

SUE BARRETT

# 142 DAYS OF GRATITUDE

THAT CHANGED MY LIFE FOREVER







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PART OF THE BARRETT GROUP OF PUBLICATIONS

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First Edition

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## FOREWORD

I'm so grateful to my friend Sue. Not only is that a very appropriate thing to say about this book, but for many other reasons too.

I'm grateful to be reminded of the impact that a seemingly small thing can have on another person. When Sue called to tell me about this book and how my Facebook post had been the catalyst for her life-changing journey with gratitude, I was deeply moved. I don't take any credit for that post — the idea was not mine and I was grateful to my friend Jeanette for introducing me to this. And she, no doubt, is thankful to whoever passed it on to her, and so it goes on — small things shared in a spirit of caring by ordinary, flawed human beings. Somewhere along the chain, it lands where it is needed, making an impact beyond what could be imagined, and changing a person's life.

I'm grateful for the insights I've gained from Sue's book — particularly on how the practice of gratitude strengthens the awareness and experience of social connection. This alone would make gratitude enough to change the world for the better. So much of the pain we experience individually and collectively stems from a failure to understand how deeply we are all connected. As Sue's book points out, awareness of our interconnectedness is a foundation of empathy, which in turn forms our moral cognition — our capacity to 'do the right thing'.

Not all traumas are the same, but we all have them — those painful times of loss, injury, attack, rejection or betrayal which can seem overwhelming. In the pain of trauma, it can be hard to feel empathy, and so trauma often leads to disconnection, isolation and a narrowing of focus onto the self.



As the saying goes: ‘Hurt people hurt people.’ Without something to pull us back into connection and empathy, we pass our traumas on — either as revenge or as indifference. Sue’s book shows gratitude is a simple but powerful way to bring us back into connection and empathy.

One potential criticism of gratitude is that it could lead to a passive acceptance of wrongs we should actively fight. Voltaire’s novel *Candide* mercilessly satirised this perspective in the character of Professor Pangloss who, no matter what terrible misfortunes are inflicted, continues to cheerfully declare that they live in the ‘best of all possible worlds’.

Sue’s story avoids this pitfall. She certainly did not just passively accept (with gratitude) the betrayal she experienced. Instead, she took action to do all she could to keep afloat and to fight what was wrong. Her gratitude for the betrayal came much later; in retrospect, she could see how she and the business had grown through the challenge. Gratitude was an inner resource which gave strength and perspective.

On a personal level, I’m grateful for Sue’s care of my son Nick, who became best friends with Sue’s son Josh at primary school. For a while, the two boys were always at Sue’s place or ours, and Sue and Jobst parented Nick as we parented Josh. As the African proverb says, ‘It takes a village to raise a child.’ Sue and Jobst were an important part of the village for our family.

I’m also very grateful that Sue is a person of integrity in the business world who thinks deeply about the consequences of her decisions on others and the planet. She is a leader who understands that individuals and organisations are part of an interconnected world where we can only thrive by seeing our suppliers (and their suppliers) and our customers (and their customers) as partners in a vast mutual enterprise which ultimately includes all living beings on this planet. Gratitude helps us to understand this. For this, I feel deeply grateful.

**Mike Lowe,**

Founder and CEO of Discover the Other



# INTRODUCTION

Gratitude is the quality of being thankful. It is the readiness to appreciate and return kindness. Gratitude became a lifeline for me. It pulled me through a tough time in 2014. It allowed me to focus on what was beautiful and tangible, especially when so much around me was grim and dark. Practising gratitude daily became a way of life that helped me focus on what was possible, to see what was ahead and find a way forward.

This practice took up very little time, but the small amount I invested each day in focusing on being grateful for and noticing the lovely people and the beautiful things around me expanded my consciousness. I developed a higher capacity to love, to find inner peace, to look at things from different perspectives, to be more discerning, and an enhanced ability to manage my thoughts, feelings and emotions.

I am an optimistic and curious person by nature, who is hopeful and confident about the future. I always look ahead to see what is possible and do my best to lead a productive and meaningful life. I read widely, and I'm always looking for ideas and strategies for constructive and sustainable change. I share my findings with others. I am open to the possibilities and opportunities of improvement, to help create a positive difference to individuals, businesses, communities and the world around us. I've been like this for as long as I can remember. Like everyone, I have had my share of ups and downs. However, even when things feel bleak and I feel too tired to go on, I always seem to find a way forward, which is why the following story is so telling about the importance of gratitude and maintaining one's optimism.

Imagine you are a 24-year-old graduate going for job interviews. In this instance, you are being interviewed by a multinational company. You get through the first interview. At the next stage, you complete a range of psychometric assessments, followed by an interview with a psychologist. Imagine if you will, that this psychologist starts by saying you are 'too optimistic', that you are a 'Pollyanna', that you are 'unrealistic in seeing the world in such as positive light', claiming there is something wrong with you.

How would you feel? Well, this scenario happened to me in the mid-1980s. My sunny, optimistic disposition was deemed a fatal career flaw by this psychologist. WHAT? I was shocked and initially profoundly upset by his analysis. Why was this a problem? What was wrong with me? Then I thought, 'Well, you're not going to get the better of me. I'm going to carry on being grateful for what I have and optimistic about the future. I will find better pathways forward for myself and my career.' And for this, I am grateful because it propelled me on my way to prove I can lead a wonderful life by being grateful and optimistic. Nothing like a bit of 'I'll show you...' to kick-start something.

Being optimistic doesn't mean everything is rosy, far from it. I have my ideas, ideals and my very person tested daily, and I've found it can be too easy to fall into 'victim status', thinking there is nothing I can do. It's tempting to blame others and not take responsibility for my actions. Bitterness, resentment and anger can make for comforting but toxic companions. While I have contemplated these options and occasionally fallen into their traps, I don't stay for long as I naturally gravitate towards gratitude.

I also found that when family members, friends or colleagues were in these same traps, I would ask questions to see if they were open to different ideas. I would offer different perspectives as to what was possible, explore what we could do, and discuss ways to move forward. Sometimes, I'm sure, I was extremely annoying to these people, but for the most part, they would move towards the different possibilities I had helped them explore. They would move forward.

Over the years, I have become ever more curious about why I would do this and not stay in the 'land of hopelessness' or blame. And then it dawned on me that every time I felt weighed down by life's challenges, I would initially feel overwhelmed, but not for long because I would naturally start to reflect on the good things in my life. I would make an inventory and pay attention to the things that made me smile, or brought me comfort. I would appreciate things even more and be grateful I was in a position where I did not want for much

at all. I would reduce everything to the simplest of measures and focus on them. But it was not a daily practice as I would only do this at times of turmoil and strife.

It was in 2014 that practising gratitude became a more permanent fixture of how I deal with life's difficulties. This book is my story about practising gratitude daily for 142 days and how it improved my life.

Was I always happy during this period? No. Did my problems magically disappear? No. Was I consistently happier and more contented? Yes. Was I better able to confront and manage the problems in my life? Yes.

I had much to contend with in 2014. It was an emotionally draining year, both professionally and personally. Even though I often felt under immense pressure, there was this capacity, a strength, resourcefulness, opening up within me that started to offer alternative ways of operating the more I practised being grateful.

Practising gratitude wasn't the only thing I did to get through that tough year. Exercising daily and eating healthy food have been my trusted companions ever since I was young. I have found working on my physical health is critical in managing stress, staying alert and getting me through life in general, but it comes into its own during tough times. I use exercise to burn off frustration and anger, blasting it out of my system physically. Research consistently shows that regular, vigorous physical activity is excellent at lowering the stress hormone cortisol, which if left unchecked can lead to heart disease and other health issues. I am eternally grateful to my parents for giving me the gift of sport and love of physical fitness from such a young age.

Having a support network of trusted friends, colleagues and family members also played a considerable part. Life is not a solo exercise; instead, it is one of community, of integrated relationships.

However, practising gratitude daily seemed to have a different effect on myself and those around me. Unlike exercise alone, gratitude stopped me from getting bitter and resentful. Gratitude stopped me from dwelling on the negative and rancorous thoughts I had when thinking about what I was enduring. Recognising and giving thanks for the good things in my life helped me banish thoughts of self-pity and misery. It focused my thinking on what I could control and influence; on what I could do. Practising gratitude helped — and continues



to help me — find agency and the purpose to keep moving forward, with no regrets or bitterness. It has helped me be kinder and more considerate of myself and others. The compound effect of practising gratitude radiated out to others with positive impact, which in turn helped me. It became a win-win all around.

What I learned about being grateful, amongst many other things, is embodied in this quote by the writer Doe Zantamata:

*Being grateful for what you have doesn't mean you have to resign thinking anything could be even better. Grateful and complacent are two different words. Being grateful while striving to improve will allow you to be happy every step of the way.*

You will see I have included all 142 days of my gratitude diary in this book. I've also written a couple of chapters about the science behind gratitude and the moral case for gratitude. These chapters are there to give my experience, and hopefully yours as well, some context and background.

Think of this book as a guide, scrapbook, a journal or a diary, and hopefully an inspiration for your journey of gratitude. I have no idea what will happen for you, other than if you keep your own gratitude diary for a reasonable period, it's likely to be good.



◀ Chapter 1 ▶

# SO WHY 142 DAYS OF GRATITUDE?

I really don't know.

One hundred and forty-two days was how long I wrote a daily journal of '3 things I am grateful for' on Facebook.

And then I stopped.

It just felt right. This daily ritual seemed to have served its purpose by the 142-day mark.

Keeping the diary helped me recalibrate, look inwards and find my centre, examine my purpose, build my inner strength and prepare for the next phase in my life, especially as I was navigating some very troubled waters. It opened up my creativity and helped me explore aspects of myself and my business I hadn't seen or examined in depth before.

Practising gratitude helped me be more courageous and adventurous. It made me feel stronger, better physically, calmer, more accepting and at peace within myself. It improved my relationships with other people.

Was I imagining this or was keeping a gratitude diary actually having a long-term, positive physical and psychological impact on me?

What I have discovered since my 142 days of gratitude in 2014 is that this practice did indeed change me for the better on many levels. It was not a figment of my imagination. The positive, long-lasting physical and psychological effects of gratitude are increasingly being backed up by science. There is indeed something very worthwhile to this gratitude practice.

Now, I said I stopped the daily ritual of writing down ‘3 things I am grateful for’ after 142 days. Does that mean I don’t reflect on what I am grateful for anymore? Not at all.

In fact, I now find I reflect on something I am grateful for nearly every day. It happens automatically. I just don’t write it down as often. But when I need to, I do, and it happens effortlessly.

Practising gratitude has become a way of life for me, and it’s paying off.

I’m sharing my experience with you in this book because I want others to benefit from what I have learned. The act of gratitude is so simple yet so powerful. It does not rely upon complex systems or external resources like time or money. It is simply a choice we make to reflect and be thankful. Simple as that.



◀ Chapter 2 ▶

# WHAT LED TO MY 142 DAYS?

I was contending with numerous issues in 2014. Some were in my control, some I could influence, and some were beyond my control.

Something outside of my control was the political climate in Australia, which was stalling with poor policies, bad decisions and ineffectual leadership. The markets for many businesses were flat but not so terrible that they would slip into a recession. However, factors like the Federal Government's lack of vision on matters like energy and climate, the volatile global stage, and austerity measures in Europe meant many business leaders were stuck in a holding pattern, waiting for direction and not making any significant decisions or investments. Nothing felt quite right, and indecision was rife.

For my team and me, this meant many businesses were not investing in sales strategies, sales processes or any training and development of sales teams, which is our core line of work. Business was pretty tough for us in late 2013 and throughout 2014. I had been through lean periods before and knew it meant buckling down and selling; getting in front of as many businesses as possible because there was work to be had. It was just much harder to gain traction during this time.

However, an already testing year took another dive when a deal worth \$300,000 I had secured in late 2013, and which was ready to roll out, was pulled out from under me in April 2014. That was bad enough. But it gets worse. A person



within my business, whom I trusted and had placed a lot of faith in, scuppered the deal. Instead of standing side by side in these tough times, this person decided things were too hard and took the easy way out. They negotiated a full-time job with our would-be client and took the \$300,000 of work with them.

I was shocked and devastated. We had more work in the pipeline, but I was banking on this substantial deal to salvage our year. And for a small consulting business, replacing \$300,000 in lost revenue overnight is not easy, as some of you will know.

On top of that, my 80-year-old father had collapsed from heart failure a few weeks before this event and died two weeks later. My father's death was not a big surprise as he had been ill for some time. However, it doesn't matter how prepared you think you are; it is still traumatic when someone close to you dies.

My stoic mother, siblings, family and I were left to farewell my father and mourn his passing.

Except I never got to mourn because I had a business to save, a team to lead, clients to serve, and a family to love and support.

I could have sued the person who betrayed me. I could have chased them down, but their betrayal had floored me. And I had other priorities. My team and I were left to pick up the pieces and keep going despite the weak market conditions and significant hole in our revenue.

I was numb. I wasn't processing much consciously in the early days. I was hanging in there and going through the motions. All I can remember is going into autopilot and trying to focus on what was in front of me and holding it all together.

The hardest thing for me to deal with was a sense of betrayal. Not just because of the money lost, I could sort that out, eventually. There's always the risk of losing money in business. No, it was about the loss of trust. This person had approached me to come and work in my business. I gave them a start in this country, helping for months before they were even here. We received them and their family with open arms. I took them at their word when they said they were in full support of our business' purpose and goals, and that they would wholeheartedly contribute to these goals.

Instead, they bailed at the first sign of difficulty and left us high and dry. Their words were hollow. Their intention was solely focussed on making money for themselves, and it didn't matter what or who suffered the consequences of their actions.

But their departure and betrayal was not all that happened. After that first blow came a series of events over the following few weeks — all showing this person's lack of respect, consideration and esteem for me, my team and my business. We had all been pawns in their game, which ended only when a legal mediation took place.

I am not the first person, nor will I be the last, to suffer such a betrayal. I have had other relationships end, but for whatever reason, this one hit me hard because I genuinely believed they cared as much as I did about what we were doing, together. And I was wrong. I felt like an idiot. I reprimanded myself. I beat myself up. I was so hard on myself, and focussing on all that I thought was wrong with me, until one day one of my team, Astrid, showed me a post on social media that said this:

*Before you diagnose yourself with depression or anxiety, make sure first you are not surrounded by assholes.*

Hmm. This got my attention. Yes, there had been signs this person was not working with the best of intentions or our interests at heart; and, yes, I could have acted earlier and addressed things I felt uncertain about. I could possibly have prevented some of what had occurred. Instead, I gave them the benefit of the doubt.

All good in hindsight, but I was left to deal with the mess in front of me here and now.

Interestingly, no one else in my team deserted ranks. My team rallied around me and are still with me today. They are amazing. I am so grateful for their loving and caring support, then and now.

While I still miss my father, I have no regrets with his passing because our relationship was strong. My father was a loyal, decent and courageous man who stood by his family and his staff. He ran the family timber wholesaling business with 120 employees before his retirement. He stood by people through thick and thin. He had our backs, and we had his. He taught me well.

It turned out the betrayal by this person was initially the worst but then the best thing that happened to me, my team and my family in 2014.

It became a major catalyst for positive change which has led to much greater successes. It forced my team and me to really stand on our own and find our true purpose and pathway forward. It forced me to define and own my truth, my destiny, and learn how to stand firm, even in tough times.

Like an Australian bushfire, this catastrophe burnt us clean and allowed us to start again with a fresh perspective, new insights, and new ways of being. It was the start of an incredibly creative period, which carries on to this day. Back then, after the initial scorching, we began to emerge like green shoots springing forth from the blackened earth, showing signs of new growth. Now we are a flourishing forest of creativity filled with vibrant life.

We have produced our best work by far since 2014 and are changing the way people and businesses sell for the better. We have created a Selling Better Philosophy, Manifesto and Movement; a Sales Strategy and codified Sales Operating System; codified sales tools, resources and education (classroom, infield and online) and a Sales Execution App. We have created the Purposeful Optimism Movement and continue to carry forward our work to broader markets.

On a personal level, I have undertaken many more initiatives, opened up my creativity and widened my horizons as to what is possible. This book is one of these creations.

I eventually became grateful for the challenging business experience I had with this person because it turned into something amazing for me, my team and my family.

*Out of the ashes, the phoenix rises*

I know I am not alone. Many other people have faced similar, if not much worse situations, and survived.

It shows we can get through hard times and come out better for it, but it doesn't happen in isolation. We are never alone. We do it supported by those around us.

So when did I get back on track and find the strength to carry on?

I began my gratitude diary in July 2014, inspired by my friend Mike Lowe, who introduced me to the 5-day gratitude project. Here is his original post:

### Five days of Gratitude — Day 1

*Thanks Jeanette Meren for tagging me in to this project, so that will be the first of three things I'm grateful for today, along with whoever thought up this idea of spreading the practice of gratitude — truly an idea that can change the world!*

*Secondly, I'm grateful for the sunlight streaming into my bedroom each morning (at least when it is sunny, which is most of the time). It reminds me that all life depends on the energy from this star and that the atoms in my body were forged in the dying seconds of another much larger star in a supernova explosion. Puts things into perspective!*

*Thirdly, I'm grateful for coffee! In particular the organic fair trade coffee I use from Republica Coffee.*

*It's hard to limit myself to three things, but I'll save some for the next few days.*

This appeared on Facebook and people started to write their five days of gratitude. So I joined in — except mine continued for 142 days.

At the time, articles were popping up bemoaning people writing these gratitude diaries, saying how useless and self-absorbed we all were for participating.

I chose to ignore these criticisms and, instead, found the experience very comforting and helpful. I was keen to carry on because, if nothing else, it distracted me from my day to day challenges. But it became so much more.

I can honestly say that keeping a gratitude diary for 142 days literally transformed me, and now science is backing this activity up.





## ◀ Chapter 3 ▶

# THE MEANING OF 142

As a scientific systems kind of person, I love mathematics. Numbers and patterns fascinate me, but I'm skeptical about numerology as a science. However, being naturally curious, I got to thinking about the number 142.

Did it have any meaning? So I looked up the number 142 and here is what I found:

- 142 energy is introspective, intuitive and self-reliant. Its focus is on building a secure foundation for the future.
- 142 represents wisdom and comfort with new beginnings.
- Before proceeding in a new direction, 142 thoroughly analyses the reasons for starting something new. It then determines steps for making progress.
- It accumulates wisdom by understanding everything in its environment it possibly can.
- Understanding is gained from observing, from communicating, and from interacting directly with the environment (i.e. working toward a goal).
- The energy of 142 tends to be spiritual, imbued with self-sufficiency and self-determination.

- In social gatherings, the person with predominant 142 energy prefers to either be alone within the group or to be seen as an expert. Professional gatherings are preferred, where professionals of various or select fields can exchange techniques and information.
- To determine the energy of 142 the multi-digit number 142 is reduced to a single digit. The result is the number 7, a number of introspection, intuition, and wisdom. The digits in the multi-digit number also have influence. This is from where the energies of (as examples) self-determination, independence, and focus come.
- When the number 142 pertains to something in a person's environment, the situation is interpreted through thought filters like intuition, work, introspection, self-reliance, independence, or focus on a project.

Weird, I know. But I am grateful for this too.

Perhaps I needed 142 days to hardwire the practice of gratitude into my system. Others may require less time or more. It will be unique and personal for each of us. 142 days seemed right for me.

*(PS: Take it or leave it, but it's oddly comforting given what I learned on my 142-day gratitude journey that this is what the number 142 means!)*



## ◀ Chapter 4 ▶

# THE SCIENCE BEHIND GRATITUDE

Why did keeping a gratitude diary make me feel better about life? What was it about this daily ritual that pulled me through a difficult time in my life and left me feeling not just OK but positive about my life, revitalised even. After all, the compound effect of what was going on in my personal and professional life could easily have led me down a darker path. A colleague's betrayal had struck my business and my father had just died — two life-shaking events. I could easily have allowed negativity to define my experience and my being.

I'm not a person who's content with accepting things as is. I need answers! I'm curious about how things work and like to pick things apart and put them back together again. That has very much been the mission of my professional life in sales education.

Sales is one of those areas of business that has long accepted fuzzy logic and questionable wisdoms. I've always sought to separate the wheat from the chaff. Dare I say it, I've tried to apply a scientific approach to sales. That's why I've spent two decades developing a rigorous, methodical and complete sales system. I observed some sales approaches yielded better results, while other approaches, though popular, yielded patchy results. You can test, measure and assess different strategies. I've been able to codify that knowledge and teach people to sell better. That has been an immensely satisfying achievement for me.

As with sales, I set my mind to discover what was under the bonnet of gratitude. Why and how does it work? Why do I feel that it works for me?

Gratitude is nice. It has a warm glow about it. Being grateful is something many of us are taught from an early age. You probably grew up hearing your parents or teachers telling you ‘to be grateful for what you have’, usually as a response to some display of childish impertinence or adolescent stropiness. For children, the persistent pleas for gratitude from parents and teachers are mostly background noise. Hopefully, it seeps into their moral subconscious and comes out years later in the form of an adult who values their good fortune and is thankful for what they have in life. As adults, most of us pay lip service to gratitude, but few of us give it substantive thought.

However, as with many of the precepts that provide the backdrop to our moral and cultural universe, there’s science behind gratitude.

## Gratitude defined

Professor Robert A. Emmons is regarded as one of the world’s leading gratitude researchers. He is a professor of psychology at the University of California, Davis, and the founding editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. Emmons and fellow researcher Professor Michael McCullough define gratitude as a two-step process: 1) “recognizing that one has obtained a positive outcome” and 2) “recognizing that there is an external source for this positive outcome.”<sup>(1)</sup>

The theologian and Nobel Peace Prize winner Albert Schweitzer echoes Emmons and McCullough more poetically: “At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.”

Gratitude is fundamentally about our relationship to others and the world. It’s about recognising the light others bring into our lives and being conscious of that gift. It’s a profound and ancient sense of our relationship to the world, an acknowledgment we are not alone, and that we owe thanks to the work, kindness and ingenuity of those around us. It speaks to the importance of social connection and the value it brings to our psychological and even physical health.

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1 Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). ‘Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life.’ *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Reading back through my gratitude diary, I have come to more fully understand the power of the social connections in my life, the ties that bind. My immediate family, my work colleagues, clients, hockey teammates, swimming group friends, even strangers, all of these people have given me something to be grateful for at some time. From small, kind gestures through to lifelong expressions of love. All of these people, to differing degrees, have “lighted the flame within”.

Each time I expressed my gratitude in words as part of my gratitude diary, I would bring forth a connection, a neural pathway of light that made me stop, think and reflect on all that is good in my life. Did the cumulative effect of all that gratitude, all those neural rays of sunshine expressed consistently over 142 days, play a part in my mental wellbeing, possibly even my physical health?

## The mental health benefits

Time and again, research shows the practice of gratitude improves our mental health and can create lasting positive psychological effects. However, most studies into gratitude have been carried out on healthy people. What happens when gratitude is introduced into the lives of people who may not feel they have much to be grateful for?

Associate professor of counselling psychology at Indiana University, Joel Wong, and his colleagues set out to research the effects of practising gratitude on nearly 300 adults, mostly college students who were seeking counselling on issues related to anxiety and depression.

In the study<sup>(2)</sup>, participants were randomly assigned into three groups, with participants in all three groups receiving counselling services. In addition, the first group was asked to write a letter of gratitude to another person each week for three weeks. The second group was asked to write about their deepest thoughts and feelings about their negative experiences. The third group did no writing activity.

The research results were published in 2017, with some interesting findings. The people in group one, who were assigned the gratitude letter task, reported

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2 Y. Joel Wong, Jesse Owen, Nicole T. Gabana, Joshua W. Brown, Sydney McInnis, Paul Toth & Lynn Gilman (2018) 'Does gratitude writing improve the mental health of psychotherapy clients? Evidence from a randomized controlled trial', *Psychotherapy Research*.

significantly better mental health 4 to 12 weeks after their writing exercise ended than the participants in the two other groups. The researchers found that practising gratitude and receiving counselling carried significant benefits in comparison to undertaking only counselling.

The researchers also found that practising gratitude impacts on our minds and bodies in four fundamental ways:

- unshackles us from toxic emotions
- helps even if you don't share it
- benefits take time
- has lasting positive effects on the brain

The study found that focusing on being grateful elicited greater use of positive words and 'we' words compared to the use of negative words. However, it wasn't so much the increased use of positive words that made the real impact; it was that people began to eliminate negative words from their thinking, writing and talking. My experience mirrors these findings.

Gratitude letter writing appears to shift people from toxic negative emotions such as resentment, bitterness and envy, and refocuses the mind on the positives of the now and the potential of the future — which is precisely my experience in keeping my gratitude diary.

Every time I logged on to Facebook and listed the three things I was grateful for on one of those 142 days, I was nudged to reflect on a person who had done something nice for me that day. Whether it was a delicious meal Jobst had made me or some kind words of encouragement from a hockey teammate, I would find beacons of joy to savour even if my day had been mostly mundane or even disappointing. Rather than ruminate moodily on the bad things in my life, I would meditate with positive intent on the good. Sometimes I could swear I almost physically felt the weight lift from my shoulders, replaced by the gentle touch of contentment.

## Nothing to be grateful for?

Writing in *The New York Times*, Arthur C. Brooks, the author of the book *Gross National Happiness*, says we don't always need to be moved by authentic feelings to express gratitude or to reap its benefits. "Building the best life does not require fealty to feelings in the name of authenticity, but rather rebelling against negative impulses and acting right even when we don't feel like it," he writes.<sup>(3)</sup>

He also says that "acting grateful can actually make you grateful". So even fake gratitude can make you feel better than no gratitude at all. Put simply: acting happy and expressing gratitude encourages one's brain towards positive emotions. There were indeed times during my 142 days of gratitude when I felt almost like I had to 'fake it to make it'. When times are tough, most of us can get sucked into the abyss of sorrow and self-pity. The act of gratitude is the escape ladder we sometimes need.

Brooks suggests three strategies to harness the positive effects of gratitude:

1. **Practice 'interior gratitude':** Keep a daily or weekly list of the things you are grateful for.
2. **Practice 'exterior gratitude':** Write thank-you notes and put your gratitude to others on paper.
3. **Be grateful for small things:** Express thanks for the everyday stuff you usually overlook such as fresh fruit and air-conditioning.

I instinctively did this without even knowing it at the time. It was a simple prompt from a friend on Facebook that got the ball rolling for me. Interesting, isn't it?

## The neurobiology of gratitude

The science of gratitude is a relatively new field of study, with the majority of academic work on the topic having been undertaken in the past two decades. As Summer Allen points out in her white paper prepared for the Greater

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3 Arthur C. Brooks, 'Choose to be grateful. It will make you happier', November 2015, *The New York Times*.

Good Science Center at UC Berkeley, “While conceptualizing gratitude has historically been an area of interest for philosophers and religious scholars, until recently it had received considerably less attention from scientists.”<sup>(4)</sup>

In her survey of the significant studies relating to gratitude and science, Allen says science is catching up on the foundational ideas developed by theologians and philosophers over the centuries on why gratitude matters.

“Research suggests that gratitude is not simply a cultural construct. It has deep roots that are embedded in our evolutionary history, our brains and DNA, and in child development,” she writes.

*Studies from neuroscience have identified brain areas that are likely involved in experiencing and expressing gratitude, providing further evidence for the idea that gratitude is an intrinsic component of the human experience. Additionally, a few studies have identified specific genes that may underlie our ability to experience gratitude.*

Science is starting to take gratitude seriously. As a society, we have begun to reawaken our desire to delve into questions of fairness, equality and happiness. As individuals, we’re starting to ask questions about how to lead useful and meaningful lives; how to live in balance with the environment; and how to live harmoniously together on this planet.

Increasingly, the tools we’re using to answer these questions come from science rather than religion. That’s not to sideline or denigrate the heavy lifting that has been done by religious thinkers and philosophers on topics like gratitude, but science is beginning to provide critical insights into the what and why of concepts like gratitude.

## Empathy and gratitude

“How would you feel if in the middle of your most distraught moment, unbound from your everyday comforts and scared for your survival, a complete stranger saved your life?”

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4 Summer Allen, ‘The Science of Gratitude’ white paper, May 2018, Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley, for John Templeton Foundation.



So starts the introduction to the academic research paper ‘Neural Correlates of Gratitude’.<sup>5</sup> The authors — Glenn R. Fox, Jonas Kaplan, Hanna Damasio, and Antonio Damasio — dramatically plunge the reader into their experiment, which involves inducing feelings of gratitude in participants while they underwent functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). The stories of Holocaust survivors were used to induce feelings of gratitude in the participants:

*In the experiment, participants immersed themselves in the context of the Holocaust and experienced these scenarios. We created documentaries detailing the events of the Holocaust aimed at giving the participants an understanding of the Holocaust. Once participants were immersed in the time period, they viewed the series of gifts that were designed to elicit varying degrees of gratitude, and they were asked to imagine how they would feel if they were in the same situation. For each gift, participants rated how much gratitude they felt. Their ratings of gratitude were correlated to brain activity collected using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI).*

Published in 2015, the study is part of a wave of similar studies designed to establish a better understanding of how the brain works in response to gratitude.

Scientists are looking under the bonnet. They are asking questions and getting tentative answers. As the authors note:

*An investigation of the neural basis of gratitude extends the reach of affective neuroscience beyond the study of basic emotions into the complex social emotions that are important for well-being. At the level of the brain, the investigation of the generation and experience of gratitude is just beginning.*

Those sparks of light Schweitzer spoke about appear to be real. Our neural system does react to gratitude. There’s more to gratitude than feel-good acts and cuddly emotions, as the results of the study show:

*The results revealed that ratings of gratitude correlated with brain activity in the anterior cingulate cortex and medial prefrontal cortex, in support of*

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5 Glenn R. Fox, Jonas Kaplan, Hanna Damasio, and Antonio Damasio, ‘Neural correlates of gratitude’, September 2015, *Frontiers in Psychology*.

*our hypotheses. The results provide a window into the brain circuitry for moral cognition and positive emotion that accompanies the experience of benefitting from the goodwill of others.*

From Cicero calling gratitude “the parent of all virtues” to Aesop telling us that “Gratitude is the sign of noble souls”, humanity has long known the truth about gratitude. It has been in our bones, so to speak, a feeling, a sense of what is right and just. It is why our parents and teachers insisted on us showing it even when we were too young to grasp what it was or why we should care. It’s why those who regularly practise gratitude feel its benefits, from personal relationships to their professional lives. Because at the heart of gratitude is a humble reverence for the role other people play in our life. A realisation that people other than ourselves light a spark, and just as importantly, that we can bring light into the lives of others as well.

Our hearts and brains are intimately connected, as science is now beginning to show us. We are learning that matters of the heart are matters of the mind, too.

## The scientific case for gratitude

In his essay ‘Why Gratitude is Good’, one of the world’s foremost researchers and writers on gratitude, Professor Robert Emmons, lays claim to an impressive list of physical, psychological and social benefits for gratitude.<sup>(6)</sup>

“We’ve studied more than one thousand people, from ages eight to 80, and found that people who practice gratitude consistently report a host of benefits:

### **Physical:**

- Stronger immune systems
- Less bothered by aches and pains
- Lower blood pressure
- Exercise more and take better care of their health
- Sleep longer and feel more refreshed upon waking

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6 Professor Robert A. Emmons, ‘Why Gratitude is Good’, November 2010, *Greater Good Magazine*.

**Psychological:**

- Higher levels of positive emotions
- More alert, alive, and awake
- More joy and pleasure
- More optimism and happiness

**Social:**

- More helpful, generous, and compassionate
- More forgiving
- More outgoing
- Feel less lonely and isolated.”

The definitive science is probably still out on Emmons’ list. However, for someone who practises gratitude and has experienced its benefits, I can vouch for at least some of the claims on his list.

When I started my gratitude diary my thoughts, feelings, behaviours and actions slowly shifted towards the positive. Practising gratitude has given me more options, more choices, more and better ways of making decisions and processing my thoughts, feelings and emotions. It has helped me reduce and remove negativity by focussing on what I am grateful for and concentrating on being content. It has reinforced my bonds to those around me and my connections to the world.

I didn’t know much about the science of gratitude when I undertook the task of keeping my gratitude diary. But I’m a self-aware person who thinks deeply about her place in the world, and I could observe the positive benefits of gratitude in my life. I continue to see them to this day. I think there’s something to this whole gratitude thing, and I think the science is starting to validate my educated hunch.



◀ Chapter 5 ▶

# THE MORAL CASE FOR GRATITUDE

Some people I am grateful to:

- My partner Jobst
- The swimming pool manager at my local swim centre
- The kindness of strangers

We can express gratitude for all kinds of things and to all sorts of people. From our most intimate and beloved to the person who makes sure our local pool is in excellent condition, through to the strangers we may never meet or know, whose ideas and actions have created the world in which we live.

As Professor Robert Emmons, the world's leading gratitude researcher, says: "Gratitude is a social emotion. I see it as a relationship-strengthening emotion because it requires us to see how we've been supported and affirmed by other people."<sup>(1)</sup>

Emmons explains gratitude as a two-step process, where we affirm goodness and then recognise the source of the goodness. "We acknowledge that other people — or even higher powers, if you're of a spiritual mindset — gave us many gifts, big and small, to help us achieve the goodness in our lives."<sup>(2)</sup>

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1 Professor Robert A. Emmons, 'Why Gratitude is Good', (2010), *Greater Good Magazine*

2 Ibid.

When Jobst makes me a delicious meal (which he often does as he is an excellent cook!) I express my gratitude to him because I know the meal did not magically appear on my plate; he created it with care and love. For that, I am grateful. In fact, I am also grateful to the farmers and others who grew or produced the ingredients Jobst used to cook the meal.

Likewise, when I dive into my local pool and the temperature is just right and the pH level is perfect, I am grateful to a person who I don't really know. Yes, it's this person's job as a pool manager to get these things right, but I am grateful they take their job seriously, and they have the knowledge and skill to carry out their tasks on a consistent basis.

Furthermore, I'm grateful to our local council for having built the pool. I extend my gratitude back in time to the councillors and local residents who had the vision and wisdom decades ago to provide the community with this fantastic resource that I use almost daily.

At an even more abstract level, I am grateful to the people who invented technologies like email, Skype and laptop computers that make my work easier to do; to the people who maintain the vast infrastructure that makes modern life possible. To all the strangers who do things I know nothing about that make my life better in ways of which I'm barely even aware.

Expressing gratitude is an act of social awareness. It places us within a web of social connections. It is a profound act of reflection on our relationships and on our place in society. We are part of the world, and the world is part of us.

## Gratitude as a moral force

How does gratitude affect our morals, our relationships, and our societies?

A study<sup>(3)</sup> by Michael E. McCullough, Shelley D. Kilpatrick, Robert A. Emmons, and David B. Larson looked at gratitude as a moral affect. The authors proposed that “gratitude typically results from and stimulates moral behaviour, that is, behaviour that is motivated out of concern for another person”<sup>(4)</sup>. They

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3 Michael E. McCullough, Shelley D. Kilpatrick, Robert A. Emmons, David B. Larson, 'Is Gratitude a Moral Affect?', 2001, *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 127, No. 2.

4 Ibid.

likened gratitude to other moral affects such as empathy, sympathy, guilt, and shame. Their proposal was supported with the four following hypotheses<sup>5</sup>:

1. *Gratitude is used as a moral barometer, in that it is used to emotionally feel the size and nature of a gift from another.*
2. *Gratitude is used as a moral motive – that is, it encourages pro-social behaviour, and discourages societally disruptive behaviour.*
3. *Expressions of gratitude reinforce moral behaviour.*
4. *Gratitude can be correlated with certain personality traits. This is proven only half true – only agreeableness is shown to be positively correlated with gratitude (and narcissism negatively correlated).*

Emmons points out in his book *Thanks: How Practicing Gratitude Can Make You Happier* that gratitude “binds people together in relationships of reciprocity” and is “one of the building blocks of a civil and humane society.”<sup>6</sup>

He is not the first to ascribe such lofty qualities to gratitude. Ideas about its importance as a moral force for good can be discerned at least as far back as the Roman statesman and philosopher Cicero: “In truth, O judges, while I wish to be adorned with every virtue, yet there is nothing which I can esteem more highly than being and appearing grateful. For this one virtue is not only the greatest, but is also the parent of all the other virtues.”

The 19th-century German philosopher Georg Simmel powerfully outlines the role gratitude plays in fostering and nurturing a healthy society:

*Gratitude is the moral memory of mankind... Although it is a purely personal affect, or (if one will) a lyrical affect, its thousand-fold ramifications throughout society make it one of the most powerful means of social cohesion. It is a fertile emotional soil which grows concrete actions among particular individuals. But much more: although we are often unaware of its fundamentally important existence, and although it is interwoven with innumerable other motivations, nevertheless, it gives human actions a unique modification or intensity: it connects them with what*

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5 Ibid.

6 Professor Robert A. Emmons, *Thanks: How Practicing Gratitude Can Make You Happier*, 2007, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

*has gone before, it enriches them with the element of personality, it gives them the continuity of interactional life. If every grateful action, which lingers on from good turns received in the past, were suddenly eliminated, society (at least as we know it) would break apart.*<sup>(7)</sup>

Perhaps what's not fully appreciated about the power of practising gratitude, especially in an active way like keeping a gratitude diary or journal, is its meditative force. Keeping a gratitude diary made me reflect in a very conscious way upon the people and things that brought me comfort, joy and happiness. My expressed gratitude for something as seemingly mundane as a clean and comfortable local pool makes me appreciate the effort and organisation that goes into making such a thing a reality.

By regularly expressing gratitude, by affirming and recognising the goodness around us, we develop a mindset that connects us to the world. We create the "fertile emotional soil which grows concrete actions among particular individuals", as Simmel put it. This reveals gratitude to be a far more powerful force for good than some people may think. The common characterisation of gratitude as a nice, polite thing to do merely touches the surface of the true magnitude of gratitude as a virtue and moral force for good.

Discussing the unspoken role gratitude plays in keeping the cogs of capitalism turning, the *New York Times* columnist David Brooks writes, "There's a lot of surplus goodness in daily life that can't be explained by the logic of equal exchange."<sup>(8)</sup>

*Gratitude is also a form of social glue. In the capitalist economy, debt is to be repaid to the lender. But a debt of gratitude is repaid forward, to another person who also doesn't deserve it. In this way each gift ripples outward and yokes circles of people in bonds of affection. It reminds us that a society isn't just a contract based on mutual benefit, but an organic connection based on natural sympathy — connections that are nurtured not by self-interest but by loyalty and service.*

The past decade has seen a marked increase in the levels of distrust in politics, the media, and banks, institutions we once thought of as unimpeachable in their integrity.

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7 George Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, The Free Press, 1950 edition.

8 David Brooks, 'The Structure of Gratitude', *The New York Times*, July 2015.

Could practising gratitude help us repair the cracks we're seeing in society? Could it counter the corruption, greed and narcissism paraded before us in the news headlines each day? If we started to consciously give thanks to the wonderful people and things in our lives, could we collectively reconnect to what is good and build a movement for positive change?

Perhaps because so many of us (though not all) in the developed world, in our prosperous Western societies, have moved far beyond the everyday material concerns of our forebears — Where will our next meal come from? Do we have adequate shelter from the heat and cold? — our 'moral memory' has been lost.

Maybe our collective ingratitude is the consequence of our ignorance of the reasons for why we have it so good? Is it possible we've lost some of our trust and respect in society's institutions, indeed in each other, because "the fertile emotional soil which grows concrete actions" has been salted by excessive materialism and a narrowed conception of the self?

## Gratitude and materialism

Practising gratitude has made me focus on other matters and much less on material things. I have found that I am far less worried about 'keeping up with the Joneses' or experiencing FOMO (fear of missing out). I think less about things and more about people.

There is a place for materialism in our world. I appreciate nice things. I am not an ascetic who disavows material goods or worldly possessions. But I don't feel the need to strive for them madly. I also understand and appreciate how materialism works as a driver for so much of our economy. After all, I work each day with businesses who come to me for advice and help on how to sell better. I understand how markets work and the emotions and desires that drive people to buy things.

However, research has shown that while materialism encourages entrepreneurship and economic growth, along with wealth creation and status signalling, it has also been shown to harm psychological well-being.



In their paper ‘Is Gratitude an Alternative to Materialism?’<sup>(9)</sup> the authors Emily L. Polak and Michael E. McCullough showed that while economic motivation is a prerequisite for a financially secure and stable life (e.g., the unemployed do have higher rates of depression), high economic motivation (e.g., materialism) is strongly correlated with reduced wellbeing and even increased rates of mental disorders.

They argue that “positive other-oriented emotion such as gratitude may have the power to change social cognition, motivation, and social relationships in precisely the ways that are likely to reduce materialistic strivings and their deleterious effects on psychological well-being.”<sup>(10)</sup>

Interestingly, several researchers have noted how insecurity, both emotional and financial, drives materialism. It can be very hard to practise gratitude when you are fighting for survival, feeling insecure, especially when you don’t have the assets, support, skills or knowledge to get you to a better place.

However, fighting for survival is relative. Other research has shown that pursuing material gain in and of itself makes people more selfish and less grateful, even when they have more than enough to go around and keep them secure. While others who have very little can be some of the most generous people around. We see this in the types of people who donate more often to charities; it is usually the less well-off that will donate more often or give a higher proportion of their income to charity.<sup>(11)</sup>

We also see it in those people who use their possessions as a kind of psychological shield to deflect from their frailties. For these people, materialism ends up feeding the black hole inside; they keep throwing gadgets, cars, clothes, properties into the void hoping it fills up, hoping they can buy their way to some peace and contentment. Or at the very least, hoping they can gain the respect, admiration and even envy of others.

Paradoxically, though, when we place ourselves front and centre in the world, we seem to diminish our sense of self. As we magnify ourselves, we only get

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9 Emily L. Polak and Michael E. McCullough, ‘Is Gratitude an Alternative to Materialism?’ (2006) *Journal of Happiness Studies*.

10 Ibid.

11 Paul K. Piff, Michael W. Kraus, Stephane Cote, Bonnie Hayden Cheng and Dacher Keltner, ‘Having Less, Giving More: The Influence of Social Class on Prosocial Behavior’, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2010, Vol. 99, No. 5

smaller. It's as if the more material objects we accumulate, the less room there is in our lives for the real substance of people and relationships; the things that indeed make us happy.

Another factor worth mentioning is the environmental impact of the rampant materialism. Can the planet afford our hyper consumption? Would we all benefit from concentrating on experiences and relationships rather than the shiny things that so often beguile and distract us?

## Gratitude and trust

In the past, I always started any relationship from a place of trust expecting the best. A little naive? Well, yes. I have been let down before, but the severity of this bad experience in 2014, made me take a different approach.

Since then, I have learned how to approach situations and people from a place of neutrality – neither positive nor negative, and this has helped me be far more effective in my decision making and relationship management. I start relationships from a neutral space and then see whether they evolve into trust-based relationships or not. This has made doing business much easier for me and for that I am grateful.

I believe that trust is the heartbeat of any relationship. However, we do need to practise discernment and make wise decisions about who we trust. I have found we need to learn to ask better questions and look beneath the surface because clearly, not everyone is going to act in our best interests.

On reflection, I think I could very easily have retreated into a protective shell, diminished my self. I was badly burned by the actions and behaviour of this person whom I had welcomed into my business. The bitterness I felt threatened at times to poison other parts of my life. As with any betrayal, it left me feeling insecure and defensive. I confess there were times, especially earlier on, when I felt real anger and wanted revenge. However, by practising gratitude daily, I seemed to channel all that dark energy and transform it into positive 'can do' energy that propelled me forward and opened up a whole new world of opportunity on many levels.

Starting the gratitude diary was a kind of emotional lifeline for me. I wanted to see the good in people. I wanted to feel positive. I didn't want to let this person

steal away from me the joy I received from the world around me. Keeping the diary for 142 days served to reinforce daily that my life is wonderful and that I have many (at least 426!) things for which to be grateful. Even if I could not totally forget this betrayal, even if I did feel sad about my father's passing, each day I found three things that helped me put things into perspective. In fact, I firmly believe my gratitude diary reoriented my thinking to such an extent that I was able to view my relationships, business and life in a fresh and invigorating light.

## Conclusion

In my diary, I am grateful for all kinds of things: hot showers, chocolate, people fighting for the environment, wattlebirds, ABBA, work colleagues, my sons, hockey teammates, and lots more. Each day I would reflect on what had happened and find three things that stood out for me. They could be big, small or in-between. Some were deep, others less so. As important as each of these things is was the fact I was taking the time to think about how they had affected me. Each day I was reinforcing my connections to the people and the world around me through gratitude.

The practise of gratitude moves us away from myopic thinking. It helps us to uncover connections, find pathways and reveal relationships. It extends our frame of reference from a cropped narcissistic selfie to a panoramic tapestry of life in its fullest glory. We see the good things people do for us and give thanks. In turn, we start to appreciate the difference we can make in the lives of others; the debt of gratitude that we pay forward.

I don't think I had any real preconceived idea of what was going to happen when I started my gratitude diary. But after 142 days I had noticed a change in me. The anger and bitterness I was carrying began to subside. I was becoming more aware of my place in the lives of other people, and my place in the world. Far from making me feel small or insignificant, I felt empowered and enriched. Five years or so on from my 142 days of gratitude, I still give thanks, I am still grateful.

The practice of gratitude has taken me to a new place in my life and thinking. I believe that if enough of us were to practise gratitude consistently, we could shift our thinking at a personal, social and even political level. In recognising and affirming the goodness in others, we could all start to discover the goodness in ourselves.

◀ Chapter 6 ▶

# SO WHAT'S NEXT?

On the following pages, you will find my 142 days of gratitude, taken from an exercise where each day on Facebook I documented '3 things I am grateful for'. I did this in 2014 and it started me on a journey to better appreciating the world around me as well as myself. I'm still on that journey.

Some of the things I wrote down are about my family and friends. However, most pertain to a range of things from the small and local to the big and worldly, from the mundane to the profound. There are also snippets of articles, images and songs I found inspiring and helpful.

By the end of this book, I hope I will have inspired you to start your own diary. It's a journey that I wholeheartedly encourage you to undertake.

May your world be filled with gratitude and happiness daily.

With gratitude and love,



Sue Barrett

◀ Chapter 7 ▶

# MY 142 DAYS OF GRATITUDE



## Business backdrop

*At this time, I am ploughing my way through hundreds of prospecting calls, and many client meetings to win as many client projects as possible. Little jobs are coming in but the big jobs, like the one we lost because of the person we had mistakenly put our confidence and trust in, are few and far between. This means we are scrapping around for work to make ends meet. Doing anything and everything to make sure we stay viable. Lots of interstate travel.*

*We're also managing a legal issue related to our business and the person who has caused us so much grief. It has been a draining experience. It has led me to question my trust in people, which is sad because I've always been an open, trusting person. Betrayal of trust is so pernicious. Aside from the damage this person did to our business, the whole episode has cast a shadow on other parts of my life. If you're a business owner, you are very invested in what you do. In many ways, there really is no separation between your professional and personal life. The two bleed into each other, as much as you try to keep them insulated.*

*So the Gratitude Diary has come along at a time when I am especially preoccupied with the challenges of running a business. It has given me an outlet to record and celebrate all the wonderful things in life; my family and friends, my thoughts and ideas, my passion for life. It has enabled me to recalibrate and bring into balance some of the negativity that has clouded my vision. The act of writing down three things each day put into perspective all the challenges I have been facing in my business. It has also helped me see my life as a continuum of experience, and to understand how the good, the bad, and even the ugly all play a part. My life is overwhelmingly good. I already knew this to be the case, but keeping the diary has emphatically reinforced it. I have much to be grateful for.*





# Day 1

I'm in too, Mike Lowe. Thank you for sharing this with us.

Firstly, I am grateful for my family and the loving support I receive from Jobst Schmalenbach. He has stood by me, for me and with me for over 24 years now as we continue our lives together. I am grateful he respects me as a person and as a woman. We stand as equals and in partnership. I am indeed fortunate.

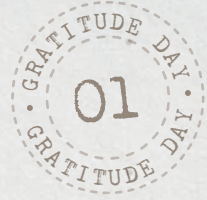
Secondly, I am grateful for my health and wellbeing. I know I cannot take it for granted as it allows me to do many things and remain actively engaged in life on many levels — being able to go outside and enjoy nature, play sport and participate in group activities, find peace in my own heart especially when things are tough, be there for others when they need help, etc.

Thirdly, I am grateful for this beautiful day — sunlight, fresh air, and a well-watered land all nurturing our plants and animals and helping continue the cycle of life.

Thank you again.

Love,

Sue xox



MIKE LOWE -  
WHO STARTED  
IT ALL OFF.





# Day 2

I am grateful for the hot shower after swimming training this morning.

For a nutritious breakfast.

And for this lovely, sunny winter's day.

Have a great day everyone.

Lots of love,

Sue xox



WINTER THROUGH  
MY CAR ROOF





# Day 3

A bit late so I'm grateful for remembering to do this today, given Jobst and I had a lot to deal with.

I'm grateful for having access to so much fresh, healthy food. Although it makes me sad many do not.

I'm grateful for my fantastic team at work. What wonderful people they are.

Take care and lots of love,

Sue xox

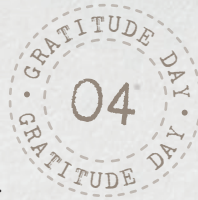


GARDEN HARVEST -  
CAULIFLOWER →





# Day 4



I am very grateful for a warm bed and dry home, especially in winter.

I am grateful I could go walking this morning in the dark by myself and feel safe.

I am grateful for an article I read this morning on *Psychology Today* about what to do when life isn't fair:

*“Let go of the entitlement. Sometimes your good works won't be recognized or rewarded. Demanding that they are will only sap your strength — strength that could be better used treating the people around you fairly.”*

Take care and lots of love,

Sue xox



MORNING WALK →





## Day 5

Today I am grateful for a good night's sleep that nourishes me for the day ahead. I have come to value highly a good night's sleep above almost everything else (at present?).

It makes me a better person.

I am also grateful for the wonderful TV show *Offspring*. I have been with it from day 1 and love it so much — its vulnerability, love and passion. I hope we get a sixth season, but if we do not, I will always treasure it as time well invested in that it nourished me on many levels. Thank you, *Offspring*.

I am grateful for the company of Red Symons, the host of 774 ABC Breakfast in the early mornings. I find his sense of perspective, knowledge and humour right up my alley. He always finds ways to make me smile. It is a lovely way to start the day.

A wonderful day to you all.

Lots of love,

Sue xox





# Day 6



Today I am grateful for the very insightful conversation I had with my colleague Astrid Silberman this morning. It was liberating. Thank you, Astrid.

I am grateful for my family. They are the bedrock of my life.

I am grateful for the wonderful teachers that my children have at school. They are so lovely and caring about the whole person rather than only the academic side of things.

I hope you all have a lovely day.

Lots of love,

Sue xox



↑  
FAMILY AT MARY AND HERMANS FARM







## Day 7

Today I am grateful for the lovely hug I had with our youngest son, Alex, this morning. We can never have enough hugs.

I am grateful for music. I am grateful for our music system and the first song I heard this morning, which was 'Heroes' by David Bowie. I love music, I love David Bowie and I love that Jobst has transferred all our music onto the hard drive so every weekend we can shuffle through almost every genre of music imaginable. Music fills my heart with joy.

I am grateful for the peace I now feel in my heart after standing up to a bully of a client this week and stating my case for a fair exchange of value. He showed his true colours and that is fine by me. I know where he stands and I can now make my peace with this and move on.

Have a lovely day everyone.

Lots of love,

Sue xox





# Day 8

Today I am grateful I got to watch [my son] Josh and the MCC U16s play hockey with Jobst at Albert Park. Although it is a wee bit cold! [like 4°C]

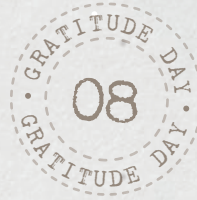
I am grateful to the many people who are putting in so much effort to fight for our environment, for positive action towards a sustainable and peaceful world.

And I am grateful for the continued love and support of Jobst.

Hope you all have a beautiful day.

Lots of love,

Sue xox



CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
WALK







## Day 9

I am grateful for being able to witness the lovely wattlebirds who were happily feeding on our grevillea in the garden this morning. They seemed very happy and content.

I am grateful for being able to find my centre and hold my ground on certain decisions I have had to make in recent times.

I am grateful for saying to myself, 'Be kind to yourself. Do not rush to an outcome and instead enjoy the journey and steady realisation that it is all about the present moment.'

A lovely day to you all.

Lots of love,

Sue xox





# Day 10

I am grateful for Robin Williams and all he gave us. Brilliant, just brilliant. I am also very sad, as will be many others, at his untimely death. Vale Robin Williams.

I am grateful for Jobst walking with me early this morning and listening to me and helping me sort things out and work through things. Thank you, Jobst.

I am grateful for truthfulness, candour and openness when sharing feelings and perspectives.

Blessings to you all today.

Sue xox



EARLY MORNING  
PARK WALK







# Day 11

Today I am grateful for being born in a country that encourages and allows women to be equal in every capacity with men. I know it was not always that way and only as little as 40 years ago women were not allowed to work in the public service if they married. And I know there are still issues of inequality in our community. However, at least we are free to be fully functioning human beings as women in our society.

We cannot take for granted the freedom we have in this country to be able to pursue our goals and dreams. We must treasure and protect this every day.

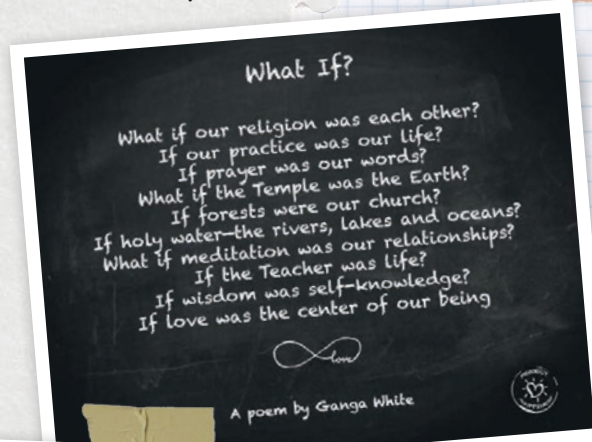
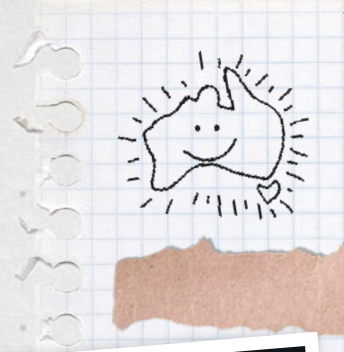
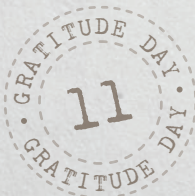
I am grateful for my children. I am a better person for becoming a mother and parent. I know having children is not on everyone's agenda, but it was the making of me as a person, and for that I am grateful.

I am grateful for my yoga session this morning. It was very comforting and freeing.

Wishing you all a beautiful day.

Lots of love,

Sue xox





# Day 12

Today I am grateful for the wonderful IPSHA (Independent Primary Schools Heads of Australia) musical concert which was held last night at the Melbourne Town Hall. Our Melbourne Montessori School choir performed along with 11 other independent primary schools and it was wonderful.

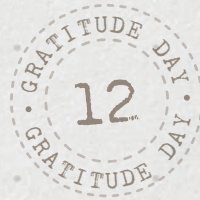
I am grateful Alex loves to sing. He has a beautiful voice.

I am grateful for our wonderful Montessori School and all it has done and is doing for our two boys and all the other children who go there.

Blessings to you all.

Lots of love,

Sue xox



MELBOURNE  
MONTESSORI  
SCHOOL CHOR







# Day 13

Today I am grateful for the lovely lunch I had with my dear friend Bruce, who was great company.

I am grateful for the lovely friendships I have developed at our hockey club. Both as a parent and a player.

I am grateful for very positive interactions with clients and prospects today.

Enjoy your evening.

Lots of love to you all,

Sue xox





# Day 14

Today I am grateful I still enjoy dancing to ABBA's 'Waterloo' and all the other lovely songs we get to listen to on the weekend. Now it is Peter Frampton's 'Baby, I Love Your Way'.

I am grateful for still being silly and free-spirited enough to dance and sing around the house like I did as a little girl!

I am grateful for a nice, hot cup of homemade filtered coffee.

Have a lovely day everyone.

Lots of love,

Sue xox







## Day 15

Today I am grateful for role models like Adam Savage and Jamie Hyneman, the hosts of the TV show *Mythbusters*, who put on a superb show last night in Melbourne and make science and engineering fun, engaging and real. It was wonderful to see so many families, especially fathers and sons, in attendance. Lots of daughters and mothers too. Great atmosphere and lots of love all round.

I am grateful for being able to walk safely with my family and many others from the Convention Centre to Flinders Street station along Southbank at 10pm. A beautiful night and very friendly atmosphere. Well done, Melbourne.

I am grateful for a good night's sleep and waking up to a lovely day.

Off to hockey now.

Blessings to you all.

Sue xox

MYTHBUSTERS EVENT





# Day 16

Today I am grateful for doing these gratitude days as they really keep me in the present and help me appreciate what I have and how lucky I am.

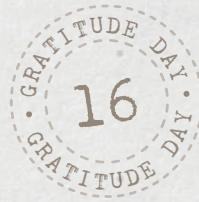
I am grateful for the support I receive from Jobst, who believes in me and sees us as equals in every way.

I am grateful my son Josh and the other under 16 boys are getting to play hockey with the men's teams to help them prepare for senior competition next year. It was lovely to see Andy and the other men yesterday make Josh and the boys feel welcome and part of the team.

A wonderful day to you all.

Lots of love,

Sue xox



JOSH HOCKEY TEAM





## Day 17

Today I am grateful for an article in *The Age* that questioned the value of Gratitude Day and said it was wearing thin. It said people run out of things to be grateful for. I have found the opposite to be true. Taking time out to think about what I have and what I am grateful for is in itself something to be grateful for, and makes me more aware of the details of our everyday lives. All the things we take for granted. Excellence is in the details, and so I think is gratitude.

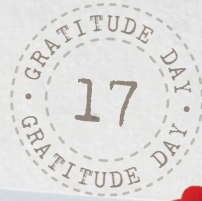
I am also grateful for the emergence of the lovely aroma of flowers in the air when we go on our walk. Spring is on the way.

I am grateful for the practice of patience, never easy but always there if I remember to embrace it.

Blessings to you all.

Lots of love

Sue xox





## Day 18

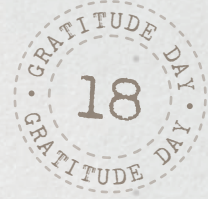
Today, I confess I am feeling a little flat. I have been reflecting on nearly two decades of running my own business. Yes, in January 2015 Barrett will have achieved 20 years in business, and for that I am grateful. However, the stresses that running a small business can bring are often unspoken. An article in *SmartCompany* brought home the challenges many small business owners face and the importance of maintaining our mental health. I am grateful for this article, too, as it speaks the truth for many of us.

Finally, I am grateful for being able to still keep going even on the tough days.

Blessings to you all.

Lots of love,

Sue xox







## Day 19

Today I am grateful for the lovely time I spent with a dear friend this afternoon. It helped restore my faith in the goodness of friendships.

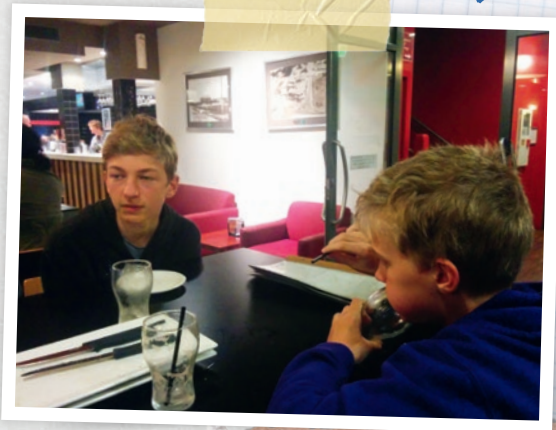
I am grateful for the yummy risotto I made for dinner tonight. Everyone enjoyed it.

I am grateful for my beautiful children. I am a better person because of them.

A peaceful night's sleep to you all.

Lots of love

Sue xox





# Day 20



I am grateful for the little things people do for each other, like finding lovely quotes and sending them on, or bumping into someone in the street you haven't seen for a while and it being an unexpectedly special or lovely moment.

I am grateful for being able to wear a skirt, short sleeve top and no tights in this beautiful weather.

I am also grateful to the lovely ladies in the cafe who said I looked stunning today. That was very nice to hear even at 52.

Enjoy this lovely day.

Lots of love

Sue xox







# Day 21

Today I am grateful for my session with Zena.  
I am feeling a lot better. Thank you, Zena.

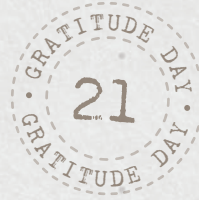
I am grateful for the lovely walk we took  
this morning.

I am grateful for living in a relatively safe  
country. It really is a gift I wish for everyone.

Enjoy your day.

Lots of love

Sue xox



←  
WALKING EARLY  
IN THE MORNING  
TOUCHING A LOVELY  
SOFT BUSH



# Day 22



Today I am very grateful for the opportunity to play left wing instead of full back in my hockey team because it meant I had a chance to score a goal. My hockey teammate, Jennifer Louise Fallu, said I would and I did! It was very exciting and all the girls were so thrilled for me. We won 3-0.

I am grateful for the lovely Sunday breakfast our family shared this morning.

And I am grateful for our hockey team's end of season lunch we are enjoying now.

Have a lovely day.

Lots of love

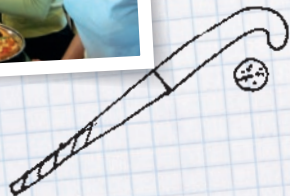
Sue xox



HOCKEY  
TEAM LUNCH



SUNDAY  
MORNING  
BREAKFAST







## Day 23

Today I am grateful for the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation). It is the most amazing resource on many levels. We are so fortunate to have it.

With respect to commentary asking why is being reasonable equated to being left leaning? I am grateful for all the reasonable people in the world helping create a more sustainable, equitable world.

I am also grateful for the rain bringing sustenance to our world.

Have a lovely day.

Sue xox



## Business backdrop

*Starting to bring in more new clients of a medium size. Got my eyes on a bigger business who I have contacts with and there is something possible on the horizon, so I'll have to keep in touch. Still lots of scrapping about. However, some interesting insight emerging in our business with some new product development off the back of some sales strategy work I have been doing. Rebecca and I are trying to map a sales strategy and operations model — it's very tricky.*



## Day 24

Today I am grateful for allowing myself five minutes to just sit and relax and not do anything.

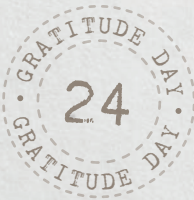
I am grateful for goals and direction. They keep me straight and true.

I am grateful for the glass of water I am about to have. It will be so refreshing.

I hope many of you are enjoying this beautiful Melbourne day. To those not in Melbourne, I hope wherever you are is beautiful too.

Lots of love,

Sue xox



I HAVE CREATED THE  
SPACE FOR OPPORTUNITY  
WITH MY INTENTIONS





# Day 25

Today I am grateful for the good work of the physios who help me keep going. Thanks for your expert care.

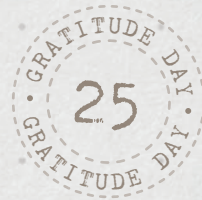
I am grateful I can collaborate and create with my team. It is fun and worthwhile.

I am also grateful for a few minutes of quiet time again.

Have a lovely evening.

Lots of love,

Sue xox



↖  
QUIET TIME





# Day 26

Today I am grateful to share with someone what they mean to me. It's lovely to let people know how special they are.

I am grateful for *QI*. I love that programme! It makes me smile and laugh every time.

I am grateful for the lovely hug I received from Alex when I got home.

Enjoy your evening.

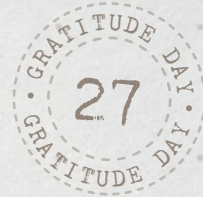
Lots of love,

Sue xox





# Day 27



Today I am grateful for all the people who point out the obvious injustices and idiotic things that plague our world. People like the farmers Kim and Dave, who are letting us know that supermarkets are rejecting their carrots because they are TOO BIG! What is that about?!

I am grateful for big carrots and beautiful fresh food.

I am grateful for the wonderful farmers who grow our food.

Here's to fresh, big, ugly, deformed, wonderful food!

Lots of love to you all,

Sue xox



↑  
← GARDEN HARVEST





# Day 28

Today I am grateful for taking it easy. Not going too hard and starting the day with a laugh.

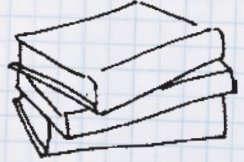
I am grateful for home-grown potatoes; they made lovely creamy mashed potatoes tonight.

I am grateful for books. I enjoy reading very much.

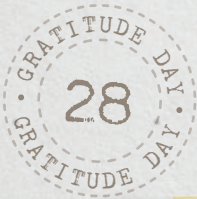
Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



HOME  
LIBRARY ↻





# Day 29

Today I am grateful to play hockey. I enjoy playing with our team, and despite not making the finals, we got better each game and played with dignity.

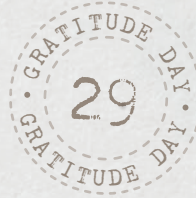
I am grateful for my lovely scarf; it is soft and comforting. A bit like Linus' blanket in Charlie Brown.

I am grateful for the practice of meditation.

Blessings to you all.

Lots of love,

Sue xox







# Day 30

Today I am grateful for opportunities to be candid with people. To have candid conversations is very refreshing.

I am grateful for laughter — it is liberating.

I am grateful for the lovely people I swim with in the morning.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox

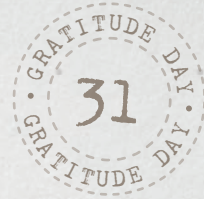


SWIMMING SQUAD  
AT PRAHRAN POOL





# Day 31



Today I am grateful to gaze upon the ceiling roses in our home and admire the craftsmanship of the people who created these over 80 years ago. I admire handiwork like this.

I am grateful to all the people who make the things we use every day. From the mundane to the beautiful. People somewhere put effort into making these things for our benefit.

I am grateful I am aware that we benefit from the kindness of others every day, most of whom are strangers to us.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox

CEILING ROSE  
CRAFTSMANSHIP



WITHOUT THE KINDNESS  
OF STRANGERS WE  
CANNOT EXIST





# Day 32

Today I am grateful for insight into self-limiting thoughts and beliefs. It is amazing how certain views of oneself can hold you hostage and diminish your capabilities.

I am grateful for people's support in exploring these insights.

I am grateful for chocolate. It is so yummy!

A good night's sleep to you all.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 33

Today I am grateful for Jobst's cooking skills. He makes great food and tonight was spag bol amongst other things.

I am grateful for the beautiful ABC show about people with mental disabilities living together in a shared house. It is wonderful.

I am grateful for still being able to give Alex a piggyback and to see him doing programming. If I'm honest, I can still give Josh a piggyback too. How long will that last, I wonder.

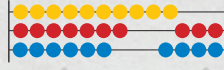
Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox







## Day 34

Today I am grateful to the Harold Holt swimming pool manager who came and swam at the Prahran pool with his trusty thermometer to finally prove we swimmers weren't going mad. For at least two months the pool has been much cooler than normal but the local pool staff would not take our word for it. It turns out the Prahran pool thermometer was set 3 degrees lower than it should have been and, instead of swimming at a lovely 27°C, we were swimming in 24°C water in winter! The pool is back to normal. It was certainly character building.

I am grateful for the persistence of many of us to keep on at Stonnington council to address this matter.

I am grateful for soft tissues as I battle the fourth week of a cold.

Blessings to you all.

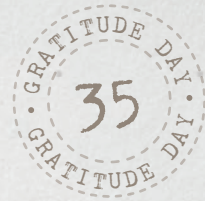
Love,

Sue xox





# Day 35



Today I am grateful for the beautiful plum blossoms and the anticipation of picking the blood plums to make jam and stewed plums. Yum.

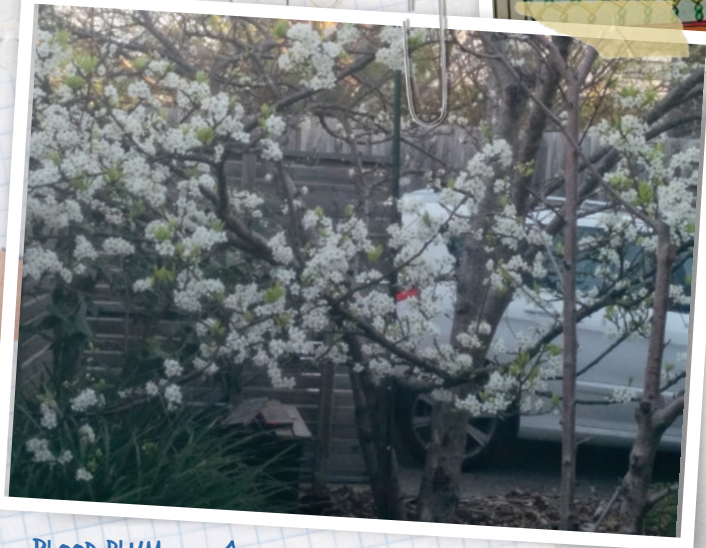
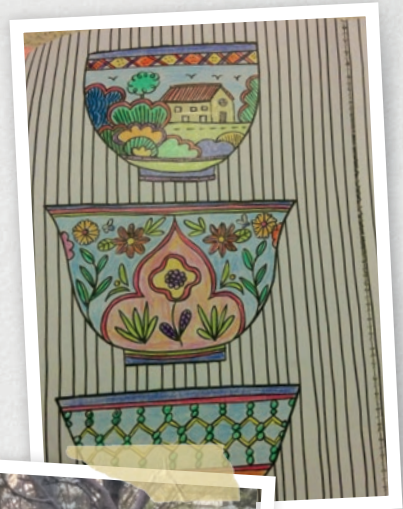
I am grateful to be able to garden nearly all weekend and be outside enjoying nature.

I am grateful for the lovely afternoon tea we had in our backyard with good friends. Nice.

Here's hoping we all have a wonderful week ahead of us.

Love,

Sue xox



BLOOD PLUM  
BLOSSOMS 





## Day 36

Today I am grateful for the warm temperature of the Prahran pool. It has returned to normal, which made getting in much easier.

I am grateful for the great team meeting we had at work.

I am grateful to the wonderful people who contribute so much to our Montessori school community and make it such a wonderful place for our children, teachers, staff and families.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 37

Today I am grateful for our Montessori school's night of the notables [This is where the children choose to research and then present as someone of note, not just famous for being famous but someone who has contributed positively to the world.] Alex presented as Stephen Hawking. The children do a great job researching their notable person.



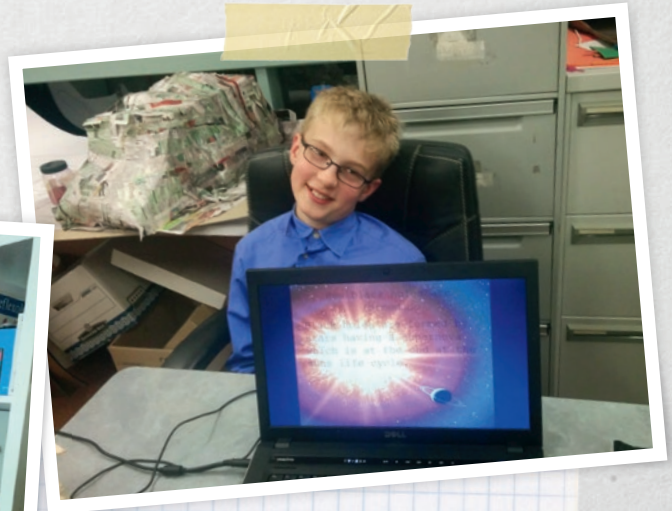
I am grateful for being able to share in the celebration of Jobst Schmalenbach's birthday today. Lots of love to you, Jobst.

I am grateful for a warm bed tonight.

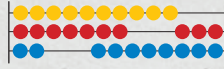
Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox







## Day 38

*This life, well, it's slipping right through my hands  
 These days turned out nothing like I had planned  
 Control, well, it's slipping right through my hands  
 These days turned out nothing like I had planned*

(Powderfinger, 'These Days', 1999)



Today I am grateful for Powderfinger's music, especially the song 'These Days'. Thanks Jobst for playing it tonight. It reminds me what is important. Family and friends, our environment, and being in the moment.

I am grateful for being able to talk to myself in a kind way so I don't lose myself in self pity or despair, especially when this gets really hard. Doesn't mean I don't want to cry. I let myself do that too because it helps release me from the tension.

I am grateful for the IKEA 'bookbook' video that is doing the rounds. It's how I feel about too much technology. I love books, real books.

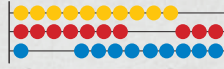
Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



I CANNOT CHANGE  
 ANYONE ELSE BUT  
 IF I CHANGE MYSELF  
 THEN THEY HAVE TO  
 CHANGE HOW THEY  
 DEAL WITH ME



# Day 39

Today I am grateful for hearing about a big business who has put community first, ahead of shareholders. That giving to and supporting the community is their number one priority gives me hope.

I am grateful for the time I had with a prospective new client / mentor today. Good to have frank, open discussions.

I am grateful for being aware of my limiting beliefs. It's sometimes really tough to keep facing things when all you want to do is walk away and get some space. HTFU [harden the fuck up] is what I have to say in these instances.

I hope tomorrow good things will come easy to us all.

Love,

Sue xox





## Business backdrop

*You learn some business and life lessons from people. Some people are assholes for sure but they can teach you a lot. While other business people give you hope. I have always stood for ethical human-centred sales practices and when you meet a business that wants that too it give you hope. At present, the trend towards ethical human-centred sales practices is not very clear or strong, but my instincts, field work and signs from the business world and consumers tells me something is coming. The stuff about banks is really showing us that not all is well there when it comes to caring about customers and ethical sales. I'm writing articles about unethical business and sales practices in the banks and managed to get published in the Australian Financial Review with an article titled 'CBA sells out: How the banks can win back trust'. I know something is brewing that will put ethical sales practices onto the main stage and be adopted by more and more businesses. So we have to hold firm and stay strong to our approach to business. Sometimes I wonder if I'm going mad and living with false hope. However, I do feel optimistic about this approach even though it isn't mainstream at all. Hang in there, I say.*





# Day 40

I am grateful I was given the gift of sport and music as a child. I have been able to carry them with me throughout life.

I am grateful for the better day I had today.

I am grateful for a fresh glass of water.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



← FRESH GLASS OF WATER



# Day 41

I am grateful for Zena and Amanda, who each took care of me in different ways today. Very lovely. [These are the people in my life who tend to my emotional wellbeing, physical and beauty treatment requirements.]

I am grateful for a good game of hockey on a beautiful day like today.

I am grateful for being able to lie down and do nothing.

Wishing you a lovely weekend.

Love,

Sue xox



RELAXING ON THE COUCH







# Day 42



I am grateful for the task and endeavour of gardening. There is something very immediate and gratifying about preparing the soil and planting seedlings and what not. Every plant I planted today was with love. In the past I have often seen it as a task, but today it was an act of love.

I am grateful for being able to lie in bed at 7.30pm tonight and read. All jobs done and dusted.

I am grateful for a good fiction book to read and the effort writers dedicate to creating an intriguing story for our enjoyment.

Wishing us all a happy and prosperous week ahead.

Love,

Sue xox



↑  
BACKYARD  
GARDEN







# Day 43

Today I am grateful Jobst rested and went to the doctor to help him get over this lingering viral cold. No point trying to keep going when you are unwell.

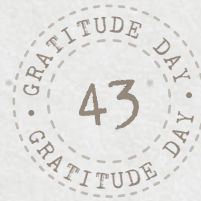
I am grateful for a focused, productive day at work.

I am grateful for my weekly massage. It irons out the cricks and relieves stress.

Wishing us all a peaceful sleep.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 44



Today I am grateful for waking up this morning after such a deep sleep and not knowing what day or time it was. That was nice.

I am grateful for David Stratton and Margaret Pomeranz for all their wonderful movie reviews. [*The Movie Show* on ABC TV] We will miss your wise counsel. Thank you.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be able to review my day to see what I can be grateful for. It is a lovely moment in my day.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 45

Today I am grateful for good conversations. Indepth, sincere, quality conversations.

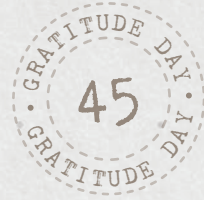
I am grateful for my very well-worn softer-than-soft t-shirts I wear to bed with my PJ pants. These t-shirts are held together by threads and holes. I will be sad when they finally fall apart.

I am grateful for how organised Alex is. I think I know who he takes after. Hmm.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 46

Today I am grateful for having had a lovely cup of peppermint tea with Leanne Chanter-Sloan, whom I have not seen in person for four years. It was as if it were yesterday since we spoke. Just lovely.

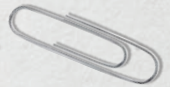
I am grateful for the art my children have created over the years, of which many pieces still decorate our home.

I am grateful for Jennie, our Montessori art teacher, who inspires and teaches our children how to appreciate and create wonderful and wide-ranging pieces of art. I love art.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 47



I am grateful to the kindness of strangers because most of our daily existence depends on strangers.

I am grateful for all the possessions I have, the vast majority of which have been made by strangers.

I am grateful for hugs from my sons. I love giving and receiving hugs from my sons.

Wishing you all a lovely weekend.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 48

*“The more I help out, the more successful I become. But I measure success in what it has done for the people around me. That is the real accolade.”*

– Adam Grant,

*Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success*

I am grateful for a book I am reading called Give and Take, which is about those who give, those who take and those who match, and the outcomes and impact on all of us.

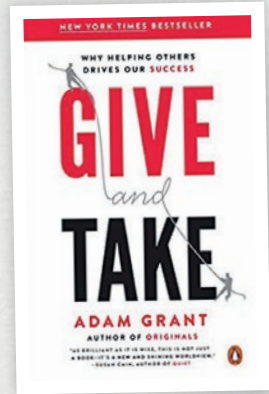
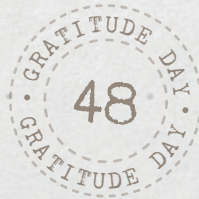
I am grateful for the simplicity of hanging washing on the line. I find it calming.

I am grateful for simplicity.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



 HANGING THE WASHING





# Day 49

Today I am grateful for the 20,000+ people who turned up for the People's Climate March in Melbourne. Part of a worldwide action plan for raising awareness about the need for action now. It is expected that 500,000 will turn out in New York.

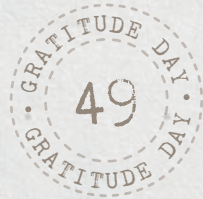
I am grateful for the lovely late Vietnamese lunch Jobst and I had in Chapel St on our way to pick up Alex from a soccer party.

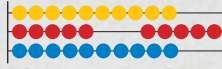
I am grateful for being able to see our children grow and lead meaningful lives as many cannot. Our children and the world they live in are precious. What state are we going to leave it in for them?

Wishing us all a prosperous week ahead.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 50

Today I am grateful for doing my gratitude days. I am at day 50 and am finding I really look forward to doing this exercise each day. It is becoming a habit.

I am grateful for the opportunities that are now appearing in my presence. Good partnerships are in the wind. Win-win for all concerned looks likely.

I am grateful for all the hard work and effort my team and I have and are putting in at work. We are focusing on doing the input activities every day.

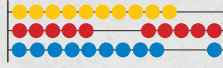
Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xoX







# Day 51

Today I am grateful for the wonderful programme on the ABC called *Brilliant Creatures*, which featured the fascinating lives of Germaine Greer, Clive James, Barry Humphries and Robert Hughes. Just brilliant. I love them all.

I am grateful for feminism. Thank you, Germaine, for your leadership and courage. Love you to bits.

I am grateful for the wonderful Clive James quote "humour is common sense dancing". Fantastic.

Blessings to you all.

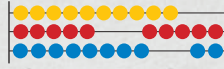
Love,

Sue xox



↗  
YOUNG  
GERMAINE GREER





# Day 52

Today I am grateful to, and for, Astrid. Many thanks to you for all we do together. My life is richer for knowing you.

I am grateful for the lovely rain tonight. I find the sound and smell very comforting.

I am grateful to Jobst, who stands by me through thick and thin. I love you.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



← RAIN ON THE GARDEN



# Day 53

I am grateful for a good laugh. A really good laugh.

I am grateful for the garden getting a good soaking.

I am grateful for my children.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 54

Today I am grateful for my tenacity and determination to get things done.

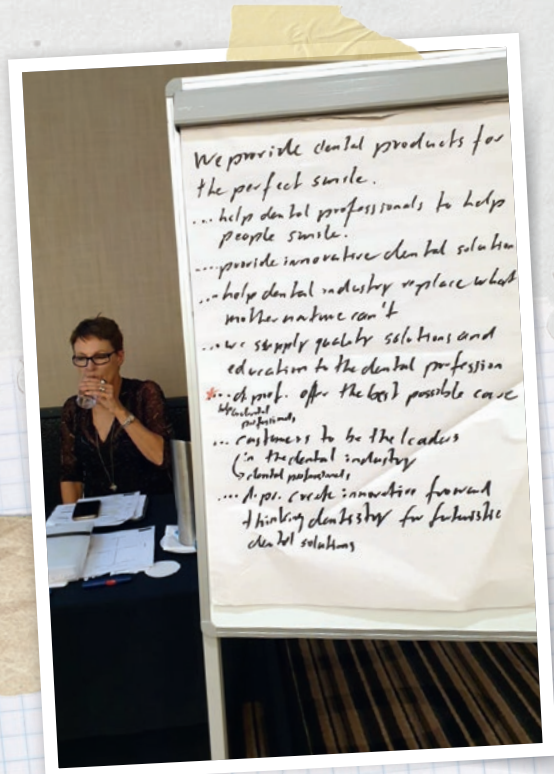
I am grateful for great storytelling.

I am grateful for people who love to learn and teaching people who love to learn.

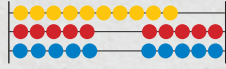
Looking forward to a great weekend.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 55

Today I am grateful for the ease with which children just get together and have adventures never having met before.

I am grateful for the sunshine and being able to read a book outside and not get cold.

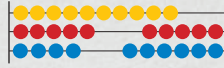
I am grateful for the sea. I love the smell, the sound and just being there.

Have a lovely weekend.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 56

I am grateful for the nanna nap I had this afternoon. So easy to just lie down and sleep.

I am grateful Alex is having a great time playing with all these new children at the park.

I am grateful for our wetsuits today when we went boogie boarding. Boy, it was cold in the water!

A wonderful and prosperous week to us all.

Love,

Sue xox



ALEX NAPPING ON  
THE DOG BED





## Day 57

Today I am grateful for the playfulness of children. I am envious too, in that, as much as I would like to play British bulldog on the inflatable bubble, it would not be correct for the children. Hmm, must work out how I can make this happen for adults!

I am grateful for healthy, fresh bread. Interesting when you go to places and white bread is all pervasive.

I am grateful for the gift of reading. Such a valuable skill. I can't imagine life without it. Yet many people are illiterate or semi literate. Education is so important.

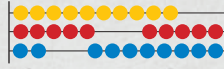
Take care everyone.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 58

Today I am grateful for mobile technology, given it allows us to connect with those people we love and with whom we wish to work.

I am grateful to go boogie boarding with the boys today in some good surf. Thank god for wetsuits!

I am grateful for the lovely food Georgia Denisenko made for us. Two dinners in a row. What a treat. Delicious.

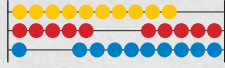
Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



↪ BOOGIE BOARDING AND SURFING



# Day 59

Today I am grateful Jobst got to do quite a bit of windsurfing and that some seasoned windsurfers gave him some excellent advice.

I am grateful for the opportunity to teach Harry how to play tennis and the game we had with Alex and Josh.

I am grateful for simple, tasty dinners.

Blessings to you all.

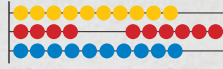
Love,

Sue xox

WINDSURFING







# Day 60

Today I am grateful for the fun time we all had at Laser Strike, which was located in an old underground coal mine. The five of us and two others made a great team, working together and winning out overall. Go the Schmalenbach boys, Harry and me!

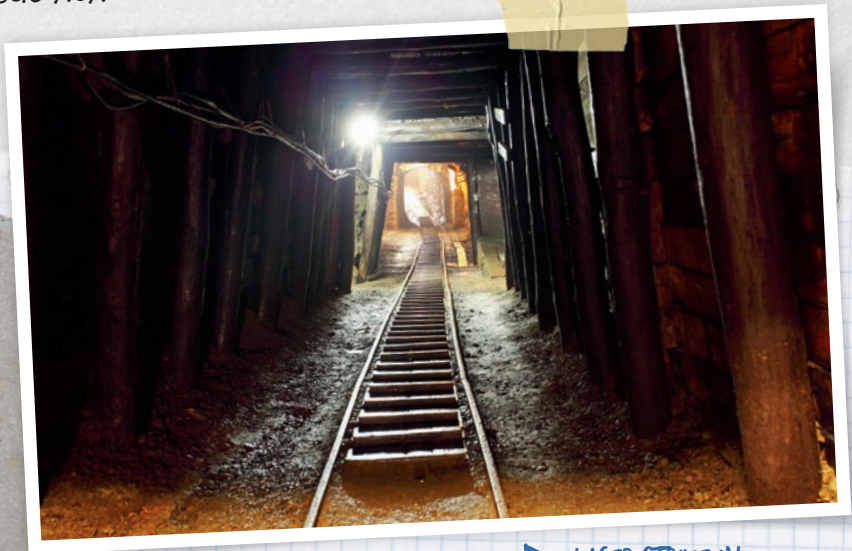
I am grateful for my fitness and desire to be young at heart so I can pitch in and have fun with the boys.

I am grateful for meaningful discussions with my family.

Blessings to you all.

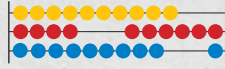
Love,

Sue xox



↖ LASER STRIKE IN  
A COAL MINE





# Day 61

Today I am grateful to sit quietly in the sun.  
Just sitting and enjoying the sun on my back.

I am grateful to help someone sort out some  
of their thinking around their business.

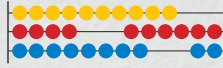
I am grateful the boys could get out and  
about after the last few rainy cold days.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 62

Today I am grateful for the awesome day in the surf with Jobst, Alex and Harry. We had such fun catching wave after wave together. Weather was great too.

I am grateful for chocolate. It really is yum.

I am grateful for the opportunity to teach Harry how to play tennis. He shows great promise.

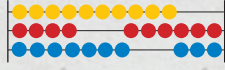
Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox







## Day 63

I am grateful for our home. It's so nice to come home to all that is familiar and of our own creation. Even if it means four loads of washing, cleaning out the fridge, sorting out all sorts of things and so on.

I am grateful for the lessons we get to learn every day whether we are giving or receiving them — as parent, child, friend, colleague and so on.

I am grateful for our safe and quick journey home today.

Wishing us all a prosperous and happy week ahead.

Love,

Sue xox



↪ DRIVING HOME -  
BEACH ROAD ALBERT  
PARK - SUNSET

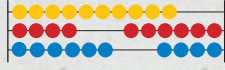




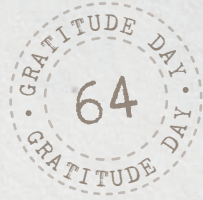
## Business backdrop

*Our Strategic Key Account Management program is really kicking goals. We've been fine tuning it and testing out some models and tools which seem to be getting real traction with clients and their analysis of strategic and major accounts. This analysis and 3D deep dive we have created into client accounts is working. Needs some tweaking but it's paying off.*

*On another note, there are some real 'Takers' out there. Looking to get our ideas for nothing. Making lots of promises but just full of BS. Welcome to sales and relationship development where you've got to wade through some real crap to find the gold. The good news is most people are decent; it's just the few you have to watch out for as you count your fingers after shaking their hands.*



# Day 64



I am grateful for the quick thinking and ingenuity of my team in preparation for tomorrow's event.

I am grateful I can speak my mind freely and openly.

I am grateful Alex did his very best to plan and begin his grade 6 graduation speech today.

Take care everyone.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 65



Today I am grateful I delivered a very comprehensive speech at a conference. Feedback was good with respect to the depth of knowledge and research I delivered.

I am grateful for the ABC's 'Mental As' initiative this week. What they are sharing and making luminous for us about mental health is incredible. I confess I have been finding it tough since my dad died, and a business associate betrayed me and our business around the same time. The shock of the betrayal and subsequent malicious behaviour overshadowed my father's death.

I am so grateful I had nothing to reconcile with my dad. No issues to address and nothing standing between us. It was the best way to say goodbye. It's only now that I find I really miss him because I couldn't really mourn his death with all I had to manage during that really challenging time. I am really teary and feeling overwhelmed tonight and I don't mind sharing this because I know people will understand.



Blessings to you all and make sure you hug the ones you love everyday.

Love,

Sue xox



DAD AND ME A FEW DAYS BEFORE HE DIED ↻





## Day 66

Today I am grateful for the five very fruitful client meetings we had. All in alignment. All on the same page. So gratifying!

I am grateful Jobst Schmalenbach is a wonderful cook. Such a treat every time — both the food and him.

I am grateful for a good night's sleep, which I'm looking forward to tonight.

Enjoy the lunar eclipse.

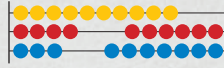
Love,

Sue xox



↻ EATING OUT - JOBST AND ALEX





# Day 67



I am grateful for living in a peaceful country. Even though people are feeling anxious because of world issues, we still remain peaceful.

I am grateful for the kindness of strangers because without that we could not exist.

I am grateful for the ABC's *Catalyst* programme tonight about friendship.

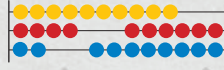
Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox







## Day 68

I am grateful to my friends for their love and support. Thank you.

I am grateful for 'Mental As'. What a wonderful initiative. We are all a bit mental.

I am grateful for a quiet Friday evening.

Here's to a lovely weekend for all. And prayers for some of my friends who are dealing with some really tough stuff.

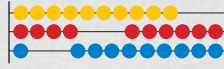
Love,

Sue xox



↳ QUITE SPACE AT  
THE BEACH





# Day 69



Today I am grateful for meaningful discussions with lovely women. Three in all today. Very gratifying.

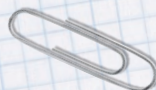
I am grateful for the effort Jobst put into finally clearing out all the extraneous stuff in the meditation room. I pitched in to help but it was his initiative. Ahh, we can be peaceful in that room now!

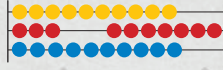
I am grateful for music. It is and can be many things, but most of all I find it soothing.

A good night's sleep to us all now that we have adapted to daylight savings.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 70

Today I am grateful for the delight I got in seeing my veggie garden revealing its lovely produce in beautiful heads of broccoli, an abundance of potatoes, parsley, coriander, lettuces and such. Just lovely!

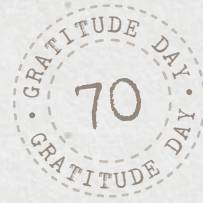
I am grateful for our home and the care we take in keeping it a place for family and sanctuary.

I am grateful for being able to list something every day to be grateful for even though some days lately have been challenging.

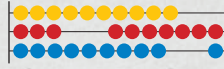
Here's to a prosperous and productive week for us all.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 71

I am grateful for human creativity and ingenuity in storytelling: movies, speeches, music, books, poems, paintings, sculpture, knitting, and so on. So many stories woven in time.

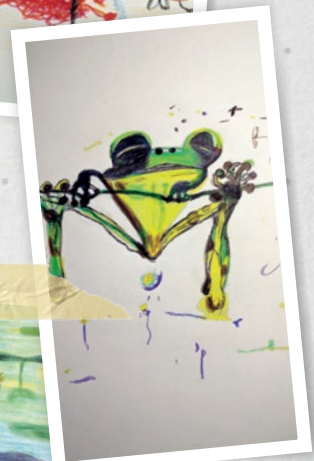
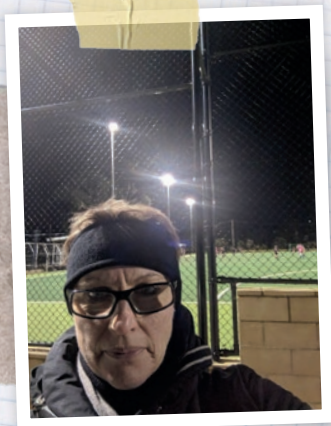
I am grateful for the gift of patience. Instead of rushing to finish something even if it is out of grasp at the moment, I am reminded of the Buddhist practice of cutting grass with a scythe for the sake of cutting grass. Rather than get frustrated at the monotony of a task, I can still find peace and solace in that task, knowing it will get me to my destination somehow.

I am grateful for warm clothes on a chilly night like tonight.

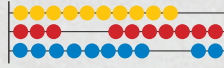
Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 72

I am grateful I got to meet with the lovely Esther Gretton, who graced us with her presence today.

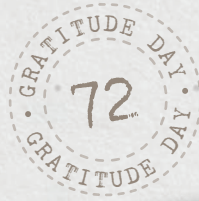
I am grateful for opportunities that come our way and being prepared to receive them with good grace.

I am grateful to my wonderful team at work. I am truly blessed to be working with them.

Stay warm and enjoy a peaceful night's sleep.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 73

Today I am grateful to see all the little plums bursting out on our tree. So lovely.

I am grateful to be able to play a good game of hockey tonight.

I am grateful for this gratitude exercise every day.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox







## Day 74

I am grateful for psychometric testing. If done correctly, it can really help you see what's beneath the bonnet of people: How people think, act, and respond. What drives and motivates them and what can make them unravel when under pressure. And how you can best work with them, coach and help them.

As Anais Nin says, *“We do not grow absolutely, chronologically. We grow sometimes in one dimension, and not in another; unevenly. We grow partially. We are relative. We are mature in one realm, childish in another. The past, present, and future mingle and pull us backward, forward, or fix us in the present. We are made up of layers, cells, constellations.”*

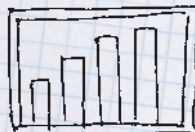
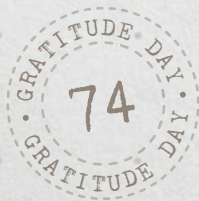
I am grateful for all the social media stuff we do. It pays dividends — even a webinar I did in 2009 came up trumps today.

I am grateful for the lovely new dinner Jobst cooked for us this evening. Just delicious.

Here's to a good night's sleep.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 75

Today I am grateful I am alive and can experience the world no matter how beautiful or challenging.

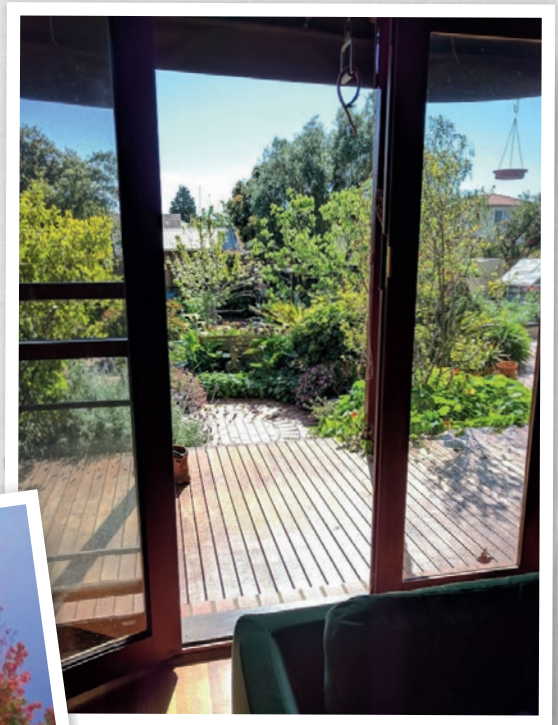
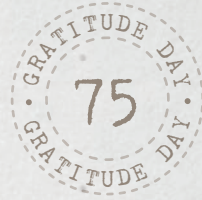
I am grateful for the heavy scent of jasmine in the air around our home.

I am grateful for seeing the afternoon sun bathing our lounge room. It was such a lovely scene.

Here's to a happy weekend.

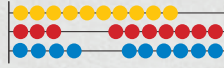
Love,

Sue xox



SUN IN THE   
LOUNGE ROOM





# Day 76

Today I am grateful for trusting my intuition. I listened to it for the benefit of someone else and it worked a treat.

I am grateful for good food and good company.

I am grateful for my lovely bed.

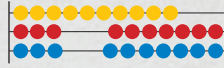
Good night to you all.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 77

Today I am grateful to be able to cook a delicious dinner using our own fresh broccoli, coriander, potatoes and chilli. So gratifying to cook with such fresh produce. Sesame, garlic, chilli fried broccoli. Mashed potatoes and fillet steak. For Alex, veggie sausages. Yum!

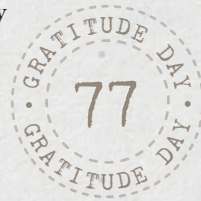
I am grateful to be able to play hockey with my family on a Sunday afternoon.

I am grateful to hang clothes on the line and fold dry clothes. I do find it a lovely form of meditation.

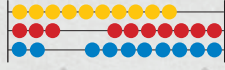
Here's to a lovely week for us all.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 78

Today I am grateful for my tenacity, just to hang in there even when it's tough.

I am grateful I can reach out to people in need and lend a hand.

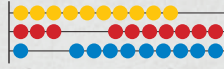
I am grateful Alex still likes to play balancing games with me. We are a very poor version of Cirque du Soleil!

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 79

Today I am grateful for my dedication to maintaining good health as it helps me to keep on keeping on.

I am grateful for the kindness and support of others.

I am grateful in allowing myself to be helped and receive support.

We are never alone.

Love,

Sue xox

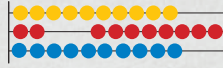




## Business backdrop

*So many moving parts. We need to map things and work out how to pull them together so we can create a real sales system and framework that accounts for everything in this area. How can we make a difference? How can we make ourselves stand apart from those 'sales gurus' selling silver bullets, broken promises and snake oil? We are determined to crack this system. We are so close. Ideas are certainly flowing and it is a team effort. While we look to crack this code, everyone is looking for new business opportunities. We are winning work but it takes real effort to get it on board. Well it's chins up and keep moving forward.*





# Day 80

Today I am grateful for team support and commitment to a greater purpose.

I am grateful my team is optimistic about the future and that we can achieve our goals.

I am grateful for quiet spaces of solitude for moments of reflection.

Love,

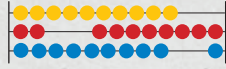
Sue xox



What we want is not blind optimism but flexible optimism — optimism with its eyes open. We must be able to use pessimism's keen sense of reality when we need it, but without having to dwell in its dark shadows.

Martin Seligman  
Learned Optimism

QUIET SPACES →



# Day 81

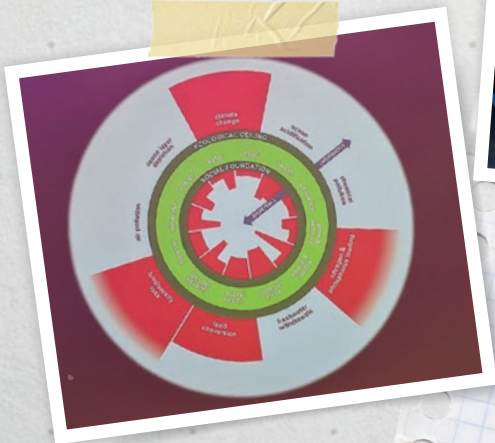
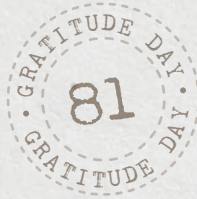
Today I am grateful for spending time in my garden, tending my vegetables and fruit trees.

I am grateful for the rain and the sunshine and the variable weather in Melbourne. I am never bored.

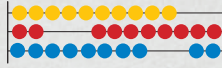
I am grateful for the growing awareness of climate change and our growing consciousness of how to live and work together.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 82

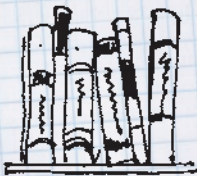
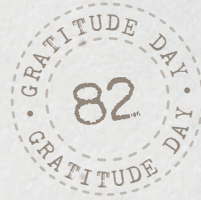
Today I am grateful for books. I love reading books of many types.

I am grateful for ideas, innovations and the ingenuity of humans to solve big problems.

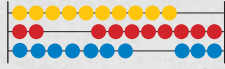
I am grateful to be able to share in family meals in a safe, warm environment.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 83

I am grateful for my determination to just keep hanging in there even when things seem really grim.

I am grateful for a warm bed and feeling safe in my home with my family.

I am grateful again for quiet spaces of solitude for moments of reflection.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 84

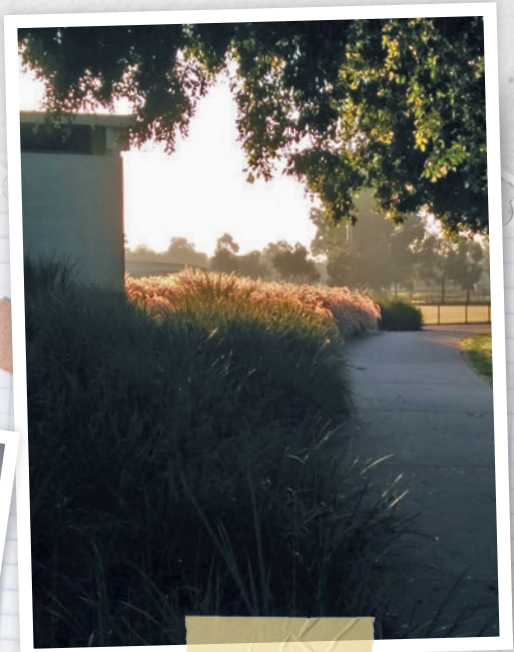
Today I am grateful for early morning walks in our local park — it's quiet, peaceful and beautiful when many are still asleep.

I am grateful my team is optimistic about the future and that we can achieve our goals.

I am grateful for quiet spaces of solitude for moments of reflection.

Love,

Sue xox



*"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity;  
an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."*







# Day 85

Today I am grateful for the benefits of hard work and commitment to our goals — it's paying off.

I am grateful for the knowledge and skills I have developed over the years; the list is long and expansive.

I am grateful for being a handy person to know.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 86

Today I am grateful for the ability to collaborate with people and come up with even better ideas than we can alone.

I am grateful for children's laughter — it is infectious and liberating.

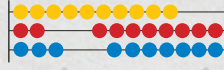
I am grateful for well-made and designed clothes and shoes and their ability to stand the test of time.

Love,

Sue xox



WELL MADE  
CLOTHES →



# Day 87



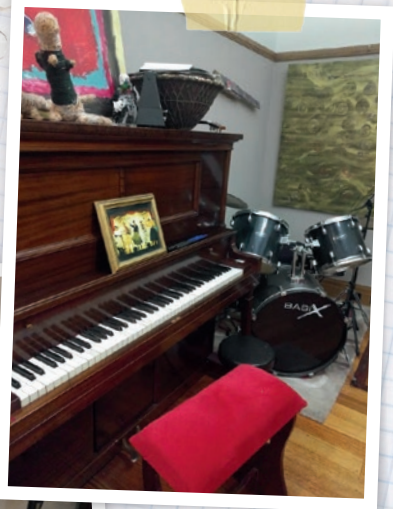
Today I am grateful for being able to play and sing music — it is very nurturing to my soul.

I am grateful I learned how to play the piano and read music when I was young; it's like learning a universal language you can take anywhere and share with anyone.

I am grateful for the radio and the ability to listen to a wide range of topics and music anywhere I go.

Love,

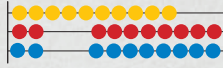
Sue xox



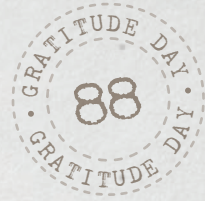
↖ MUSIC







# Day 88



Today I am grateful for the conversation I had in the car with Alex when he asked about how I felt about the bad things happening in the world like wars and Ebola. He said that if he had three wishes one of them would be for peace in the world.

I am grateful Alex is wishing for peace in the world. We could all do that a bit more I think.

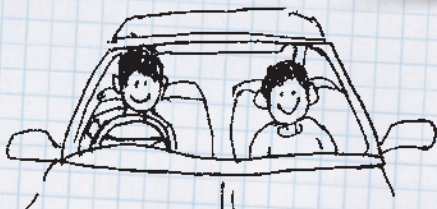
I am grateful for the opportunity to be in the car with my children and for the conversations we have. I love my children more than anything.

Let's all pray and wish for peace in the world.

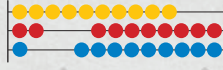


Love,

Sue xox







## Day 89

I am grateful to have the opportunity to reflect on my journey in business. Today I was interviewed for a new business that helps businesses grow and evolve. It's great to be a part of their team.

I am grateful for the chance to collaborate on ideas.

I am grateful for our close win at hockey tonight. A last minute goal sealed it for us.

Here's to a good night's sleep.

Love,

Sue xox



WINNING  
AT HOCKEY





# Day 90

Today I am grateful I can help people see what they can really do when they apply themselves.

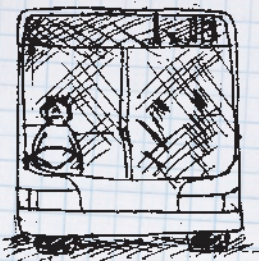
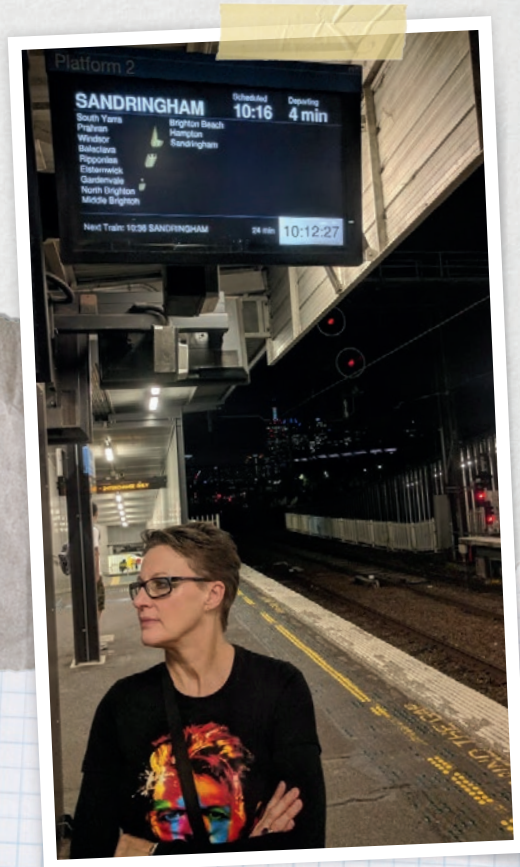
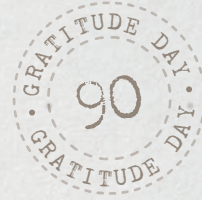
I am grateful for public transport. It is very useful and easy to use.

I am grateful for a good night's sleep.

Bon soir.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 91

Today I am grateful for all the things I have learnt. So many things to consider. I appreciate my patience and endeavours to make sense of many of these things.

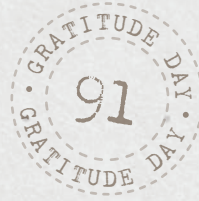
I am grateful for the sound of nature at night. It's mostly quiet but with little faint sounds. Very peaceful.

I am grateful for the lovely conversations I have with Alex in the car. Long may they continue.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 92

Today I am grateful we could celebrate our hockey club's achievements and spend time with my teammates and fellow parents as we appreciate the fun and comradery that team sport offers in abundance.

I am grateful for gardens and nature — they are essential balms for the soul.

I am grateful for the Greek goddess Artemis, aka Diana in Roman mythology and Wonder Woman in DC comics. She is my super hero.



Love,

Sue xox





## Day 93

Today I am grateful for surviving a rather tough and hot match of hockey this afternoon.

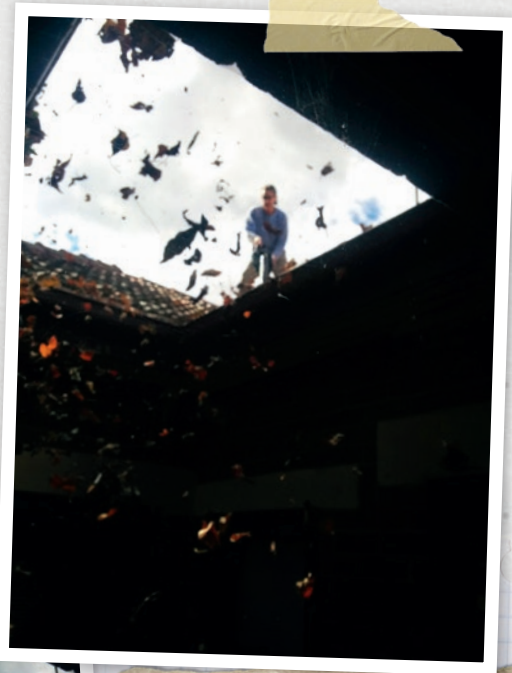
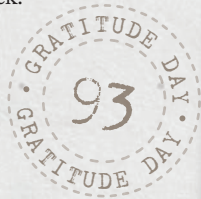
I am grateful for the simply delicious dinner Jobst made tonight. Zucchini and carrot fritters with avocado, lettuce and salsa.

I am grateful for our clean and uncluttered meditation room. I do like sitting in there and doing nothing.

Here's to a lovely week.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 94

Today I am grateful I went swimming with my pool buddies. Even when lightning and thunder threatened our session this morning we went indoors and ploughed our way in 31°C. Phew, it was hot but we got the kilometres done!

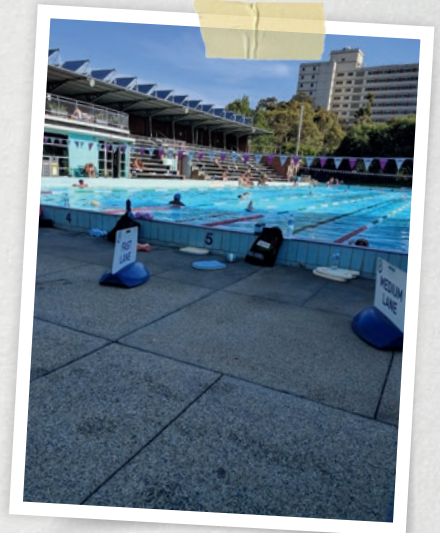
I am grateful for the beautiful rain that watered our gardens and filled our rain tanks.

I am grateful for families, especially when they rally around in very difficult times like the death of loved ones. Thinking of the Westaways at this very difficult time.

Blessings to us all.

Love,

Sue xox



↪ DAD WITH JOSH AND ALEX





## Day 95

Today I am grateful for bicarbonate of soda. It is the most awesome cleaning agent — hair, nails, bathroom, shoes, you name it, it's incredible!

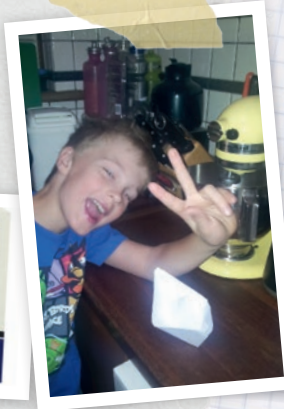
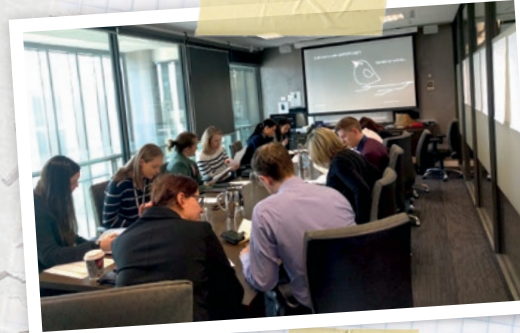
I am grateful for the opportunity to coach managers in how to coach their people. Especially willing, interested, lovely people.

I am grateful I could find common ground and share a laugh with someone I normally find very difficult to deal with.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 96

I am grateful for the funny puns and jokes we share at work. It's great to laugh with colleagues.

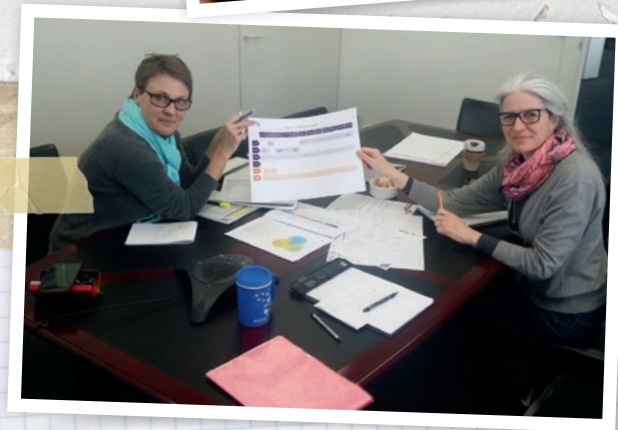
I am grateful for directness, frankness, openness and candour. It's refreshing in many ways.

I am grateful for being able to move on from the grief I have experienced over the last few months with my father's death, the betrayal by a work colleague, and so on. Too many things all piled on top of each other made for real compression and undue pressure. The pressure is easing and things are moving forward bit by bit, day by day. Practising acceptance and doing these gratitude diaries has been very helpful.

Thank you for all your support. It means a lot to me.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 97

Today I am grateful for warm, sunny days with a cool breeze.

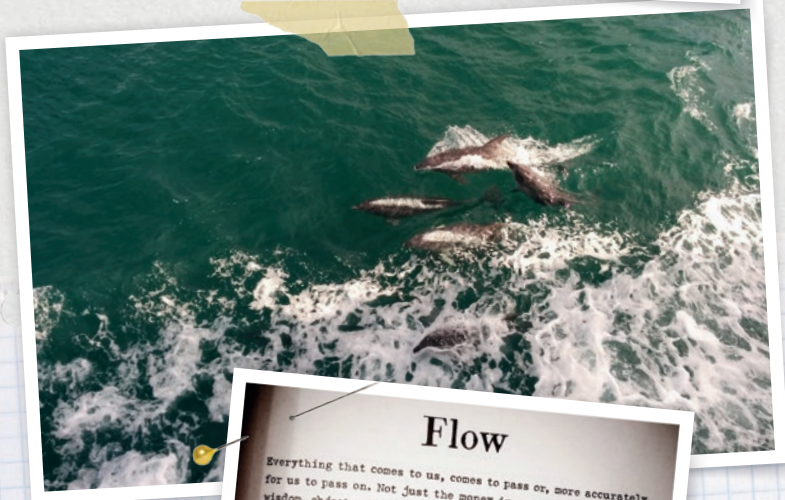
I am grateful to be able to binge watch a TV series with Jobst. A lovely distraction.

I am grateful for the movement, flow and ease of being yoga gives me.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



**Flow**

Everything that comes to us, comes to pass or, more accurately, for us to pass on. Not just the money in our pocket, but wisdom, objects, ideas, even opportunities, all come to us, so that, at the right moment, we can pass them on. This is called flow. Being in the flow means being aware that the river of life is flowing to us at every moment. Being in the flow means accepting whatever comes and putting it to good use, before passing it on. Going with the flow means allowing whatever comes to move on freely, without holding on in any way. If we do not pass on, we are trying to block the flow, and that's when we feel pressure in our life. Pressure is always self-inflicted. Every time you feel 'under pressure' look at what you need to release and to pass on to someone else. Once you do you can... relax... again.





# Day 98

Today I am grateful I get to do interesting work.

I am grateful for sobriety. It is so nice to wake up without any consequences from the night before.

I am grateful for knowing when to stay quiet. Although I need more practice.

A lovely evening to you all.

Love,

Sue xox





## Day 99

Today I am grateful for investing 99 days paying attention to the things I am grateful for. It's better than looking at all the things that are wrong.

I am grateful for a good sleep-in this morning.

I am grateful for being able to have choice. I'm aware I cannot control everything but I can choose how I respond and act. That is in my control.

A peaceful sleep to us all.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 100

Today I am grateful for 100 days of gratitude.

I am grateful for simple activities like washing clothes, hanging them on the line and then folding up fresh clothes.

I am grateful when I get into a clean, fresh bed. Especially when the bed linen has been line dried on a fresh, windy day.



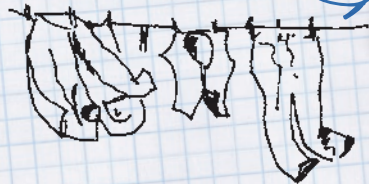
Here's to a prosperous week for us all.

Love,

Sue xox



BED LINEN ON THE LINE







# Day 101

I am grateful I can go swimming training  
this afternoon and feel strong and powerful.

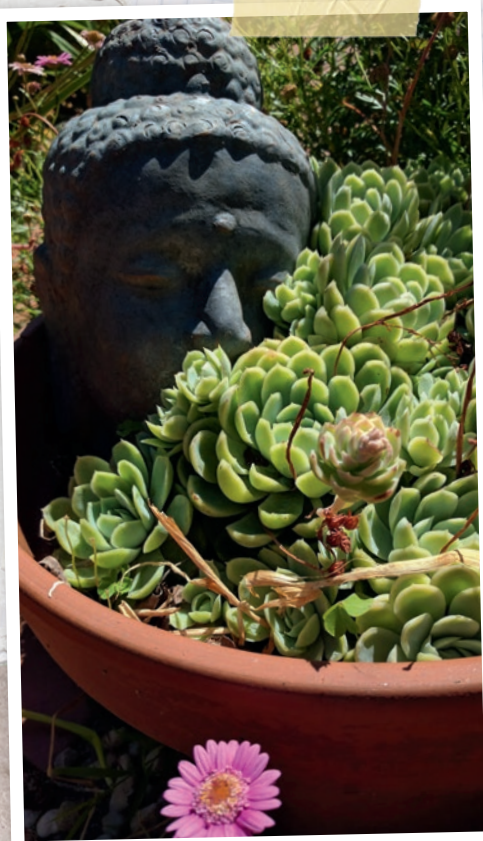
I am grateful to get to know  
people who are interested in  
working with me.

I am grateful for a good  
night's sleep.

Wishing you all a good  
night's sleep.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 102

Today I am grateful for the feeling my feet experience when I wear fluffy new sports socks and my runners. It feels so comforting!

I am grateful for some quiet time to think and reflect.

I am grateful for morning walks, hearing the birds sing, smelling the scents of trees and flowers, and the morning sunlight.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xoX



BIRDS SINGING ↗





# Day 103



Today I am grateful for all the lovely birthday wishes I received from my friends and family. Thank you, everyone. It has been very touching.

I am grateful for the support I receive from Jobst every day.

I am grateful for my lovely bed.

Blessings to you all. Here's to a prosperous and happy new year.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 104

Today I am grateful for patience. It helps me get through some difficult situations.

I am grateful for healthy food. It is very nourishing.

I am grateful for sleep. It is very restorative.

Sweet dreams.

Love,

Sue xox

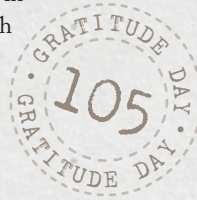


HEALTHY FOOD →



## Day 105

Today I am grateful to my mother, who persisted in her request to the cemetery trust in Geelong to have my father's ashes buried with his mother, who died when he was 18 years old. My mother said dad would be happy to be in the company of his mother again as they were inseparable when she was alive. Nice work, mum.



I am grateful for all the work we have put in over the last 20 years to create a complete sales system. My unofficial PhD.

I am grateful for simplicity; it unclutters my life. For instance, I have been unsubscribing from many emails this week and it feels good.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



← DAD'S GRAVE



MUM →





## Business backdrop

*We've done it! Rebecca and I have cracked the code for our Sales Strategy & Operations Framework. It's amazing. We can audit an entire sales strategy and operations framework and then produce amazing insights, information and results that clients can use to run their businesses better. This is epic. There is nothing like it in the world. We can now take it to market and change how people do sales strategy, manage sales operations and lead sales teams.*



# Day 106

Today I am grateful for long evening walks with Jobst. They are quiet and peaceful.

I am grateful for time to talk and be listened to, as it is usually me doing the questioning and listening in my daily work. Thank you, Lyn.

I am grateful for the cool change; it was a bit warm today.

Sweet dreams.

Love,

Sue xox



EVENING WALKS ↗





# Day 107



I am grateful for the good, clean game of hockey we had this afternoon. It was a beautiful, sunny but cool day. Perfect. Just perfect.

I am grateful for a clear and quiet space to work. I went to the office today and pumped out quite a bit of work and felt satisfied. I also cleared my head for the week. Nothing like starting the week ahead already.

I am grateful for the ease with which we can communicate our thoughts. It used to be done by handwritten letters, which I do miss, but I also like the immediacy of digital communication.

Here's to a lovely week for us all.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 108

Today I am grateful for the internet and how easily I can find and learn new information.

I am grateful I stood up for myself when I was 15-16 years of age and carried on my love of learning despite being ridiculed for it at school by my peers.

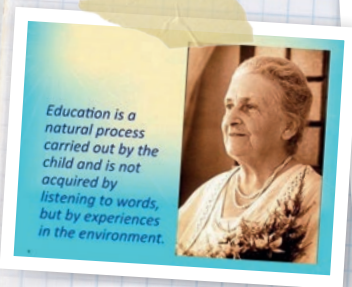
I am grateful for education — it is liberating for all.

Love,

Sue xox



ME AS A  
YOUNG  
SWIMMER







# Day 109



Today I am grateful for the opportunity to keep swimming. It is a great way to stay fit and strong. It is lovely to be in water, moving and floating. I do feel at home.

I am grateful to Jobst for his dedication to making our home a wonderful place to live.

I am grateful to be able work with the Victorian Institute of Sport athletes and the Athlete and Career Education program advisors.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox





## Day 110

Today I am grateful for the quality that is grit. It is written about in a great book called *Give and Take* by organisational psychologist Adam Grant. When people show grit they can often do amazing things. That is my intention at this rather challenging time.

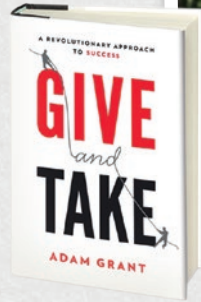
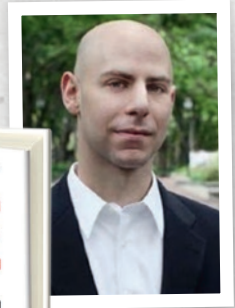
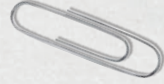
I am grateful for homemade muesli with yogurt and cranberries. Delicious.

I am grateful for opportunity.

Blessings to you all.

Cheers,

Sue xox







# Day 111

Today I am grateful for honest, frank and open conversations. Very refreshing.

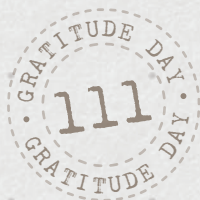
I am grateful for teamwork. Like in our hockey game tonight where we came from behind and drew our match.

I am grateful Jobst also plays hockey and enjoyed two games tonight in his vets competition.

Sweet dreams.

Love,

Sue xox



CONVERSATIONS





## Day 112

Today I am grateful for the wonderful Melbourne Montessori School speech night for graduates. What a night! So wonderful to see our beautiful children growing into beautiful young people. Speeches were great.

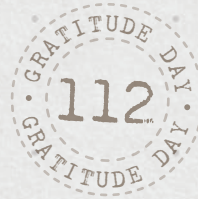
I am grateful for the privilege of being a mother/parent.

I am grateful for my mother's stamina and strength of character as she transitions in her life without Dad.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



↑  
DAD AND MUM ON  
THEIR HONEYMOON







# Day 113

Today I am grateful for the virtues of forgiveness and kindness. They help make each day more fruitful.

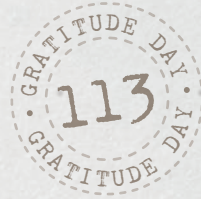
I am grateful for Alex's composure when he gave his graduate speech last night. Speaking clearly with confidence and clarity.

I am grateful for quiet times.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 114

Today I am grateful for rain. The beautiful sound of gentle, steady rain soaking our gardens and land. I pray for regular bouts of rain periodically over summer and autumn to avoid a drought.

I am grateful for our great 40th birthday carnival for our Melbourne Montessori School today.

I am grateful for Steve's wise advice and insights for Josh moving forward.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox

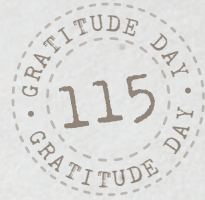


↻ RAIN SOAKED  
GARDEN





# Day 115



I am grateful for Jobst reminding me to smell the flowers and notice the lovely things that surround us each day.

I am grateful for Jobst's amazing goalkeeping skills today. He was so agile and skilful.

I am grateful for the way my sales articles/blogs are so easy to write. I find writing very therapeutic.

Here's to a thoughtful and inspiring week for us all.

Love,

Sue xox



FLOWERS IN THE GARDEN





# Day 116

Today I am grateful for the article in *The Age* about teaching children to be kind and other centric. It was most insightful.

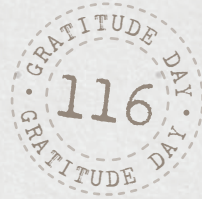
I am grateful for the lovely smells emanating from the flowering trees in our neighbourhood.

I am grateful for peaceful sleeps. I am getting more per week now.

Blessings to you all.

Cheers,

Sue xox



TEACHING  
CHILDREN TO  
BE KIND





# Day 117

Today I am grateful for my health and my family's health. We can never take our health for granted.

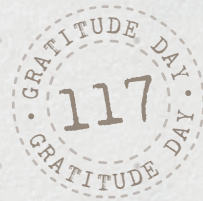
I am grateful I can sit with Alex on the couch and watch TV together even though he made me watch *Air Crash Investigation* and I have to get on a plane tomorrow. Hmm.

I am grateful for yoga. It is very comforting for me. I have been doing it since I was 13. That's 40 years. Amazing.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



↑ ALEX & ME  
WATCHING TV



# Day 118

Today I am grateful for all the lovely memories I have had in returning to Mildura. My mother was from Renmark, about an hour drive away, and quite a bit of our childhood holidays were spent up here. And Mildura is where I won my first big swimming gold medal, U12 100m butterfly.

I am grateful for quiet after a very busy, people intensive day.

I am grateful for the beautiful vista of the Murray river from the paddle boat tonight.

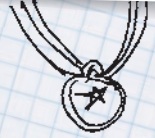
Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



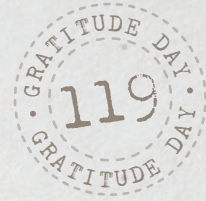
↑  
MURRAY  
RIVER







# Day 119



Today I am grateful to be part of a wonderful group of business women who were invited to a roundtable discussion with the Federal Minister for Small Business, Bruce Billson. It was a rewarding event. Amongst other things, we were asked the question: "If you were Prime Minister for a day, what would you do?"

I had a definite reply. *[See the following article I wrote about this two and half years later.]*



I am grateful to be home in my bed, ready for a decent night's sleep after my trip to Mildura.

I am grateful for the delicious Indian dinner Jobst cooked tonight. Just what the doctor ordered.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



DELICIOUS INDIAN  
DINNER A blue arrow pointing to the right, located at the end of the caption.



## If I were Prime Minister for a day

Imagine you were asked to complete the statement ‘If I were Prime Minister for a day...’ what would you say?

It is an intriguing task that gets you thinking. It got me thinking big. I’m sharing my response to that statement, and I encourage you to reflect on what you would say too. It can make all the difference to the choices we make in life and business.

In November 2014, I was invited by the then Federal Minister for Small Business, Bruce Billson, to attend the Women in Business Round Table event at the Commonwealth Offices, 4 Treasury Place, where the Federal Government Cabinet meet when in Melbourne. About 30 women from different walks of life and professions attended; with representatives from industry bodies, large corporates, not-for-profits and a smattering of women leading various innovative businesses, consulting firms and initiatives, such as myself.

Bruce wanted to hear our take on business in general, including small business and women in business. Everyone had the opportunity to speak and share their ideas and thoughts on said topics. There was much discussion.

However, the conversation ramped up when Bruce asked each of us to complete the following statement ‘If you were Prime Minister for a day...’



I was placed about three-quarters of the way around the table before my turn came to speak. So while waiting for my turn, I recalled the saying: “A politician only thinks about the next election; a statesman thinks about the next generation” and listened to each of the women share her answer. There were some excellent ideas, but what struck me was that many of them were focusing around eliminating red tape, middle management initiatives and short-term solutions. There was very little that was visionary or long term; no overarching purpose that could lead us to a better future. There was very little that was inspiring us to unite behind a bigger cause and calling us to work towards something better. In short, nothing statesman/woman-like.

As my turn neared, I was debating whether I should share my thoughts and my vision for our country. I also doubted myself. Should I speak up? Will I look like a fool if I do? I felt a mixture of trepidation, anxiety and excited anticipation. As background, I have had the privilege of working for over 35 years across many, many industries (government, semi-government, N4Ps, private and publicly listed organisations ranging from industrial, media, health, science, banking and finance, sport, education, manufacturing, professional services, etc.). This experience has given me many insights about how business works and taught me a lot about the many domains and systems we live and work within.

I also read and study a lot about science, psychology, sociology, ethics and philosophy, environment, business and so on. Whenever I express any views, opinions or insights, I always endeavour to do so with a solid base of evidence and facts underpinned by fairness and respect. I’ve also had a little bit of practice writing my fair share of letters to politicians expressing both my frustrations and visions, ideas and suggestions for our nation. As I contemplated my response, I was also acutely aware that I was far from declaring myself a stateswoman or someone who has it all worked out, but I knew I was not alone in my desire for a better future and better leadership for us all. I knew this was my OPPORTUNITY to say something and be heard.

An OPPORTUNITY presented itself, so I decided to go out on a limb and risk making a fool of myself.

**Here is my response:**

*If I were Prime Minister for a day, I would rethink the vision for Australia and stop our descent into third world status by relying only on mining and tourism for our future wealth. Here is the vision I would take to the people of Australia and invite them to participate in:*

*Become the world leader in renewable energy (solar, wind, geothermal, wave technology, etc.) and be the epicentre of technology innovation, education and high-*

*end manufacturing; be the world's role model in running an integrated renewable and clean energy society that can flourish and thrive now and for the long term.*

*Become the world leader in agriculture technology and production: we are 1 of 16 nations that exports food to the world, as is Israel, which is tiny by comparison. Israel uses amazing agricultural technology to grow food in arid environments. Australia is only scratching the surface in this area. Imagine what we could do if we harnessed our amazing talent and made this a reality?*

*Become the world leader in healthcare and care for the elderly and disabled. We have an amazing healthcare system combined with talent and ideas coming out of our universities, communities, start-ups and the CSIRO.*

*Become the world leader in multiculturalism and healthy democracies. We are already there regarding multiculturalism, but we need to make more of this by embracing this fantastic strength as a society. We need to be great role models and stop any descent into marginalisation. We need to continue to embrace difference and diversity as our strength as a nation and create integrated societies that can flourish and evolve to include everyone. (See the wonderful work of Kate Raworth on Doughnut Economics for more about this.)*

*Australia is like Goldilocks — not too small nor too large — population-wise, we are just the right size to make real and effective change and become the global role model for how to live as a sustainable, peaceful and prosperous society.*

*This is what I would do if I were Prime Minister for a day.*

I got a hearty round of applause, and when I looked at Bruce Billson, his eyes and mouth were wide open. Make of that what you will.

Having attended a recent Australian Leadership Roundtable 'The Future of Power: Future Leadership' led by Victor Pertou and the Future Business Generation launch event led by Parrys Raines, as well as joining the Future Business Council led by CEO James Wright and now as one of FBC's board members, I know there are many more people, much more skilled than myself, who want to and are creating a better future for us all.

So what would you do if you were Prime Minister for a day?

Go out on a limb. From there we'll see that proactively bringing positive initiatives, good ideas and solutions to society and engaging in productive, open, collaborative conversations can change our world for the better and land us the right opportunities to lead and live better every time.

Remember everybody lives by selling something.





# Day 120



Today I am grateful for music, especially how humans have created music from all sorts of instruments, creating so many intricate patterns on so many levels.

I am grateful I could catch up with our good friend Danny. We had a lovely evening all together. [Danny is an old swimming buddy of mine who has moved to Sydney with his family.]

I am grateful for the gift of love.

Looking forward to a joyful weekend.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 121

Today I am grateful for reminding myself that everything is impermanent. Hard to accept sometimes but nonetheless true.

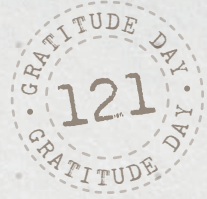
I am grateful for dates. They are delicious and very good for our systems.

I am grateful for Netflix as we can binge watch our favourite shows.

Off to bed now.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 122

Today I am grateful for the ABC and *Countdown*. I loved watching the history of *Countdown*, it brought back so many memories.

I am grateful for healthy food. How fortunate we are in this country to have access to fresh, beautiful food.

I am grateful to Jobst for pretty much everything.

Here's to a wonderful week.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 123

Today I am grateful for decisions. I like it when decisions are made and I can make decisions.

I am grateful for the Prahran pool being open again after its refurbishment.

I am grateful for my lovely, comfortable bed.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



SWIMMING SQUAD  
PRAHRAN POOL ↗





# Day 124

Today I am grateful for work ethic. Having a sound work ethic makes a huge difference on so many levels. Thanks to my team for their work ethic.

I am grateful for a good game of hockey. You can't think of anything else when you are playing hockey.

I am grateful for friendship and helping each other in life.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



↩  
FRIENDSHIPS



# Day 125

Today I am grateful for my sports glasses as they prevented me from breaking my nose in hockey tonight, having been struck in the nose with a ball.

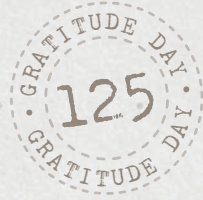
I am grateful for the good coaching and support I received tonight at our hockey match. Thanks, Simon.

I am grateful for the lovely variety of friends I have. It is lovely!

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 126



Today I am grateful for the lovely clash of spring flower colours in our backyard this fine evening.

I am grateful for home-cooked food.

I am grateful to find some space for peacefulness.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



HOME COOKED FOOD 





# Day 127

Today I am grateful for the way people work together at community sporting events, making it possible for our children to have fun.

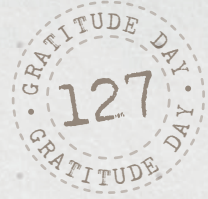
I am grateful for the virtues of compassion, kindness and love. They take up very little space yet are vast in their reach.

I am grateful for good comedies as it is so wonderful to laugh and laugh and laugh.

Here's to a lovely weekend.

Love,

Sue xox





## Business backdrop

*We have found a fantastic B2B salesperson who is tenacious, committed and focused. She has excellent experience and is not afraid of hard work. She knows what has happened to us and wants to help any way she can. It will be a great support to have someone working alongside me prospecting and bringing in new business. We have everything here to train and coach her to success.*



## Day 128

Today I am grateful for the little black bird who follows Jobst around the garden as we weed and garden. He comes up really close and picks out the worms and other delicacies.

In hindsight, I am so grateful that that man left our business earlier this year. It has been the best thing that has happened to us without question. A tough journey but so grateful it happened.

I am grateful for the strong partnership Jobst and I have on every level. Thank you, Jobst.

The early bird gets the worm.

Love,

Sue xox



← STRONG PARTNERSHIPS







# Day 129

I am grateful for air-con in the car. Today's hockey match was a scorcher. So hot. We were all exhausted afterwards.

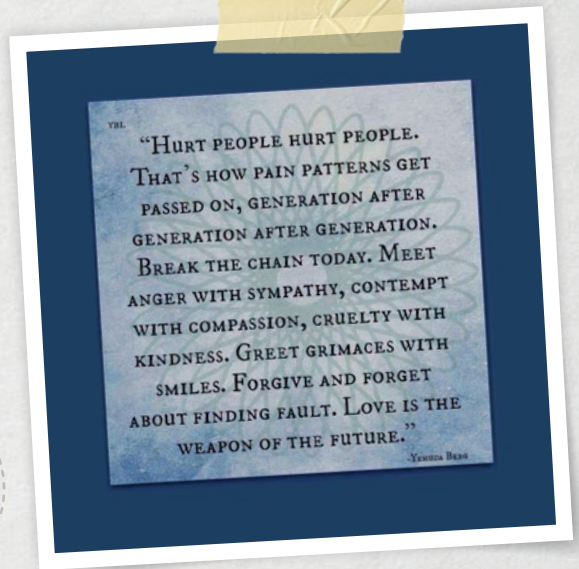
I am grateful for teamwork. Good communication, determination and focused effort pays off.

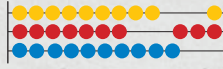
I am grateful for being able to talk things through with someone. It helps put things into perspective.

Here's to a great week ahead.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 130

Today I am grateful for my Chinese massage therapists. They are amazing. I feel so much better after my weekly session.

I am grateful for my swimming squad buddies and the swim sessions we share together.

I am grateful for well-made TV dramas.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 131



Today I am grateful for great acting and singing. I'm so enjoying watching the TV show *Cilla*. Just loving it!

I am grateful for morning walks in the park.

I am grateful for loving kindness.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox



 MORNING WALKS



# Day 132

Today I am grateful for enthusiasm and passion.

I am grateful when I hear my children whistling as they go about their day.

I am grateful for *The Good Wife*. I love watching this program.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 133

Today I am grateful Alex decided to play the drums at the school concert. He did very well and we are proud parents.

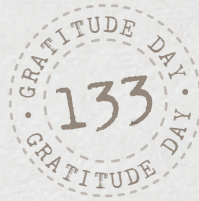
I am grateful for my bed tonight as I am rather tired.

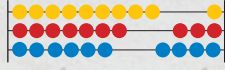
I am grateful for quiet moments.

Blessings to you all.

Love,

Sue xox





## Day 134

Today I am grateful for sticking to my guns and investing 20 years into researching and developing a complete sales system. My unofficial PhD in sales.

I am grateful for our cat Mowgli. He is quite nutty but very affectionate when he doesn't bite you.

I am grateful for fresh water. There is nothing as refreshing as a glass of fresh water.

Here's to a lovely weekend.

Love,

Sue xox



⚡ MOWGLI  
OUR CAT







# Day 135

Today I am grateful to the team of car washers who cleaned my car inside and out. Just lovely.

I am grateful for the kindness of the many strangers who make things for us to use and enjoy.

I am grateful for the delicious lamb curry Jobst cooked tonight.

Blessings to all the strangers out there who make our lives possible.

Love,

Sue xox





## Day 136

Today I am grateful for teamwork, determination and belief. We played the top hockey team (all 18 and under and top level players) in our mixed competition who whipped us last time 7-1. This time we stepped up and took them head on. We kept them honest all game and took it up to them. It took an awesome goal in the last two minutes for them to take the score from 1-1 to 2-1. By this time they were so desperate. They were very frustrated with us but we held it together. Although we lost, we did not lose our dignity. We had players aged 12, 16, 40+, 53 (me), 59 (Jobst), and the rest of our team in their Twenties and Thirties. Good day at the office, as they would say. Go team!

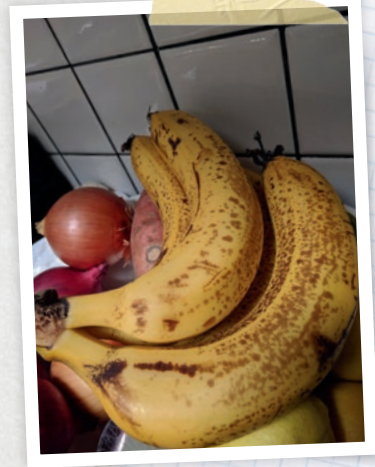
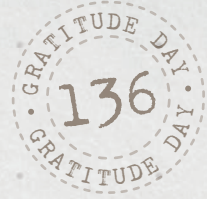
I am grateful for hockey as I cannot think of anything else when I am on the field. It allows me some relief from having to think about work and the business nearly every moment as we overcome a challenging year.

I am grateful for overripe bananas as they make for lovely banana bread. Yum.

Here's to a fruitful and positive week for us all.

Love,

Sue xox



LOVELY  
BANANA  
BREAD





## Business backdrop

*Our newish B2B salesperson, Minah, is working out a treat. She is getting out there like no one I have seen before. Not afraid to take 'No' for an answer. Her telephone manner is second to none. The relief it brings to me and the team knowing we have Minah really kicking goals is immense.*



## Day 137

Today, I am grateful for the opportunity to coach. It is a very rewarding experience.

I am grateful for how Jobst and I are building on our music collection across all genres — 8000 pieces and counting.

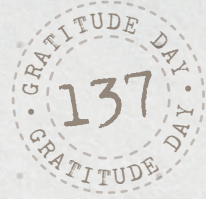
I am grateful for the skill of reflection. A very trusty ally on any occasion, happy or sad.

Speaking of which, I am grateful for Stella Young. She was an amazing woman whom we will all miss. Vale Stella Young.

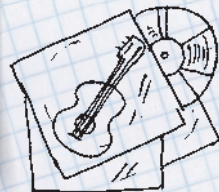
I trust you are all doing well. Hugs to you all.

Love,

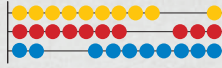
Sue xox



↶ MUSIC  
COLLECTION







# Day 138

Today, I am grateful to work in a quiet space, free of interruptions. Like sitting in my car while Alex went swimming this afternoon.

I am grateful for Jobst's amazing IT skills allowing me to work pretty much anywhere.

I am grateful for personal space.

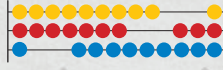
Here's to a peaceful and productive week.

Love,

Sue xox



SCHMALENBACH  
BOYS WORKING  
ON COMPUTERS



## Day 139

Today I am grateful for all those lab animals who sacrificed their lives for ours. I was just thinking how many have been used for our benefit. Very sad, I know. I couldn't do those lab tests at uni without that sacrifice.

I am grateful for our Wednesday night summer hockey team. We have played so well and with one match to go we've won the championship.

I am grateful for a lovely piece of chocolate.

Sweet dreams.

Love,

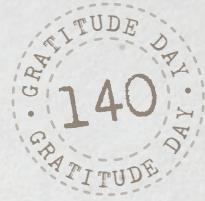
Sue xox







# Day 140



Today I am grateful for the effort many people are putting in to making our environment more sustainable. So much effort — I wish the politicians and big business would pay attention and support our endeavours.

I am grateful for our wonderful ABC.  
Always full of great content.

I am grateful for peacefulness.

Sweet dreams.

Love,

Sue xox





# Day 141

Today I am grateful for collaborative teamwork. We had an awesome outcome on a new process.

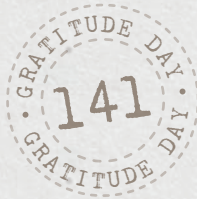
I am grateful for the great swimming session we had at squad this morning. Beautiful morning for swimming, hot air balloons above and good company in the pool. Lovely.

I am grateful for the new transition lenses in my new glasses.

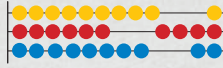
Peace be with us all.

Love,

Sue xox







# Day 142

Today I am grateful for family and sharing food, stories and love. Lovely day all round and reminds me how lucky we are to have technology that allows us to talk to our family and friends around the world as if they were here. Nice.

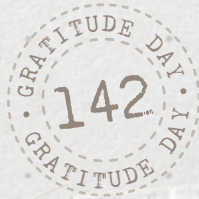
I am grateful for the beautiful weather today and how lovely our garden looked in all its glory.

I am grateful for a good night's sleep. Very refreshing. Here's to good friends.

Love,

Sue xox

*Season's greetings to you all and here's to a peaceful and prosperous 2015 for us all.*



## Business backdrop

*The bigger projects are emerging. The big one I was working on has paid off and we are starting that in February 2015. There are many more on the cards and with our coordinated and committed team approach combined with our clear value proposition, new sales system, innovative product suite, including our one-of-a-kind Sales Strategy & Operations Audit process, we are ready to tackle 2015 head on. I feel inspired by my team. Our creativity, teamwork and just dogged determination to be magnificent at what we do is wonderful to be a part of. Here's to an amazing future for us all.*



◀ Chapter 8 ▶

# A FINAL NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

I am extremely grateful that you took the time to bear witness to my personal journey as a human being at this time in my life.

That you sought to understand me and how I think and feel about life in general, about relationships of all kinds, success and failure, mourning loved ones, managing setbacks, dealing with betrayal, resentment and bitterness, recovery and resilience, love and kindness, the little things, the big things, drawing on creativity in times of crisis, and appreciating the mundane to the overwhelmingly beautiful.

You've read about the many things I am grateful for and shared in my 142 days of gratitude.

You've seen what useful resources, musings and insights my gratitude journey has unleashed, for me at least.

I hope that these resources, musings and insights, be they personal, professional or societal in nature, can be shared with many more people; that they positively impact your life on every level and help you and many others lead wonderful lives of gratitude too.

So, whenever you are ready, I encourage you to start your own journey of gratitude and help others to do the same.

It makes sense.

And for that I am grateful.

Love, Sue

Three things I'm grateful for today:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## ◀ APPENDIX ▶

For many years, my father had asked me to deliver his eulogy. I, of course, obliged when the time came. Fortunately, I had a large body of work to choose from. Why?

It was about 12 months before my father died that I decided to write a letter of gratitude to him. It was six A4 pages filled with as many memories I could recall about him and what he meant to our family and me.

I found the experience to be immensely satisfying and sent this letter to him. He was very grateful for this and treasured my letter, placing it in a shoebox marked 'Brian Barrett' along with other mementos and memories that were important to him.

At the time of his death, I prepared his eulogy, which was called 'Our letter of gratitude to you, Brian'. I wrote it in the second person speaking directly to him about what he meant to all of us — his family, friends, former employees and community. At his funeral, I read this letter of gratitude to the congregation. At the end, I told everyone that my father knew what I was saying about him because I had told him what he had meant to me before he had died, and I was using my original letter of gratitude notes to compose his eulogy. I then encouraged everyone to do the same and let those people who they want to express their feelings of gratitude toward know before it is too late.

Despite the darkness that surrounded me at the time, I felt very centred when writing and delivering my father's eulogy. It's as if I was in another world looking at an oasis of love and knew exactly how to show my gratitude.



Little did I know, I was going to begin writing my 142 days of gratitude diary in a few months' time.

Following is my father's eulogy. I share it with you for two reasons: (1) You may find inspiration in my father's life. (2) You may have to write a eulogy one day and have no idea how to do something like that. So I offer you this eulogy as an example of how you can write one.

I had never written a eulogy before, so I want to acknowledge my gratitude towards Greg Lindquist for inspiring me to write in the manner I did. You see, I grew up living next door to Greg. He was like an older brother to me, and several months before my father's funeral, I attended Greg's father's funeral where Greg delivered the eulogy.

Both eulogies are different, but Greg inspired me and gave me the confidence to know that I would do a good job too.

On the day of my father's funeral, it was very touching to receive many compliments and 'requests' to write other people's eulogies.

So here it is.

5 May 2014

## Memories of our life together

Dear Brian,

You will be very pleased to know that your friends and family are here. We are here to celebrate your life, share our stories about what you mean to us and send you on your way into this vast universe.

This is our letter of gratitude to you.

Brian, we know that you were born in Geelong on 22 March 1934, 80 years ago. You were the only child of Vera and Anthony Barrett and you were the apple of your mother's eye. She doted over you, showering you with unconditional love and opportunity. Your father, although more distant in demeanour, together with your mother gave you access to a good life and a good education at St Patrick's School and then St Joseph's College.

Between your parents and St Joey's you were introduced to the gift of sport. And boy did you take that gift and make the most of it. Brian, if I was to tell everyone about everything you achieved on the sporting stage I would be here for at least three hours. So I need to be succinct.

You were introduced to tennis, athletics, squash, cricket and golf in your early years and you excelled at every level in each of these sports. From taking a hat-trick as an off-spin bowler for St Joey's against Geelong Grammar, winning many athletics track events, to coming runner-up in the Victorian School Boys Tennis Championship when you were 16, where you came in as an unknown knocking off the top seed in the first round and then going through the rounds into the final. If it wasn't for the rain during the final match, which meant moving the game from grass (your favourite turf on every level) to en-tout-cas, you could have possibly won the title. Either way, anyone you played with or against could always guarantee you would bring your 'A' game.

Not one for second best, you practised and played your way to excellence whether that meant dropping your children off at swimming training at 5.45am and taking yourself down to the practice fairway to hit ball after ball or putting on the carpet at home. Even at 77 years of age you were hitting 77 off the stick.





You excelled as a sportsman — playing Melbourne Pennant Tennis for Geelong for many years and 'A' grade squash for Geelong City with teammates such as Polly Farmer, winning a pennant in 1952.

You joined the Geelong Golf Club in 1950 and played off a handicap of 1 representing the Club in Melbourne Pennant for 20 years and in doing so, along the way, defeating two reigning amateur Australian Champions. You earned the nickname 'Tiger', which seems prophetic given your golfing wins and awards, which are too numerous to mention here. I am sure the many golfers here today will recall you striding along the Geelong Golf Course, in your shorts and walk socks, whether playing or inspecting the fairways.

On the sporting bucket list of achievements, you got more than your fair share: three holes in one, a hat-trick, a 1 handicap and numerous championships in both individual and team events. A keen follower of the Geelong Football Club and life member of the social club, the three premierships in the last few years also added to your bucket list.

Not only a champion on the course and court, you were also actively involved in running and leading the Geelong Golf Club over many years. A member of the Social Committee for six years, including four years as chairman after which you were elected to the General Committee where you were a member for six years and Club Captain for two years in 1976-77. It was during this captaincy that you were the convener of the \$80,000 course watering system installation. In 1994 through to 1995, you were re-elected Captain.

During your stewardship, the Ladies Associate Membership were very grateful for your support in giving them a fair go. Not content at seeing the Ladies being treated as second rate citizens, you actively consulted with them, ensuring the women members were equals. Women such as Audrey Gipps want to acknowledge all the work you did to give them what they wanted and needed.

You were also the last person to be made a life member of the Geelong Golf Club. We know it broke your heart when the club was closed down but do not underestimate the many lives you touched with your sporting endeavours. Your parents, your school, all your sporting mates and spectators, your family and friends can't thank you enough for the pleasure and joy you brought us in your many achievements on and off the sporting arena. We are all so very proud of you.



So how could we possibly summarise this part of your life? Well, it boils down to two key qualities: First, a mastery mindset — always aiming to do and be your best. Constantly practising, always moving closer to perfection — knowing that it was illusory, impossible to achieve, but none the less, like top performers everywhere, you kept aiming high, knowing that focused effort and hard work is what makes a person accomplished. You always encouraged us to do and be our best. You were a great role model.

The second quality is fairness. Straight and true, you were the epitome of sportsmanship — the aspiration or ethos that a sport will be enjoyed for its own sake, with proper consideration for fairness, ethics, respect, and a sense of fellowship with one's competitors. That was you, Brian, to a tee.

These qualities and others carried over into all aspects of your life. Upon finishing your schooling at St Joseph's, you started your career in the building industry in January 1950, where you completed a building and construction course at the Gordon Technical School whilst working with a local building firm for five years on many projects, including the big wheat silos in Stawell.

Unfortunately, during this period your beloved mother, Vera, died when you were 18. Broken hearted, your best mates, the Bell brothers, took you on a road trip to Queensland to help you recover. Your mates meant a lot to you and you to them, and even though you were an only child, you were often invited over to share dinner with their families as the 'adopted' son. During these years you were sought after on many fronts — not just sport. Many young women fancied you — this handsome, young, athletic man riding around on the very first BSA Golden Flash motorcycle in Geelong. But I digress. I would like to focus on your business career and achievements now...

In 1955, you joined your father's business, Corio Timber Company, where you worked in many facets of the business. You grew into a very knowledgeable and experienced businessman working respectfully with clients, suppliers, staff and peers. Even to this day, I meet people in business who know of you and recall you as an honest, reliable and very respected businessman. That is no mean feat in a business world often littered with self-interest and greed.

You were actively involved in the business community too as a member of the Geelong Business Men's club for 18 years, with three years on the committee as well as the international forest products industry group, the Hoo-Hoo organisation.



1. Dad as a 3 year old with his mother.
2. Dad and Mum on their wedding day.
3. Dad as a young tennis player.







1. Dad at work.
2. Dad eating Christmas dinner.
3. Dad playing golf
4. Dad giving a speech at Geelong Golf Club

You ran the Corio Timber Company for 35 years until your health became such an issue that you needed to exit. Fortunately, you were able to recover enough to work part-time, by which time you were sought after for your knowledge, expertise and connections, working first for Malishev's and then Belmont Timber until your full retirement.

This leads me to highlight the third key quality that you epitomise — integrity. Integrity is a personal choice, an uncompromising and predictably consistent commitment to honour, moral, ethical, spiritual and artistic values and principles. You were always reminding us to do the right thing in business (and in life) even if it meant that you lost a deal. No deal was worth winning if it wasn't done honestly, you said. Your advice to your grandsons before you died was 'don't get into trouble and always do the right thing. Be honest in your dealings with people wherever you may go.' You have been my all-time best role model for what epitomised excellence in sales and ethical business practice. Way ahead of your time, you were making sure that business and sales were always about the fair exchange of value. We intend to do our best to carry on your legacy.

That now leads me to the final chapter in your life — your family and friends. As I mentioned previously, you were hot property in the 1950s, but someone entered your life in 1956 who would sweep you off your feet. This beautiful young woman walked into the Palais Dance venue one Saturday night in Geelong.

Looking handsome in your Geelong Golf Club blazer having just played in a competition that day, it was love at first sight. After a courtship that saw you drive many times to Melbourne and back, you married Margaret Thompson on 26 October 1957. This was the beginning of a 56-and-a-half year partnership built on love and loyalty.

Building your first home together at 8 Edgecombe Street, you finally started your own family in 1961 with four children, three girls and a boy, arriving in quick succession in just under five years. Alongside this you developed many firm, fast and longstanding friendships with neighbours, many of whom are here today. We know you are grateful for their loyal friendship, helping each other out and enjoying many good times together on your life's journey.

As children, we wanted for nothing. You and mum made sure we were given every opportunity to learn, grow and flourish. Yet it was done with modesty.





1. Dad at Alex's 1st birthday party.
2. Dad, me, the boys and Mum at Chistmas 2006.
3. Dad with Alex and Josh at his last Christmas.
4. Dad, Alex and Josh 4 weeks before he died.
5. Dad, mum, Louise and me in hospital a few days before he died.



You were always fair and firm and never sexist, always treating us as people first and foremost. And you were lots of fun too. I am sure that mum sometimes thought she had five children, not four, when we used to play with you.

Here are some of the fond memories my sisters, Alison and Louise, and my brother Neil and I have about our time growing up with you:

- Teaching us how to drive the car up Edgecombe Street. First sitting on your lap and then progressing to actually driving when we could see over the dashboard on the back blocks.
- Your storytelling while on road trips, which often felt like Indiana Jones movies as we would snake our way along narrow roads dicing with death on the Wild Dog Track and through the Otways.
- Sunday mornings escaping the piranhas and sharks from around your bed.
- World Championship Wrestling where you would have all four of us trying to bring you to the floor yet we would somehow be the ones who would end up squashed in a pile.
- Teaching us how to ride our bikes or use hand tools to make things or giving us advice on how to run and win cross country races and of course the Caramello Koalas on a Friday night.
- Learning how to play snooker with you and the Lindquists — it was as if we were all part of one big family.
- Neil and I do recall rescuing you from the surf at the Gold Coast on holiday, and whilst you were a great sportsman, you were no swimmer.
- Swimming training and competitions: For many years you would dedicate yourself to getting up early every day to take us swimming and then take us to competitions all around Victoria.
- Teaching us how to play tennis and how to deal with your spin serves, which we could never return, or the really fast serves that we couldn't even see. But then you would always make sure we got enough soft serves so we could keep on playing.



- And how we must always have a firm handshake: no wet fish handshakes, you always said.
- And how could we forget your famous Chinese burns? It brings back so many funny memories and we love how you did this with your grandsons, even in your final days with us.

These are just some of the many childhood memories we have of you. Your three grandsons, Nathan, Josh and Alex have also benefited from your love and kindness. Enjoying being recipients and participants of your fun and games including endless games of snooker. I hope they can treasure their memories of you too.

As for your daughter-in-law, Marlene, and sons-in-law Peter and Jobst, you loved them as if they were your own children. As Jobst said, you were the best father-in-law he could have ever had. I am sure Marlene and Peter would concur. And of course the many friends you have — they too could add many hours of narrative and memories of your derring-do to this presentation.

Many of us have been on the journey with you, Brian, for some time now. So when you first became visibly ill with your heart condition around 1983 we were all very scared that we would lose you but, like the Tiger that is your nickname, you showed tremendous courage to pull through and survive and then thrive.

You were also most fortunate to be born in an era of great medical advances. At final count, Brian, you racked up 45 operations in your life and Mum was always there by your side, showing tremendous courage to support you too, especially in your final days. As Jobst said, he had the privilege to see you on your death bed surrounded by the love of your wife — tears in her eyes yet a warm, loving smile when she looked at you. You two, indeed, made a great partnership.

So in conclusion, your three final qualities I wish to highlight are commitment, gratitude and love.

Commitment to your family and friends; commitment to developing yours and other peoples' gifts; and commitment to leading an honourable life even in the face of adversity.

Gratitude for a life well lived. You appreciated every opportunity that was given to you. The lovely nursing staff at Grace McKellar palliative care unit commented on how thankful you always were for everything they did for you even when you were facing death. They said how wonderful it was to look after such a beautiful person.

And finally, love. You loved life and you loved us all. That we know and in your final weeks you got to tell many people, especially your family how much you loved them and, in turn, we were able to tell you how much we loved you. That is what matters... Love is the centre of our being. Nurtured by commitment and seasoned by kindness, love is our greatest gift.

Brian, we love you and thank you from the bottom of our hearts for being in our lives and we will miss you terribly, but please know that your legacy is being carried forward in the lives of your wife, children, grandchildren, friends and many others when we share your stories about how to live an honourable life. You have made a difference to many people's lives and for that we are grateful.

In closing, I want to let you all know that the many ingredients of this eulogy were written last year in a six-page letter I gave to Brian so he would know how we felt about him before he died. Therefore I encourage everyone here to hug one another and tell each other what you mean to each other before it is too late. And while you are doing that, why not give each other a firm handshake and Chinese burn in honour of Brian.

Thank you.



## READ WHAT OTHERS HAVE TO SAY...

Sue has been a true pioneer in professional development and resource innovation in the sales and business development industry. Her overarching philosophy has been ethical sales and selling better. Sadly, not something that is very common these days! Her commitment, passion, energy, honesty and values based business methodology has stood the test of time.

In addition to managing her own business, Sue has worked 'pro bono' since 1991 with some of Australia's best Olympic and Paralympic athletes supporting them in personal brand and image improvement at the Victorian Institute of Sport.

In summary, Sue has been an 'elite performer' all of her life. I absolutely loved this gratitude memoir. *Ignis Aurum Probat* — fire tests gold — Sue has been tested and come out pure gold!

—**Bernadette Sierakowski**,  
*Performance Excellence Coordinator,*  
*Victorian Institute of Sport*

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There are not many people in this world like Sue Barrett. Sue energises a room when she walks in — this was the case during our first session at the Victorian Institute of Sport Barrett Business Program. Sue combines evidence and practice in a way that relates directly to you and helps spark meaningful change. This is extremely powerful when combined with a delightful sense of humour and the ability to form sincere connections. Sue

has captured these key ingredients in her book *142 Days of Gratitude That Changed My Life Forever*. A mix of science, neuroplasticity, vulnerability, and desire to help others, all shine through strongly and provide for an enjoyable read that I can highly recommend. It's a legs up from me!

—**Hannah Macdougall, PhD**, *dual Paralympian and medallist, motivational speaker, athlete well-being expert, community engagement & development at Victoria State Emergency Service*

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Sue has made the art of incorporating gratitude into one's daily life accessible and real in her journey through 142 days of being grateful for three things daily. Her account of this journey shows her dedication to the ethics of her business practice, her love for humanity and belief in more sustainable, holistic methodologies for our future. Being grateful is now part of my life.

—**Victoria Edgar**, *award-winning jeweller, silversmith and maker of wearable art*

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Sue Barrett's *142 Days of Gratitude* is a reflection on what we should all aspire to. Having known Sue since 2014, I say with conviction that she is an individual who sees life as more than just glass half full — her glass is overflowing! I hope others who read this book are as inspired as I was.

—**Fiona Fox**, *retail & interior designer and fellow hockey parent*

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Having first met Sue whilst I was on scholarship with the Victorian Institute of Sport, I was a little surprised to read the background of her story *142 Days of Gratitude That Changed My Life Forever*. The reason for my surprise is because I was of the firm belief Sue was living a brilliant life, and why would anyone want to change that. This is the very essence of why this book is so important; because life changes and being the person we want to be often takes work. With a simple layout and page after page of thought-provoking content, *142 Days of Gratitude* is a real winner. I'm grateful Sue has created this book and highly recommend it. Congrats Sue, you nailed it!

— **Don Elgin**, *motivational speaker, author, athlete at four World Championships, three Paralympic Games, two World Cups and a Commonwealth Games*

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Thoughtful, insightful and timely. Sue's journey of gratitude helps us to think bigger and more kindly about people and the world. An honest account of how she chose the practice of gratitude for recalibrating her perspective and recognising that the good, bad and the ugly are all part of living. Her gratitude diary is especially illuminating, and one realises the joy of recognising the 'little things' in a busy world. I am grateful for Sue's story, and it was a joy to follow her on her 142-day journey. Thank you.

— **Kate Caldecott**, *principal Kate Caldecott & Associates, chief operating officer at ThinkTilt and fellow Montessori parent*

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Having developed and delivered leadership advancement programs around the world for almost three decades, I know all too well how brilliant careers can be derailed. I've seen gifted leaders become disillusioned and let go of their aspirations, or worse, carry on while letting go of their ideals. Sue Barrett's clear and positive take on being grateful is a fundamental practice among those who weather their storms, continue their climb, and have the impact they seek.

Sue provides a poignant and very personal story of how gratitude changed her life. When knocked down and too tired to get back up, focus on what's still working. When experiencing self-doubt, even depression, focus on what still makes you smile. Sue's journey through *142 Days of Gratitude* reveals a myriad of acknowledgments, each one a small step toward health and prosperity, each one a defiant symbol of resilience.

Sue's story highlights how showing gratitude is an act of humility, a positive statement about what helps us get through a tough day. Ultimately, the practice of being grateful hones a leader's 'true north', strengthens a leader's resolve to strive toward it, and prepares a leader to rise again following the inevitable setbacks that punctuate everyone's life.

I am grateful to Sue for sharing her experience and writing this book about being grateful.

— **Jonathan Matheny**, *PhD, Director of Program Development, Leadership and Executive Education, Monash Business School, Monash University*

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I was blessed to be raised by the world's most positive father. I grew up with the power of positive thinking. Positivity has been the cornerstone of my 20+ years of sales/people coaching and my life. I have survived a divorce, a redundancy, the loss of dear friends and the passing of my parents. I have witnessed friends survive heart attacks and prayed for those who have been diagnosed with terminal illnesses. I have managed to thrive through all of this. I know I am resilient.

However, until I read *142 Days of Gratitude That Changed My Life Forever*, I wasn't really aware as to the why or how. I knew it was about positivity, belief and optimism. But I hadn't latched onto the science of gratitude. Sue's book gave me the answers.

Every now and then, something makes sense. It validates. And, if you're lucky, it inspires! That's *142 Days of Gratitude*. I am grateful for the friends and loved ones who surround me. I am grateful for my ingrained positivity. I am grateful to Sue Barrett for making it make sense. And 'I'm in too!' — I cannot wait to get started by capturing my own days of gratitude!

— **Don Sutherland**, *sales leader, coach, father and friend*

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Every so often, you come across a thought, a word, or a deed from someone that has a profound impact on your life. Sue provided me with all three in the form of her book *142 Days of Gratitude*. Her message is powerful because it is pure and authentic.

I have benefited immensely from her reflections. Through her story, I remembered that we are all faced with challenges in our communities, our professional lives, our families. We all have a past that has shaped our views of

the world, a present that we are striving to improve and hopes for the future. It is easy to lose touch with ourselves and all that we have to be thankful for today.

For me, 142 days symbolises continuity. Sue taught me that self-transformation is achieved through constant effort, such as her consistent work ethic through Barrett Consulting for decades which has generated enormous social and commercial value since its inception. Through the practice of gratitude, we can transform ourselves. Once we are on the path of self-transformation, we can help to impact the world and those around us positively.

I hope to use gratitude to bring people together. In business, and in the various communities I am a part of. And I have Sue to thank for this valuable lesson.

— **Raza Rizwan**, *advisor on Leadership & Strategy, and community leader*

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Anyone who knows Sue Barrett will not be surprised by this subject matter. Here is an invitation to peer into the heart of a spark.

— **Steve Watson**, *Melbourne Montessori Senior School Teacher*

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A touching and poignant journey into deep gratitude which mothers especially can readily identify with. This lovely self-help manual causes you to reflect on your own levels of gratitude all over again. From an educational standpoint, it is informative and interesting to have the scientific and historical aspects of gratitude collated by Sue and it would be very useful as a model of how to create your own gratitude journal for students of all ages.

**Gay Wales**, *Principal, Melbourne Montessori School*

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## About the Author

Sue Barrett is the founder and CEO of Barrett Consulting Group (est. 1995), a business consulting and education firm specialising in sales strategy, process, education and culture, and the Selling Better Movement. Sue lives by the philosophy that selling is everybody's business and everybody lives by selling something. She is the architect of the world class Selling Better Operating System & Philosophy. Her vision is for everybody to practise ethical, human-centred selling for a fair, sustainable and prosperous world.

Sue was the 1997 Winner of the Telstra & Victorian Government Small Business Award, an inductee in the Business Women's Hall of Fame 2000, and finalist in 1998 and 2001 Telstra Business Woman of the Year Awards. She is one of the most authoritative thought leaders reporting on and working in the selling profession in Australia and the world today.

Working as a sales strategist, writer, philosopher, keynote speaker, sales trainer, coach and selling better activist, Sue has published over 600 sales articles in the mainstream press, written 21 e-books on sales, and was instrumental in putting sales on the academic curriculum as a Diploma course — the first-ever such course offered by an Australian university. She produces the 'must read' Annual 12 Sales Trends Report. Sue and her team are committed to helping business leaders deliver selling better strategies and helping people and businesses sell better with healthier margins and less risk. Sue is also a Board Member of the Future Business Council.

Sue lives in Melbourne with her partner Jobst and sons Alex and Josh. She loves swimming, hockey and singing and dancing to David Bowie, Queen and pretty much anything that lifts our spirits.

In the space of a few weeks, Sue Barrett lost her dad and had her trust betrayed by a person who left her business and took a deal worth \$300,000 along with them.

In mourning and trying to rescue her business, being grateful was far from her mind. That is until a friend prompted her to do a gratitude diary exercise on Facebook for five days. She would continue to write her diary for 142 days.

This book is about how this daily practice helped her overcome challenging times and opened her heart and mind to the profound power of gratitude as a force for personal and social good.

“Loaded with insight, Sue Barrett’s treatise on the positive power of gratitude delivers a masterclass in resilience.”

— **Jonathan Matheny, PhD**, *Director of Program Development, Leadership and Executive Education, Monash Business School, Monash University*

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“I absolutely loved this gratitude memoir. *Ignis Aurum Probat* — ‘for fire tests gold’ — Sue has been tested and come out pure gold!”

— **Bernadette Sierakowski**, *Performance Excellence Coordinator, Victorian Institute of Sport*

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“Thoughtful, insightful and timely. Sue’s journey of gratitude helps us to think bigger and more kindly about people and the world.”

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“A mix of science, neuroplasticity, vulnerability, and desire to help others, all shine through strongly.”

— **Hannah Macdougall, PhD**, *dual Paralympian and medallist, motivational speaker, athlete well-being expert, community engagement & development at Victoria State Emergency Service*

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— **Raza Rizwan**, *advisor on Leadership & Strategy, engineer and community leader*

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everybody lives by selling something

