



Manifesto Musing

Go well, Sue.

Now that we have commenced 2025, we are aware that we are past the first blush of our book launch and into the next phase. We have been advised by our publisher, David Tenenbaum from Melbourne Books, and by you, our mates, that when we speak about our book, we are 'so passionate, people can't help but listen.' An extension of listening is oftentimes the purchase of our book and to avoid the uncomfortable 'selling' feeling, I recite my mantra: 'every book sold, and the work done, is a life touched.'

Consequently, this year we are looking for speaking opportunities, a chance to meet and connect with people and to spread our message. I took up such an opportunity to speak to the Probus Club Torquay. Probus as many of you would know, is a semi-retired and retired professional businesspeople's friendship group.

Before I undertake a speaking opportunity, I experience the nerves, the fear, of speaking publicly, which apparently is one of the universal human fears (experienced to varying degrees). The social researcher of renown, Brene Brown characterises this fear as the fear of 'what will others think of me?'

In my case, knowing *why* I am speaking – the message – is what helps me overcome this fear. It is not about me, but about the importance of what I am saying. Justin and I have experienced in our own lives the impact of having a personal manifesto (as have many of you), one we have created by following the 7 steps of our book. Each of us have our guide to return to when we are pulled off course (which happens to all humans!).

As I was preparing for my Probus talk, envisaging a group of around 50-60 peers, with just myself—Justin was presenting at a school for his Wellbeing Distillery—and a microphone in a 30-minute speech, typically my nerves began to kick in. Over the previous days, I had been practising with some strategies I have developed, such as 'future pacing' my speech. This strategy involves me putting in place all of the props I will use in the actual presentation, such as the type of stool I have chosen to deliver my speech from (a Sue in conversation style was my choice for this speech), the side table that I want to rest our book on, my notes just in case I need them, my small clock to be mindful of the time passing and a glass of water, carefully placed so as not to knock it over with one of my hand flourishes which are a natural part of my deliveries!

I also decided that in my examples of 'roadtesters' stories, (our roadtesters are of course those of you who did the work of our book, feedback suggestions and allowed us to use your words as case studies in our book. Thank you!), I would tell Annette's story (the full story will be the subject of a future blog). The poster that Annette's family made and passed onto Justin and me, of Annette's



personal manifesto, which they displayed at her Celebration of Life Service, was a prop I would also put in place.

On the morning that I was due to give my speech, as I was packing my props, my eye caught another. This was the framed photo of Annette in her bed in the palliative care room of the Epworth Hospital Geelong, with me sitting on a chair beside her. The photo was taken by her family the day I co-created Annette's personal manifesto, in an in-person coaching session. They framed it and gifted it to me as a memento. (How wonderful!)

Seeing it, remembering that unique day of privileged experience, galvanised me.

I did my speech scared, but Annette was with me.

I imagined her saying, "Go well, Sue."