



Manifesto Musing

Synergy

In this fabulous time of our book launches, I want to take a moment to reflect on the word 'synergy'. I have spoken and written of the synergy that Justin and I experienced when I first began coaching him at Geelong Grammar School. The energy generated in a coaching session, which was the result of 'synergy', fuelled both of us through the rest of that day!

My Toastmaster's Club friend defined synergy very neatly: one plus one equals three. What a lovely way of understanding why, when you are in conversation with someone with whom you are aligned in values, the energy created is greater than what either of you bring singly. It is this synergy which underpins the evolution and growth of **my manifesto** as a wellbeing business concept and now as a newly published book, *My Manifesto: a compassionate guide to reveal your best life*.

"The sum is greater than the parts" is another way to describe synergy. I often wondered about this expression when I was a young woman; I didn't understand it. Since then, I have deconstructed it using the analogy of a car: all the parts that make up a car have intrinsic value. Assemble them, and you have the sum of the parts. But take it for a spin, and you have more than the sum; you have a conveyance. A sculpture, I was tempted to say, is only the sum of its parts, but the 'more than' is clearly the aesthetic value to the beholder as well as the intended meaning communicated by the creator to the viewer, the receiver of the message.

Let us consider synergy in the context of community: each individual brings with them strengths, skills and intellect. Assemble a group in community, neighbourhood, society, or the world, and there is the additional power of the collective. In evolutionary terms, the power of the collective is the reason the strain of humans, *Homo sapiens*, survived whereas others perished. Our challenge in today's society is to recommit to the synergy of the herd, lest we risk extinction.

In relationships, there are stages: dependency, independence, and then interdependence. Justin and I, within the pages of our book write about our interdependent relationship as the wellspring from which our contribution derives. In an interdependent relationship, what each of you bring is valued and celebrated. Together, in combined enterprise, you have the opportunity to tap into something greater: a wisdom that, when shared, can generate new possibilities.

We have heard the expression, 'Together we are stronger.' How often this is true of a loving couple. The family unit, through the bond between the primary couple, becomes the synergetic relationship that forms the foundation of the whole. That relationship engenders the talents with which the next generation flourishes. In an organisation, the power of the collective – no matter the individual's role or level – when contributing their talents, strengths, and dreams, can create a



flourishing organisational culture with healthy wellbeing. We have ventured into this with *Our Manifesto*, and we are currently laying down the second year of our prototype with the affirming and encouraging business, Elements ABC.

In the coaching context, Richard Boyatzis and team in “Helping People Change” (who provided the front cover testimonial for our book) write of ‘resonant relationships’. This type of relationship, to bring this discussion full circle, is the one which I established with Justin in those first coaching sessions at Geelong Grammar School. A ‘resonant relationship’ as defined by Boyatzis et al., is one where:

Both the coach or helper and the person being helped have positive mutual regard for each other, share a commitment to their relationship, and benefit equally from the engagement and interactions. Such relationships help foster openness to learning and change.

It is from this resonant, synergetic relationship that **my manifesto** arose, and our recent book was written.

Thank you all for your encouragement and support to us both at every stage of this journey.

Warm wishes,
Sue and Justin.