the residents can see that they matter to the people that prepare their meals.

Scan here
for more
information
on DR Care
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Goodness and Pleasure



One of the projects that the MBF funded was providing grants to Aged Care homes in regional New South Wales to support them in implementing or improving existing Wellbeing Gardens.

Each home embraced the opportunity, involving residents, staff, and in some cases, local TAFE students in the design and building of these spaces.

This is an important aspect of the wellbeing of residents – it isn't just about the goodness it is also about the pleasure.

Maggie shared the following Maria Montessori quote with me:

"Everything you do for me, you take away from me"

Have you ever had a true "light bulb moment"? For me this quote was mind-blowing. My entire caring journey flashed before my eyes in a split second and I knew that these 10 words were going to have such a profound affect.

Glancing back knowing I could have done better but looking forward to know where I will make improvements.

When you do everything for someone you take away their independence!

There is nothing for them to do!

When our Father was in aged care he would get up early every day and go down to the dinning room to grab an early cup of tea and chat with the staff.

He offered to help – they gave him the serviettes and showed him how to fold them. Each and every day he folded serviettes.

Now this might not seem much to you and I but to Dad it was everything. He was contributing to his community, he was giving back but more importantly he was doing something.

Dad was legally blind, his mind and rest of his body were still working but he just couldn't see properly anymore. Folding the serviettes gave him a sense of pride.



This is our Father, Hans Heitz.

Dad was involved in everything at his aged care home.

Always the king for us!

Goodness and Pleasure

Yes, it might take more time for them to do it and in a time poor environment this can be a challenge but what is time when you can enhance someone's life?

This is important for people living in their own homes too!

I have been on the caring journey since 2006 when our Mother passed – either as a part time long distance carer, support carer or main carer and now helping my partner care for his 93 year old mother.

I've always approached the different caring roles with what I have to do for our loved ones but now, well now I am going to approach it a bit differently.

It is going to be about what I am not going to take away from them!

When we know better We do Better!



Speaking with Maggie I began to see that food is definitely the quickest way to wellbeing for all of us not just our aged loved ones.

Some of the tips that Maggie shared with me were:

- Protein is important – not just in one meal a day but throughout the day
- Finger foods are great – easy to pick up and eat
- Every bite can be filled with goodness and pleasure
- Get our aged loved ones involved – don't take away all their independence
- Good oral health is important
- Making food attractive – to look at, to smell, to eat!

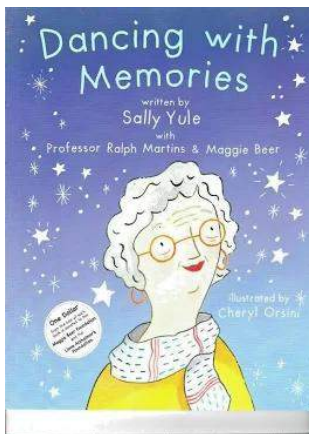


Goodness and Pleasure

Maggie has been involved in a number of projects that contributes to the wellbeing of our aged loved ones.

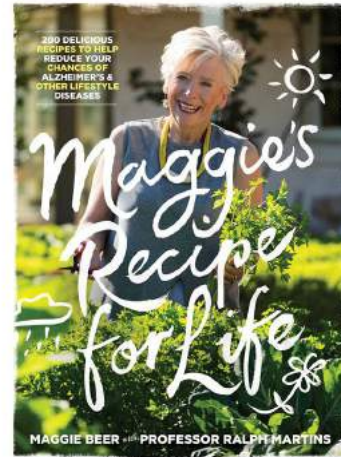
For all the details check out The Christmas Gift Guide (page 62)

With Sally Yule and Professor Ralph Martins, Maggie contributed to a children's picture book – Dancing with Memories about living well with Dementia.



Maggie and Professor Ralph also created “Recipe for Life” Cookbook.

“A healthy attitude to eating – it’s all about balance, variety and choosing foods that give you the best chance of being in good health now and into your future. This is not a diet book – it’s a way of life.” – Maggie Beer.



Of course I couldn't go without mentioning the fabulous products Maggie has in her online shop.

Check them out here -

<https://www.maggiebeer.com.au/>

When we know better, we do better and everyone will be better – after talking with Maggie I know better and I will be doing things differently on my caring journey not just for our aged loved one but for myself too!

The goodness and pleasure of food will be the quickest way to wellbeing!



Goodness and Pleasure

The Final Three Thoughts:

Best piece of advice received: Look always to do better, without being critical.

If in 5 years it won't matter, what do you wish you hadn't spent more than 5 minutes on?
Cleaning out computer folders.

Maggie is passionate about food, music and if you have a platform you have a responsibility to use it to make things better!

Editor's Note:

Speaking with Maggie has had a profound effect on me. First of all I am so grateful for the chance to speak with her and that she made the time in her very busy schedule to share her words of wisdom.

The way I approach caring from now on will be different – not taking so much away will mean I give back to myself as well.

By not doing it all I will not feel overwhelmed.

The ultimate selfcare!

I have changed the way I look at food – only goodness and pleasure from now on! I am going to continue to use my platform to help carers.



My business, Aged Care with Ease, has always supported various charities and I am going to add the Maggie Beer Foundation to ACE's Charity list.

I want to share the goodness and pleasure of Maggie's products – the giveaway for this month will be a \$50 gift voucher for the Maggie Beer Online shop – see the giveaway page 26 for the details on how you can enter the draw to win the voucher.

The goodness and pleasure of food will be the quickest way to wellbeing!



Check out the Christmas Guide on
Page 61

Preparing for the Festive Season



The Festive Season is fun, however, it can be a difficult and tiring time especially for our aged loved ones.

It's an emotional time for everyone, particularly now as we still have to manage being COVID-19 Safe. Many restrictions have been lifted however we still need to be mindful of certain situations.

It doesn't matter if you care for your aged loved ones in their home, your home or a home the Festive Season brings challenges for everyone.

Here are a few tips that can make the season easier for you and all the family.

- Planning ahead – talk to all the family and work out what the family gathering will look like this year. Be COVID safe. How will social distancing affect your celebrations? Set up different times for family members to call or visit.
- If you are taking your aged loved one out do you have to show their vaccination record – do you have their certificate online or do you need to get a hard copy from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).



- Older members tire easily – don't plan too much, limit the number of activities they are involved in and importantly the length of time.
- The noise and confusion of a large family gathering can lead to irritability or exhaustion.
- Nap times are a great idea, or set aside a quiet room where your aged loved one can take a break.
- Family rituals are important - try and keep the celebrations as normal as possible. This may be difficult however it might be as simple as the family traditional Christmas decorations or treats.
- Gift giving – consider the gift you are giving. Make it personal. Something they can easily pick up and use especially if they are in an aged care home. Family pictures are always a great idea. Check out The Carer's Champion Gift Guide for ideas.

This year the celebrations may be different particularly if your aged loved one is in a home however with a bit of planning it can still be fun.

Please note at the time of writing this article some states still had restrictions in place due to COVID. Check your local health website to see if restrictions still apply.

Merry Christmas!



Tony is Doing Fine!

Editors note: Trigger warning – this article is a follow up on Tony's Story from the November issue about an emotional recounting of a 15 year caring journey of a family dealing with Multiple System Atrophy a Parkinson's Plus Disorder

In October I first introduced you to Tony in my article "A Daughter's Story" where I shared Gina's parent's caring journey. In November I shared Tony's story of caring for his wife, Gwen, and today we find out how things are going for Tony since the passing of Gwen on 12 May 2021.

Finding the right words to start this article has been challenging for me because there are so many important things Tony shared with me and I want to do them justice.

I felt exactly the same way when Tony and I started the interview – I was apprehensive. I didn't want to upset Tony who has been so generous with his time and discussing some very difficult topics.

But I should have known better – Tony is an amazing man who wants to share his story to help others.

After the small talk about the weather and a few other things I asked Tony how he was and without a moment's hesitation, he said "I'm good". And I believed him, I truly did – you see people often say they are good or ok but really they aren't. But with Tony, I could see he was.

After Gwen's passing there were only a couple of days of grief. Gwen wasn't suffering anymore.

Initially, it took a while for Gwen's passing to sink in – this is very normal and a feeling I know only too well, I still sometimes go to reach for the phone to talk to my mum and she passed in 2006.

Tony dreamt that he had taken Gwen to the doctor and when he came out and called her name. Tony stood up, turned around - and Gwen wasn't there. That was when it really sunk in.



LISA WEST
MIND & BODY COACH
& YOGA TEACHER



Lisa works with you to get to the root cause of your health and lifestyle habits and concerns using Yoga and Ayurvedic principles and mindset tools.

Lisa teaches regular online mindful yoga and chair yoga classes and is the designer and creator of her Dare.Dream.Create inspirational products You will find all her links here:

<https://linktr.ee/lisawestcoach>

Tony is Doing Fine!



The past six months have gone quickly and Tony has kept busy. Getting out and about, continuing with the Parkinson's Carer's Support group so he can help others.

Helping others on the caring journey, Tony told me that just today he gave some information about Carer's respite to someone in the support group.

Tony can look at other people's caring journey and see where they need help. Knowing what he and Gwen did to overcome challenges he can share his lived experience with others to ease their journey. Helping others to know what services/products are available.

Carers just don't have the time or energy to look for themselves.

Tony is keeping active – still walking his dog and going out to different social events.

In this respect, things haven't changed. You will recall I mentioned last month that one of the biggest changes for Gwen and Tony was that people stopped visiting them at home and this is still the case so Tony goes out.

Of course, accessibility for Gwen was one of the main issues and I suppose we just fall into the habit of not inviting people.

Personally, I think it is more than that – we don't know how to deal with a situation so we don't and then it becomes the norm to not visit or issue invitations.

Still very engaged with the community and friends, Tony is supporting friends in similar situations.

When people are under a lot of stress, and caring is stressful, there isn't the energy to think through alternatives and that is where Tony helps out – a trusted advisor.

Trying to find out information from "call centres" can be difficult and when a person is overwhelmed by their caring journey. Often times it is about following the rule books and not looking with compassion at individuals situations. This is when you need "a clear head" to get the right information.

It is tough. We end up in a carers fog – we are so overwhelmed with our caring role that we don't look at all the options and to be honest we don't often understand what is being said to us as we have so much on our minds.

Often we are kept at arm's length by the people we seek help from, especially service providers, when all we really need is to have arms wrapped around us to give support and comfort.

Tony is Doing Fine!



This is why what Tony is doing is so important and why everyone on the caring journey needs a great support network. A space to talk with people with lived experience to share solutions.

It hasn't all been supporting others – Tony has been to visit his family too. On Gwen's Birthday, he spent time with Gina and her family.

This is a very important point – acknowledging our loved one's special days when they have passed. Celebrate their lives.

Grief is ok and we will always miss and love our loved ones. We grieve differently – there is no right or wrong. Just feel what you feel and not worry about it.

Tony told me he is done with grieving – it is more of a relief than grief as Gwen doesn't have to put up with anything anymore.



I have always been impressed with Gwen and Tony's caring journey. They looked after themselves, they used the services available to them, they had time together and apart – all the right things to make their caring journey easier.

It didn't surprise me at all that this part of the caring journey was handled with love, respect and care.

Gwen had made her own funeral arrangements, the readings she wanted and all the details. All Tony and the family had to do was sort out the photos and music.

Everything was in place and this made the time easier for Tony and his family. No probate was required and the legal stuff was sorted so there were no hassles there.

The lawyer's visit was only 30minutes and most of that was making a new will for Tony. Stress levels were low and everything sorted easily.

It was a nice passing for Gwen. Tony and Gina were with her. The hospital was excellent and they couldn't be faulted in the way she was cared for. This also made things easier for Tony, knowing that she was being given the best care and he didn't have to be her champion during this time.

Tony is Doing Fine!



Tony is in a good place at the moment and there have been no teary moments. It is a testament of Gwen and Tony's strong relationship that he has no regrets.

Lady is Tony's dog who was originally purchased for Gwen but within six months became more of Tony's dog. Lady is a great support for Tony and they both enjoy their long walks on the beach.

The kids and grandkids have been great and Tony is looking forward to spending more time with them.

Tony has a few more trips planned (as long as there are no more lockdowns). In February he will be going to Canberra and in June he is off to the USA to see his other daughter.

Plus Gina and her family will be at his place for Christmas.

Tony is in regular contact with family and spends time with both his and Gwen's family often. Something else we spoke about was communication – honest and open communication on the caring journey is important.

Often Gwen would agree with whatever Tony said or offered because he did so much for her and she didn't want to seem unappreciative. It was her way of caring for Tony's wellbeing.

During one of the times Gwen was in respite Tony wanted to bring her home after a few days but she said no thinking that Tony needed a break but not realising that he was worried about her not getting the care she needed.

Not wanting to be a burden she was saying what she thought Tony wanted to hear but in reality, it was making matters worse for Tony.

My sister has a favourite saying – say what you mean, mean what you say and don't be mean about it!

I think that is something we should all do – don't you?

It was great to talk with Tony and I loved what he shared – community and communication are key ways to help during stressful situations.

Another feature of this story was planning and preparation will make a huge difference.

A huge thanks to Tony for sharing his time and wisdom with us.



A Nutritionist's Guide To Staying On Track This Christmas

The end of the year can be a rocky time for many, physically, mentally and emotionally. This, compounded with the availability and temptation of excess food and alcohol, can make for a period that quickly turns into a downward health spiral.

We sat down with Gabrielle Newman, a Nutritionist at The Fast 800, an online programme designed to empower you with the tools and knowledge to be able to create good habits and make sensible choices long-term.

While it's unreasonable to expect yourself to cruise through fasting days across the festive season without batting an eyelid, here are some strategies Gabrielle recommends to support your body without going backwards...or compromising festive celebrations.

What to Eat

- Where possible, choose foods that fit the principles of a moderately low-carb, Mediterranean-style diet most of the time.
-
- Fill your plate with protein and non-starchy vegetables first, which helps to crowd out available space for that extra Yorkshire pudding or serving of roast potatoes.
-
- Opt for wholefoods first – vegetables, proteins, full-fat dairy, beans and legumes, hard fruits and berries.



- Focus on satisfying meals, rather than snacking or grazing, which can quickly lead to eating much more throughout the day than you intended to.

How to Eat

- Plan your festive period in advance to have a better understanding of when you might be indulging, and when it would be more sensible to stick to your meal plan, incorporate a shake or perhaps have a fasting day. This helps to stop one day of “off-plan” eating turn into one month...or longer!
- Be realistic in what is going to be most sustainable for you
- Use the festive season to hone in on time-restricted eating, if you fast daily for 12, 14 or 16 hours. This means finishing your evening meal earlier and/or having “breakfast” a little later in the day. Not only can this support good metabolic health, but it provides book-ends to your eating window – boundaries to reduce the likelihood of an all-day graze.



A Nutritionist's Guide To Staying On Track This Christmas



What to Drink

- On non-fasting days, it's okay to enjoy a glass of our preferred alcohol – red wine. While it's not exactly a health tonic, red wine has slightly more health benefits when compared to other alcoholic beverages.
- The key things to avoid are mixers like tonic water, juice and soft drinks, which provide an unnecessary blood sugar spike. Sugar-free and "diet" alternatives aren't much better if they're reliant on artificial sweeteners, so opt for soda water and some fresh berries or citrus as an alternative.
- If you're someone who enjoys an alcoholic beverage, it's unreasonable to put yourself on a "booze ban" for the festive season if you know you're setting yourself up for failure. Instead, drink mindfully and in moderation – find out how. We don't recommend drinking alcohol on fasting days
- It's advice you've likely heard before, but that's because it's quite good advice – space your drinks with water. Alcohol often results in increased thirst, so it's easy to keep drinking without realising the extent of your sugar and calorie intake.
- Having a glass of water between drinks will help quench your thirst to avoid dehydration and slow down your overall alcohol intake.

How to Move

- Don't use exercise as a punishment for over-indulging or going "off plan". Instead, grab a loved one and do a quick HIIT workout together to remind yourself of how good it feels to move your body.
- If the festive season for you means a little more time to do things you wouldn't normally get to do, use the opportunity to go on some long walks. Walking is great if you are exploring a new area or want to show visitors around and just as beneficial to do alone to recharge during what can be a chaotic period.

How to Think

- First and foremost, be kind to yourself.
- Practising mindfulness can help to reduce stress, keep you focused and give you some much-needed respite during an often-overwhelming time. A short morning meditation is a wonderful addition to your routine at any time of year, but particularly now.



A Nutritionist's Guide To Staying On Track This Christmas

- Communicate your intentions to your loved ones and ask that they be supportive during times you're choosing not to indulge, while reminding them it doesn't mean you're going to have a "fun-free" festive season.
- Focus on one day – or even one meal – at a time. If things go a bit pear-shaped, take it as a learning experience and move on. Health is a long-term game, so rather than giving up if you go backwards, remember that every subsequent small step forwards is one in the right direction.

For more healthy lifestyle tips and recipes, head to <https://thefast800.com>

Gabrielle Newman, BHSc (Nutritional Medicine), is the Nutritionist and Recipe Developer for The Fast 800.



**Christmas can be a tough time
and that is ok!**

Be kind to yourself.

Practice self-compassion

Take a break before you break





Christmas Recipes



Gabrielle Newmann – Mince pies

Gabrielle has provided some comparisons to store-bought counterparts which I can provide upon request. To give you an example, The Fast 800 fruit mince pie will help to keep you feeling full due to the inclusion of healthy fats and protein. It's extremely low in carbs and sugars, compared to others. It is also gluten free and has no added sugar. It has a reasonable level of fibre, and way more than your traditional mince pies. Whilst the recipe is a win on the health front, it's also a win on the taste front.



Fruit Mince Pies

By The Fast 800

Compared to an average, store-bought fruit mince pie, the carbohydrates and sugar in The Fast 800 fruit mince pies is drastically reduced. The key is a clever balance of dried fruits and spices to achieve the classic flavours but limiting the effects on blood sugars. Also, the keto-friendly pastry helps to keep the carb-load low, with extra fat helping to slow the release of energy. A classic treat designed to support a healthy lifestyle over the festive season!

NO. SERVES: 10 PIES PREP TIME: 12 HOURS COOK TIME: 55 MINUTES

CALORIES: 226KCAL PER PIE PROTEIN: 4.5G FIBRE: 4.2G CARBS: 12.6G SUGAR: 11.2G FAT: 16.9G

Ingredients

PASTRY

0.5 tbsp chia seeds (about 5g)
1 egg
2 tsp apple cider vinegar
100g almond meal
40g coconut flour
0.25 tsp salt
0.5 orange, zest
100g butter, at room temperature
60g cream cheese, at room temperature

FRUIT MINCE

2 green apples, (not peeled) cored and diced into 0.5cm cubes
1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp allspice
1 tsp nutmeg
0.5 tsp ground cloves (or 4 whole cloves)
40g dried unsweetened cranberries
40g currants
40g mixed peel
2 tsp grated root ginger (about 4cm)
1 tbsp water
1 extra egg for egg wash
Olive oil or extra butter for greasing

Method

1. Make the pastry: in a clean spice grinder or mortar and pestle, grind the chia seeds into a flour.
2. In a small bowl, lightly whisk chia flour, egg and apple cider vinegar together. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl, combine almond meal, coconut flour, salt and orange zest.
4. Chop the butter and cream cheese into chunks and work these through the flour mix with your fingers until it forms a dough.
5. Add the egg to the dough and mix until just combined - it may seem too wet for pastry, but the excess moisture will be absorbed as the pastry rests.
6. Cover the dough and refrigerate for at least an hour, but preferably overnight.
7. Make the fruit mince: In a pot over very low heat, add all ingredients and allow to stew with the lid on for 35-40 minutes - stir regularly. The apple pieces should still be holding their shape.
8. Refrigerate the fruit mince mixture so it cools completely.
9. Make the fruit mince pies: Preheat the oven to 170°C fan forced/190°C.
10. Generously grease a muffin tray with butter or olive oil.
11. Working quickly so that the dough stays cold, press portions of the dough into the tart wells so it's about half a cm thick on the base and sides. Make about 10 pies - there should be some pastry leftover for the tops.
12. Scoop the fruit mince evenly across all pastry cases.
13. Roll out the remaining pastry between two sheets of baking paper and cut star shapes. Top your pies with the pastry stars and press them on gently.
14. (Optional) Lightly whisk another egg and brush over the top.
15. Bake for 10 minutes, rotating halfway, until the pastry looks golden. Allow to cool before serving so that the pastry sets. Enjoy after a meal.





Low Carb Cherry Trifle

By The Fast 800

A simple cake and low sugar fruits make this low carb trifle feel truly decadent for any celebration. Using cherries from a jar means it can be made all year round or switch the cherries for your favourite seasonal low sugar fresh fruits.

What we love about this upgrade from a classic? This low carb trifle recipe is gluten free and made from almond flour to bolster protein and healthy fats. This is how we achieve less than 15% carbohydrates (and only 6g of sugar) per serve, rather than the usual 48% you'll find in the store bought version.

No. serves: 12 Prep time: 1 hour Cook time: 1 hour

Calories: 373kcal Protein: 8.5g Fibre: 3.2g Carbs: 12.3g Sugar: 6.1g Fat: 31.9g



Ingredients

2 oranges (300g)
8 soft pitted dates
4 tbsp olive oil
4 eggs
300g almond meal (ground almonds)
1 ½ tsp baking powder
400ml whipping cream
400g pitted morello cherries
whole fresh cranberries or cherries to garnish



Method

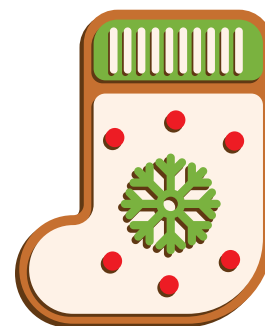
1. Preheat the oven to fan forced 170°C/190°C/375°F/Gas mark 5. Line a 22-24cm cake tin.
2. Wash your oranges and prick them all over with the tip of a knife. Microwave in a covered bowl for 10 minutes. Allow to cool.
3. Chop and deseed oranges - place in a food processor with the chopped dates, olive oil and eggs - blitz until well combined. Add the almond meal, baking powder and blend into a batter.
4. Pour into the lined cake tin and spread mix evenly. Bake for 35-40 minutes, until golden and firm to the touch. Set aside to cool.
5. Whip your cream into firm peaks and cut your cake into 1cm (½ inch) slices.
6. Layer your trifle - start with the cake, pressing firmly to the side of the dish (to create clean layers), add a layer of cherries, scoop on a layer of whipped cream - then repeat to fill your trifle dish finishing with a cream layer.
7. Be generous with the top most cream layer - top with whole fresh cherries or cranberries to really wow your guests. Serve immediately.

Tips:

- Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.
- Premake your cake the day before to save time.

For more healthy lifestyle tips and recipes, head to <https://thefast800.com>

Gabrielle Newman, BHSc (Nutritional Medicine), is the Nutritionist and Recipe Developer for The Fast 800.

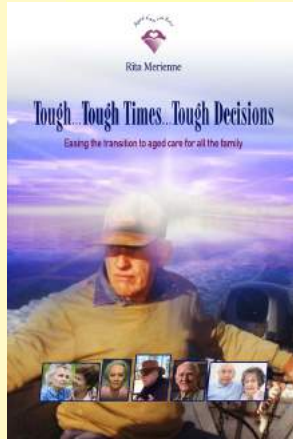


Giveaways

All winners have been notified by email

**Find Your Bling
winner is
KM**

Congratulations!



**The Carers Champion
Sign up Draw
Copy of
Tough...Tough Times
...Tough Decisions
is
DB
Congratulations!**

December Giveaway

**Maggie Beer Voucher
Valued at \$50 to be spent on
Maggie Beer Products**

**A name will be randomly picked from the sscribers
to The Carer's Champion
Winner will be contacted by email.**

*



Handout this month are:

- New Normal Visualisation

**Check out the
covering email for all
the handouts
and giveaways**



WHY I DO WHAT I DO!

Introducing the people behind the products and services



MORE THAN JUST A PLATFORM - GIVING YOU A CHOICE!

CARESEEKERS

I spoke with Marissa from Careseekers – a website that connects individuals directly to disability support workers and aged care workers.

A couple of sisters saw a need for this service after watching their parents care for three of their grandparents. Watching them struggling to get the care/support workers they needed to keep their loved ones in their own homes. Private options were often very expensive and the choices were limited.



More than Just a Platform - Giving You a Choice!

But it was more than that, Marissa spent 15 years working in Human Rights Law and five years in the Disability Discrimination Law sectors where she noticed that if only her clients had support workers that could walk with them through this journey there would have been better outcomes.

Marissa's sister has a background in technology and working with startups and not for profit organisations.

Putting their experience and skills together - just like that "Careseekers" was born. An easy to use website to help people find the right care/support workers.

Giving families more options and a choice but also giving care/support workers a choice too!

Now that aged care is a consumer directed environment people are looking for different types of care. Care is no longer a one stop shop and Careseekers helps clients to find the right carers/support workers for their individual needs and wants.

Finding the right support that is right for you



Careseekers is perfect if you self manage your home care package however they can also partner with your home care provider – if they are willing.

There are over 8000 care/support workers registered on the Careseekers platform. I was surprised to find out that there were so many independent care/support workers.

All care/support workers have:

- References
- Police check
- Double COVID Vaccinated
- Undergone COVID training
- Undergone Online registration process
- Interviewed during the onboarding process

Careseekers provides insurance for the care/support workers.

You don't need to be on a home care package – you can be a private paying client.

You can engage a care or support worker for a temporary issue or ongoing care/support.



More than Just a Platform - Giving You a Choice!



Careseekers is an NDIS registered provider and can service all NDIS participants. They can partner with aged care providers so you can use your home care funding on a care worker you choose.

Building connections with people makes Marissa smile, whether it is connection with family, children, work care seekers or carers and it is obvious that is what Careseekers does – connecting people that need care/support with the right people to help them with their needs and wants.

Marissa's advice for carers:

- It is a marathon not a sprint! Keep this in mind in all you do when caring
- You are as worthy as the person you are caring for – don't feel guilty when you take time for yourself.
- Caring for yourself is one of the most important things you can do for your loved ones.
- Prevent burnout by taking time out

The future of caring is changing, we are an ageing population and there will be more focus on caring.

We are already finding new and different ways to care for our loved ones. Look outside the box and look at the different options available and find what's right for you and your loved ones.

Marissa's Tips for finding the right care worker:

- Take time to find the right carer.
- Meet and Greet first to see if you are right for each other.
- Do a Trial Shift before putting permanent arrangements in place.
- Start with baseline care and then build the relationship, it will be easier to transfer to more care if needed.
- If it doesn't feel right, it's ok. Not everyone clicks.
- Remember that this is now Consumer Directed Care! What you want and need.

The relationship with the care/support worker is important – enhancing the life of your loved ones.

Knowing the needs and wants of your aged loved one is very important, also knowing their medical condition and what future symptoms may be so that the right experienced care is engaged.

Careseekers is more than just a platform it is an easy to use website that gives you a choice of care/support worker and values, choice, control and affordability.

Find a care or support worker that's right for you today!

More than Just a Platform - Giving You a Choice!

Careseekers also has great resources on their website:

- Sample questions for caregivers
- Reference Check Questions
- Guide to police checks

Click here for all the details

<https://www.careseekers.com.au/>

This is a great service that gives you another option for helping to keep your aged loved ones at home run with the heartfelt dedication of people that have seen the struggles carers go through – the emotional and financial challenges families go through to find the right care/support workers for their loved ones.



The Final Three Thoughts:

The best bit of advice received: Do something you love as if you love it, you will do it well, and it will lead to other opportunities.

If in 5 Years it won't matter what do you wish you hadn't spent 5 minutes on: Worrying. It serves no purpose at all!

Marissa is passionate about: Leading a purposeful life and contributing to the world. Making the world a better place.



www.sarahjensen.com.au/unleash

The Original Nursing Barbers



One of the things our father wanted more than anything when he was in an aged care home, was a decent shave!

Yes, I know there are a lot of things he could have wanted but he was legally blind and had to rely on staff to shave him and not many people knew how to or had the time to give him the shave he wanted.

It really frustrated him and he always felt “unkept” because he wasn’t clean-shaven. It was why I was so excited to talk to Jarrod from The Original Nursing Barbers.

Focusing on cosmetic and preventative health Jarrod is a registered nurse with a background in public health and a trained barber.

It was when he was working on an aged care ward that he saw the joy and happiness a proper shave brought to patients. Having someone take the time to give them the dignity of looking good.

Calling on his past experience Jarrod designed a service that enhances the lives of men in care.

Oh how I wish this would have been available for our father – he would have loved it.

Jarrod goes to aged care homes and gives men the barber experience (haircuts, hot towel shaves), nursing assessment and skin integrity treatment.

Jarrod’s medical and life experience enhances the experience for his clients. Finding common ground to talk about creating an engaging experience for his clients.

Having been a Brickie, truck driver, worked on fishing trawlers and not to mention his work in public health in remote localities, Jarrod is never short of topics to talk about with his clients.

Spending 30 to 45 minutes with each client bringing dignity by helping them to look good and which leads to them feeling good.

But it is so much more than a haircut – it is enhancing their lives by interacting with them and treating them to specialised individualised care.

Whether it is weekly/fortnightly or monthly interacting with his clients, Jarrod has found that touch is important and people crave to touch and be touched. Although men of our aged loved ones era are taught to be stoic and resilient, they also want to look smart and feel good about their appearance.

The Original Nursing Barbers



It is also about social interactions and bringing back some of the wonderful memories, sharing stories while having a hot towel shave.

Jarrold has all the skills to provide this much needed service:

- Aware of safety issues
- Deescalate challenging behaviours
- Working with nursing/care staff to identify triggers
- Medically trained
- Barber trained
- COVID trained

Describing his service as having a yarn while giving a hot towel shave and looking after their skin while giving them back a bit of dignity.

A friend who has the ability to talk to all walks of life, but also has the skills to expertly care for them.

Continuity is important and Jarrold's clients look forward to his regular visits. We often see hairdressing services for ladies in aged care homes wouldn't it be wonderful to see this barbering and preventative health care service for men.

Some of the challenges that Jarrold faces are confused clients that are Neurologically challenged and understanding their triggers.

Working closely with nursing/care staff is important to ensure the experience is pleasurable for the client and not disruptive. Another challenge Jarrold faced was starting this service a couple of months prior to the first Lockdown in March 2020.

Ensuring all interactions are COVID safe and in accordance with restrictions.

Jarrold is triple vaccinated.

Jarrold's tips for carers:

- You can't care for people if you don't care for yourself.
- Boundaries are important.
- Don't fall into the Martyr Mind frame – giving up your life to care for others.
- Prioritise your rest.
- Selfcare isn't selfish.
- Do something for you each day!

To find out more about Jarrold's service check out all the details at

<https://www.originalnursingbarbers.com/>

The Original Nursing Barbers

I would love to see this service provided in aged care homes giving our male aged loved ones the specialised treatment they deserve and enhancing their lives.

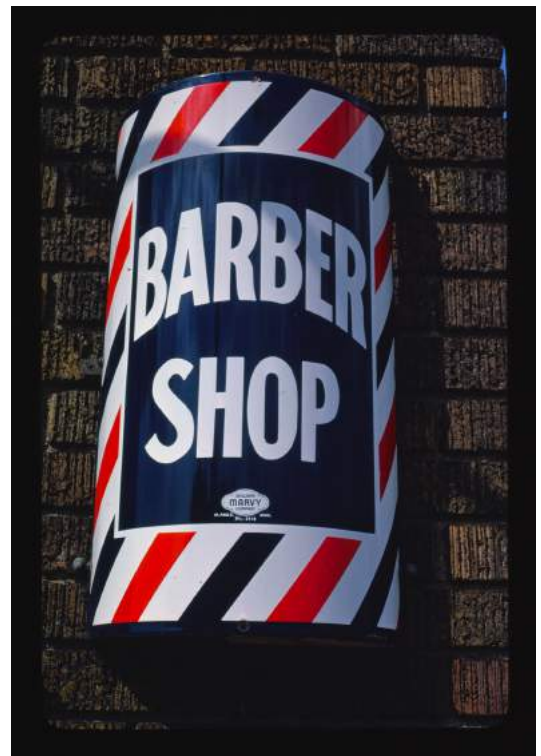
If you are in Sydney and your aged loved one is in an Aged Care home – please share this information with home management team. How good would it be for your aged loved one and his fellow residents to have access to this wonderful service.

Final Three Thoughts

Best bit of advice received: Don't Die
Wondering! Go for it. No self-doubt and then wondering what would have happened.

If in 5 years it won't matter what do you wish you hadn't spent more than 5 minutes on: Jarrod doesn't let things get to him. He has a great balance in his life.

Jarrod is passionate about many things including learning, he reads, dances and sings. He loves helping people to develop.



It's ok not to be
ok especially at
Christmas.
It is tough
Be kind to yourself

Selfcare isn't selfish!



Dignity, Mobility and Comfort

Since 1984 Rej and the team at Comfort Discovered have been providing solutions for thousands of Australians.

Enhancing the independence of clients and empowering them to live their lives with dignity, mobility and comfort.

Providing equipment to aged care facilities and under the NDIS Insurance Scheme, Comfort Discovered is contracted as a My Aged Care Provider.

Also providing equipment for in home care sector.

With over 30 years experience Rej knows a thing or two about helping clients find the right solution.

Sharing his knowledge as a fellow columnist for the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Post, articles in the Bush Telegraph and the Dural Round Up Rej is committed to finding the right solution not just selling a piece of equipment.

Rej was the main carer for his 99 year old father and his 86 year old mum – he understands the difficulty of finding the right help and knows what it is like to be responsible for your aged loved ones care.



Noone is prepared for caring and it can be challenging to know where to go for help.

The more I spoke with Rej the more I was impressed with his attitude and commitment to helping clients find the right solution. He wants to make a difference in people's lives and he is happy to be of service.

I wanted to know why it was important to get professional help when buying mobility equipment and I was intrigued to learn more about Comfort Discovered and in particular Rej's response. It isn't about what people think they want or need it is about finding the best solution that will give the client independence, mobility and dignity.

This was a theme throughout our conversation.

The importance of the solution offering dignity for the client.



Dignity, Mobility and Comfort

It may take several visits to the store or the client's home to get the right solution and often it isn't what they thought they needed.

Rej always starts consultation with finding out what the desired outcome is, what does the client wants to do?

Then he shows them different solutions – never telling them but giving them options. In this way empowering them to make their own decision about what they need.

This is a fantastic approach especially if the client is reluctant to use mobility equipment. Comfort Discovered receives lots of positive feedback from customers with heartfelt gratitude for making their lives better.

Dealing with the most vulnerable people Rej and all his team take their responsibility seriously. It's not about making the sale, its about finding the right solution.



A client wanted to buy a mobility scooter, she had her heart set on it. She knew what she wanted and she wanted to buy it. Although the client said she would pick it up herself and she would catch the train back home, Rej insisted he deliver it.

When he arrived at her home he didn't leave the scooter, he took it back to the store and he gave the client a full refund.

There is no way she could have safely use the scooter – she would have been a danger to herself and to others. Some months later he received a call from the family of the client – they had been ringing all the mobility places in Sydney looking for Rej to thank him for what he did and the care for their mother.

It's not about the sale it is about the right solution. Everyone in the team shares the same goals and vision – to provide solutions. As a preferred provider for organisations such as DVA strict guidelines and protocols are strictly followed.

General public can come into the store to buy or hire equipment. Home trials are also available if people can't make it into the store.

Dignity, Mobility and Comfort



There is even an online store for clients. Taking customer service a step further the team at Comfort Discovered offers Assisted Technology clinics for complex situations where they bring in an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist to do an assessment for the client either in the store or the client's home.

Always putting the client first to find the right solution.

Prior to COVID the team ran seminars in the store – Live Life Better for Seniors educating people on different topics.

Hands on training with different presenters. There were also 15 to 20 in store seminars for clinicians to increase their knowledge of products and equipment. During COVID these have been held as webinars.

Comfort Discovered is a small business aiming to be the customer's first choice and the best in the sector.

During the last couple of years since the first COVID lockdown Team Comfort Discovered has been proactive as possible in protecting their clients.

Dealing with the most vulnerable people it was important to put robust protocols in place to protect clients and staff.

Three mutually exclusive teams are in place to mitigate all staff being exposed and to ensure the business didn't close its doors and were available to provide the vital support clients need.

Comfort Discovered is located in Hornsby, Sydney NSW and provides in store/home services throughout Sydney and the Central Coast.

Don't forget about the online store. For more information go to <https://comfortdiscovered.com/>

There are lots of great resources on the site.

You can book a free consultation on 02 9987 4500

Final Three Thoughts

Best piece of advice received: Always be prepared to unlearn. We may need to unlearn some things we know to live better. If in 5 years it doesn't matter what do I wish I hadn't spent more than 5 minutes on: What others thought about what I am doing.

Rej is passionate about many things. Connecting with people and helping customers drives him and gives a purpose to his life. Making Comfort Discovered customer's first choice.



A DAY IN THE LIFE!

What they do to make it work for you!



HELPING YOU TO MAKE A FULLY INFORMED DECISION

I met Louise Biti from Aged Care Steps over six years ago and not long after she asked me to speak at some of her training sessions to share my caring journey.

Aged Care Steps is a market leader in aged care advice providing advisers with the resources and tools needed to offer aged care advice



Helping You to Make a Fully Informed Decision



Aged Care Steps is passionate about creating different solutions for financial advisors focusing on awareness of frailty planning and encouraging their clients to plan early. Helping businesses to provide services for all their clients.

As I always say early planning is important and knowing what your aged loved ones want and need, start the conversation early so when an emergency happens it eases some of the stress at a very emotional time.

Louise shared how a few years ago she was about to leave for a holiday when she became ill – she was deciding whether to continue to the airport or go to the hospital.

Luckily, she went to the hospital as her appendix were about to rupture. As she was recovering she couldn't help but hear the situation for the patient in the bed next to hers, a situation that happens each and every day in most hospitals.

A lady in her 80s had broken both hips in a fall and the prognosis wasn't good. The large close-knit family rallied around preparing for the worse. It was an emotional time however they knew what had to be done. Then out of the blue a doctor (with a very poor bedside manner) popped his head into the room and said "Great you are all here, your mother is doing well and will pull through. She can't go home but we need the bed tomorrow. She will need to move to aged care."

It was wonderful news but no-one knew what to do next. Where, how, what? Luckily Louise was able to offer help.

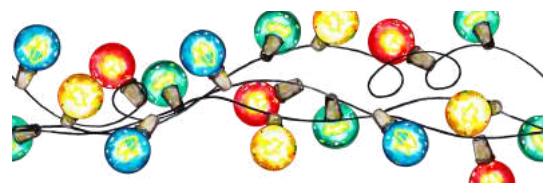
This happens often – more often than most people realise. Our aged loved one has a fall and they can no longer look after themselves. They are in hospital and are well enough to leave but where do they go?

There are options available and this is when you need professionals to help you. I can't stress this enough – when something happens to your aged loved one it is a very emotional time and you will often overlook the options available and dare I say it, the option that will be the best for your aged loved one.

It's about giving your aged loved ones the quality of life, the lifestyle they want. Often times the hospital social worker will suggest the option that will free a bed up as soon as possible without taking your aged loved ones wants into consideration.

You don't know what you don't know!

There are other options available but you need to have someone on your side that will listen to what you want, find out what you need and make it work within your financial situation.



Helping You to Make a Fully Informed Decision



It isn't just finding the right option it is making sure all the legal and financial documents are in place for an easy transition to the right care for your aged loved one.

Just imagine how much easier it would be if as much as possible was in place when "the emergency" happened? Wouldn't it be great if your financial adviser spoke to you prior to need for care and had solutions ready?

That's what Aged Care Steps does – they encourage financial advisors to offer solutions and options to their clients to prepare for the future, as well as help with an action plan when an emergency does arise.

It's not just a one-off training session, Aged Care Steps provide ongoing support and assistance with business setup. Helping with the currency of information and communicating that information to clients. If there are tricky situations Louise and her team are there to provide the adviser with ongoing support and advice.

Another very important part of Aged Care Steps service is transcribing legislation into easy-to-understand information.

Helping advisors to respond quickly to help clients and to efficiently reduce costs. Providing a support network for clients now and for the future.

Paying for professional assistance will help families find the best solution, saves time and stress.

Each situation is different and having the right information from someone who knows you and your situation is important.

When you pay for professional advice you take the emotion out of making your choices and you can be safe in the knowledge that you are all on the same page with the same agenda!

Another thing that Aged Care Steps does is to help financial advisors build communication skills to help with difficult times. Our aged loved ones are often uncomfortable talking about finances with their family.

Family dynamics can be challenging. Your aged loved one deserves to have a person in the room who is experienced, knowledgeable and whose objective is to find the best option for them.



Helping You to Make a Fully Informed Decision



Family dynamics can be challenging. Your aged loved one deserves to have a person in the room who is experienced, knowledgeable and who's objective is to find the best option for them.

Stepping the whole family through the options in a safe and professional environment. Not telling you what to do but helping you to make a fully informed decision.

Over 2000 financial advisers have attended Aged Care Steps' training.

To find an accredited financial adviser who is actively providing advice to clients, go to Aged Care Steps website – there is a button at the top of the page “looking for an adviser” where there is a list of advisers.

www.agedcaresteps.com.au

If you are a financial adviser and you want to find out more check out the website for information on how to be accredited with Aged Care Steps and you too can have help finding the right business model, helping your clients create awareness and solutions in accordance with the legislation.

Louise's Tips for find the financial adviser for frailty planning:

1. Ask your financial adviser if they have experience with the aged care sector, can they help, if not can they refer you to someone they know and trust.
2. If you don't have a financial advisor go to www.agedcaresteps.com.au and click on “find a planner” button. This is an Australia wide listing of financial advisers trained and actively working in the aged care sector.
3. Check accreditation – make sure they have experience in the aged care sector.
4. Talk to a couple of different financial advisors. You have to be comfortable with them, build a relationship. Make sure they listen to you and your needs and wants, that they understand what you are saying and that they are working with you.

Lousie was on the Board of the Aged Care Financing Authority for five years. The ACFA was an independent committee that provided advice to the Minister. Working with professionals from health, finance, and aged care sectors the committee reported to government and industry on different aspects of Aged Care. The committee was disbanded in July 2021 and has been superseded by a new committee as the Government moves to a new five-year plan of reform for the sector.



Helping You to Make a Fully Informed Decision

Don't Panic' Aged Care Guide – Age the way you want, where you want

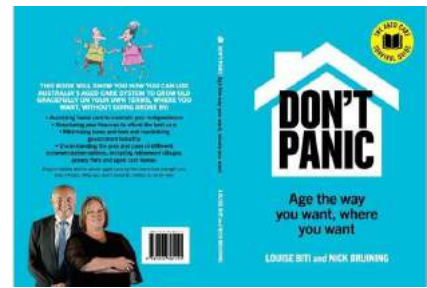
The 'Don't Panic' Aged Care Guide will show you how you can use Australia's aged care system to grow old gracefully on your own terms, where you want, without going broke by:

1. Accessing home care to maintain your independence
2. Structuring your finances to afford the best care
3. Minimising taxes and fees and maximising government benefits
4. Understanding the pros and cons of different accommodation options, including retirement villages, granny flats and aged care homes.

<https://subscriber.thewest.com.au/agedcareguide>

If you need help to find the right financial advisor check out www.agedcaresteps.com.au

What I love about Aged Care Steps is that they get it. They understand how emotional it is for families looking at options for the care of their aged loved ones and they provide assistance to financial advisers to communicate the available options in an understanding and caring way.



I highly recommend you find an Aged Care Steps accredited financial advisor to help you with preparing for your aged loved one's care.

Final Three Thoughts:

Best Advice Received: Be Nice to your Mum and take responsibility for your own life. Let little things go!

If in 5 years it won't matter what do you wish you hadn't spent 5 minutes on: No worry about the little things.

Louise's Passions: Travel especially Rome. Spending time in Rome and finding all the beautiful history and art.



You don't know what you don't know



Food that Cares!



The following information was provided by Care Food co

“670,000 Australians are afflicted with Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing).

The Australian and New Zealand Society for Geriatric Medicine has estimated that the prevalence of people in the community suffering dysphagia is between 7 and 22% and its incidence is as much as 40 to 50% among older people in long-term care facilities.

Dysphagia is the result of conditions affecting the throat's nerves and muscles ie Stroke, Parkinson's, Dementia, therefore the majority of patients are 70+.

With our ageing population, the incidence of Dysphagia is increasing, placing increasing pressure on our health system.

Research from Flinders University found that Dysphagics add 40% to health costs both in Australia and internationally.

Costs ranged from diagnosis to hospital admission and costs of managing complications such as malnutrition or pneumonia.

Common causes of these last two factors are incorrect preparation of texture-modified food.

When diagnosed with Dysphagia, food preparation is critical in the patient's health care program. Dieticians, Speech Pathologists and other health care professions advise patients and carers on the IDDSI level required for the severity of the patient's Dysphagia.

There are five levels of 'liquid thickness' measurement or Food Textures (3-Liquidised to 7-Regular).

Carers are affected, with 60% reporting they are not happy with the foods they are serving.”

After reading this information I wanted to find out more about Dysphagia and I spoke with Dave from the Care Food Co.

Dave started Care Food Co in 2019 because he saw how his mother struggled with feeding his father who had a stroke 20 years ago.

Dave's mother had all the medical equipment to assist his father but not the food, she had to make it herself. Domestic kitchen equipment isn't built to make the food with the correct texture for someone with Dysphagia.



Food that Cares!



If the food isn't the right texture the patient can end up with fluid on the lungs which means extended hospital and rehabilitation stays.

This is exactly what happened with Dave's father on several occasions.

A continuing cycle!

The best alternative at the time was jars of baby food and some people are still eating it now!

Dave's mother tried many things including a product called Provital however this was made using 1970/80's technology.

Dave decided there was a need for a product that was texture modified but still tasted good and he set about producing it using high end food technology to produce a fresh chilled product that in line with the IDDSI requirements.

IDDSI Framework is a standard developed by a group driven by speech pathologists because there was confusion around the language people were using to translate swallowing diagnoses and providing a common terminology to describe food textures and drink thickness.



The technology Care Food Co used produced clean label food – which means there is nothing else added – no preservatives, no fortifiers – Nothing!

There is scientific research evidence to suggest that Care Food Co's food has enhanced bio-availability of nutrients, combined with zero additives.

Which means that there is more nutrients and the body absorbs the nutrients faster than any other food.

The feedback from clients shows that Care Food Co is enhancing the lives of people that use it.

"The Dr was worried I was losing too much weight before I started using Food Care Co and now he says I need to make sure I don't put on too much weight"

"I've had less hospital visits".

"I've been able to taste food for the first time in 8 years"

The process in manufacturing is the key to producing the texture modified food. It isn't baby food for adults it is specially texture modified food.

Food that Cares!



Dave explained the process and as we all know I am not a Tech Savvy person so I am going to share with you a few elements of the process:

- Fresh chilled never frozen
- Pressure cooking – extreme pressure
- Food is natural and tastes good to start with
- Nothing added – no fortifiers etc
- The technology has been around for over 10 years
- Great shelf life

If you wanted to know more about the technical side I am sure that Dave can help out. It was fascinating to hear how by changing the technique an improved product can be produced.

A product that enhances the lives of the patient and makes carer's lives easier. Taking away the pressure of finding the right food that tastes good.

I asked Dave about the most popular product and it is sweet corn.

Did you know that preparing peas and corn to the IDDSI framework is really difficult and if you don't prepare them correctly husks can remain.

Mashed potatoes is another dish that needs to be prepared correctly – stickiness becomes an issue and is one of the biggest concerns for a patient with Dysphagia.

Working with a dietician and the IDDSI framework the Care Food Co have developed a range of meals here are just a few:

- Lamb Shanks
- Sweet and Sour Pork
- Chicken and Coconut Curry
- Chicken and Barley Stew
- Beef Bourguignon

To check out the full range go to <https://www.carefoodco.com.au/>

These are global first products!

Care Food Co is always looking to introduce new products into the range and are working on beverages plus they have developed biscuits that give the sensation of chewing and are IDDSI compliant.

Shipping products Australia-wide and with interest shown internationally as well Care Food Co is providing food that cares!

To find out more about Care Food Co call them on 0499 060 177 to discover what a difference texture modified food can make.

To get a sample pack free of charge go to <https://www.carefoodco.com.au/>



Food that Cares!



I love that because of his family's experience with trying to source the right food Dave has create a way to help others in the same situation. Enhancing lives of people that need it the most!

I never knew that it was so difficult to source correctly prepared food and what the consequences where if the food isn't the right texture.

Final Three Thoughts:

Best bit of advice received: Be good to your mother!

If in 5 Years it won't matter what do you wish you hadn't spent 5 minutes on: Worrying

What are you passionate about: Family and about the Care Food Co. Helping to "rock their world" and enhancing lives.



Third Age Matters – Customised Aged Care Placement



Bina Brown is an accredited Aged Care Professional who works with a licensed financial adviser specialising in aged care to get the best outcome for people looking for an aged care facility in Canberra and the South Coast.

Bina also writes a monthly column for the

Australian Financial Review.

As a journalist writing about the aged care sector for over 25 years Bina decided to start Third Age Matters because after the 2014 changes to the regulations for aged care placement she realised people didn't understand. People were being left behind and didn't understand how to complete the paperwork involved with finding the right care facility.

Bina works closely with family members to help transition their aged loved ones into the right care for them. Sometimes she also works with couples who are looking for a caring solution.

Families going from desperate situations to calm and easy transition to care that suits the wishes and needs of the aged loved ones.

Some of the challenges of this sector is keeping up with all the changes in government regulations and the implications from the changes.

There is so much misunderstanding in this sector and Bina spends a great deal of time keeping up with all the changes to ensure the right outcome is reached for her clients.

Educating aged care homes to treat people with respect when moving into care is something else that Bina works with to ease the transition to care.

Helping the new residents to settle in and manage their expectations. She visits often and explains how the home operates to the resident and the family. Helping with any complaints.

Making the whole process as seamless and pleasurable as possible.

It is difficult for the families when their aged loved ones move into an aged care home, they are full of guilt. However, the relationship often changes between the family and their aged loved one. Instead of the pressures of caring they can go back to concentrating on family relations and enjoying each other.



Third Age Matters – Customised Aged Care Placement

Recently Bina has been working with a client who needs to move her aged loved one into care.

Whilst there are other siblings the client is the one making all the decisions and they had been struggling with the decision. They were offered 2 positions which has made the decision even tougher for the client. Bina has been receiving phone messages at 2, 3 and 4 am from the client. It's all part of the service, easing the transition for all the family.

Having independent advice and input helps with the decision-making process. It is a very big decision to find the right care for your aged loved one and it is a very emotional time for everyone.

One of the biggest issues that families face when finding the right care is the reluctance to start looking at places. Bina narrows down the choices taking into consideration location, preferences, reputation and provision of care required.

Timing is never good!

Starting early is important. Transitioning from a hospital to an aged care home isn't easy and often very difficult for everyone concerned. The care is often required urgently and decisions can be challenging when rushed.



Bina's tips for finding the right care are:

- Look early
- Know what is important – if they don't like lifts make sure you look at ground level accommodation
- Find out what their wants and needs are
- Can the home provide the care they need – think about symptoms of their condition and if they progress can they still provide the required care
- Can the home meet the wants of the resident – onsite café, open-air, outside areas?
- What is the complaints process – knowing how to raise issues

Bina provides an inclusive service, helping to find the right care, filling out all the required paperwork including Centrelink forms and settling in process for both the residents and families.



Third Age Matters – Customised Aged Care Placement

Bina is also an Advanced Care Facilitator and helps clients to complete the required documents. It is important to have this documentation completed prior to going into an aged care home. Just imagine how confronting it would be to fill out the Aged Care Directive on your first day in the aged care home.

If you are in Canberra or on the South Coast and you are looking for aged care options I highly recommend Bina Brown to you. Not only does she know the local aged care facilities she is an accredited aged care professional.

Contact Third Age Matters on
<https://thirdagematters.com.au/>

Final three thoughts:

The best bit of advice that Bina has received is to Follow Your Instincts. To go for it!

If in five years it doesn't matter what do you wish you hadn't spent more than 5 Minutes on: Worrying about not having enough clients to sustain the business. There are so many people who need help to find the right care.

Bina is passionate about helping people. Problem solving and finding solutions for the best outcome for everyone.



Low means residents in aged care homes may be entitled to assistance with fees

Services are available to come into aged care homes include barbers, dental, social carers.

Self-managed home care packages can be the answer to your caring options



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Shining a light on Products and Services!



You don't know what you don't know!

In this section I will sharing different products and services with you.

Products and services that can make the caring journey easier for you and for your aged loved ones.

Not all of the products and services will be right for you but it will show you what is available.

When we know better we do better!



BENEFITS OF COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES



Our sense of smell is directly connected to the Limbic System which is responsible for moods, emotions, memory and learning.

Essential oils are naturally produced by the plant and are extracted in such a way as to minimize any chance of adulteration.

Fragrant oils, on the other hand, are artificially produced.

While you may enjoy the fragrance of some, they do not compare to the natural beauty of true essential oils and do not share any of the same therapeutic benefits.

I've been lucky enough to have had a massage from Michelle Cochrane who not only uses essential oils but mixes her own blends!

Hand-blended Australian essential oils crafted just for you.

Michelle is passionate about providing the best care for her clients. Michelle is fully qualified and accredited, with diplomas from registered training organisations, and continues to do further professional development.

Safety awareness is paramount for Michelle.

For those who have read my book "Tough...Tough Times... Tough Decisions" you will know how much essential oils helped on my caring journey. I use them daily and I absolutely love Michelle's blends.

Michelle has also developed a chakra range of essential oil blends plus works with people to produce their own unique blend. I love this idea especially for our aged loved ones, creating a calming blend that evokes memories. Perfect.



BENEFITS OF COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES



Michelle uses essential oils and massages as complimentary therapies and started using them on her own journey where she found that both of these therapies were beneficial for her.

This led Michelle to discover her true calling in life - to heal others, and give them the tools and the strength to heal themselves.



Essential Oils affect the Limbic system and can be used in a number of ways

- Memory enhancer.
- Can address Anxiety and Aggravation issues, especially for people who don't like contact.
- Calming and soothing not only for the patient but for the carer too. Before and after engagement.
- Covering up stale smells.

Diffusing an essential oil like "mandarin" makes the environment calmer.

If a carer can go into a situation calmer it is better for all.

Diffusing essential oils with cypress helps to release emotions.

If you want to feel grounded try cedar or sandalwood.

To evoke thoughts and emotions try diffusing lemongrass.

I know of people that use essential oils in diffusers to ease patients' anxiety and to evoke happy memories.



BENEFITS OF COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES



Essential oils are safe around pets and children when used properly – keep out of direct contact, diffusing is the best and safest method and don't use for extended periods.

Michelle has a very special offer (check out the Christmas Gift Guide for all the details) where she will create a personal essential oil blend. Talking with you in person or on the phone Michelle uses her expertise to work out your personal blend. Personally blended for you!

Michelle has also worked with several businesses to create their own “business blends” and is available to help you create your own business blend.

Finding the right massage therapist and aromatherapist can be difficult and I asked Michelle for her tips:

- Know where their qualifications were obtained
- What is their safety awareness – did they ask questions about your medical condition and history?
- Feeling safe and cared for in this personal situation is ok
- Its ok to ask questions

I love Michelle's passion for providing the best care for her clients and when having massages with her I always feel I am in very safe and caring hands.

Australia is a vast country with a diverse environment that produces a wide variety of unique plants, many of which capable of producing incredible essential oils with fantastic therapeutic properties and beautiful fragrances which cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

Find out more about aromatherapy and how to use essential oils, including our wonderful range of native Australian essential oils.

Learn safe and effective ways to use these oils in your own home.

For all the details check out Michelle's website

<https://www.michellecochrane.com.au>



TRUSTED CARE AND THE SUPPORT YOU NEED



Recently I spoke with Marie from Young At Heart Services, a Sydney based unique service that not only provides required care but also personal assistant services for seniors.

This is a great idea for our aged loved ones. The care if they need it but also a service that help with the everyday things that need to be done.

But it is so much more than that.

Marie provides a service to keep our aged loved ones engaged and keeping their passions alive.

It could be sharing a hobby or activity or just companionship.

Help with the everyday running of homes. What I love about this idea is that as carers a lot of our time is spent with the “mundane” household chores instead of spending time with our aged loved ones. Having someone come in and do those mundane chores like bill paying, gift buying and letter writing to name a few.

Some of the things that your care plan doesn't cover.

Yes this also means that funding isn't provided by the Home Care Package but – and this is a big but..... having someone to do the mundane things with your aged loved ones so you can spend quality time with them is so important and priceless.

Marie explained how she is often asked to visit people in aged care homes – to provide that extra engagement or even take them to the hairdresser.

How many times have you heard about our aged loved ones not attending special family occasions because it would be too hard for someone to pick them up, care for them during the event and then take them back home when they tire.

This is one of the services that Marie and her team provide – she even helps with buying gifts and the outfit for the event, arranging hair and makeup, transport to and from plus ensuring the aged loved one is cared for during the event. Taking the stress from the event for everyone.

TRUSTED CARE AND THE SUPPORT YOU NEED



Personally I think this is a huge and much needed service – I wish this was an option for me when I was caring for Dad.

Organising a family event is hard enough but the added stress of managing an aged loved ones care often means the aged loved one misses out.

I love that by thinking outside the box and organising a service to help out means inclusion for everyone and that is priceless.

One of the main features of Young at Heart's services is inclusion and we all know that this is really important for our aged loved ones. It changes their outlook on everything. Companionship and being active helps all areas of our aged loved ones' lives.

Giving them quality of life and a purpose. Enhancing their lives by helping them to keep their independence.

Young at Heart services can be a one off or an ongoing service. It is an hourly rate with no extra costs.

You are not locked in for a particular service – it's up to you. Shopping, letter writing, visits, sport or activities, hairdresser – this service is about enhancing the lives of our aged loved ones and not a home care service.

Marie is in constant contact with families and this service is perfect if you are not in the same locality.

A personal assistant for your aged loved one to help them live their best life. I love this idea and think it is a great way to help your aged loved one keep independent.

What a great gift to give your aged loved one.

Check out

<https://www.youngatheartservices.com.au>
/ for all the details.



New Research Shows Personalised Music Can Improve Brain Function For Dementia

In the near future, precision and personalised medicine will be complemented by affordable access to real time biometric feedback that will optimise wellbeing in real and measurable ways.

Over the past few years, researchers have been trying to understand how listening to music affects your brain. One of the features of music that seems to be directly related to its impact is whether you have an emotional connection to it.

A recent study* published by the University of Toronto has demonstrated that those living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia can improve their cognitive function by listening to music that has personal significance to them - such as the songs heard on the radio in their youth.

The right music is therefore a cost-effective, non-invasive way to stimulate the entire brain making the listener easier to care for while creating joyful moments for all.

Professor Michael Thaut, senior author of the study, said "It's simple: keep listening to the music that you've loved all your life.

Your all-time favourite songs, those pieces that are especially meaningful to you. Make that your brain gym."

But how do we know what music to play for someone living with dementia?

Vera, a music wellness app, is changing the lives of dementia carers and their loved ones by making it easy to find the right music to play. Using AI technology, Vera acts like a personalised radio with three stations uniquely curated for each listener - Relax, Energise and Reminisce.

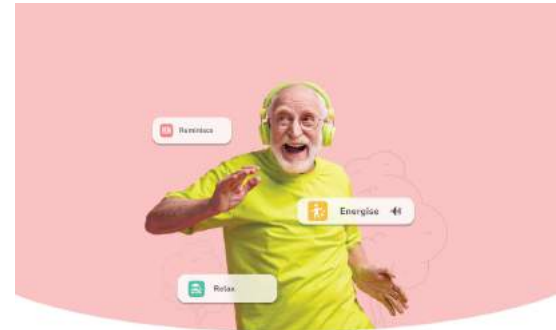
Vera discovers the soundtrack of someone's life by combining information such as where they grew up, their age and known languages with important musical details such as their favourite artists and genres.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT - EDITORIAL

A PAID EDITORIAL BY VERA

New Research Shows Personalised Music Can Improve Brain Function For Dementia



It then looks at the relevant chart data from the time and place of their youth and matches that data with their music taste to find what music they listened to throughout their life.

This information forms their personal “Music DNA”, allowing Vera to find “the right music for their mind”.

Vera is designed for carers and best-practice is to integrate music into the daily routine of care to enhance certain activities or moods. Here are a few examples of where the three listening modes can be effective:

- Energise plays music that gives an extra boost for the day and helps to motivate. This is best used in the morning routine, when getting dressed or just before mealtime.
- Relax plays music that helps calm the body and mind. Typically this is the playlist that helps with sleep, reducing stress or winding down in the evening.

- Reminisce plays the songs from a listener’s past. It’s looking for those songs that haven’t been heard in years, but as soon as they play, everyone is singing along!

These songs are particularly helpful to enjoy when spending time with the listener since they can open the door to memories that trigger great conversations.

Making Vera a part of the daily routine when caring for those with dementia can make noticeable and genuine improvements to the quality of life of both carers and their loved ones. These include improved mood, memory, sleep, motor functions and cognitive functions.

Following their win of Decoding Dementia, Music Health, the company and team behind Vera, has been nominated as a finalist in the 2021 Pause Awards as well as receiving an honourable mention in Fast Company’s World Changing Ideas of 2021 Awards earlier this year.

New Research Shows Personalised Music Can Improve Brain Function For Dementia

vera

The Sydney-based team is currently conducting research in partnership with the Global Centre For Modern Ageing (GCMA) and Dementia Australia to build on the findings of the Toronto University research.

See what the fuss is about on their website, www.veramusic.com and learn how to integrate music into the daily care routine to improve outcomes for all.

All Vera subscriptions come with a 14-day money-back guarantee for peace of mind and the team are always on hand at the touch of a button if you need support.

You can also join the newly formed Vera Carers Facebook Community to share your experiences with other carers at www.veramusic.com/carercommunity

*Reference:

<https://content.iospress.com/articles/journal-of-alzheimers-disease/jad210610>



Season's Greetings

Agedcarewithease.com

“

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FROM MANAGERS CAN HELP EMPLOYEES COPE WITH THE STRESS IN THEIR LIVES.

FILLING THE VOID IN AGED CARE
AGED CARE WITH EASE IS HERE TO EASE
THE TRANSITION TO AGED CARE FOR ALL
THE FAMILY

MY DISH, YOUR FAVOURITE DISH



Are you looking for Gourmet food made with tender loving care delivered right to your door?

In a world of fast and convenient food, you don't have to sacrifice good taste.

My Dish is a fantastic local solution - gourmet meals that are delicious, easy and no fuss. Made from fresh all-natural ingredients that will tempt even the fussiest of eaters.

Often recommended to clients who are having trouble cooking meals, My Dish is providing a much-needed service and enhancing our loved ones' lives.

Tim and Shelley started this business in 2006 after Tim's butcher shop customers wanted to buy his lunches. Tim would cook up meals for himself however he soon found that his "lunches" had become very popular.

It wasn't long before Tim and Shelley recognised their community's need for quality and convenient home-delivered meals.

My Dish create home delivered meals that are delicious and healthy, made with their own stocks, bases and the freshest locally sourced ingredients.

All meals are snap frozen after cooking which retains the fresh natural flavours for longer periods.

There are many different meals in the range, from hearty meals to family favourites.

Single serves with vegies included, 3 meal portions or even a Curry feast for six - My Dish has something for everyone.

There is even a care package - you can order a care package and have it delivered to a loved one. Pick and choose the meals you want to meet their dietary and taste needs.

With Family Dinner packs that include soup and dessert, Couple Dinner packs and even desserts there is something for everyone! One of the most popular meals is Cottage pie - Originating from family farm kitchens in the United Kingdom and Ireland, Cottage Pie has been adopted as an Aussie favourite for generations. This simple yet nourishing dish is a heart warmer.

MY DISH, YOUR FAVOURITE DISH

My Dish have used their 'tried and true' recipe base of Aussie lamb and Aussie beef gently combined with a variety of herbs and spices and finished off with gorgeous creamy mash crust on top. Great idea for a family dinner or perfect as a rainy weekend family lunch.

A meal in itself on it's own or try serving with lightly steamed beans and carrots.

With Christmas just around the corner My Dish has something special for you!

The perfect solution for a great Christmas Gift!

Have to take something to your work Christma Party?

Need a gift for a teacher, coach, and/or friend?

Have a hankering for the taste of Christmas but can't wait until the 25th?

Need to liven up the Christmas Desserts table?



Look no further, My Dish's Traditional Christmas Pudding!

Made with a delicious blend of vine fruit, Marinated in sherry and brandy, then slow-cooked to perfection. Serves 6.
All for only \$22.00

Just click here for the Christmas Pudding - <https://www.mydish.com.au/product-page/traditional-christmas-pudding>

My Dish prides itself on its food safety. Rest assured the meals that are delivered to your home comply with Australian Food Safety Standards and a rigorous HACCP program. It is also important to note, that if their meals identify as gluten-free, they have been tested.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT - EDITORIAL

A PAID EDITORIAL BY MY DISH

MY DISH, YOUR FAVOURITE DISH

Working with your home care package provider or under a self-managed plan – My Dish works with you to provide food that will enhance your aged loved ones lives. The perfect solution!

Great food made with tender loving care, online booking and payment and contactless delivery – what more could you want?

But – yes there is always a but, My Dish is a Sydney-based business and only delivers to Sydney/Blue Mountains/ Central Coast and some parts of Wollongong.

If you or your loved ones are in the Sydney region, give My Dish a go for great service and gourmet food that will please any palette. There is even a gift card system in case you don't want to choose the meals for others.

Order today and My Dish can have a selection of chef prepared meals delivered to your home on the same or next business day!



What people say:

"Hey, Tim & Shelley! Had the Chilli con Carne for lunch today. Superb Saturday lunch, really tasty! Served with avocado, chopped tomato, cheese and shredded lettuce. Very tasty, easy, carb-free and just the right amount for 2! Thanks for such a great product." "Ms T"

So you've had your meals delivered to your home, what now? My Dish meals require minimal effort when reheating, 2-3 minutes in the microwave from thawed or 5-6 minutes from frozen, these of course are rough guidelines, product specific heating instructions can be found on each meal.

My Dish meals allow you to create or further enhance your own meals. Many of our existing customers enjoy purchasing our products and providing the sides themselves.

My Dish will soon be your favourite Dish! Check out all the details at <https://www.mydish.com.au/> or call us at Ph: 02 9477 4001

Drop us an Email: info@mydish.com.au
Yes, we even have Christmas Gift Vouchers.

CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

Helping to take the Stress Out of Christmas!



Finding the right gift can be difficult.

It can be downright stressful - not to mention time-consuming.

I've found some gifts that carers might like, that your aged loved ones might like and gifts that you might like to give.

If you want more information on any of the products please visit the websites listed or contact the providers – can you do me a favour and mention The Carer's Champion if you speak to them. Thanks.

Prices listed do not include postage and handling!

Taking a little bit of the stress out of Christmas!





The Christmas Gift Guide

Tough...Tough Times...Tough Decision

A Book by Rita Merienne. Easing the journey to aged care for all. Sharing my emotional journey to help ease yours.

Price: \$18.00

<https://www.ritamerienne.com/product/book/>



ACE Care Cards

Providing inspiration and support and suggesting ideas. 30 Cards with a cute little stand to remind you to stop, take a breath and help you to stress less.

Price: \$14.00

<https://www.ritamerienne.com/product/aged-care-with-ease-care-cards/>



Give the gift of comfort and care with a Petal Back nightie

Soft on the skin, gentle to slide on and off, dignified length and gorgeous variety of prints to suit individual taste
Petal Back Clothing – Adaptive Clothing.

Price: \$49.00

<https://www.petalbackclothing.com.au/>



For a little extra, a short polar fleece poncho

For gentle warmth across the shoulders and chest when sitting up in bed.
Petal Back Clothing – Adaptive clothing

Price: \$29.00

<https://www.petalbackclothing.com.au/>





The Christmas Gift Guide

Maggie Beer Shop



Discover The Most Delicious Items From Maggie's Kitchen & Cellar. Gift Vouchers Available. Shop Maggie Beer's High-Quality Gourmet Products. Pantry Favourites, Gift Hampers & Books. Easy Online Shopping.

Price: Various check out the website for all the details

<https://www.maggiebeer.com.au/?feed=Product#feed>

Maggie's Recipe for Life



My recipe for life is to have a healthy attitude to eating – it's all about balance, variety and choosing foods that give you the best chance of being in good health now and into your future. This is not a diet book – it's a way of life." – Maggie Beer

Price: \$29.95

<https://shop.maggiebeer.com.au/products/maggies-recipe-for-life-cookbook/>



Affirmation Pen Sets

Available in four colours, each set features 5 coloured pens with black ink and inspiring affirmations printed on the side.

Price: \$25 for the set - \$10 flat rate express postage or free postage over \$100 (Within Australia).

<https://www.popyourbusiness.com/product/affirmation-pen-set/>

"You're on Fire" Candle



Hand-poured soy wax candle with Champagne and Strawberries Scent. This is the perfect gift for someone doing well in their career, business or life!

Price: \$38 each - \$10 flat rate express postage or free postage over \$100 (Within Australia).

<https://www.popyourbusiness.com/product/hand-poured-soy-wax-candle/>





The Christmas Gift Guide



Wolfe's Berry Farm:

Four Generations Strong

Wolfe's Berry Farm is nestled in the foothills of Mt Wellington/kunanyi is where four generations of Wolfe family have grown quality small fruits. Our farm is open seasonal but we are now very proud to present our online store where you will be able to try a sample of our produce all year round.

Price: From \$8.00 to \$35.00

<https://www.wolfesberryfarm.com/>



The Wolfe Brothers

The revered country duo, comprised of brothers Nick and Tom Wolfe, have become renowned over the past few years for their jaw-dropping live shows and steady ascent to Australian country music's upper echelon.

Kids on Cassette is their latest offering and has been nominated for 'Best Country Album'

Price: \$25.00

<https://www.thewolfebrothers.com/>



Söka Tub

The Söka Tub has a primary use for separately soaking soiled, coloured and delicate clothing all in the one space saving bucket which allows for multiple detergent use. The Söka Tub therefore fits easily in the laundry sink with room to still wash your hands, or looks sleek and stylish on any bench or bookshelf around the home.

Price: \$64.95

<https://www.sokaaustralia.com.au/products-1>



Flex-a-Tee

Care & Style have developed the Flex-A-Tee® to offer wearers easily accessible, comfortable, quality, adaptive clothing.

The unique design of the Flex-A-Tee® makes the tshirt suitable for a wide range of requirements i

Price: \$79.99 (Less Discount for first time orders)

<https://www.flexatee.com/products/flex-a-tee>





The Christmas Gift Guide

Dare Dream Create

Need some inspiration for your Christmas stockings?

This meditation pack includes a journal, pen, inspiration cards, candle and meditation essential oil.

Price: \$59

Visit the website for more great gifts <https://daredreamcreate.square.site>



Golf Tees made from Recycled Plastic Car Bumper Bars

Naiteev is an Australian owned, non-profit enterprise manufacturing clever and useful products from Australian automotive plastic waste

Price range: \$6.00 - \$10.00

www.naiteev.com



Red Paddle Co Luxury Towelling Change Robe

Soft, luxurious and warm with a design to ensure you can confidently go from the water to work; the ultimate accessory for changing before or after getting on the water.

Price: \$89

Women's: <https://redpaddleco.com/en-au/product/womens-luxury-towelling-change-robe/>

Men's: <https://redpaddleco.com/en-au/product/mens-luxury-towelling-robe/>



Red Paddle Co Insulated Stainless Steel Water Bottle

Not just for water, with a 750ml capacity, you can take 3 cups of your favourite coffee with you or enjoy a cool glass of wine once you reach your destination.

Price: From \$45

<https://red-equipment.com.au/collections/equipment/products/insulated-stainless-steel-water-bottle>





The Christmas Gift Guide



Adjustable Phone and Tablet Stand

Your ideal friend for those who like flexibility and support. The foldable stand fits into your pocket or bag when you are traveling. Available in a choice of colours.

Price: \$54

https://www.maximisetechology.com.au/product-category/stands-mounts/counter/?filtering=1&filter_product_brand=2465



OtterBox 15000mAh Wireless Power Bank

This portable wireless mobile charger is engineered to charge and empower your day. The USB-A and Fast Charge USB-C ports allow for multi-device charging, and secure wireless charging through 10W Qi Wireless output.

Price: \$99.00

<https://www.maximisetechology.com.au/product/otterbox-15000mah-wireless-power-bank/>



Satechi Aluminium Tablet Stand Hub

Push the boundaries of a traditional setup by combining the capabilities of a desktop with the convenience of a tablet. This stand transforms your iPad or tablet into a fully functional workstation, wherever you are, no desktop required.

Price: \$179.00

<https://www.maximisetechology.com.au/product/satechi-aluminium-stand-hub/>

Don't Panic' Aged Care Guide – Age the way you want, where you want



The 'Don't Panic' Aged Care Guide will show you how you can use Australia's aged care system to grow old gracefully on your own terms, where you want, without going broke by.

Price: \$29.95

<https://subscriber.thewest.com.au/agedcareguide>





The Christmas Gift Guide

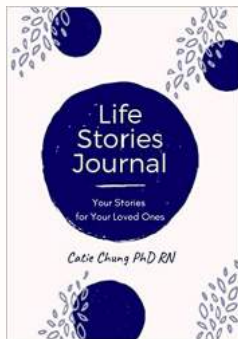
Write the World Notebooks

The premise behind Write the World notebooks is simple. We produce gorgeous notebooks and sell them to raise money to tackle issues around global poverty.

Each notebook sells for \$10, with 100% of the price of the notebook going to approved effective charities that improve the lives of people living in extreme poverty.

Price: \$10.00

<https://www.writetheworldnotebooks.org/buy>



Life Stories Journal: Your Stories for Your Loved Ones

The perfect gift for anyone you love, especially older family members! The journal has thoughtful prompts & space to write memories. Bring more meaning & joy to time spent together!

Paperback \$19.99 USD

Hardcover \$27.99 USD

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08JHVWT9J>

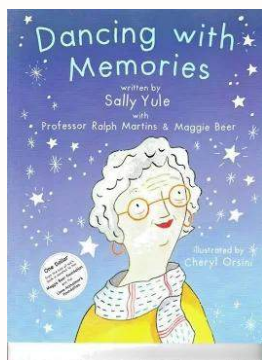


The Seed Cycle 1 Month Pack

Curated seed blends to support natural hormone balance. Purchase The Seed Cycle Phase 1 and 2 month pack - perfect for yourself if you're new to seed cycling or give the gift of natural hormone balance to a friend or family member.

Price \$55.00 including free shipping within AUS

<https://theseedcycle.com.au/product/one-off-purchase/>



Dancing with Memories

A children's picture book about living well with dementia. Written by Sally Yule, with Professor Ralph Martins and Maggie Beer. Illustrated by Cheryl Orsini.

Price: \$17.95

<https://www.dancingwithmemories.com.au/buybook>





The Christmas Gift Guide

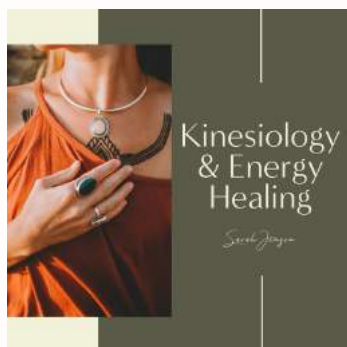


Start Journaling with Sarah Jensen

Be gently guided as you explore the magic of journaling. Start Journaling is a range of 10-day online journaling experiences, bringing together journaling tips and thoughtfully crafted prompts to help you start, or deepen, your journaling practice.

Price: \$13 each

<https://www.sarahjensen.com.au/start-journaling/>



Kinesiology & Energy Healing With Sarah Jensen

Give the gift of calm this Christmas with a one-hour kinesiology and energy healing session. In person and remote sessions are available. Learn more via the link below and email Sarah@SarahJensen.com.au to arrange your voucher.

Price: \$115

<https://www.sarahjensen.com.au/kinesiology-and-energy-healing/>



Sink Buddy by Kleva Range

If they've touched raw meat, raw eggs, fish or vegetables, wash them before using them on any other food. Place a sink buddy which consists of an instant soap pump dispenser and sponge caddy, next to the sink so you can easily wash down items as you go."

Price: \$17.95

<https://kleva.com.au/products/sink-buddy?variant=37963618681014>



Eco Lids by Kleva Range

If you have food left over that you are not going to cook or eat straight away, place it in the fridge or freezer as soon as possible. When placing leftovers in the fridge put them in an airtight container or in a bowl and seal it with a flexi stretchy eco lid. They are reusable, silicone food covers that are perfect for leftovers.

Price: \$12.95

<https://kleva.com.au/products/kleva-flexi-stretchy-eco-lids?variant=32436966883412>





The Christmas Gift Guide

The Heart-centred Hub Membership conducted by Alyson Williams of Power Your Life Coaching



The aim of the Heart-centred Hub Group is to bring together women who are interested in connecting and communicating with like-minded women

\$20 per month or \$200 for the year

Contact Alyson on 0432 580 886 or DM her on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/AlysonLWilliams/>

Bling Card sessions with Alyson Williams-Empowerment & Self-love Coach and Bling Angel



Would you like some insight, clarity or direction on a specific matter in your life? Then bring this topic along to your Bling card session and see what messages The Universe has for you. It's uncanny how the cards ALWAYS have the right message. Alyson will be your Bling Angel facilitator to guide you gently and lovingly through the process.

Price: From \$55 or a 20 Minute session

Booking link: <https://calendly.com/alyson-williams/>

Hypnotherapy sessions with Alyson Williams, NLP Master Coach and Hypnotherapist (Diploma of Hypnotherapy, member of ASCH)



Hypnotherapy is a safe and gentle practice to address numerous concerns ranging from physical ailments like allergies and chronic pain, to limiting emotional beliefs and patterns like unworthiness and self-sabotage, to addictive behaviours like smoking or unhealthy eating habits, and a whole lot more.

Alyson also does Past Life Regression and Inner Child work. Give her a call on 0432 580 886 to find out more.

Price: \$150 for a 45 minute Session

Booking link: <https://calendly.com/alyson-williams/>

Your personalised essential oil blend



Your own unique blend, created just for you. Includes a 15min discovery session via Zoom to discuss what you are looking for and develop the perfect combination of essential oils for you, plus a 5ml bottle of hand-blended essential oil delivered to your door.

Price: \$59

<https://www.michellecochrane.com.au/>





The Christmas Gift Guide



Rodan + Fields Face Masks

Know someone who deserves a little pamper and self care? A Rodan + Fields face mask is just what you need. With 4 different options available to cater for your specific skin concerns we have you and your loved one covered.

The retail price is \$83 however you can purchase yours today for just \$74!! Plus if you buy 2 you can get a 3rd one for free !!

<https://jmlloyd.myrandf.com.au/category/c/face-masks>



Smart Scents

Looking for a no liquid and no flame home scent? Our rolled paper fragrance sticks are sourced from sustainable forests. SmartScents by PartyLite™ give you long-lasting fragrance, for up to 30 days, flame-free. Pack of 5 come in a variety of fragrances. Display at home or wherever you go with our GoSmart Mobile Fragrance Holder. A variety of holders also available. Perfect for small rooms, especially aged care residents' rooms.

Price: \$25

www.partylite.com.au/lisasparkes/partylite-collection/smartscents



Aromapure

Fill your car or home with fine fragrance in our latest form. AromaPure™ lets you enjoy 24/7 fragrance in our strongest and longest lasting flameless option. Made of paper from sustainable forests. Air freshener. No liquid to spill. 45 days worth of fragrance. Perfect for the car or small rooms, especially aged care residents rooms.

Price: \$20 holder \$20

<https://www.partylite.com.au/lisasparkes/partylite-collection/aromapure>





The Christmas Gift Guide



Total RF Serum.

Roll back time by re-energising your skin cell turnover with Total RF Serum. With ingredients such as Sandlewood, Indian Kino Extract and Omega-6 Fatty Acids that are blended into a luxurious anti aging serum to help build resilience in your skin.

Price: \$ 239 (ask me how to get this 10% off and free shipping)

<https://debparsons.myrandf.com.au/>



Kylie Bath Salts

Range of Bath Salts and Essential Oil roll-ons.

Price: Ranging from \$20.00 upwards

www.myy.com/kyliemraindrop



Kylie Raindrop

Raindrop Technique massage is a deeply relaxing light massage combined with reflexology and pure essential oil therapy. Located in Canberra

Price: \$150

www.myy.com/kyliemraindrop





The Christmas Gift Guide

3 Wick Candles



Our signature 3-Wick Jar Candles are the best way to enjoy luxurious home fragrance. Made with the finest ingredients. Burn time 25-45 hrs. Perfect gift for someone special. For these and more visit.

Price: \$39

www.partylite.com.au/lisasarkes

Easy slip on style Necklace



Versatile 80cm ball chain necklace featuring a 25 mm heart pendant. Wear short or long. Avail in Gold, Rose Gold, Silver or Two Tone RG & Silver
*starting price for silver

Price from \$75

www.facebook.com/groups/anchormejewellery

My Moments Pendant



A personalised collection of charm jewels designed to capture your special moments. Huge Variety of Pendants, Charms and chains to suit everyone, including easy slip on styles.

*starting price includes a pendant, silk chain and one charm.

From \$60*

www.facebook.com/groups/anchormejewellery

Anchor Me Jewellery

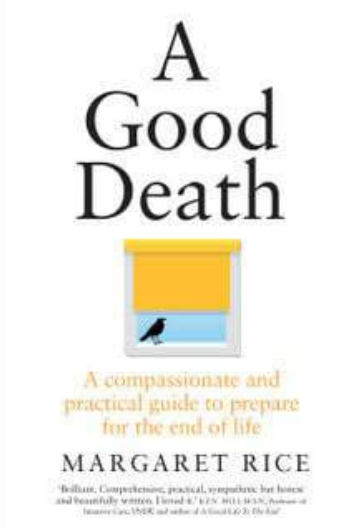


Shop or Browse a stunning collection of quality, affordable, real jewellery for your precious loved ones. Thoughtful, caring and compassionate assistance is available for help in selecting the perfect piece.

Price Varied for all budgets

www.facebook.com/groups/anchormejewellery





The Christmas Gift Guide

A Good Death: a compassionate and practical guide to prepare for the end of life by Margaret Rice

It might be an uncomfortable truth but as we age, death becomes more likely. Yet because of our culture's fear of death we deny this. We allow ourselves to be molycoddled into a fantasy that it won't happen. The result is so many of us reach old age swathed in a cloud of ignorance. We are disempowered. And so are the family and friends who want to care for us at the end.

Price:

via Booktopia (\$24.95) or Dymocks (\$29.99) Amazon (\$22.80)

Kindle edition \$14.72

<https://good-grief.com.au/>

Traditional Christmas Pudding



Made with a delicious blend of vine fruit, Marinated in sherry and brandy, then slow cooked to perfection. Serves 6. Area of delivery - Sydney/Blue Mountains/ Wollongong/Central Coast

Price: \$22.00

<https://www.mydish.com.au/>

Thank you to everyone who supports any of the products/services in the Carer's Champion Christmas Gift Guide

Please Mention
The Carer's Champion if
you purchase any of these
gifts

**Prices do not include postage and handling
All prices in Australian Dollars unless indicated**

Merry Christmas



Living your best life, Your way!



In this section our columnists will share tips, traps and tricks on how to live life your way. Making the most of each and every day.

When we know better we do better!



Skin Support by Janita

Janita is a mum of 2 young girls, a Rodan + Fields consultant, a melanoma survivor and a Certified Bling Angel. She is passionate about empowering young adults to find the fire and love within themselves to achieve great things.

Follow Janita on Insta @janitam_lloyd



Photography by Grace Costa

It's the most wonderful time of the year. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays everyone!

Firstly I want to say thank you to everyone reading my articles here and for the support and love you all give me. It's heartwarming to know that you enjoy my words and that you find them valuable.

Secondly this month I want to share the value of self-care with you. Now self-care can mean so many different things to each person and that's perfect – because what works for one person – doesn't necessarily work for another person.

Some of the ways I practice self-care with using skincare products are :

- Face masks – and I'm not talking about the face masks that we have had to wear thanks to Covid!! I'm referring to the luxury face masks that we put on our faces and necks to help revitalize and restore the delicate skin on our faces. You can multi-task with a face mask whilst you do house chores OR you can do a face mask whilst relaxing in the bath. Either option is great for your self care over the Christmas period.
- Body Moisturising – yep!! After the cold months in our Australian Capital – my arms and legs look like a beaten bumpy cracked track in the desert!! They can be dry and flaky and just down right – icky!! So one of the ways I practice self care is to have a nice bath or shower and then spend 5 minutes indulging my skin with moisturizer. Now it may sound corny however spending this 5 minutes really does help me mentally and it's giving back to me physically as well.



SKIN SUPPORT BY JANITA

- Taking time to do my morning or night time skin routine. Usually I'm in such a rush with kids, family, dog and work that I literally just rush to do my skincare routine. However I've realized that rather than "rush" to do this to get it ticked off my daily to-do list – if I spend 5 minutes and just take my time to cleanse and moisturize my face – I actually feel better about myself plus my skin looks and feels better as I've given it more care and love.

Lastly, if you are interested I've got some terrific Christmas product bundles on offer and available now !! So if you are curious about these incredible skincare products or want to give the gift of great confident skin to a loved one, reach out and let me know!! I love helping people feel confident in their own skin.

Have a safe, healthy and Happy Christmas

*Merry
Christmas*



Life Style by DR Gina Kingston

Qualified Personal Stylist specialising in people with health issues. Gina's mum had Multiple Systems Atrophy a Parkinson's Plus disorder and Gina has scoliosis. They still want to look stylish.



Simple Christmas Outfits

By the time you read this, there will be less than four weeks left until Christmas.

Christmas can be a great time of joy, but it can also be stressful. Christmas decorations, Christmas events, and shopping for gifts on top of everything you are already doing can really feel like a lot. I know that whenever I visited Mum and Dad for Christmas, my first job was always to put up the Christmas decorations and my last job was to take them down. It just meant that it was one less thing that Dad had to think about.

Dressing for Christmas events or Christmas Day should be one more thing to add to the list of jobs to do for Christmas.

Here are some simple ways to get in the Christmas spirit with minimal effort. Pick one or two depending on your mood.





1. Grab a top (or a dress) in a Christmas colour.

Red, silver and gold are all good Christmas colours. I like to make my tops or dresses interesting so I don't need to add think about to wear with them.

Choose dresses that can be worn with flats or runners and tops that can be worn with jeans or smart pants and you have most occasions covered.

Grab 2 identical tops for you and/or the person you are caring for if food spills or accidents are likely so that your change isn't noticeable and you can stay in the Christmas frame of mind.

2. Grab a print top with a Christmas theme.

Stars and Gifts themes are versatile and can be worn year-round. Angels, Christmas trees and Santa hats are less versatile but have more of a Christmas vibe. Snowmen are another option.

3. Don some Christmas themed earrings.

If you wear earrings, switching out your regular pair for a Christmas themed pair is any easy, no stress option.

4. Grab a Christmas themed bag.

If you have a bag of things that you need to take with you on every outing - we always had one with medicine and a change of clothes - switch it for a Christmas themed one.

5. Grab a top, a skirt or a bag that sparkles.

Sparkles don't necessarily say Christmas, but they do say special occasion. A few sparkles up top and nobody notices what you are wearing below. This is a great option for more formal or evening events when your t-shirt and jeans feel too relaxed and informal.

If you would like some more inspiration come and join me in in my private Facebook group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ginakingstonstylelounge> - it's free to join and this month's challenge is all about wearing Christmas colours.

Gina helps people spend less effort to look good so they can spend more time enjoying life. She offers personalised style sessions and group workshops in-person and online. Consultations can be booked at www.calendly.com/ginakingstonstylist

1/2 zoom style sessions cost \$20.21.

Colour, wardrobe and shopping session to help you have a wardrobe full of clothes that fit and flatter cost \$250 each.

Gina is a stockist of Veducci and Flex-A-Tee - the easiest T-shirt to wear.

Email: info@ginakingston.com

Phone: 0479 087 923

Web: www.ginakingston.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ginakingstonstylist

Instagram: www.instagram.com/ginakingstonstylist



Self Compassion

Alyson Williams is a Transformation; Mindset Coach and Self-love Mentor, she empowers women to love themselves and live a life they love. Alyson is a trained Transformational coach, Relationship coach, Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) Master Coach, Extended DISC Behaviour Analysis practitioner and Hypnotherapist and Bling Angel.



Navigating the Challenges of the Christmas Season

Christmas is meant to be the season of joy, peace and goodwill! Yet for many, Christmas can be a challenge. Many people grapple with the burden of the preparations.

For some, the Christmas period leads to overspending, overeating and overdoing it and then being overtired which can mean you don't get to enjoy the day. Then there's the minefield of navigating the family dramas. Demanding, self-centred or unpopular family members add to the mix in the minefield that one has to navigate.

So, how do you deal with these challenges and keep your sanity? Establish some guidelines to manage your time, money, physical and emotional energy. It all comes down to planning ahead of time.

Plan your time for all the jobs you need to do. List them, categorise them, schedule them. This will avoid overwhelm, overtiredness and getting cranky with yourself and others. Budget for gifts, allocate an amount per person and stick to it; similarly, determine the amount of money you wish to spend on food and drink, plan the menu/s and order and/or buy as much as possible beforehand to avoid missing out on stocks as well as paying premium prices for last-minute purchases, not to mention the last-minute hassles of shopping in crowded shops and car parks. Determine how you will deal with troublesome family members. Have some ground rules for what behaviour you will and won't tolerate.

If possible, talk to the relevant people beforehand, ask for their cooperation to make Christmas Day a joyful celebration and pleasant experience everyone. If possible, ask the grumpy brother (or brother-in-law) to be a bit more tolerant with whomever generally pushes their buttons. Warn the creepy uncle who generally over-imbibes and gets over-friendly that you will either call him out or maybe even resort to physical retaliation, such as pushing him off or stepping hard on his foot!



Ensure the needs of the kids and senior family members are taken care of diplomatically and discreetly. Set them up with their basic needs of food and drink, especially if they have to eat early. In fact, plan the mealtime around the needs of your aged loved ones. Remember to attend to their need for 'comfort breaks'.

Lastly, and most importantly, ensure your own needs are met. Make sure you plan well ahead so that you get to rest. Get some help from other family members, including with the meal. Allocate different elements of the meal to various family members to prepare and provide. This spreads the load of time, effort and money and makes everyone feel included. Make sure you take time out for some 'me time', whether it's a rest with a cup of tea, or getting away for a massage or mani-pedi, or some down time to 'veg out' for relaxation. Adopt the rules that work for your situation.

Finally, I wish you and yours a very Happy Christmas season filled with love, laughter and good memories

Some of the ways to work with Alyson:

Book a Bling Angel card guidance session if you would like to explore using more positive self-talk in your life or to increase your self-love or self-care practices contact Alyson, details below.

Use the booking link below to book a strategy session or a Bling card session if you would like to explore how to navigate your challenges during the Christmas season..

Bling Angel card sessions:

- \$55 for 20 minutes
- \$150 for 1 hour
- \$200 for 1 ½ hours
- \$250 for 2 hours

Email: coach.pylc@gmail.com

Website: www.poweryourlifecoaching.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AlysonLWilliams>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/alyson-williams-434ab6117/>

Phone: +61 432 580 886

Booking link: <https://calendly.com/alyson-williams/>



Mindfully Me

Dee Brennan – is a Wellbeing and Mindfulness Coach, Mum, Runner and total Coffee snob. Her number one priority in life is to take care of herself first. Having had cancer and been a carer for family members with cancer it's health that matters most. Her non-negotiable meditation and mindfulness practice helps her handle life with more ease.



Your 7 Day Mindfulness Challenge

Everyone loves a challenge, right? Here is a challenge that will build on a healthy lifestyle and keep giving. A Mindfulness activity allows us to slow down and connect to our present moment experience. The present moment is where we access our inner peace. Wouldn't we all like more inner peace?

The challenge is to choose one mindful activity you can do every day for a week. Here are some ideas to choose from.

1 Just Noticing - Set a timer for 5 minutes and just look around your surroundings and notice what you notice. Nature is the best place to do this. You will notice sounds, sensations on your skin, colours and maybe things moving. Choosing the same time of day will make it easier to remember to do it.

2. Mindfulness of Emotions - Once a day, about the same time of day, write down how you are feeling. This helps us to connect and regulate our emotions. When we can learn to recognise different emotions, we can then meet our own needs sooner.

3. A Morning Mindful Cuppa – Let the first thing you enjoy each morning be quiet cuppa. Wrap your hands around your favourite cup and savour the moment. There is no rush here. It's important you do not check your emails or social media until you have reached the bottom on your cup. Checking your phone first thing in the morning makes you reactive and your brain starts firing off in all directions with things to do and people to get back to. Make yourself the priority instead. This is my personal favourite



Your 7 Day Mindfulness Challenge



Choose a mindfulness activity above or create your very own.

Decide which day you will start and think about any obstacles that might arise before starting. There will always be obstacles with setting challenges, thinking ahead can combat obstacles and make you more successful.

You might like to get a friend on board. Doing a challenge with a friend will keep you more accountable and you will learn more by sharing your experience with each other. At the end of the 7 days you can decide if it's been beneficial for you. If it's been a positive experience you could choose to make this a part of your new lifestyle, or choose a new challenge for the next 7 days.

Have fun!

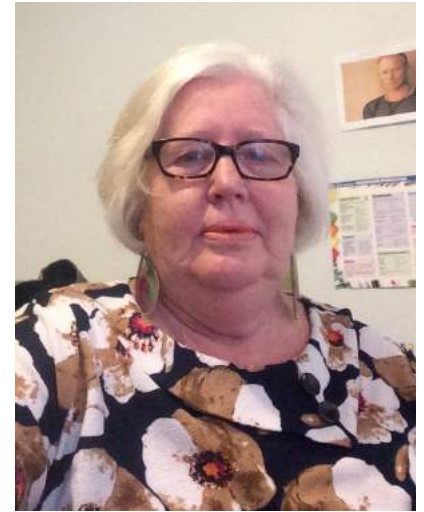
If you are in Canberra be sure to checkout Dee's events. Roof Top Meditation, Candles and Fairy lights is back this summer. Wrapped in cosy blanket, enjoy a guided meditation as the sunsets.

FB – thinkoutloud Insta – thinkoutloudwellness
www.thinkoutloud.com.au
deanne@thinkoutloud.com.au



HARMONY IN WORDS

A Book Review
By Yvonne Heitz from Word Harmony
Proofreading and Editing Enterprise

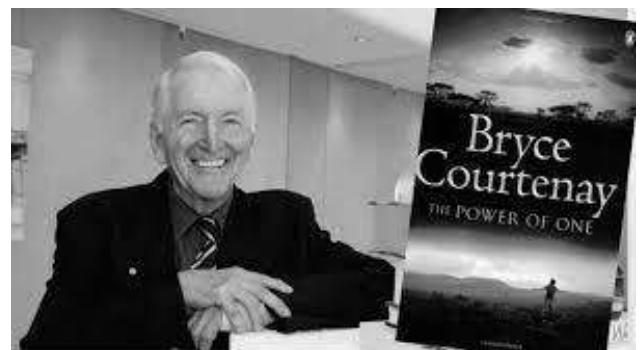


Welcome to Harmony in Words Book Review ~ December 2021. For this issue of “The Carer’s Champion” I have chosen to review an author instead of a book.

I am sure that Bryce Courtenay needs no introduction. The very first book I read was of course, “The Power of One”, his first best seller, written when he was 55 years old. Bryce Courtenay was one of the greatest storytellers ever and continued to pen 21 books throughout his career. I feel privileged to say that I have read all of them except for one (The Night Country).

Not sure how I missed this one, as soon as I discovered Bryce Courtenay, I was obsessed with his amazing storytelling talent and succeeded to obtain hardback copies to complete my collection. There is a comical story fundamental to my collection, and I will attempt to keep it very short. Whilst visiting my family on the Gold Coast I discovered a secondhand bookstore that had all the hardback copies of Bryce’s Collection, and I purchased the 7 that I was missing at an unbelievably low price.

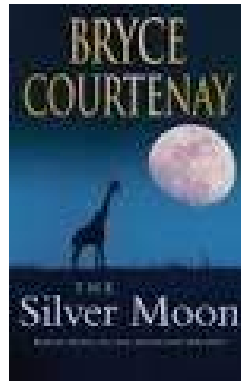
On my return flight, I had to pay for excess baggage, due to the weight of the books, which ended up costing more than my flight. The things you do for the love of a great author...





There is no possible way that I could select a favourite book as I have thoroughly enjoyed every single one that I have read, with that wonderful anticipation of what is going to happen next ~ which demonstrates the qualities of a good author.

Sadly, Bryce passed away in 2012 and in 2014 *The Silver Moon* was published by Christine Courtenay, and I would like to share the last two pages of this 'reflection on life, death and writing' which resonates strongly with my family.



AND GOD CREATED A FLOWER AND NAMED IT AFTER THE SUN

You possibly haven't given a great deal of thought to that most unpretentious flower of them all – the sunflower.

She's big, clumsy-looking, open, surprisingly shy and modest – a thoroughly nice girl who doesn't expect to be noticed at a party along with the roses, tulips, daffs and other female exotica.

Never truly a wallflower, she always helps clear up afterwards and can usually be found up to her elbows in soap suds laughing and cheerful as she does the dishes while the other girls find dark corners to giggle and cuddle with their boyfriends.

However, take a closer look. Big, yes, but the smile never leaves her face. Look into it and you see the pure simplicity that is genuine beauty, the personification of the sun itself.

I beg you, this year plant a single sunflower seed preferably in your front garden in a part that receives lots of sunlight. Then watch what happens when Miss Sunflower grows tall, smiling, facing the sun and happily greets everyone who passes by."

Good reading and Merry Christmas and be sure to add a Bryce Courtenay book to your Santa List ~ as I will do with "The Night Country".





Functional Health and Nutrition

Founder and visionary behind Functional Health Canberra and The Seed Cycle. Melissa is a Functional Nutrition Consultant and a Certified Clinical EFT Practitioner. Since starting her EFT and functional nutrition clinic, Mel has helped hundreds of clients release limiting beliefs and mental blocks and find optimal health and happiness.



Organic - Is it worth it?

To answer this, we first must understand the impact of chemicals on our health. In this article we will discuss whether or not organic food is worth the price tag in terms of nutrition and taste.

Reducing our chemical load can have a positive impact on our health but is organic foods the answer? Let's explore further.

Our bodies are bombarded with chemicals sprayed on our food, in our water and skin care, as well as pollutants in our air. On average, conventional farmers apply between two and twelve synthetic pesticides to their crop, so the average serving of vegetables may contain three to four different pesticide residues. (1,2)

Evidence suggests that these chemicals may affect our health causing allergic sensitivities and long-term health problems. Several chemicals found in pesticides are suspected to act as hormone disruptors and may cause adverse developmental, disease and reproductive problems. (3,4) Generally, children are also more sensitive to chemicals. (5)

What does Organic mean?

Organic foods are produced using farming systems that don't rely on synthetic fertilisers, pesticides or genetic modification. Environmental sustainability and animal welfare are often priorities and benefits of organic farming. (8)

Because of these farming practises organic foods have higher levels of vitamins and minerals. For example, in non-organic produce, delicate vitamins such as vitamin C are often depleted, and it is for this reason that people often say organic food tastes better.



Functional Health and Nutrition

How do we know its Organic?

In Australia there is no regulation for the use of the term 'organic'. There are however regulatory bodies who are members of the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS). AQIS are the sole government regulator of organic agriculture and responsible for enforcing standards and legislation for exports.



AQIS standards for organics include that all fruit and vegetables must be cultivated free of pesticides in soil fed with animal and plant waste. Livestock must graze on organic pastures and forbid the use of growth hormones or chemical treatments. Intensive housing of animals is banned as are long periods of artificial light. (8)

You can trust something is organic if it carries an approved certification symbol like the Australian Certified Organic logo with a certification number.

How to make it work for you.

Organic produce can be more expensive, but I see it as a long-term investment in your health. It is important to note the benefits of eating fresh fruit and vegetables still out way any risk of pesticide harm.

If you can't afford or justify buying organic produce you could also consider these options:

The Dirty Dozen

You may decide to prioritize and opt for organic produce when buying any of the 'dirty dozen' fruits or vegetables which are more likely to be contaminated with pesticides and other chemicals. These can be fruits and vegetables such as apples, capsicum, blueberries, celery, grapes, cucumber, lettuce, nectarines, peaches, potatoes, strawberries and spinach. Washing all your produce well in warm water before eating it can help reduce some of the pesticide residue. (10)

Transition Farms

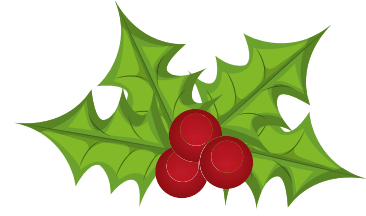
You can find 'transition farm' or in-conversion growers at your local farmers markets which means they are on their way to being certified organic as the process is quite expensive and lengthy. That way you will get almost organic food at a cheaper price.

Supermarkets

Big chain supermarkets offer organic fruit and vegetable options although these are usually wrapped in plastic; some of which is not recyclable.



Functional Health and Nutrition



Create a Veggie Patch

Another option is to include some organic foods in your diet by planting a few herbs, tomatoes and lettuce in your own garden. This is a more cost-effective solution and gives you complete control on the soil types, watering, and spraying.

Local Produce

You could also consider the idea of buying your food from local farmers. The prices are often competitive with supermarkets and the seasonal produce is fresher than foods shipped long distances. Buying local is also great for our farmers and the local economy!

In an ideal world our food would be chemical free but remember good nutrition is more than just 'eating organic' it is the result of good overall health and the quality of our diets including real whole foods, minimally processed.

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BODY, MIND AND BREATH

Lisa West is a Mind and Body Coach, Yoga Teacher & Ayurveda Lifestyle Consultant
Adapting yoga philosophy and mindset tools, she works with clients to explore their belief systems, habits and patterns.



Benefits of Chair Yoga for Health and Wellbeing

The benefit of an active lifestyle is important, especially as we age. You would have heard the saying 'use it or lose it'?

Chair yoga is a great way for seniors, carers, or people with mobility challenges who would like to reap the benefits of an active lifestyle in a more accessible way.

You can take advantage of the many benefits that yoga provides by using your chair for seated or balancing poses. Chair yoga is the perfect solution to help increase circulation and mobility in your joints, loosen and stretch painful muscles, reduce stress and increase your feeling of well-being.

Other benefits include:

- Increased flexibility – the ability to bend, twist, stretch and move freely allows you do the things you love
- Improved strength – more strength in your legs and arms means better balance in your body and can reduce the risk of falls.
- More muscle mass – increases bone density and makes daily living easeful.
- Reduced stress – mindfulness and meditation promote relaxation which reduces stress and improves mental clarity.
- Better sleep – maintaining a regular exercise routine is associated with better sleep and chair yoga is no exception.





Benefits of Chair Yoga for Health and Wellbeing

Once you begin practicing chair yoga, you will start to feel a sense of ease and relaxation. You'll also notice how this gentle practice can exercise your whole body and help you feel the benefits straight away.

Lisa is a Mind and Body Coach, Yoga Teacher & Ayurveda Lifestyle, Consultant. Adapting yoga philosophy and mindset tools, she works with clients to explore their belief systems, habits and patterns.

Lisa also teaches regular online mindful yoga classes and chair yoga and is currently completing Yoga Therapy Training.

<https://linktr.ee/lisawestcoach> for all links to her services and products.





REAL WORLD, REAL HEALTH

Catie is a nurse case manager who has helps families deal with the crazy healthcare system & aging parents for years. Even with that experience, my dad's cancer journey was a big fat b*tch. But it did help that I understood the healthcare.



Introducing Catie

As a registered nurse I have witnessed and supported many families through the medical issues that happen to our aged loved ones. I interpret the confusing medical terms and explain the winding path of health care to families, and I know this helps ease some of the strain that illness brings.

But what I learned through my dad's own cancer journey was not about the medical system or managing his illness and side effects... it was about spending time together in a more meaningful way.

As our loved ones age, especially our parents, I have found that our busy lives don't always support time together that is simply for the sake of having that time together. Especially if there is a major healthcare problem, the focus becomes the disease – the clinic appointments, having labs drawn, going for scans, and taking medicine to manage the side effects and pain.

But what Really Mattered to me then and now is the time we spent sharing stories. Dad's best Thanksgiving turkey the year all the extended family traveled to our house, the one time dad tried and hated cross country skiing in the winter, how he broke his right index finger in college (beer was involved) – then hearing his loud laugh at the silly stories – that is the time I treasure.



REAL WORLD, REAL HEALTH



I could not keep this secret to myself – I am a helper after all. So I created the Life Stories Journal – a guided journal with prompts that will lead to laughter, happy tears, and warm hugs. Use it with your aged loved ones this holiday season. Meaningful time together is the best medicine!

Find the book on Amazon [amazon.com/dp/B08JHVWT9J](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08JHVWT9J)

xoxo,

Catie

Join me online!

Catie is a registered nurse who supports and empowers carers of aging loved ones.

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World According To Rita

I've been running the ACE support network since 2014. I've been a support carer, long-distance carer, main carer and now I am helping my partner to care for his 95 year old mother.

Caring isn't always pretty or nice, however, there are always pretty and nice moments.



#sorrynotsorry #soapbox

I really dislike it when people judge another person's caring journey. We are all doing the best we can...

Last year I responded to a great post by someone I admire and appreciate, she runs an aged care placement service with heart and integrity.

She made a great point about how staying at home isn't always the best option when health declines and everyday activities become too difficult.

I totally agree with this.

Each caring journey is different and each caring solution is different.

I pointed out that our Dad loved being in his aged care home – people around him, meals cooked for him.

One of the responses to my post was that I should have visited him more often. And I instantly leaped onto my soapbox.

Ok so I didn't explain the circumstance fully however I shouldn't need to – it was our caring journey, our solution.

We don't need to justify anything. Nobody needs to justify anything.

It is something that really pushes my buttons.

Yes I did respond.... I wanted to share it with you because you never know who is going through or what their journey is.



World According To Rita



"I lived interstate and visited regularly. With 2 to 3 calls daily from myself and my other sister that lived interstate. My sister who lived near him visited him all the time between working and raising her family. He missed Mum so much after she passed and then when he lost his eyesight. He was lost. Grappling with trying to learn how to deal with so much loss. Nothing is perfect and that was the point I was trying to raise... sometimes the solution isn't perfect however it is an improvement on what is happening. Dad would go wandering at night. Several times he ended up in emergency which was lucky because if he went the other way he could have ended up in the river.

He didn't want to move in with any of us. He didn't want home help. He didn't want meals on wheels. It was really difficult. I wish I lived near him but I didn't. I wish Mum hadn't passed. I wish so many things. We did the best we could and Dad really enjoyed the home. He had so many friends there and he was with people all the time. No it wasn't perfect but it was perfect for our situation. And that is what I was trying to say although be it clumsily... each journey is different and there are different solutions for each journey"

Why do people think they know your journey?

Why do people think they can tell you what you could have done?

Yes I am very passionate about this because carers have enough challenges to put up with they don't need to be judged and shamed.

It is your journey. It is your decision. You do your caring journey the best way for you and your aged loved ones.

Stepping off my soap box now.

Check out my FB page for more information.

Aged Care with Ease – Rita Merienne.

You Matter to Me!

No Blame
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No Judgement
Just Understanding





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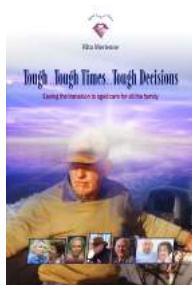


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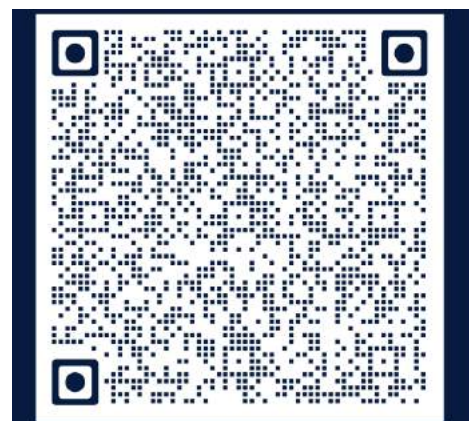
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Pets at Christmas!





Respect The Cycle of Life

I shared a post recently about an 80-year-old man and his son – sitting together one day they saw a crow and the Father asked 4 times what it was. The Son became irritated and told his father not to ask again – the father got out a diary and show his son an entry about the time the son was 3years old asked 23 times what a crow was. As a father he was appreciative that he could teach his son something.

Respecting the cycle of life is all about listening, sharing and appreciating that you have the time with your aged loved one.

No it isn't easy.

No it doesn't make sense.

No you shouldn't have to repeat something many times.

No it isn't what you expected.

Yes it can be irritating.

Yes it takes time.

Yes it is scary and confronting to see your aged loved one forgetting the simplest of things,

Respecting the cycle of life isn't always easy however it is the right thing to do just as your aged loved respected you when you were just a toddler and needed a helping hand.





Sharing is good! Right?

A problem shared is a problem halved.

I didn't really understand this proverb until we went through our caring journey. Growing up in a strict European family we were always told to keep our business private and ourselves to ourselves. And that's what I did.

I kept everything to myself and instead of talking through my issues/problems/challenges I kept it all inside and let it fester. And fester it did. I thought I had to do it all and didn't ask for help.

I've since learnt how very important it is ask for help and let people help. Years ago we were all part of a community and we could rely on each other – your community was your family and you talked and shared amongst your community. Then things changed and we moved to other towns and cities and all of a sudden there was no family around you.

Who is your community?

Who can you talk things over with?

Who do you share your problems with?

Easing your heart is very important and talking with someone can help.

As we take on more caring roles for our loved ones it is important to remember who your community and your support network is and more importantly who you can go to for help.

Finding like-minded people to be your community is very important.

Who is your community?



IN THE NEXT ISSUE:



- Tim Ferguson from the DAAS
- Mediation - do you need it?
- New Year checklists - What do you need to do?
- Home Care Packages - what now?
- Plus so much more

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