

AWARD WINNING

panorama

People share their stories of mental health recovery in work and life

Monthly Issue **June #101C**



What We Are
is What We Do

Still Having
a Lot to Offer

Lived Experience
to Drive Employment
Transformation



Where mental wellbeing thrives

NDIS PROVIDER
— SINCE 2013 —



Where mental wellbeing thrives

About us

Flourish Australia is committed to walking beside people with a lived experience of mental health issues as they progress along their recovery journeys. We passionately believe in mental health recovery, and are committed to providing the best possible support and encouragement to people so they can achieve their recovery goals. We offer this help across all 60+ of our services in New South Wales, Queensland, and Australian Capital Territory.

Contact Flourish Australia!

1300 779 270 (option1) or
flourishaustralia.org.au

Chair: Judi Higgin
Chief Executive Officer: Mark Orr AM
Chief Development Officer: Peter Neilson

About Panorama

Founded in 1996 in one of Flourish Australia's predecessor organisations (PRA), Panorama has grown to become a lifestyle magazine dedicated to informing and encouraging the recovery journey of readers. Panorama is written, designed and produced almost entirely by people with a lived experience of mental health issues.

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COVER: Tayla Jeffrey, Team Coordinator at Buckingham House, with Hospitality student San.

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Debby accesses Flourish Australia services on the Sunshine Coast

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Tricia and Jen are members of the Community Advisory Council

Sam Lane is a renowned sports broadcaster, and an Ambassador of Flourish Australia

Thanks to Flourish Australia staff Abby Boardman, Prue Jeffrey, Sarah Robertson, Ben Haley, Zoe Sexton, Cassandra Williams, Caitlin Deverell, Andre Maddocks, George Czako.

Contributions are welcome!

WE PROVIDE PRACTICAL

Care for Carers



Flourish Australia is committed to working closely with families and carers in their important role of supporting people close to them with a lived experience of a mental health issue.

Using a family inclusive approach, we work directly and in partnership with specialist organisations to provide support and education services for families and carers.

A list of helpful resources and Carer organisations for family and carers can be found on our website:
flourishaustralia.org.au/family-and-carers

SCAN QR TO FIND OUT MORE



In Panorama June 2026



Gaining open employment plays a key role in many mental health recovery journeys. We have three articles connected by this theme. Firstly, our Maitland Inclusive Employment Australia team took part in a local Suicide Awareness

Walk to raise funding to support people in need (Team Coordinator-Peer Specialists Ben Haley and Lisa De Sylva are to the left). "Lived Experience To Drive Employment Transformation" reports how our Inclusive Employment Australia service supports people with a lived experience to gain and keep open employment, and "Getting Kitchen-Ready at Buckingham House" celebrates a class of supported employees at Surry Hills who have become job ready by completing a Certificate II in Hospitality.

"What We Are Is What We Do" explores the personal journey of growth and development we all undertake in defining who we are in life, and in the article "Still Having A Lot To Offer," Debby shares how

in the wake of a serious accident she's been finding new sources of fulfilment and exploring ways that her skills can benefit others.

We were happy to welcome Sam Lane, renowned sports broadcaster and author, who presented at Flourish Australia's International Women's Day "Let's Do Lunch" event.

Coming up in July Panorama...

- Norman's tip for recovery: Open the Door!
- Dancing and Wellness: Moving in Time for Recovery
- Road to Australia's BIGGEST Mental Health Conferences!

And more!

Spread

hope.
inspire others.

**Don't worry if
you're not a writer -
that's where
we jump in!**

Did you know that sharing your own mental health recovery story can spread hope and inspiration?

At Panorama, every story is valued.

We're constantly on the lookout for stories from those living with mental health issues, but family members and caregivers, your stories matter too!

Not sure where to begin? Send us a message, we would love to hear from you.

Email: panorama@flourishaustralia.org.au or Call: 1300 779 270

WHO WE ARE IS WHAT WE DO

We become the CHARACTER we build

By Warren Heggarty



Lionel Shriver, author of *We Need To Talk About Kevin*, thinks some modern mental health problems might be related to too much INWARD focus on ourselves. Changing this focus to being more outward-looking might help us mentally.

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle famously said, "People are social animals," sometimes translated as "Man is a political beast" ("anthropon politikon zoon"). He did not think of us as separate individuals (like we tend to). To him, a human being is necessarily a member of the community. We build our identity through our relations to others.

To Aristotle and other ancient thinkers, who you are is what you do, and what you do, you do in the community. Even philosophy is something you ultimately do in consideration of others, and to him "contemplation" meant thinking of what was good for society as a whole.

A couple of thousand years later, we have a different viewpoint. We often think that "who you are" lies at the intersection of a number of different categories, your "identity."

Some go even further and focus only on individuals.

In an interview with Winston Marshall, Shriver said of the increasing levels of anxiety and depression in this generation: "They are the consequence of looking inward all the time and not finding very much, and that's depressing and it makes you anxious." (Marshall, 2025)

So what is the solution to this "looking inward" and not liking what you see?

"I think our whole model of growing up, the whole idea of CHARACTER, has changed," she said, "and we tend to think of people now as (having a) pre-extant character that you discover." This is reminiscent of Aristotle's teacher - and rival- Plato. Rather than being produced through action, he saw knowledge as already being there in our minds, just waiting to be "discovered" or "identified."

"No, it isn't," says Shriver. "I think we need to go back to an earlier version of what it means to BECOME someone, to grow up. To have an identity is something you BUILD. That used to be a common expression, to BUILD character, or do character building exercises."

Today, "character building exercises" are techniques for fiction writers,

rather than things we all do to help us grow or "grow up."

"That means...you do not start out with something marvellous that you can discover or unearth. You start out as kind of all over the place, and maybe you have certain proclivities, but you need to firm up, you have to learn to do things, you have to learn about the world. It's an OUTWARD experience which makes you into someone in particular."

"So the way you create an identity is not sitting around worrying about how you feel all the time, but going out and DOING something and meeting people and learning a new skill and humbling yourself in relation to all the things that you don't know in order that you might come to know some of it."

Works Cited

Marshall, W. (2025). The Winston Marshall show In conversation with Lionel Shriver. Retrieved from YouTube : [Youtube.com/watch?v=VxYBCqAD8E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VxYBCqAD8E) (starting from 9 minutes 45 seconds in)

ABOVE: The Chinese Character "de," meaning "Virtue." According to Lionel Shriver, character is not something you already have, but something you must build by going outside of yourself. IMAGE FROM "LEADING BY VIRTUE"

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026

Sam Lane shares with Flourish Australia how she made the impossible, possible

By Grant J Everett



Sam Lane was Flourish Australia's speaker for International Women's Day 2026: Give to Gain. An award-winning sports broadcast journalist, Sam has been a trailblazer in the media for decades. Sam has reported from many Olympic and Commonwealth Games and is praised by her peers. Sam is also the author of "Roar," which details the creation of the Australian Football League Women (AFLW). Sam proudly serves as an Ambassador for Flourish Foundation Australia.

At our recent International Mothers Day event held online, Lisa Gott, our Executive Director, Lived Experience Leadership, recognised single mothers who have experienced hard times, and celebrated the strength and hope that women share when they're on a recovery journey through Flourish Australia services, especially the mothers who access the Women and Children's Program.

Sam said there's still lots of work to be done in gender equality. As a single mother to a 19-month-old girl, Sam's greatest hope is that she will raise her daughter in a world free of gender bias and discrimination.

"Being a mother is so hard, but it's also the best thing that's ever happened to me."

Since Sam began her career, there are now far more women presenters in sport, and she reported that it didn't feel like they were including a woman "just to tick a box" anymore. Sam acknowledges sport's media is still a difficult field for women to break into, as expert commentators in sports broadcasting are usually acclaimed sportsmen. So when a woman gets such a role, it's a big deal.

"Right now, at the Women's Asian Cup with the Matildas, an all-male team of broadcasters have been covering this event," Sam said. "But you wouldn't see an all-women's broadcasting team covering a male sporting event. There's no shortage of women and non-white men who want to be in these roles: the difference is opportunity. The struggle in sports media is even worse for people of colour."

"Where the change will come is when the old bosses and boards appoint younger people in influential roles. I'd love to see a day where women are in the highest roles, to reach a level of equality where it doesn't even need to be addressed anymore."

"From the start, I have been constantly under pressure to prove myself. It helps to win awards, to show you are somebody who is respected and does good work. But without a doubt, my biggest achievement has been the birth of the AFLW."

"I often got the sense there was an eye-roll (or ten) whenever I promoted the creation of the

AFLW. While I was the only female broadcaster in the room at the time, I had lots of male allies."

Before the AFLW was created, Sam was constantly told it was impossible. Writing about this opposition in her book *Roar*, Sam described how "little silos of activism" gradually joined together until it led to the AFLW going from theoretical to actual.

"The AFLW's creation is a microcosm of how from little things, big things grow. Once dismissed, these female athletes are now Hall of Famers. The AFLW has been around for a decade now, it's legitimate, and it has a bright future."

"You need conviction, confidence, and people on your side if you want to make any kind of change," Sam said. "Change can be so hard, and it can beat you down to the point where you feel your efforts are better directed elsewhere. You can feel bullied, ostracised, vilified. I felt less confident at times, but I didn't feel any less conviction about promoting inclusion and diversity. I still want to see more diversity within sport: gender, nationality, LGBTIAQ, First Nations, and mental health issues."

The audience was grateful to Sam for her generous, thoughtful and powerful talk, reminding us that real change requires a collective effort built over time. Keep being a part of building a better future!

ABOVE: Sam Lane, Sports Broadcaster and author. PHOTO PROVIDED BY SAM LANE



We Join the Maitland Suicide Awareness Walk

By Grant J Everett

“The Inclusive Employment Australia team from Flourish Australia’s Maitland service came together at Maitland Park on the 20th of February to take part in the U_Matter Annual Suicide Awareness walk,” said Julie Duong, Manager, Employment for Flourish Australia’s IEA.

“This community event is dedicated to the people we have lost, and it also promotes the fact WE ALL MATTER. It was a good opportunity to share the services and programs that Flourish Australia has to offer to people with a lived experience.”

“Other support services that attended included The U_Matter Team, Stand By/Social Futures, Roses in the Ocean Hunter Mobile Safe Space, and Young Warrior Hearts, who provided an opportunity for teenagers to get together and have a talk with youth workers between 6:30pm-7pm.

“Flourish Australia was the only IEA service provider in attendance, and we also had the most diverse range of mental health supports on offer, too.”

“Like past years, there was a MEMORIAL WALL for anyone who wanted to place a photo, letter, sign, or anything else that symbolised a loved one they have lost. There was plenty of U_Matter merchandise for sale, as well as an amazing \$7,000 worth of raffle prizes up for grabs. The raffle was drawn the following morning.”

“The team from IEA at Maitland included Abby Boardman, Prue Jeffrey, and myself,” said Sarah Robertson, Team Leader-Employment at Maitland. “We also had Team Coordinator Peer Specialist Ben Haley and Mental Health Worker Zoe Sexton. Zoe dedicated her time and effort to the NDIS social group to make Mental Health Awareness friendship bracelets, which were a big hit with the community.”

“The event started at Maitland Park at 6pm with a community BBQ from Rotary Club East Maitland, as well as other food vendors that include Maitland Sikhs, Spiral Spuds, Emmy-Lou’s Charity Cook-Ups, and Chrisar Coffee Co.”

“The walk started at 8pm on Friday the 20th of February, and ended the next morning at 8am. People were welcome to walk as little or as long as they like.”

“750 community members started the walk, 31 completed the full 12 hours of walking, and the longest distance covered by a single walker was 61 kilometres.”

“Flourish Australia’s booth remained lit up with fairy lights overnight, and a lot of the walkers spoke about how the Flourish Australia booth was the ‘homing beacon’ that indicated they’d finished another lap.”

For Awareness

A core aim of taking part in the U_Matter Annual Suicide Awareness Walk was to connect community members with local providers, raising awareness of the supports available for people struggling with their mental health, and sharing Flourish Australia’s services and programs across the local area. Together, we’re better.

This event wouldn’t have been possible without so many staff dedicating their own time on a Friday night and Saturday morning for such a good cause.

“We all had a great time supporting such an important event for our local community, and we’re already planning the next events we’ll be working together on,” said Sarah.

ABOVE: Caitlin Deverell, Abby Boardman, Prue Jeffrey, Ben Haley, Sarah Robertson (and daughter), Sara MacNamara, Zoe Sexton. PHOTO PROVIDED BY SARAH ROBERTSON

Learn all about Inclusive Employment Australia on the next page ▶

INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT AUSTRALIA

Lived Experience To Drive
Employment Transformation

By Andre Maddocks



Is Open
Employment
a Key to
YOUR Social
Citizenship?

On the 3rd of November 2025, Flourish Australia commenced our new partnership with Inclusive Employment Australia. This replaces the former DES (Disability Employment Service).

Inclusive Employment Australia is much more reflective of who we are as an organisation and the way that we offer support to people to attain their employment goals. And we are off to a flying start!

We reached our one-hundredth work placement in February, with our Caringbah team taking the honours. By the time I was able to announce this to the Flourish Australia "Town Hall" meeting on the 26th of February, it had grown to 122. All the staff have worked hard to get this great initial result.

That job placement figure is similar to what we would have attained in a whole year with the former DES. To reach this in three months and three weeks is a significant achievement. Of course, the new Inclusive Employment Australia partnership is larger, with more locations and more staff.

The really great thing is that at Flourish Australia we have been able to embed peer workers into

our job seeking support process. This has never been done before, either under DES or by any other organisation. It ensures that like every endeavour of Flourish Australia, it is driven by lived experience.

When people living with mental health issues come to us for job seeking support, they can be sure that we "get it." We have worked closely with Lisa Gott (Executive Director, Lived Experience Leadership) and Mat Tipping (Lived Experience Practice Lead), and are starting to see some great outcomes there.

Key Pillar To Recovery

Our Inclusive Employment Australia operations are by no means isolated from the other things that Flourish Australia does. One of the key pillars to recovery is employment, and Flourish Australia has long recognised that the satisfaction that people gain from work can be pivotal in most people's recovery journeys.

We operate several Community Businesses that support employees at different stages of their mental health recovery journey, and we are now in the happy position of being able to develop direct referral pathways for employees looking to move into open employment.

Even better, we are collocated with 13 other Flourish Australia services, raising the profile of possible open employment to people who access our psychosocial services. We have also kicked off an Employment Community of Practice among our staff to look at improving how we support people to attain a sustainable employment future.

At the time of the February Town Hall meeting, IEA had 1,300 confirmed participants with 232 pending. This has been such a great opportunity to support a large number of people to move into open employment.

We want to see the people who access Flourish Australia's services enjoy full social citizenship and take up their place in the open workforce wherever this is possible. The new Inclusive Employment Australia partnership is helping us to achieve this.

Want to know more about how Flourish Australia is preparing people for Open Employment? See the "Getting Kitchen-Ready at Buckingham House" story on pages 10-11.

ABOVE: Ready to go from day one! Bankstown Inclusive Employment Australia consultant Christina (left) with Team Leader Alan (Right). PHOTO BY ANDRE



STILL HAVING A LOT TO OFFER

An accident changed Debby's life. Step by step, she's reclaiming it.

By Debby

I've told the staff that just getting out of my home for the day to do fun things with friends is like being released from a prison.

Green Thumbs

I've always adored growing herbs and edible plants, and I would love to share my experiences with others. So I hope one day perhaps to get a "garden edibles group" going. How to pot things, grow things, deal with pests naturally, stuff like that. Gardening is a very valuable skill, especially with the cost of food lately. Even if you don't have much space at home, you can grow crops on your veranda or balcony in pots and planters. And people with back problems and other health issues can use raised garden beds and special tools, so even people who might be a bit frail or have limited movements can get into it. Gardening is very therapeutic.

Looking Forward To Tomorrow

Flourish Australia has acknowledged my worth as an individual and that I have a lot to offer, and they've just been very welcoming. They listen, and understand. I feel restored at being able to offer the wisdom I've learned over the years, to feel appreciated and respected for the

Support Services, who helped me with my accommodation needs. My goals with Flourish Australia were socialising and learning new skills.

There were so many fun and interesting things to do at the Flourish Australia service that I really enjoy. After working in childcare for so long, craft has become a passion of mine, and I have lots of ideas for future class projects for our Tuesday craft group. Friday is the cooking group, and while I love to make good food, I don't have the space to do this at home. I can only use one appliance at a time, or it trips the fuse. So it feels like I get more out of the cooking group than most of the others!

The support of Flourish Australia has been great. They've done so much for me, like helping me with my NDIS applications. That is such a massive undertaking.

By 2025 I'd worked in the childcare sector for 50 years non-stop, including a role with Queensland Education where I did disability support work, Special Education, tutoring, English as a Second Language, and many other groups with children and teenagers. As I was in childcare, even when I had kids of my own, I'd just bring them to work with me. I didn't even take maternity leave.

Since leaving work due to an injury, I connected with Flourish Australia on the Sunshine Coast in November 2025 through Kyabra Housing

ways I can help out and support other people. Just because you're retired or you have disabilities doesn't mean you have nothing to offer!

After my long career in childcare and education, I hear that there is a successful women and children's program run by Flourish Australia in NSW. It would be good if there was something like this in Queensland because I would love to be able to support parents with tips, activities and coping strategies for kids and teenagers.

I also know lots about fundraising and getting businesses interested in contributing to a good cause, so I feel like I have a lot to offer.

Turning Point

My career ended when I suffered a serious workplace injury in a poorly-lit area. I chipped my C6, pinched nerves between 4,5 and 6 and S1, fractured my T12, and I also have a bulging disc. My knee required surgery, and since then it's been bone grinding on bone and will eventually require a full replacement. I get constant headaches and back pain, and my mind has suffered. Before the accident I was very articulate and capable of so much more, and my short-term memory is poorer than it used to be.

Changed Life

So many people relied on me, but the shoe is on the other foot now, as I can't fully look after myself at home, and over the years the practical support I need day-to-day has been hit and miss with several different agencies. I can't vacuum, sweep, mop, kneel, lunge, or bend over, and if I do force myself to do any of these things, it can take days spent horizontal to recover.

After the accident I began to feel like no one needed me. I could not see my purpose in life. I was also experiencing financial difficulties and was in constant pain. This led to a decline in my mental health and emotional and physical health as well, which is why I connected with Flourish Australia in the first place.

Since the fall, I've spent years bouncing back and forth like a game of Pong on an Atari between

different services and agencies. I had some funding for physiotherapy at my home for a short time, but I don't get any assistance with my physical needs at present.

It's been very difficult dealing with things like Disability Support Pensions, WorkCover and lawyers, and I've spent my savings and my Super just to get by.

Housing Stress

I can't afford a retirement village, so I live in a housing commission complex on the ground level (as I have difficulty with stairs). Just before I moved in, I was sleeping in my car. My one-bedroom flat is really old and cramped, and there isn't even room for a dining table. But it's a roof over my head, and I'm grateful not to be sleeping in my car!

Making the flat livable has been expensive. I have a painful skin issue that flares up when it's hot, so I needed to install an air conditioner, and due to my physical limitations I also had to get a dishwasher on my bench top. This all came out of my own money.

I've been trying to move somewhere better, but this process has been a constant battle. I feel like a hamster on a wheel.

Seasons

After so many years, I'm finally used to where I'm at. Now that I'm being supported by Flourish Australia, I'm starting to figure out what I can do next. I've only been coming here for six months, so I'm keen to see what's around the corner!

ABOVE: Debby enjoying her time in a commercial kitchen, preparing lunch for the cooking group. **OPPOSITE:** Debby enjoying the fruits of her labours! **PHOTOS FROM DEBBY**

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COMMIT TO JUST A LITTLE EVERY DAY



I call them "daily duties." The household influencer, Clutterbug, calls them "nightly non-negotiables." Whatever YOU call them, they could make your life easier.

When unwellness or low mood leads to our homes becoming a cluttered mess, we often resolve to put in a big effort to clean it up. Then it happens again. Or sometimes, the idea is so daunting we don't even try at all.

But what about choosing some small, daily tasks that will make a difference that you will be able to commit to every day, no matter what? Clutterbug chose these two:

- 1. No dirty dishes left overnight.
- 2. Do a 10 minute quick tidy before bed.

"If I'm sick, I still do them," Clutterbug says. "If I'm too busy, I still do them. If I'm too tired, I still do them." But remember that a discipline is not a compulsion. it does not have to be done perfectly or more than once. Just do it every day, because you need to develop a habit. Clutterbug says triumphantly, "I can wake up every day to a home free of dirty dishes!"

Other tasks that you may choose to make a daily commitment to do include taking out the garbage, doing laundry, and putting things back where they belong.

Another influencer, Reynard Lowell, suggests that you have a dedicated DROP ZONE for stuff going in or out of your home, which you commit to clearing daily. WH



Getting Kitchen-Ready at Buckingham House

Creating new pathways to open employment

By Grant J Everett

Undertaking studies in the hospitality industry makes sense, because when it comes to booming sectors, the hospitality sector is up there with the largest. There is always, always work to be had in hospitality.

Flourish Australia's Community Business at Buckingham House at Surry Hills received a funding grant in 2025, and some of this money was used to renovate their commercial kitchen and to

reopen the Buck House Cafe. These facilities were then used to create a vocational pathway for supported employees, including the opportunity to learn all kinds of kitchen and barista skills.

A class of supported employees at Buck House completed a Statement of Attainment in Food Safety Handling. This course has been a mandatory requirement for all hospitality workers to complete since 2023, the perfect place to start.

"The class was so excited when they received their Food Safety

Handling certificates!" said George, Vocational Trainer (Hospitality) at Buckingham House.

The Next Step

Those who were interested in continuing their studies with a Certificate II in Hospitality were invited to do so at the Buckingham House site. To take part in this Cert II, everyone needed to be a supported employee at Buck House and had to be receiving NDIS support, as the course was funded by people's NDIS plans. This course

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL COLUMN

With Tricia from the Council

One of the most exciting topics at the Community Advisory Council's March 2026 meeting was the opening of the "Participant Portal." You may have read Cassandra Williams' article about it in a recent Panorama. This Portal will give the people who access Flourish Australia's services direct access to Flourish Connect, which is the new computer database.

Cassandra visited the Council and walked us through what will be happening later in March (and it will already have happened by the time you read this). We were all very excited by the possibilities that this opens up, such as helping people develop a greater sense of control over their dealings with Flourish Australia.

To give a hypothetical example, let's say you had a session booked with your provider, which is covered by NDIS. You discover that you cannot come to the scheduled session. So, you ring up to cancel it. Unfortunately, your key worker is not on duty, and your cancellation message doesn't get through. The wasted session ends up getting billed to your NDIS!

With the Participant Portal, your message cannot go missing like this because you will be able to access the same database that your key worker uses.

Mohammed Alkhub, General Manager of Business Excellence, spoke to the Council about the complaint and dispute resolution process. The aim is to have everything resolved (if possible)

within a 28-day timeframe so that problems are solved promptly.

Mohammed's slide presentation was so easy to understand, and made a somewhat dry topic very accessible. The Council gave Mohammed feedback which he will take to the next Flourish Australia Quality and Safety Meeting.

Lisa Gott, Executive Director of Lived Experience Leadership, teamed up with Mohammed to do a brochure review, bringing our brochures up to date. One important point is that when new brochures are introduced, it is a good time to "recycle" the old ones being replaced.

Rochelle Robinson from People and Culture took us through the Diversity Strategy that Flourish Australia is currently working on. We had a look at what some other companies have in place, and spoke about what Flourish Australia could do for its own strategy. There is a lot to go through and we will be revisiting this in April and May, no doubt.

As you may know, 2026 is the tenth anniversary of the Community Advisory Council. We looked at the

possibility of having a Celebratory Meeting, possibly in November 2026. It was suggested that we could invite past and current members, and another idea was that we compose a special song for our birthday! We had a few volunteers put their hands up for that! Let's see what we can do.

Starting March 2026, our meetings have been moved to the second Wednesday of the month. Our next meeting will be held in April, and the report will appear in either July or August's Panorama.

ABOVE: It is good to throw out those old, out of date brochures when you get new ones, but not Panorama. Panorama is always a good read, even the back issues! PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY



Sketching for Recovery

3 ACTIVITIES 4 RECOVERY: PART 3

By Warren Heggarty



Some of our readers have done “art therapy,” and a number would like to take it further. Why not keep a sketchbook? It’s about exploring and having fun!

“Elida Nikolov Art” has produced a YouTube video which is very friendly and enjoyable and covers all the sketchbook basics. Even though art is her job, Elida says that when she sits down to sketch of an evening, “it can be a very calming place.” She recommends you take the “no pressure approach” to use your sketching to reflect on the day, relax, and draw “silly little things” for ten minutes or so every evening (Nikolov, 2025).

Keeping a sketchbook won’t cost you much, and it could turn into a very useful and healthy habit. It is the fashion, these days, to create drawings using the help of computer programs, and as we read in our previous articles on Affirmation Journals and Commonplace Books, it is more fun, more effective and more educational to do it the old-fashioned way with pen(cil) and paper.

You will need to use your eyes, too, as drawing is about seeing. What’s that? You’re blind? Don’t worry, I

know plenty of people with vision impairments who regularly draw. Totally blind? Try sculpting, or model-making.

As the art critic John Berger put it, visual art is a “way of seeing” in the broadest sense of the word. He wasn’t just talking about eyesight: you need to make your hands (or whatever body part you are going to use) mark down what you see or imagine.

I know two people who have congenitally impaired, monocular vision who are really good at drawing in perspective. Because they can’t see in 3D, their vision is flat, like paper or canvas. It’s like having an unfair advantage!

Professional artists use sketchbooks. They use them to plan their paintings, to experiment with shape, colour and technique, and also *just for fun*.

You won’t be Leonardo da Vinci overnight, though it may surprise you that drawing people and pets may not be as hard as you expect. This is because we LOOK at them all the time. Things that have unfamiliar structures, on the other hand, can be a real challenge: Flowers, drapery, seascapes and landscapes, for example.

The internet is full of videos that demonstrate how to generate ideas. For example, fill a page up with blobs of all kinds of shapes. Colour them in with warm colours like red, orange, pink, and yellow. Guess what? You’re designing wallpaper! Draw another page of blobs, fill them in with cool colours like blue and green and grey, and now do a third, only this time draw funny faces in the blobs.

Go outside and look at houses and draw them. Draw your DREAM HOUSE. Draw a car. Now design your DREAM car. Draw diagrams. Draw maps. Draw plans. Do “technical drawings” using rulers and compass. Do lettering. Try signwriting. Learn calligraphy (Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, and so on). Don’t worry: there are endless things just waiting for you to sketch them.

References

Nikolov, E. (2026). How to start a sketchbook beginners guide (Materials, techniques and habits). Retrieved from Elida Nikolov Art YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4vCXI0IliQ&t=487s>

ABOVE: Keeping a sketchbook allows you to think on paper! PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY



HOW WE LEARN TO BE RESILIENT

By Warren Heggarty

Resilience, according to Dr Chris Johnstone, is a “two-part story.” The first part is the “difficult situation.” “In difficult situations,” Johnstone writes in *Seven Ways to Build Resilience*, “there are times when we surprise ourselves, finding new strengths and rising to the occasion in ways that make the second part of the story turn out better than expected.” (Johnstone, 2019, p. 3)

There are pathways we can take that lead us out of any difficult situations we find ourselves in. The problem is, when we are in a “trough” or a “hole” in our lives, it is difficult to SEE alternatives to despair. The value of peer support, in which Flourish Australia is a leader, is that we can

work with others who have been in that “hole” and made it out again.

We can also use the stories of others that we find in books, films, plays, religious teachings, in the lives of explorers, and even in legend and mythology.

Johnstone tells us, “...research confirms that resilience can be cultivated.” So you can LEARN to be resilient! In support of this, he cites a 2014 meta-study (a study of many different research programs) called *The Efficacy of Resilience Training Programs* by A. L. Lepin and others.

It is helpful, says Johnstone, to suppose that resilience is not something you just have, but something you learn to DO. It is a part of “post traumatic growth,” where a person is spurred on to

improve themselves following a traumatic experience. Johnstone’s own “post traumatic growth” started from a car accident. He ran his car off a cliff due to exhaustion after working for 112 hours in a single week as a young resident doctor. There’s a lot for us all to unpack here!

There are practices that can make you more resilient, and Johnstone’s aim in his book is to help readers “make the practices part of your life.” (page 12) This is whether you are helping yourself, or helping others, through struggles. Or if you just want to “take on challenges and not be put off by setbacks along the way.” (page 13)

Johnstone starts by asking us to zoom out of our present struggle to see what bigger picture it fits into, by looking at the examples of others. (page 17) That is, people who we know have gotten through adversity. How did they do it?

We have examples right here in *Panorama* magazine. David Hall and his book *Superbeast* were featured in our recent Autumn issue. David was in a dire situation after a serious accident where he lost both legs. And with support and determination, he was able to see a bigger picture and follow the path to becoming a champion sportsman. (Hall, 2025)

No matter what your issue is related to (side effects of medication, disadvantage in education, poverty, the symptoms of your condition) others have been there before, and their stories are out there to discover. There are some great books, too, such as Ryan Holiday’s *Discipline is Destiny*, which contains a whole collection of stories about people overcoming huge struggles. Also by Holiday are *The Obstacle Is The Way*, and *The Daily Stoic*.

Works Cited

Hall, D. (2025). *Superbeast*. Sydney: Amazon.

Johnstone, C. (2019). *Seven Ways to Build Resilience: Strengthening Your Ability To Deal With Difficult Times*. London: Robinson an imprint of Little Brown Book Group and Hachette UK.

ABOVE: Mother Giraffe: ‘When you have a problem, Junior, take a moment to zoom out and see the big picture from on high. That way, you will see the path forward.’ PHOTO FROM PIXABAY

BEING ON TIME

And other good manners

By Warren Heggarty



Good manners are important. Panorama went in search of the very BEST manner, the one manner that will likely cause the biggest improvement in your life if you live by it: being on time.

There is a widespread belief that manners have largely been abandoned. We are not sure that this is really true, but there are certainly a lot of people talking about “etiquette rules we never should have abandoned.” But what do we mean by “manners,” exactly?

I remember once I was in a posh restaurant and encountered a posh piece of cutlery that I had never seen before, and did not know how to use. There was a rather posh couple in my group who openly laughed at my struggles with this device. This is NOT manners. Manners is about putting others AT EASE, not laughing at them.

The whole idea of manners is to behave in a way that is predictable and puts other people at ease. Therefore, within a particular social circle or society, we often follow (usually) unwritten rules that keep us sweet with others. Perhaps multiculturalism has mucked this up a bit, but all cultures have manners, and some things are universal.

To find what the BEST of all manners are (at least according to

our readers), Panorama consulted many books and blogs and sifted through heaps of opinions. Chief among the websites were CountryAdventures.net Marielisa Reyes on Yourtango.com, Ephraim Miles at fodmapeveryday.com, Alex Daniel at Best of Life, and Lisa Fogarty of Vogue magazine.

Our survey produced a very, very long list of things that people consider “good manners, and “Being On Time” was one of the standouts. The other standouts are...

- Send handwritten thank-you notes
- At dinner, wait until everyone is served before starting to eat. And...
- Offer your seat to someone who might need it more.

Your view of time influences your expectations about others, and others’ expectations about you.

There was also an interesting contrast between fixed and flexible attitudes. Some people see time as a fixed framework in which things happen on time and as expected (monochronic), while others see time as a more fluid thing in which they need to be flexible about dealing with the unexpected (polychronic, or “Island Time”). When people move from one time culture to another, they notice!

Most of our readers live in a ‘monochronic’ environment. That means we have appointments and deadlines which we take seriously. The general rule is that you should respect other people’s time by always being ON time, and you should respect your own time by not being TOO early.

Being on time is a one-sided thing. You and I have to be on time. Some people can be a little “time blind,” and we need to set an example for them. Kindly!

The reason being on time is so important is because NOT being on time (and its even uglier twin, CANCELLING AT THE LAST MINUTE) is so inconvenient. I once had a regular appointment with a professional each week, but she frequently cancelled at the last minute. It infuriated me because I was always already on my way there when she called it off. This is a generational thing, as I am used to the pre-mobile days when an appointment was a commitment. She was of a new generation where people take full advantage of instant communications, and probably didn’t realise how annoyed I was! Maybe I should have told her?

ABOVE: Part of the art of dealing with the sands of time is knowing that OTHER people might not see it the same way as you do. But no one will ever go crook at you for being on time! PHOTO BY ANNETTE ON PIXABAY

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