

One in Six?

Flawed, Forgiven and Free: The anatomy of one man's forgiveness of his abuser and himself.

By Mark Jones

Prologue

This book is a warning, a guide and a lament.

It is written for survivors of sexual abuse, their supporters, family and friends. I acknowledge your pain and your courage.

With a choice of coming face to face with your abuser, in court, in restorative justice or in your family, this book will encourage you to seek truth, kindness and compassion.

In Australia today sexual abuse is common. One in four women and one in six men have experienced it. Unfortunately, very few are able to discuss what happened and fewer still seek restoration and emotional healing. We survivors are made to carry the unbearable burden that sexual abuse brings.

As you challenge yourself and those closest to you; as you seek help from the judicial system for an apology, I offer the encouragement of a fellow traveller.

By sharing my experience, my wish is you'll find the courage to request your perpetrator be held accountable.

Forgiveness of an abuser is neither quick nor easy. It is a process.

This story is real, though certain names are withheld to reduce harm. My abuser's name appears as a matter of public record.

This is not a story for the faint hearted but one of forgiveness and redemption.

It is about a long journey to wholeness and recovery of spirit. There is no part of this story I would change.

I hope and pray you are transformed by reading it. I trust you can eventually open your heart to forgive your abuser.

Only by doing so can you set yourself and them free.

Heartfelt best wishes

Mark Jones
September 2020

Acknowledgements

I am profoundly grateful for all of the support I have received from so many people over the years. It seems that the right person turns up with the right information at the right time. This has been a constant theme in my life.

To all of those who have been involved in groups that I have participated in, I sincerely thank you for hearing and seeing me. To the therapists, the clergy, those from whom I have sought support - you have all been part of my healing process for which I am grateful.

To the politicians, members of the judiciary and the staff of the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Abuse who deal with the fallout of sexual abuse on a daily basis. This is a tough topic. Your dedication to your public service leadership role is fundamental to getting the environment right not only justice - but for healing as well. When I attended my interview at the Royal Commission, I was seen and heard for the first time. This profound act of witnessing my story gave me the motivation to choose the course of action outlined in this book. Without the Royal Commission, I may never have resolved to overcome the silence of suffering in which I lived for 40 years.

To those volunteers who work in the myriad of organisations brought before the Royal Commission into Child Sex Abuse in Australia, who have never been involved in any crimes, I honour your service to the cause. I also implore you to keep vigilant in ensuring your churches, scouting groups, old people homes, orphanages or community groups, remain free of abuse and seek to protect children who are especially vulnerable to sexual predators.

The Royal Commission established that 90-95% of perpetrators are men who have both access and opportunity to seek sexual intimacy with children. The families and the children themselves are always groomed, and the perpetrator is known. I want to acknowledge all organisations who have come to recognise the child abuse risk inherent in their organisations. For those who are taking steps to embed a programmatic response, with formalised processes and procedures which systematically provide the type of healing accountability so desperately needed both individually and institutionally, you will heal past harms and prevent future occurrences.

To my family who had to live alongside me whilst I travelled this turbulent path, I deeply appreciate your courage, patience and love.

Introduction

Letter from
?

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Lost

Stand still.

The trees ahead and bushes beside you

Are not lost.

Wherever you are is called Here,

And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,

Must ask permission to know it and be known.

The forest breathes.

Listen.

It answers,

I have made this place around you.

If you leave it, you may come back again, saying Here.

No two trees are the same to Raven.

No two branches are the same to Wren.

If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you,

You are surely lost.

Stand Still.

The forest knows

Where you are.

You must let it find you.

— *David Wagoner*

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.”

Maya Angelo

“The truth will set you free” John 8:32

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FLAWED

*“As long as you keep secrets and suppress information,
you are fundamentally at war with yourself.”*

Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*

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Go Gillard

I was surprised when you turned up in my lounge room that evening to let me know it was time.

Time we face the collective demons of child sex abuse in Australia.

Time to speak up

Time to uncover the truths

That lay dormant for decades

Smouldering, smoking, sweating

Under piles of denial.

For me "denial" now means I don't even know I am lying. It's true, we didn't know quite how bad it was. No one knew.

You said there would be a royal commission led by Justice McClelland that would focus on the Catholic and Anglican Church and other institutions.

But what about the Boy Scouts? Would they be included?

I was touched by your announcement, moved to tears by your words. But I was also horrified.

Would you miss out on the one institution that had turned my life upside down?

Your courage, gave me courage

Your energy helped me find mine

Your leadership inspired my own

And my thanks is everlasting

I am profoundly grateful for the leadership you demonstrated.

That you and your caucus choose to unearth what so many of us had removed from living memory was painful. It also enabled restorative justice to commence to heal the wounds of many pasts and that is a remarkable legacy.

Go Gillard, I love your work.

Dear Prime Minister

From: "Prime Minister of Australia" <info@pm.gov.au>

Subject: Your message to the Prime Minister

Date: 12 November 2012 at 21:23:12 AEDT

Thank you for your message to the Prime Minister at www.pm.gov.au. Below is a copy for your records.

Subject: Your Royal Commission Announcement

Madam Prime Minister

I cried tears of relief tonight.

After nearly 40 years of harbouring my terrible secret, of being systematically abused by my scout master, I am relieved to hear that you will give voice to my and many other's abuse.

I congratulate you on your leadership and implore you to not be narrow in your terms of reference, by limiting this to just the religious institutions.

I was abused by Mark Geoffrey Fisher - Scout Master of the 1st Hunters Hill boy scouts over a 4-year period between 1974-1978. That's right, in the heart of John Howard's Bennelong electorate. Sexual abuse knows no boundaries, does not discriminate between the sexes and needs to be dealt with across this country.

I left the country for 20 years to escape the memory of my abuse and returned 6 years ago to face my demons.

I have however never sought justice nor reported this to police. I have carried this secret in my heart and soul for many years and shared it only with those who have been in therapy to heal the pain from their abuse.

It seems to me that your Royal Commission would be the ideal opportunity for me to purge my conscience and provide a forum for me and others like me, to tell their stories. I strongly support you including the scouting movement in your terms of reference.

Please listen to your inner voice and do the right thing. YOU know how broadly this issue has played out - take the required leadership to expose the extent to which this cancer has beset this society and help us to find redemption and heal the wounds.

That's a big job but you are up for it and so is Australia.

Warmest regards

Being Heard

Justice McClellan smiled gracefully as he introduced himself and his team.

“Would you like to tell us your story,” he motioned.

I sat back my chair started to relate what happened all those years ago. I didn't pause, or dwell on the details. I gave as factual account of what had happened as well as I could recall.

It did seem somewhat surreal. Here I was sitting in front of the chairman of the Royal Commission explaining my story.

I felt safe in the presence of him and his team. They showed kindness and compassion as my story tumbled out. There were tears, the occasional laugh and plenty of time for reflection.

He said that over the course of the interviews he had completed so far, the impact of sex abuse in the community was vast. He said that different people reacted in very different ways.

I felt confident that I could explain my story to him and feel heard. More importantly, be heard by someone whose job it was to make recommendations to stop this ever happening again to anyone.

I related the story of telling my kids what happened. I told him how important it was that if they ever felt any unease about somebody approaching them physically or intimately that it was OK to say no and let me or my wife know what was happening. He reflected on my suggestion, the proximity that all his years of hearing cases had provided, and that he had never thought to give the same advice to his own kids.

Perhaps we all should no matter who we are!

At the end he asked, “would you like us to pass on your case to the police for further investigation?”

I said “no, that's my job.”

Paddington Police

I stepped into Paddington police station around midday. "How can I help you sir" the constable asked

"I'm here to report a crime" I whispered, "it happened many years ago."

As his eyes met mine, "it's about sexual abuse" I added.

He was drawn. He asked me to sit and wait whilst he contacted the detectives.

Ten minutes later I was in a room with two young detectives, a man and a woman. They offered me a cup of tea.

They were attentive and reassuring. Their concern for me was palpable. A collective anticipation about what I was about to be revealed was given due care and deference.

I am after all a white middle-aged man, wearing a suit, sitting in a Police station 33 years after the fact, relating a story which still haunted me.

They were unperturbed. Nothing ruffled them. I mentioned the scout troop and his name. I felt relieved and terrified. I had finally dared to share my story with people who could take action.

By entering the police-station I had also made a pact with myself. To hand over all of my control regarding this matter to the police and the judicial process.

I had no idea how the criminal justice system worked. I had never considered myself a victim. I felt strongly I was a survivor of something which I could not really articulate, but I knew was incredibly important to me. For me I wanted acknowledgement of the injustices perpetrated against me all of those years ago.

I also wanted an apology.

Bearing Witness

In my police statement I named names. There were other boys, who had been in the scouts with me. Like me, they had also been given a lift home after the meeting and were dropped off before it was just me alone in the car. The police statement also included other people I had told since I had “come out” in around 2006.

Detective Robertson asked whether he could interview the people I had named. I said “of course, go ahead.”

I did ask, that I speak to them first, to give them a heads up that they could expect a call.

I was surprised to discover that some people were not as enthusiastic to share their recollections of my story.

In fact, no one who had travelled in the car with me, was prepared to discuss their recollections of the story I had shared with them, with Detective Robertson.

I felt sad and lonely.

It was tough enough to head into this process. It got even tougher when those closest to me found it too overwhelming to lend their support.

I could taste their fear and terror. I had buried the memory of what had happened for decades until a fateful meditation session in 2005 brought it back in full technicolour.

I knew how harrowing it was for me to dig up the past. After all, it was my choice to work through what had happened to me. Whatever my hopes or desires were for the participation of others to confirm my story, I knew it was up to them to say yes or no.

At this point I decided to simply let go. If people did not wish to be interviewed. So be it. I was not sure whether their corroboration of my story would end up being necessary as part of the evidence process. The shame attached to these dark secrets had kept me quiet for years. I was powerless over the decision of others to support my story. I let go of any expectation and carry no resentments.

I can now see we were all traumatised by what had happened, and it was far too much to ask other people to speak to the police.

Allowing myself to embrace my absolute powerlessness over other people’s actions enabled me to come to peace with their reluctance. It was a gift. I was the only one who could bear witness.

The Elevator

I can't remember who she was, but she was lithe, covered in oil and so was I. We arrived after 30 minutes together as her shame met mine. Me trying to forget why I'd come. She trying to forget why she was there.

After it was over, I showered and left. I arrived at the meditation event feeling tinges of shame, a hangover from my oily experience.

"Before we commence this evening, please write down a key question you would like to answer as part of your meditation this evening" our meditation instructor urged. I wrote down "why is my sex life so strange?".

She urged us to "shut your eyes, sit in a meditative position, take a few deep breaths and relax."

She then asked us to "pretend you're going into an elevator, the door shuts behind you and then you go down and down to time in your childhood that relates to the question you've just written down".

I followed her instructions to the letter.

"When the doors of the elevator open, look around you" she said, "notice what you see, what you feel and what you smell."

I found myself sitting on the lap of my Scoutmaster. He was molesting me on the front seat of his car. We were parked in the long dark driveway just outside my home. This was his pattern. He would drive everybody else home first, and then drop me home last. It always happened in the car.

I stepped back into lift and returned to the room. When I open my eyes my head and heart simmered with white-hot rage. I was homicidal. My flashback to the moment of trauma was so real, I could smell it. I felt his breath, his perspiration, the gear shift between my legs.

The instructor gave me a baseball bat and cushion. I went to work. It was satisfying. Smashing, smashing, smashing; emptying years of pent up anger into a cushion.

So satisfying. So clear. So direct and wonderful. So terrifying. What had been uncovered that night, could never be covered up again.

Longing for Belonging

As a child I can only remember feeling unsafe. Really unsafe.

On the surface, I sailed effortlessly through the strangeness of the 1960s and the wonderfully crass ugliness of Australia in the 1970s. I was the first-born child to thoroughly middle-class baby boomers, who did their absolute best to portray the image that there was “nothing to see here” despite there being an assortment of weirdness to negotiate.

Dad suffered mental health issues after a near death car accident and we pretended all was OK. Mum was incredibly kind but overwhelmed by the challenge’s dad’s behaviour created.

My school life was dominated by Catholic priests. They were a pretty sad bunch whose pedagogy was based on a steady diet of intimidation and humiliation. Their aggression fed my terror.

Confusion and doubt reigned supreme. I avoided any doubt I felt about what was OK and what’s not. I did what I was told, kept smiling and avoided telling the truth at all costs.

Life was an obstacle course of people who could potentially hurt, shame or humiliate me.

I was never comfortable on the inside, even though I tried to make it look effortless on the outside. I had made a pact to myself not to share anything of the discomfort I felt. The thought and the shame of having my deepest fears shared and aired was a fate too much to contemplate. I was also desperate to belong to this off bunch who didn’t seem to want to share how they felt with anyone. We are all 100% OK and that’s it!

Eventually I did breakdown in front of the family and say to everyone “I lived in fear”. This was met with laughter and derision by my family. The odd thing was the place that was meant to be my safe haven felt like the most unsafe place on the planet.

My longing for belonging was palpable.

I did find refuge in the relationship I had with my grandfather. We would spend hours fishing together and hanging out.

Looking back, I now see that my scoutmaster also sensed my needs for belonging. He was practiced in the art of grooming boys for his own needs and I was sufficiently open to his advances. It met my needs.

What appeared to be a safe haven in an otherwise dangerous world, was the least safe alternative.

The wrong belonging - but it was too late.

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Man on the Run

The ink was not dry on my final Higher School Certificate exam papers when I decided to run off to the USA. Just seventeen years old, I was full of fear, ambition and a wild yearning to be free. Free and very far away from Sydney felt exhilarating and energising.

When I returned, I knew deep down I had developed a taste for escape. The road streamed through my veins, it fired up my soul.

The exhilaration of the unknown. The terror of the uncertainty and the certainty that anywhere was better than Sydney.

Three years later university was behind me.

It was in my final term at University that I made a deal with the devil. In essence the deal was "if I come to work for you, then you will send me overseas on secondment."

Three years later I was on my way to London for an eighteen-month secondment.

I returned occasionally to see how life was back home. Not much changed. The same people, leading the same lives in the same ways.

I felt like an alien and had no desire to live in my sunny seaside city of Sydney.

The world was my oyster. London led to Chiang Mai in Thailand. In Thailand I met the gorgeous woman who would share my path, mother my children and take me to live together with her back in Amsterdam.

As a Dutchman I fitted right in. New town, new job, new language and nationality.

A complete makeover.

Far from the place I'd grown up.

Far from the world and people who had surrounded me as a child.

Far from everything I wanted to escape.

I didn't return for more than 20 years to my hometown of Sydney; a man on the run.

The Demon Failure

Failure and its close cousin judgement plagued me as a young man. I simply did not get how things worked and was relentless in my pursuit of "perfection". I tried controlling my world in the faint hope it would deliver the outcomes I wanted. Mostly it didn't.

My years as an amateur violinist my teacher had frequently reminded me that the violin was hard enough without me making it any harder. It's a cruel instrument without much room for error. It certainly taught me the discipline of doing something till I worked it out. It also drove me nuts in the process.

I found failure difficult to process. There were so many expectations, people to disappoint and every miss was a reminder that I am well, just not perfect. That's right I'm not.

I did have a bunch of classic failures. I guess it was God's way of reminding me I was on the wrong path.

Let me mention a few.

I failed my first attempts at passing my exams to get professional recognition as a chartered accountant. Who would have thought debits on the left and credits on the right would be so hard? It was.

I had failed to protect my younger brother when I saw that he was being emotionally abused.

My greatest failures were in relationships; with myself and those closest to me.

I didn't do emotion. It was simply a foreign land into which I had never ventured. Like others who have traversed the landscape of trauma, there was a darkness. It felt heavy, like a fog, in which it was difficult to discern the exact shape of how I was feeling. It was like a dank moist cellar full of demons.

It was a lonely place which I shared with no-one. I found it tough to venture in there on my own and then encounter the voices of my own echo chamber. I was terrified. As much as I knew I needed to listen to myself, I felt a failure for never being able to do it.

It felt like everything inside of me was frozen. Somehow, I felt locked-up in a time or space. Life behind a locked door felt lonely. A miserable failure.

The upside? Luckily, in my work I did not seem to need emotion that much and I could always blame everything on those intangible demons.

Dark Mark

Travel is a gift. It is also a curse

To be on the way to my next adventure was an exquisite feeling. It exhilarated me and gave me purpose.

It also terrified me. I would arrive at the airport and anxiety would set in.

I would be off to God knows where, and then I would be there. All alone.

Loneliness and the road are almost sacred bedfellows. My loneliness comes out to play the moment I would get underway.

It wrapped its tentacles around everything. My emotions, what I ate, how much I drank, and for how long I slept.

It also controlled the door to my Cellar. I had once described the cellar door inside my heart has a dark and deep place. With a vaulted lock on the door.

Do not enter except at your own risk. I was scared of what lay behind the door. I felt bad, mad and sometimes sad. What could be so awful and so ugly that it required such conscious denial.

It was like a hidden acid, eating away at the essence of who I was.

Unfortunately, my secrets were too dangerous and too unpalatable to be shared with anyone.

The risk of ever allowing these secrets to get out was far too great to contemplate. For me, the self-imposed prison of loneliness was a far lesser evil than dealing with dark Mark. That was way beyond my comprehension. Lesser evil than dealing with dark Mark.

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Sounds of Silence

If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?

Inside Dark Mark the world was in lockdown. Not understood, little was shared.

The tragedy of this was the loneliness and despair. I was clearly unavailable emotionally to myself and to everyone else in my life.

Sometimes out of nowhere I would feel overcome by some weird power. I would react to situations in sometimes bizarre and unexplainable ways.

The greatest loves would leave me terrified. My deepest loves, so cold.

It was opposites day.

Things I was meant to love and like, sometimes became the objects of my wrath

Rage would appear from nowhere. Directed at the nearest casualty it would cut down those around me like an automatic weapon used against defenceless crowd.

These were the external manifestations of what stirred within. Darkness never revealed itself directly. It hid in the shadows injecting itself with its bouts of grandiosity and entitlement.

Those around me became used to these uncharacteristic outbursts. I tried to hide my shame. Sometimes successfully, mostly not.

I could not connect the dots. That meant turning inside to unearth what was going on.

What was it that triggered my sudden desire to fire lightning into those around me? Upend the status-quo and then pretend that nothing was wrong – I'm just fine.

My shadow grew longer as the years rolled by.

Sometimes the sun would shine in, though always my shadow remained remarkably persistent silencing any attempts to uncover its darker secrets.

Living in Fear

Going in

Saying what I feel

Take the hit

Bang bang and again bang

Ridicule raged

Rough and ragged

Tough love

Not the sort you warm to

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*The sort you just fall by
Fall down and cry
Into my pillow I'd cry
Lost in my angst
Overwhelmed
Taken out of everyday living
Lost in my own thoughts
Lost to my own reality
No ownership
No connection
Just me and my monkey
To ease my pain*

More, More, More

Sometimes life just accelerates. It goes so damn fast that I would get caught in its forward propulsion.

The driver was fear.

Fear of not being good enough, fear of not being valuable. Fear of being judged, fear of everything, even when I had nothing to lose.

I felt a visceral need to prove my worth. My career was the avenue to manifest this reality. The firm I worked for had a simple career trajectory; it was either up or out. People normally lasted three years.

I was a statistical anomaly in many ways. One of only a handful of foreigners able to work easily within the culture, my peculiar talent was something nobody else did. I had found my own space to build and create business of my own. An empty canvas.

We set about filling in that canvas very quickly. We started to grow from part-time to full time team members. More work arrived. More people. More trouble. More money. More clients. More status. More of everything.

This went on for a decade or more.

Prosperity in the material space was beyond anything I had ever imagined. There was more than enough of all I desired. That was of course with the exception of fear.

Fear still permeated every nook and cranny of my being. I had grown accustomed to its presence. I had realised there wasn't much that I could do about it.

The only solution I had found was to accelerate the pace and try to outrun it.

Hungry Ghosts

*Oh hungry ghosts,
whenever you appeared,
you took.*

*Your presence distracted me
destroyed my connection to everything.
Myself, others, and those whom I loved.*

*You ate me up,
needed feeding.
You devoured people, places, things.*

You grabbed everything you wanted and more

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*Insatiable desires.
Always distracting me,
away from the real emotion.*

*They were such dark emotions.
Fear, shame, humiliation*

*Shame and fear dominated.
The deadly duo.
Terror always lay just around the corner.*

*You helped stave that off.
You rampaged through my life,
raging, demanding, taking.*

*Leaving nothing.
Offering lies, stonewalling the truth.
Till you didn't. Till you couldn't*

*The promise of a return to normality,
felt always like it was within reach.
It wasn't.*

*You took everything and
left nothing behind.*

*Nothing, except DENIAL –
when I
didn't even notice I was lying.*

Suicide is Painless

Driving Each day
Amsterdam to Rotterdam.
An hour's drive.
75 kms door to door.

The freeway meanders
through the Dutch countryside.

Dipping under a canal
Boats traveling past overhead
whilst driving down the freeway.
Simply weird!

I spent hours behind the wheel wondering why I had traded my freedom for a return to my former employer.

The financial security was a relief. The feeling of returning to the devil I knew was painful.

I felt incredibly lonely. Just married in a new country, new job and new family. I felt far from home in every sense.

Some part of me was shut down unable to reach out for help. Fear and shame were buried deeply in my internal wiring. Fear of being not good enough, fear of being humiliated and judged.

The language of my childhood resonated with emotional dissonance. The family of my childhood was never a safe place. It was no place to seek refuge and be vulnerable.

So I dared not bring vulnerability into my relationships. I feigned emotional connection, at least in the way I "thought" it was.

In fact, I was clueless. Attempts to open up and share my feelings had been met with derision and terror as a child. I was horrified by the consequences of sharing how I felt and had learned to shut down that part of myself.

My preferred place to was to remain unsafe, on the edge and living in eternal uncertainty. Living behind a mask of "everything's OK". That was my home. That's where I felt fake, but safe.

I felt incredibly lonely. So lonely I thought one day "what if I were to ever so suddenly jerk the steering wheel on my car on my way to Rotterdam in the morning, it would be all over, red rover".

It was a little daydream. A fantasy.

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It played to the tune of loneliness and helplessness. My self-pity was overwhelming though I didn't realise it at the time; I was tasting my delusion that suicide is painless.

Turning Point

*It came in a flash
just turn the wheel
On the road
from Amsterdam to Rotterdam
over and out!
The world had turned
I'd gone past the point of no return; nearly.*

*New worlds opened
They came and went
Still I hung onto
my weightlessness
my irritation with the spirit
knowing that there was a spirit to be found.*

*My God my God
Why had you abandoned me?
Playing hide and seek
You were not in the church
Not in my family
You were hiding out in me*

*You were I see
Inside of me
Biding your time*

Genesis

Once I had admitted to my wife, the acute loneliness, the suicidal ideation and the potential dire consequences of my short-lived fantasy, it was clear that help was needed.

I needed to talk. Talk to someone I trusted. This was difficult. I did not know many people, nor did I trust anyone.

Frans was a priest. I did not trust priests. Jesuit priests had occupied a peculiar place in my life having had 10 years of schooling under their authoritarian hands.

When leaving school, I was so relieved to escape the confines of my Jesuit education. It was like leaving prison. True freedom from arbitrary authority and oppression. The Jesuits did not cover themselves in glory in the 1970s in Australia.

Like my home life, my school life was marred by a deep distrust of those in charge. Trust was in short supply.

Frans was the parish priest in Amsterdam. He had married us and was deeply committed to the mystics. He also loved painting.

Over the years he had developed the practice of taking in troubled parishioners including me. Using the power of painting our own picture, he would assist us to unearth gems from our unconsciousness. I learned to trust Frans.

He was the first person I had ever confided in. He was solemn, gregarious, warm and lively.

He would give me a short extract from one day of the creation story, a set of water-colour paints and a white piece of paper.

Genesis 1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

Once finished we would marvel at the finished work and unpack its hidden meaning. These sessions brought gems of wisdom from both of us. He brought me slowly back into the world in which I was living. It was the Genesis of a new life in a new country with a new confidante. My own re-creation story.

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Who Murdered Mark?

Over the years I had contemplated it. A lot.

What would be like to corner my perpetrator and simply take him out. One shot to the head, and he'd be gone.

My murderous rage simmered, just beneath the surface. It would pop up occasionally. Unfortunately, it was always directed at the wrong parties.

I had never contemplated murder.

I had not yet allowed myself to fantasise and revel in the thought of murdering Mark Fisher, scout leader of 1st Hunters Hill boy scout troop. Perhaps there was another with an equally adequate motive who would do the job for me. There were no doubt others who had harboured such dark thoughts.

I didn't until I did.

"Paedophile killed" - would be the headline. Who would care? who would really give a shit?

Wouldn't this be karmically what he deserved?

Would it be the perfect crime?

There were at least nine complainants' over the years, who felt strongly enough about their abuse to report him to the police and provide the evidence 25 years after the fact to put him behind bars.

Would it be one of us?

Or would it be one of the many nameless men, who were once boys. Boys like us who suffered indignities at the hands of Mark Fisher, a paedophile playing with their parts.

Would it be one of those who suffered in silence, unable to adequately put into words how they feel? Those whose suffering is real in every aspect of their daily lives. Would they be the one who murdered Mark?

Or will they simply continue to abuse those closest to them, fuelled by the fear and resentment of their innocence lost.

For decades, resentment and fear drove a wedge between me and many with whom I had tried to be close.

It wasn't Mark Fisher I had ended up murdering. It was me and my connection with those closest to me.

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

Dust to Dust...

I was buried. Up to my armpits in work. Work here, work there, work was everywhere.

I had discovered I was good at finding work. Lots of it.

There was a lot of travel involved. Many different companies in different countries. It appealed to me. There was always a new project, a new assignment and a reason to be on the road.

Over time I became ambitious in my approach to growing the business. I wanted to be a partner of the firm. Get status, money and all that accrued with the authority of partnership.

Sure I was a foreigner, a “vreemdeling” or stranger as I was called in Dutch. But I spoke the language, stood my ground and went in hard for what I wanted.

Unbridled ambition and a desire to show the world what I could do was an intoxicating cocktail.

I did what was asked of me. I loved it. New business, new clients and new travels. More people who noticed that I was good at what I did. And I was.

In fact, I was so good, that in my 360-degree feedback, I discovered I was in the 98th percentile of competitive behaviour. That’s right I was more competitive than 98% of all people who had done their survey. That’s pretty damn competitive, not collaborative and frankly difficult to work with. My only saving grace was I used this approach to #getshitdone and #gettheresults.

At work they called me the “wild colonial boy”. I went through assistants at a high rate, didn’t suffer fools and deeply yearned for the recognition that partnership would give me.

“Be careful what you wish for” is what I say. I was working sometimes upwards of 60 hours per week feeling stressed, anxious and tired. I didn’t exercise much and charged ahead at a silly pace.

Not much time for family and without friends, my work was my friend, my lover, my place of worship.

I had raged against the machine years earlier. Now I had become the machine pounding to dust anything and everything that got in my way.

Intuitive Interludes

I went to the open day with my father in law.

He had recently been to the Centre for Life and Intuition for an energy reading and was captivated by what he heard.

“They just ask you your name and then they tell you about everything” he mused

“I wonder if they can do it again today?”

We went through the different sessions together.

An energy healing, an energy reading, a group class.

As we went home, we looked at each other, both surprised and profoundly moved by what we had experienced. My father in law was convinced it was abracadabra but could not believe they were so spot on in their play back of what was actually going on under the skin with him.

Twice in one month, with completely different personnel, a similar story had emerged. His legal sceptic was stupefied by the accuracy of their party trick as he had no way to explain it. How did they read his energy, feed this back to him after only asking him to speak his name?

It was a mystery, and one which I wanted to master.

I spent the next five years learning how to read energy. It turns out we can all do it, all we need is practice. I assumed at the time that I was perhaps the only one of my work colleagues involved in such pursuits. This did not worry me in the slightest.

After a very full 12-hour day, I would detox from my work by learning to connect to myself for 2 to 3 hours sometimes 3 to 4 times per week. It was a sort of meditation. Over time, this practice of physically inhabiting my body, enabled me to detach from the stress in the madness of my corporate life. It offered temporary respite for a time and kick started my intuition to take charge of the show.

Prodigal Returns

It was over dinner in the only Australian restaurant in the Netherlands that my wife said with a grin on her face and tears in her eyes “I am ready to go to Australia”.

I said, “You’re what?”

“Ready to go to Australia. I think we should move there”

I was dumbstruck. After nearly 20 years away from Australia, my wife was suggesting she was ready to live there.

I said, “What about a life here?”

We live in Holland, have kids at school, cars, your family and a lovely home. Jobs aplenty, and the lifestyle we can only dream of.

She said she was ready. I said I wasn’t.

It took a year. After our summer vacation the following year, I also came to the same conclusion. I returned to work following that summer holiday convinced this was the right move for us.

In retrospect, we were clueless, about what lay ahead.

A hope. A dream. It was an uncertain future. Despite the lack of clarity around where and what, the when was getting clearer and the why remained vague. Our gut feel was “let’s do it”.

My bosses were quite surprised when I resigned during my annual performance review. One rolled his eyes and said, “So the Phoenix has risen from the ashes and flown through the fucking window.” He had seen me struggle over the years and had been steadfast in his support. His surprise was mired in confusion as he tried to process my decision.

That was to be the end of my career in big consulting. This was the end of an era – of being literally on-the-run. The prodigal son was about to return to his place of birth knowing little of what lay ahead.

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

Rock Bottom

It felt like a huge excavation site. And archaeological dig into a distant past. The 10 day retreat I had signed up for was not quite what I had expected.

The Hoffman Process was the so-called Rolls Royce of psychotherapy. It felt like a can opener had wrenched open my head and heart.

So many thoughts and feelings re-emerged as the process gently move forward. Like peeling back layers of the proverbial onion, tears appeared along the way and all of my unwholesome habits too.

After years of ruptures, when I least expected it, I had found a path that may lead me to a level of peace, serenity and well-being. The ruptures did not cease after the process had finished

Like falling
through thin ice,
I am drowning
in oceans
of emotions
shutting down
seeking relief
looking for escapes
grabbing for beverages
people
or simply control
life was unmanageable
my rock bottoms
like Russian dolls
Appeared when
least expected
Remind me
To connect to me
Oh hail – GOD's
Gift Of Desperation

Me and My Shadow

The revelations of my meditation and elevator trip into my subconscious and the reliving of the trauma of the abuse had a lasting impact on me.

Like a song that cannot be unheard, I realised for the first time in my life, what had taken place in my scoutmaster's car had permeated every part of my being, especially my subconscious.

It lay dormant in my emotional well-being, my relationships. I also had known all of my life that sex was like a drug for me. A habit. An addiction. It soothed me.

It was my salve from anxiety and stress. The crack pipe attached to my body. Its power to shift my mood was profound. In anticipation, it falsely offered to lift my spirits. Afterwards, there was only ever remorse and regret.

Since that time in 2006, I have sat in rooms with many who have also suffered abuse as children. Often, sexual abuse sets up its survivors for odd sex lives. Too much. Too little. Not enough. I found these groups when I came clean to my counsellor about the level and extent of my lack of sexual and emotional sobriety.

Many of us are emotionally unavailable. I was. Some are sexually or emotionally anorexic or avoidant. This is a disability. I was unable to express myself, unable to engage, unable to connect from the heart.

In sexual and romantic matters, I discovered that who were abused have a tendency to re-abuse; mostly ourselves. For me it was my way of coping with stress and anxiety. It distracted me from the trauma which could be triggered by pretty much anything.

As time passed, I discovered groups where people could come together to express their profound experience strength and hope. Fuelled by a willingness for honesty and openness, my participation allowed shame and guilt to evaporate. These group sessions were incredibly powerful.

The group's collective acknowledgement and support for my shadow side helped me immensely. The group became a fiercely powerful place of belonging, with a unity of purpose around recovery, connection and healing. Their non-judgemental witnessing of my story enabled me and many kindred spirits to find and enjoy enormous reservoirs of courage and compassion.

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the many people who patiently listened to my story, met me where I was at without judgment or trying to fix whatever was going on for me. This was, without any doubt, a miracle, triggering a shift in my perspective on life, as well as my behaviour.

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

The group taught me to be unflinchingly honest and willing to explore even the darkest extremities of my story and shadow. They were a light in the darkest chapter of my life and more than satisfied a need I had harboured all of my life, my longing for belonging.

Soul Labour

Over the years I had sought support in many places. The rooms of anonymous 12-step groups became a regular refuge.

I found these rooms to be a place where I could sit quietly, without judgement and review my shadow in its entirety. My emotional addictions were placed under the microscope. My shame evaporated as my story was exposed to light, unconditional love and the absence of judgement.

I met and befriended dozens of people who are shared the same or similar childhood stories of trauma. Every kind of trauma from child sex abuse through violence and simple neglect.

I recall meeting the head guy at the Wayside Chapel, a home for homeless people in Sydney. He shocked me with his statistic, that in his experience, 85% of all people who are homeless, and living on the street had suffered juvenile trauma. My own anecdotal experience is that significant percentage of people suffering from addiction have had some very significant childhood abuse or neglect. Often it is sexual.

Recovery from addiction, the feelings associated with trauma and the shame of hiding away is a lifelong process. The willingness to explore my shadow side and be open and honest with my past has brought me closer to myself. It has taught me the value of humility, the importance of relationship and the benefits of being of service to others.

Each day I still meditate, exercise, make and receive outreach calls, go to group and individual therapy and attends special groups.

Reconnecting is not an idea or a goal, it is a skill and requires daily practice.

The practice of recovery is, I believe, a life-long journey of experience, strength and hope. It has meant that I am able to pass on the support that others have given me.

It is never too late to start and want to get rolling it is the greatest job of all time, soul labour.

My Gift

*Severed
Chopped off at the knees
Disconnected from my foundations
I dropped in on everyone
Stayed – pooed and left
It was always about me
Always I was the centre of my universe
Service to another
my anathema*

I shat on their goodness

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

*Rained on their parade
Pissed on their kindness
Turned and forgot them
Abandoned them
Abandoned myself*

*My dignity returns
My shame rises
My humility
Bubbles up from deep inside
it takes on new forms
bringing oxygen to places unknown*

*Supports my frail heart
To be
And being is
Good enough
To express my angst
My deepest longing
My yearning
To be*

*My gift is to come back
To feel worthy
To take heart
Mine is not a lost cause
To bring what's inside out*

*Imagine that
Being connected to me
Owning my stuff and
Being present to it all
The good the bad and the fucken ugly
Shifting in a way that only I can?*

*Awaken my ability to create
Light in the darkness
Cool in the heat,
Water in the drought
Space when there is none
Timelessness to overcome impatience
Peace where there is war
Love in the midst of fear
Sobriety that sticks
Orientating me in the unknown*

*Shit it's a long road
Not just less travelled*

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

Not travelled ever before

I'm up for that now

Up for a new ride

Up for surrender

Cause its miles better than it was

Banality of Evil

Detective Robertson was a seasoned paedophile hunter. An affable Englishman nearing retirement, he was business like and to the point.

When we first met at Gladesville Police-station, I made my intentions clear. I wished to be guided by him to provide him with all of the information he would require. My desire was to seek justice and obtain an apology.

The rest was unimportant to me.

He went to work by gently coaxing the facts from me. Gradually the story and my police statement emerged.

Remarkably I could recall the perpetrators car, make and model, its colour, number plate, interior upholstery and every single detail about his vehicle. It was like it had been etched into my psyche. The perpetrator's car was the place where he had access and opportunity.

Once the story had unfolded, Detective Robertson prepared to bring the case to the prosecutor. He then told me we needed to go further. He wanted dates. 40 years after the fact he wanted exact dates for at least three events! That seemed a little unrealistic.

He persisted.

We spent an afternoon together. Gradually the events that had book-ended certain key weekends of my childhood re-appeared. The night the Romanian gymnast won a gold medal. The Queen's Birthday weekend we spent the down at the Snowy Mountains. The re-election of my father to the local council. All of these events enabled my recall.

My detective knew his stuff. Understood how to get the story, build the case and nail my perpetrator.

He was dogged. No stone was left unturned. No detail was irrelevant. He was a man doing his job, serving the judicial system and its inherent bureaucratic requirements. Rules around evidence, policy and procedures were followed to the letter. The policeman's tools, rules and conventions.

Detective Robertson was now armed and dangerous. He had all the evidence required to bring a conclusive case against the perpetrator in a court of law. The banality of evil was his stock-in-trade and he knew exactly how to use it to obtain justice.

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

It's Him

The over-night flight from South Africa was tiring and made a swim at Bondi upon arrival feel even better. Just as I was unpacking my suitcase after that swim the phone rang. It was Detective Robertson.

“Hi Mark, I meet up with the accused today”

“Oh” I mumbled

The reality of what was being said to me was sinking in. 40 years after I had been molested my detective had spoken to the perpetrator.

I had doubted my story, questioned my motives and thought that I must be dreaming for so many years. I had imagined a ritual homicide involving my perpetrator and had buried the ugliness, shame and memories until now.

In the Royal Commission’s report, they discovered that the average time it takes for survivor to speak up after childhood sexual abuse was about 33 years. I was bang on average.

It had taken me another seven years to get to get to the point of formally reporting the matter and having it investigated by the police.

Gingerly I asked “so, what did he say?”

“Oh yes he did it” Detective Robertson said matter-of-factly. “He read your statement and agreed that it all happened”.

“Oh, and he’s also prepared to apologise to you. He said either face-to-face or letter. Whatever you think would work best for you”

I started to weep I am not mad. It did happen. He does acknowledge it. He will apologise and make his amends.

I felt sad, vindicated and terrified.

You Too

A few weeks later, I felt it was time to call dad and let him know what was happening. Dad was once a district court judge and had put guys like my perpetrator behind bars.

Dad lived in Tasmania with my stepmother. She took the call. As was her custom, I told her what I was wanting to share, and she passed the phone to dad.

I explained to him what was happening; who had done what to whom. I explained how I felt and that there was a substantive case. The facts were clear and had been in formally agreed by the accused. Now was the time he should find out what had really happened.

Dad was in shock.

He was fierce at the best of times and on this occasion was overcome by this news.

I had expected that. He was fragile. We kept it short and he hung up.

The next day I received a call from dad. This was terribly out of character for him. He never called nor initiated communications.

When he came on the phone his voice was firm and full of emotion. He apologised for what happened. That he had not been aware of the abuse when it was happening all of those years ago. I could hear the remorse and regret in his voice. He knew he was at home when I would come inside from my sessions in the car. He also knew he was unlikely to have noticed what was happening with me through his own lack of sobriety.

And then he said, "I need to let you know, it also happened to me too."

He didn't go into details. He couldn't. He could not touch upon his own pain though he knew all too well the price he had paid for a lifetime of silence.

We never discussed it again. His admission explained everything. His behaviour over a lifetime of depression, alcoholism and despair was always unfathomable. Now I could understand it. You too!

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

Guilty

From the first meeting of Detective Robertson with the accused I knew that my story was not fake, not fancy, and not some bad dream I pushed down for most of my life.

It was real. It had been acknowledged by perpetrator. But would he still plead guilty in court?

This uncertainty nagged deep within me. What will happen on the day? Will I need to stand up in court and relate my story. Re-live the humiliations I had desperately wanted to forget.

What if he pleads not guilty? What then?

My brain was less able to terrorise me than was the case in my youth. I calmly let it go. Whatever happens is what is meant to happen.

After he attended the court hearing to make his plea, I received a call from Detective Robertson

“Guilty” he said.

I was euphoric and relieved. Finally, it has been acknowledged in the court. The story was real it, stacked up. My uncertainty concerning the efficacy of my story had remained till that moment. It is so difficult, to know what the accused would say, in a situation where the only witnesses to the violation were those present. His affirmation was a deep relief.

In my desire to share this news I wrote an email to my family.

Subject: Fisher pleads guilty

Date: 2 June 2015 at 13:13:39 AEST

My accused abuser - Mark Fisher went to court today in Burwood (Sydney) and pleaded guilty on all counts.

It's taken me over 40 years to bring this man to justice for what he did to me as a young teenager.

I'm relieved that I don't need to appear as a witness, and that my statements were sufficient to convince him to admit his guilt to the court.

His sentencing will take place on June 30. I intend to be there.

I'm deeply relieved by this outcome.

Many thx to everyone for your support (over a lifetime) for some stuff that should never have happened but did.

I couldn't have gotten this far without any of you.....

Much love

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

Their silence was deafening. There were a few emails, but no one called. I did receive a call from overseas who said disarmingly "I don't know what to say except congratulations". It was so heart felt and honest I cried.

The others remain silent.

It was then I realised how impossibly difficult it is for anybody to process this. I had spent a life in and around the subject matter. They were only just coming to terms with the news that he was in fact guilty.

Ironically, because my silence on the matter was both prolonged and profound, they never really knew what had happened.

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

Angry

I spoke to my wife following the guilty plea. We had been separated for a time. Our communications were fraught and intermittent.

She was angry. She asked if we could go for a walk and talk about what had happened. We had been together for decades, yet I have not felt able to share the full details of my abuse until that weekend.

The shame, the guilt and loathing were so deeply ingrained in my system. I could never imagine talking freely about what had happened, not even to my wife.

We walked and talked with the ocean as our backdrop. As the waves rolled in from the southern Pacific, I found the composure I needed to share the story. I apologised for never having the courage to bring it out previously.

She asked for copies of the police statements and I promised to send them through.

A few days later she called in tears and very distressed. She was appalled. Angry. Angry about everything.

I got it. I really did. At different stages in my life I had been so angry, I had wanted to murder the perpetrator. Instead I projected my anger at those I loved and who are closest to me

She has every right to be very angry indeed.

Harms Done

The intention I had set at the beginning of this process was my desire to obtain an apology. I never understood how the judicial system worked in a criminal case, despite my father being a judge.

There were rules and procedures to follow.

In my first meeting with Detective Robertson I had said all I want is an apology. If you could guide me through the process to obtain that outcome, I would be eternally thankful.

Unfortunately, in the criminal justice system there is no play book for the survivor to obtain restoration. By restoration I mean to re-story the past, so that peace and serenity can emerge. In New South Wales criminal courts, this did not appear to be part of the criminal justice system. For me, restoration matters. It was the only thing that mattered. It is the basis of my psychic healing and the right of every human who has been harmed by another human.

In many ways I saw this process as a means of helping the accused take ownership and responsibility for his actions and their unintended consequences. Fundamentally I wanted to hold him accountable for the harms he had done to me and my family. The outcome of the criminal case was irrelevant for me. I wanted an apology, for him to make amends for the harms he had done. I wanted his public acknowledgement that his behaviour was not ok and that he regretted his actions.

Having pleaded guilty I felt compelled to write a letter to the judge in my case outlining what the accused had done, the consequences for me and my family and my request for an apology.

My aim was to read this letter to the accused in the court room and provide an opportunity for his response. A simple amends for harms done was all I needed.

FORGIVEN

“The depth of darkness to which you can descend and still live is an exact measure of the height to which you can aspire to reach.”

– Laurens Van Der Post

Judgement Day

June 30, 2015 was more than just the last day of the financial year.

It was the culmination of 40 years of waiting. There was terror and angst coursing through my veins as I drove towards the courthouse. Only the night before, I had found out the person I had asked to accompany me as my support person was ill and unable to join me.

I felt horribly alone.

On the drive there I called another friend who lived close-by. He felt and heard my loneliness and offered to join me.

I felt so grateful.
Once again,
my higher power,
intuition or
whatever was guiding me
had not let me down;
not once, never.
All I had to do
was let go!

As I arrived at the courthouse, I receive call from my boss wishing me well. At the same moment I saw TV cameras and protestors carrying placards with **“PEDO SCUM OFF OUR STREETS”**

I felt sick.

Were they there to shoot film about the sentencing of my perpetrator?

I went inside and saw him straight away. I was alone and sat at the opposite end of the courthouse. My wife and Detective Robertson joined me. We went into the court room.

He then proceeded to sit in the chair one along from me. The invasion of my personal space after 40 years was visceral. Had this guy learnt nothing about boundaries?

My friend arrived at a full court room and knew immediately the guy next to him was my accused. I felt safe knowing I had the support of two people both prepared to help me face him

The judge cleared the court. She felt it was necessary to review an appeal made against the accused who had been sentenced for offences against eight complainants in 1997. At that time, he was found guilty. The leniency of his sentence was appealed, and he was sentenced to 8 concurrent terms of six years, with a non-parole term of 3 years.

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We broke for lunch Detective Robertson came to meet us with the 1997 appeal judgement in his hand. As I read it, I realised I was reading an identical statement of facts in my own police statements.

Somehow, I had joined a club of survivors who had chosen to speak-out about what had happened. Three of the eight boys were also in the scouts at the same time as me.

Who are you?
Did we meet?
Did we share the same space?
I know your story
Smelt the same breath
On my neck
Unwanted hands
on my body
We did meet
The day
Our courage
Our bravery
Brought light
to the darkness
We shared our story
We share a bond
To say –
It's not OK
It's never OK

The judge asked me to read my letter. I stood and delivered every word of the letter to the accused. Through tears of relief and a wavering voice I made my intention clear. I wanted acknowledgement. I wanted to be heard and seen. I wanted to express my anger and dismay and share the unintended consequences of his actions on my life, that of my family and friends.

He read his apology.

It was short. And for some too little and too late.

For me it was perfect. It felt like a soft salve on a sore that had infected my heart for 40 years. Finally, he was able to take responsibility for his actions, for the harms he had done, owning his part by acknowledging how his actions had impacted me.

I forgave him.
I couldn't do
anything else.
It felt surreal.
Something shifted
Something dis-lodged

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

In my heart
In my throat
In my body
I let go

As we left the court room Detective Robertson said that for him after 40 years of being a detective, he had never seen a case go down like that. It was also his final day on the job. I was so grateful to have such a dedicated diligent detective on my side. A thoroughbred paedophile hunter.

The other person to stop me on the way out was the accused. He thanked me. My guess was this was a means at redemption for the many people he would have harmed. I was perhaps the first who was lucky enough to bring him and his behaviour to account.

As we left at the courthouse the TV cameras were long gone.

They had another fish to fry and so did I.

Letter to the Judge

June 9, 2015

To the Presiding Judge
Burwood Court
7/9 Belmore St
Burwood NSW

Re: Impact Statement in the case of the accused Mark Fisher

Dear sir / madam

I am writing to express my profound gratitude at the process of justice as I have experienced it, in my specific case. The deeds about which I write took place four decades ago. They have remained buried deeply in my psyche for most of that time. The smouldering embers of my experience never lost their heat, or their power. The betrayal, humiliation, anger and shame I've felt ever since, have remained a constant force in my life to this day.

It is not every day one gets the chance to unshackle the past in such a profoundly personal way. The accused paid a lot of attention to me during my time in the boy scouts and told me I was special to him. I craved love so much. I was young, impressionable and scared. I allowed him to touch me as he chose. What I did not understand nor realise, was how sick he was. When he touched me, I remember now that I would leave my body to pretend that I wasn't actually there. I disconnected, disassociated myself from all of the feelings I was having. This was my way of surviving the myriad of confusing emotions I would experience.

What he did to me and other young boys in Hunters Hill throughout the 1970's was abhorrent. He was sick, depraved and preyed on naive young boys like me, using us for his own pleasure to meet his degenerate needs. I told no one and did my best to forget about any of the incidents in the front seat of his car, where I was molested on a weekly basis.

That is the reason we are here today.

The guilt, shame and lies started then. These negative emotions have smouldered and burnt at the heart of every significant relationship I have ever had. They have disrupted, destroyed and imbalanced my attempts to bring harmony and meaning into my life. They have eaten away like a burning cancer at my emotional well-being. Sometimes this pain has been too

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

much for me to bear. I have felt lonely, isolated and unable to share my burden, for fear of the shame and humiliation that may ensue.

Instead I chose many ways to numb my pain. I escaped the country, discovered many things about myself and wrestled constantly with addiction. Addiction to substances, work, sex and love, all obsessive reactions to quell my pain, became part of my life. These remain in my life to this day. But for the grace of a loving God, I am able to escape their gravity and live one day at a time in some sort of serenity.

For me I have wanted, at various stages of my life to seek revenge. Instead I have invariably taken this anger out on myself, and those closest to me. They and I have suffered, as I have raged. They and I have born the consequences of my ultimate betrayal of myself, brought on by periods of addiction and depression. They and I have carried these dark secrets smouldering in our relationships; until now.

Now is the time to stop and reflect upon my truth. The truth does set us free. In my case the admission of guilt by the accused after 40 years is setting me free. It's allowing me to get on with my life and live it every day to the fullest with those whom I choose to love. It's removing the secrecy, the lies, addictions, the anger, the betrayal, depression, shame, guilt and the sense of humiliation. It's coming clean.

There is forgiveness at the end of this for all concerned. There is love and redemption. I seek only an apology for myself, and all of those whom the accused has violated. His heartfelt apology is my quest during my moment of justice. I feel inadequate to describe any forms of punishment for the crimes committed. I have been punished sufficiently over my lifetime. So have many others, who are not represented in my case, but suffer in silence. The courts will find the right retribution in law, to satisfy me and others.

My quest is an apology, delivered face to face, by the accused. I need to hear his remorse, for his actions, as part of my process of healing.

Yours sincerely

His Apology

Dear Mark,

I write to offer you my heartfelt and sincere apology for the hurt and distress I have caused you over a great many years. It has been difficult for me to read your statement and to realise just how wrong I was in my dealings with you and to learn what a marked and long-lasting impact my action had on you.

Your time as a Scout at 1st Hunter's Hill Troop and especially your years as a Patrol leader, I recall with great significance. You were a natural leader and always an inspiration to the other boys in your patrol. I am so very sorry that my assaults on you robbed you of a happy memory of your time as a scout

Some eighteen years ago, incarceration presented me with an opportunity to face up to and accept full responsibility for my sexual assaults on boys. As a member in different group therapies over four years, I was brought to a full realisation of the enormity of my offending, and only through the group discussions and feedback from those in charge, did I realise the enormity of my violation of others and come to acknowledge the consequences. I can now more fully understand your hurt and your anger.

Even more importantly, these therapy courses made me realise and accept just how much my attitudes formed an opportunity of and pattern for abuse. As I touched you inappropriately, I had no idea or thought of how you might have been feeling. The remembering of these actions fills me now with great shame and distress.

By pleading guilty to your charges at the first opportunity, I have sought to try to reduce your further pain as much as I could. I commend your decision and courage in coming forward with your charges and I will accept and take full responsibility for whatever is given to me.

I hope that by my accepting full responsibility in court, you may now find some form of closure. I hope that you are now able to somehow more happily move on with your life.

Yours most sincerely,

Mark Fisher

Goldilocks Problem

Somewhere in this process I realised that me drinking poison expecting the accused to die, was not working.

I have been through the process yet still felt there was something not quite right.

My fears and focus shifted to my motives. What were the reasons I felt compelled to seek a connection with a paedophile when I was a child?

It turned out, the seeds of my need to fulfil a normal human need had been implanted within my family's dis-function. My dad was largely an absent emotional parent. Very typical of his day.

Mum was quite the opposite. She smothered me in love which had felt suffocating to me.

Too much and not enough. The *Goldilocks* problem.

The accused had played into this emotional schism with the aplomb and guile of a seasoned professional. He leveraged his role as scoutmaster to generate trust. He had both access and opportunity and used both to fulfil his needs.

I thought the relationship we had was true love. It sounds insane today, but that's how it felt at the time.

How mistaken and confused I had been. Stockholm Syndrome took over and I felt isolated and detached from family, friends and trusted adults.

This confusion would last until the time had passed for reflection.

I came to realise that the most important person to forgive in this process was me. I had placed a lot of shame and guilt on my part in this liaison. It was time for me to let that go.

I needed to heal this part of me and reconnect once again to my spirit.

Thankyouse all

In the weeks that followed I was shell-shocked. So many things have happened. Over the previous 10 years there had been the discovery, the realisation of my truth, the Royal Commission, the police statements, the trial, the guilty plea, and then an apology.

Somehow, I felt I was not living my life. I was numbed by the enormity of what happened and also felt terribly glad that this was finally over.

And I was very relieved.

The fallout from this process had not been insignificant. My relationship with my wife had ended in separation. The kids were fantastic but grieved the loss of their family and father.

So much has happened.

I felt the need to thank those who have supported me through this process. I invited a bunch of people – my closest supporters to lunch.

It was an awkward day. So many emotions running. I desperately wanted to thank all have been part of my journey.

I did. I thanked them all from the bottom of my heart but still I could not get over the loneliness and toll this entire exercise had brought to bear upon my family.

The difficulty in relating to what had happened, the search for empathy, and the lies. The “what the fucks?” were everywhere. I had lived a double life for over 40 years not admitting anything to anyone about what was really going on and now I was coming clean with everyone about everything.

How do you celebrate an apology?

It was like a wake for my previous self, the man who had shut down a part of himself for decades. There was a new man ready to emerge, but he was coming out of a cocoon. Slowly coming to life after living a life which had been shut down, shut out and full of fear.

I was grateful to all who attended the wake for my previous self that day. Their loving support, over many years, had brought me to a place where I could finally come out and say what had happened to me in the courtroom, without shame, without guilt and regain my long lost self.

Thankyouse all!

Bruce – My Unsung Hero

Bruce is cool. A big smiling African guy he always calms the farm.

I met Bruce during a retreat when I returned to Australia from Holland. There were a number of years, during which our relationship was fleeting. He came in and out of my life.

As my desire for recovery from the damage of childhood abuse picked up its pace, so did my contact with Bruce.

I have a special box where I put my greatest challenges. It's an old wooden box with a draw. My God box.

I have put some of the biggest challenges of my life into the box. I've never been let down. Never. As a social scientist I have often felt that any mention of a higher power, a being spirit who can actually engage with real life problems, is mostly met with classic disdain.

I can only operate on the basis of evidence. The battles that have within me to avoid all of the pain, drama and cover-up, have actually been won every time through the intervention of my higher power. Also known as Bruce.

It is not normal after 33 years to suddenly remember intense detail the specifics of an abuse decades after it had been shut away. To then go on and prosecute a case, forgive the perpetrator and myself is as close to a miracle as I can possibly imagine.

To also rediscover that a new life is also possible within this Life, means that something way beyond my paygrade is at work here.

Bruce's role in winning the battles and eventually the war, is evidence of many things. The power of quantum shifts in time and possibility. The ability of my brain to change and adapt to new ways of operating. The ability to shift emotional states and fundamentally transform negative behaviours and traits.

How do I know?

Because it happened, and then some.

Amending Fences

For most of my life, large tracts of my emotional landscape were shut down

No-trespass signs hung everywhere a possible intruder may care to wander.

I covered up my emotional dyslexia by working around it.

For those closest to me I came to see how much harm I had done to them. My inability to connect with myself meant others in my family and my friends were also unable to reach me.

As a result, I felt compelled to offer them an unreserved apology for the harms done. A lifetime of avoidance of authentic emotional connection was jolted out of its sleep.

Offering an apology and making amends, exploring in forensic detail my part in past wrongs. Long term resentments were ploughed through, unearthing misdeeds and harvesting an endless stream of fears.

The horror of my selfishness was profound. I had not realised how impactful my failure to connect with myself had been, not just for me, but also those closest to me.

Offering amends and a lifelong intention to never harm those whom I had hurt emotionally was what it took. My relief was palpable.

The shame, guilt and anger evaporated like water under the Australian sun. Fences were mended, relationships rebalanced, and healthy boundaries evolved.

I could never have thought how much this process would empower me emotionally until it happened. My gratitude for the courage to face the damage done is boundless.

Brother from Another Mother

My sister in law called to say that Albo was on the radio yesterday talking about his recent biography.

He had shared a story about a meeting at university many years ago and the impact that meeting had on his mother's life.

She was a chronic rheumatoid arthritis suffer. My mum worked for the best rheumatoid arthritis specialist in the city

It was obvious. We needed to get his mum to see my mum's doctor and get her sorted out.

Five years later I was in town and bumped into Albo's mum. No longer confined to a wheelchair and told me she could dance once again. What a marvel of modern medicine this is.

After my day in court I wondered how I could ever thank Gillard for initiating the Royal Commission into Child Sex Abuse.

I met Albo in a restaurant in Canberra to discuss our lives and his biography. He gave me a copy and shared the story of meeting his dad and siblings over in Italy.

I explained that my last 10 years had been quite unexpected. I gave him a rundown of the whole gory story and asked if he could pass on my sincere thanks to Gillard for making the Royal Commission possible. In my view this was one of the most important investigations held into institutions and their conspiracy of silence since the white history of Australia had begun.

Then he told me he had been in the room too with Wayne Swan and the Prime Minister. Together they had discussed the Royal Commission. My old university mate had helped to initiate a process that led me to get an apology after 40 years.

I was gobsmacked.

Thirty years after indirectly aiding and abetting his mum to discover a new life outside of a wheelchair, he had been at the birth of the Royal commission that would set me free.

The wild serendipity of these two events was not lost on us. I cried tears of thanks and joy that in this life I had found a brother from another mother.

Phoenix Rising

When I had met with my boss many years earlier in Amsterdam, to discuss my resignation he had made a memorable observation; “the Phoenix has risen from the ashes and flown through the fucking window”.

He was not happy. He had just invested 12 years mentoring and guiding me, shepherding me through the politics of an intensely political organization. He had not expected it.

How right he was. He had watched me struggle many times in my career as an outsider in the Netherlands. It was not the easiest road I had taken, and he knew it. It was a portentous comment. Little did I know that the fires would continue to burn for the following decades.

The Phoenix needs to literally burn off all that is fake and untrue. All that stands in the way of revealing who we really are.

As a Phoenix I have bathed in the fire of the furnace for 30-40 years now.

On the other side, there is light and a remarkable switch. I am grateful for everything. For the process, for the support. For those who've helped me and those who couldn't.

There were many who I had expected would help. But they were unable to hold me or were unavailable.

That's okay.

There when many fellow travellers who found themselves in the fire. They stood there with me providing the sustenance I needed along this path.

My higher power, Bruce, has been unflinching. The hotter the heat the more I felt protected.

I never ever understood the word gratitude when I was younger. Now I know that an attitude of gratitude makes my world go around. No matter how hot the furnace, I'm grateful.

I walk down the street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I fall in.

I am lost I am helpless.

It isn't my fault.

It takes forever to find a way out.

I walk down the street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I pretend that I don't see it.

I fall in again.

I can't believe I am in this same place.

But, it isn't my fault.

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

It still takes a long time to get out.

I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I see it is there.

I still fall in ... it's a habit ... but, my eyes are open.

I know where I am.

It is my fault.

I get out immediately.

I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I walk around it.

I walk down another street.

– Portia Nelson, There's a Hole in My Sidewalk: The Romance of Self-Discovery

Redress

A few years after the criminal case a friend of mine gave me an advertisement she had found in the Financial Review. They were asking for members of the public who had been at my school, during the years that I had attended.

I went online and googled the firm and listened to a short video of one of their partners. He reminded me of my detective. It turned out he had also been a detective. He was battle scared from years of fighting civil cases for damages against large institutions including the Churches, community groups and the scouts.

When we met, he told me he stood with the survivors 150%. The institutions had treated survivors poorly over a prolonged period. He knew having completed more than 1500 cases on behalf of other survivors. His was a vocation – not a career. He understood extremely well what the human toll was as a result of the absence of protection for children in Australia. He also knew what we were up against trying to seek redress.

I was unable to assist in his enquiries for witnesses at my old school but did request that he take on my case against the scouts.

During this period, I explored the possibility of the government sponsored redress scheme. The more I explored the less interested I became. The maximum payout was \$150,000 which did seem like a modest sum for someone who had spent at least double that amount for a lifetime of therapy. To add insult to injury, my “damage” was not considered sufficient to warrant a payout of the maximum amount. I estimated the worst case being around \$50,000 from this institutionally sponsored scheme – which might cover some of the legal expenses I had already incurred.

Frankly, the institutional redress scheme is pathetic. A cap on the contingent liability for all concerned, with little regard for the true cost of a lifetime of suffering. Quite pathetic.

Vicarious Liability

When an employee injures or assaults or, in the case of a paedophile, criminally harms a child, the employer is technically liable for the damages done to the child. This is in theory at least.

In practice in Australia, the Catholic Church has used deep pockets to invest in the finest legal minds to minimise its financial exposure. The result has been legal precedent which not only reduces all institutions financial liability but makes it incredibly difficult for survivors of child sex abuse to successfully bring a case for the institutions to be held legally liable. The legal loophole they have hidden behind is an employment contract. Because priests and the other religious leaders did not have an employment contract, the Catholic Church successfully argued it was not vicariously liable for the actions of its priests. All care, just zero responsibility.

This legal precedent meant that for me to sue the scouts, I was also subject to the same common law precedent. My scout leader did not have an employment contract. He was a volunteer. That meant I had a weak case based on the current common law.

Australia stands apart from the rest of the English-speaking world in this respect. In England, Canada and the USA, the Scouting movement was liable. Just not in Australia.

But surely the Royal Commission would address this anomaly? They had recommended that the states adopt new laws that would make all organisations – whether run by volunteers or employees vicariously liable for the actions of their staff. These recommendations were adopted in NSW prospectively in 2018, not retrospectively.

Simply put, the Institutions of Australia, who had essentially run criminal conspiracies to abuse children on a prodigious scale, lobbied for it to be impossible to be sued under the laws of each state for any historic cases of Child Sex Abuse.

That's quite convenient really.

It meant that survivors only recourse for redress was the redress scheme with a maximum damages claim of \$125,000. In other words, the total liability was capped to minimise the financial loss for these same institutions who even today are fighting every claim with the best legal advice money can buy.

It's a sad disgrace that the fine work and recommendations of the Royal Commission have been watered down to make it difficult for a just redress. Their guilt and responsibility were laid bare by a commission that interrogated thousands of survivors and the organisations who had caused them pain and suffering. Having weighed all of these considerations, I decided the only way to go was to sue the scouts and get the best legal minds I could on my case. Regardless of the interpretation of vicarious liability which favoured the scouts, I wanted to bring my case for damages to the supreme court of NSW.

Restorative Engagement?

After my legal team had begun proceedings against Scouts NSW in the Supreme Court of NSW, I received a letter from the scouts concerning restorative engagement.

Quite unexpectedly, Scouting NSW offered me two things I had not expected to receive. Firstly, they proposed to cover the costs of ongoing therapy, which was a kind gesture. Secondly, they asked if I would participate in a process they called “restorative engagement”.

I had never spoken to anyone at the Scouting NSW organisation and was keen to understand what this process was. So, I checked out the website, looked through the Child Protection policy but could not find any information on the “restorative engagement” process.

That worried me. Would it be safe? Who would be running it? Was there an independent facilitator? Would there be a restorative agreement outlining what each party would do as part of the amends making process?

Together with two supporters I attended a meeting together with senior leaders of the scouting movement. It was tense in the beginning, but thawed out after I read a letter outlining my experience in scouting and again a request for an apology. It turned out the leadership group was keen to change the culture of the organisation. The question was how?

As the meeting progressed, I was told that Scouting NSW was actively engaging with survivors of historic Child Sex abuse. I observed that my only contact came after I had sued them for damages. I also mentioned there were other survivors with whom no one had ever spoken – namely the three other scouts who had been complainants against Fisher in 1997. I also offered to send through a copy of the original judgement to Scouting NSW so that they could follow up with these fellow survivors.

The leaders asked whether my letter could be read to the leadership to help them understand the “human cost” of child sex abuse. I agreed. I also offered to read it to them! This offer was declined. The session ended with a rolled gold apology and a promise to send through a written apology.

It was an awkward session that did offer an apology, though it was complicated by the failure of the organisation to have what I would call an adequate reparation or restoration process. Thankfully, I was not further traumatised by it. Perhaps others would be triggered by what was a paternalistic process that frankly was not really restorative. It was a missed opportunity, as was my approach, but I had zero expectation on what was going to happen.

Ducked a Bullet

One day, after a session with my legal team, I dropped in to see my brother. He's a professional investor with an office in the city.

I told him I had recently been to see our old headmaster and had told him that his new child protection policy looked far clearer than it was, back in my day at the school. A few months earlier, he had sent around an email to all of the old boys informing us that a brother who had been at the school had been found guilty and sentenced to jail time.

When I mentioned to my brother, I had gone to visit him to, he told me he had spoken to him as well. As tears welled up in his eyes, he told me of his realisation that he had ducked two bullets. He had felt my abuser wanting to engage with him in his early days in scouts and had stopped going. Similarly, he had also chosen not to go into a room where the brother who had been found guilty and put in jail was doing things to boys, he felt uncomfortable being part of.

He had dodged a bullet and felt the horrible trauma of guilt. In the same way that it had taken me decades to open up about my story, he had also struggled coming to terms with his. It had taken two grown men 40 years to share what had actually happened when we were growing up.

We connected. I could completely feel the feelings that were triggered by the news he had received. After so many years I was grateful he had literally ducked a couple of bullets and could also feel the confusion that this had brought to his experience of childhood.

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

Imagine If

*Imagine if
I was inspired
I could stop and listen
I felt calm, composed,
full of creativity
I allowed all of me, [my shadow and light]
To just be*

*Imagine if
I connected to myself
My judgement disappeared
That right and wrong
Dissolved before my eyes
And allowed all of me
To just be*

*Imagine if
I owned my heart
My heart had opened
Revealed its courage
And Intimacy morphed into you I see
And allowed all of me
To just be*

*Imagine if
I let go of my compulsion
Had escaped addictions [Of every shape and colour]
Had absolved my pain
And desire to escape
And allowed all of me
To just be*

*Imagine if
Relationships were loving*

*Imagine if
There was workplace intimacy
My team and I could collaborate
I lead without power, authority and position
I had no need for status
I knew when enough was enough
I could stare down fear
I had courage
I could be true to my deepest beliefs
I had hope
I could create*

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

I built a movement
I competed with myself, not others
I could support my team
I was engaging my organisation
I galvanised people energy

I found a partner
I could keep a partner in a loving relationship
I had contact with a loving spirit
I could deliver myself over to unconditional love
I let go of painful wounds
I trusted my intuition
I knew which way to go at an intersection

I accepted who I am
I had a healthy sex life
I was in a loving relationship
I had a deep connection with my partner
I was convinced of my worth
I valued myself
I was gracious for everything I had
I embodied humility
I had grace
I had dignity
I shared my fear of death

I knew my purpose
I felt compassion
I learnt without effort
I let go of anything
I was set free from my madness
I accepted my shadow
I healed my wounds
I acknowledged my darkness
I followed my vision
I had a vision
I showed my gratitude
I revealed my needs
I sung along to another's song
I enjoyed confidence in abundance
I leveraged my passion

I could guide another
I could take their hand
I accepted their trust
I shared my vulnerability
I gave them everything

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

I shared their joy
I marvelled at their competence
I could cry in their presence
I could forgive them

Suppression or Expression

When an institution like Scouting NSW hears that there is a violation through historic Child sex Abuse, there is a choice. Do they take an organisational-centric view of the problem where they are concerned about reputation, exposure to liability, and the risk to future existence of the organisation? Or do they take a survivor-centric approach.

Implicit in this approach is an acute awareness of the life-destructive unintended consequences an individual survivor experience. These manifest physically, materially, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually. A survivor-centric approach sets out to re-story the old story that was the violation. It enables a process to take place in which we heal ourselves by facilitating an encounter with the truth, repairing the emotional hurt that has been done and offering amends. It seeks to heal all parties to the conflict including the organisation, the perpetrator and the survivor.

These two approaches could not be more different from one another.

The organisational-centric approach is driven by fear. This approach is centred on the organisation's experience of abuses, the protection and limitation of risk. It constrains survivors' stories to avoid public humiliation and loss of reputation (litigation).

I discovered in my preparation for the settlement of my case with Scouting NSW that there were very different approaches they could take to the way in which they handled my case. In many ways I had been lucky to be able to speak out at the trial of my abuser and seek an apology from him whilst he stood in the full glare of the judge who was about to pass down his sentence. I was able to give full expression to what I needed in that situation thanks to the kindness of the judge and my detective.

The organisation who had harboured my abuser had done nothing to assist me in my process. I had done it all on my own. As I prepared for my mediation with Scouting NSW I gave careful consideration to the non-monetary items I would ask of them, that would give me the chance to express to them exactly what I felt was necessary when it came to healing and restoring the emotional wounds of child sex abuse. Suppression was over, it was time for expression.

FREE

“We have not even to risk the adventure alone; for the heroes of all time have gone before us; the labyrinth is thoroughly known; we have only to follow the thread of the hero-path.” Here it is. “And where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god; where we had thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves; where we had thought to travel outward, we shall come to the centre of our own existence; where we had thought to be alone, we shall be with all the world.”

– Joseph Campbell

Freedom is what you do with what’s been done to you.

– Jean Paul Sartre

D-Day

Fear

*So, fear, I stared you down.
Honesty, bucket loads of it
Brought me dignity
Brought me courage*

*I am who I am
I am all of the things I've ever done
I'm human and suffer*

*Fear you've been my nemesis
My partner in crime
Drown yourself in your charade*

*Blow your wet wind elsewhere
Dissipate somewhere over the seas
Convert to waves
The power of your energy
Bring me back again*

*Honesty gives me dignity
Cuts you off at the knees
Makes you impotent, despondent*

*Shift, glow be only as you need to be
Save me from the perils of physical harm
Disconnect from your emotional enmeshment
Grow up and be dignified too!*

I had never felt more prepared for a meeting in my life. It was clear to me that I did not wish to take the case to court because of the weak case I had trying to win under NSW law. The ghosts of the catholic Church hovered over my legal team meaning that winning a case using the legal argument of vicarious liability was fraught with danger.

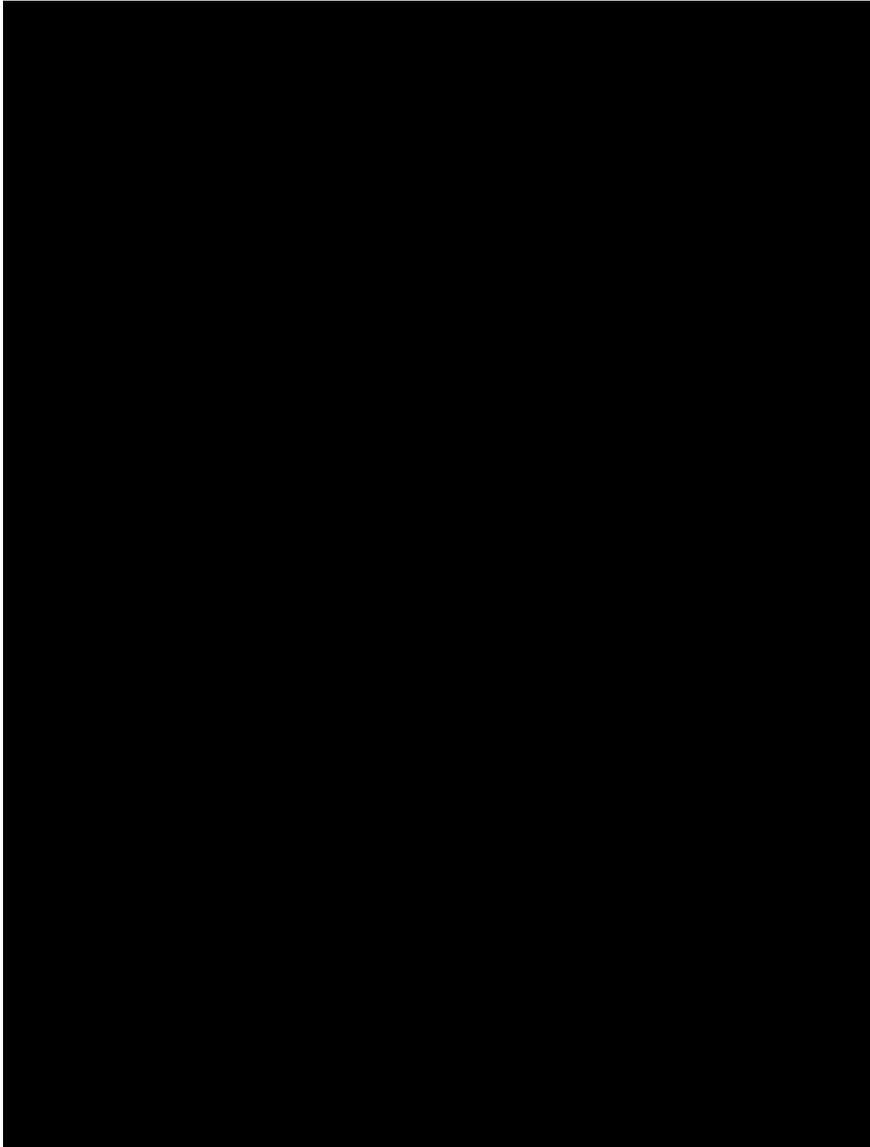
Even if we were to win, I would most likely fail at an appeal in the NSW Supreme court. If I wanted to win in the High Court of Australia, I had to be prepared for a 3-4 year campaign and then lose up to \$1.5m in legal fees.

Why? Simply because the laws concerning vicarious liability had been changed prospectively and NOT retrospectively. Here is where the lobbying of the institutions, including the Scouts, had paid off handsomely. I was strong disincentivised to take my case to court despite the guilty verdict for the perpetrator and the implicit vicarious liability the institution had to keep me safe. My team advised that settlement would be by far the best outcome. I agreed.

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

The day started with the mediator outlining the situation, introducing the parties and handing over to me.

I introduced myself with a photo of me as an 11-year-old boy. I explained that this was the boy who had been unable to speak up all of those year ago. I was now able to speak for that boy and tell his story with respect and dignity.



I then read them this letter ...

To all in attendance today

Today we will all be a witness to the evidence that has been presented and arrive at a conclusion which establishes redress for the damage done to me. I would like to begin by thanking all of you for the work you have done to prepare yourselves for this meeting today.

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

For me, this is an important milestone in a justice journey that started decades ago, with the last 14 years representing my process of healing and recovery. During this time, I have only once had the chance to speak directly to my perpetrator Mark Fisher, which was the day of his sentencing, June 30, 2015. Today is the second occasion I have the opportunity to speak directly to representatives of Scouting Australia; the first being in January in 2019 when we met for a restorative engagement session.

You are possibly wondering what drives a middle-age man to disrupt his life, report to the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sex Abuse (CSA), chase down an apology from the perpetrator, and seek redress from the organisation to which we all belonged?

It's simple. When I explained at his sentencing the harms the perpetrator had committed, their impact on me and my family, he could perhaps see and feel for the first time, what it was like to be on the receiving end of his unwanted behaviour. As the court session closed, he thanked me for having the courage to come forward. What has now become clear to me is how his apology and acknowledgement, and my family's chance to bear witness to what he had done were both precursors to me eventually forgiving him for what took place over 40 years ago.

Today we have an opportunity to address the damages claim that Scouts Australia NSW has received. I do not wish to comment on any aspect of the claim made. I do however believe that there is an opportunity for the scouting movement to make amends, agree to provide compensation, and then pledge to do everything possible to disable the organisational culture which created this situation in the first place.

I want to acknowledge the work done by Scouting Australia NSW in developing a set of guidelines which begin the journey to addressing child protection within the scouting movement. When I met with commissioner in January 2019, it was made clear to me that despite an excellent set of policies and procedures, there is a way to go to shift the behaviours and attitudes of the scouting movement in Australia. Building a culture which inherently disables abuse, restores trust and has a system of restorative processes, procedures, and criteria: to process all previous and future incidents is a significant undertaking. This is the other reason we are here today, to change the scouting movement so that no child ever has to go through what I went through.

It is with this in mind that I would like our mediation to address the following request as part of the final settlement.

1. **A Written Apology:** When I met with Scouting NSW leaders, I was able to tell my story and was provided with an apology. It was heartfelt and addressed all of the issues I had raised. They also mentioned that he would provide a written apology which was not forthcoming at the time. My request is for the promised apology be included in the final settlement agreement.
2. **A Meeting with the Leadership of Scouts Australia:** During our meeting, I was asked if the letter I read to the leaders, outlining my story, be made available to his leadership group. I said, I am happy for him to share my story with this group, as a means of providing an emotional context to the need for robust child protection within

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

the scouting movement. With 90-95% of all paedophiles being men, the scouting movement is, regardless of the policies in place, an ideal venue for a child sex offender as it provides both access and opportunity to any perpetrator. Given the high risk inherent in Scouting Australia's movement, I believe there is an objective need to take every step to mitigate this risk and develop cultural traits that make future crimes highly unlikely. I also wish to comment on the importance of a survivor-centred approach to restoration for the survivors. My request is for an invitation to meet with the Board, Executive and leadership group of Scouting Australia and share my story with them. During this meeting my aim would be to discuss the current CSA risks inherent in the organisation, the consequences when vigilance fails within Scouting Australia's membership and possible cultural traits that would thwart perpetrators. My simple aim is to ensure the Scouting movement in Australia shifts its leadership-culture to ensure a case like mine is unlikely to ever happen ever again and all survivors are given every opportunity to heal.

- 3. Exclusion of my memoir from a Confidentiality Agreement:** Last year I wrote a memoir called *Flawed Forgiven and Free*. This short book was written specifically for the survivors of sexual abuse. It came about when I was talking to a friend about the difficulty survivors have to face their perpetrators in court, in restorative justice and in many other contexts. The purpose of my memoir is to provide the reader with inspiration and hope on their healing journey. It is for those who are carrying the seemingly unbearable burden that sexual abuse brings with it. My sincere hope is to provide other survivors with courage and strength, as they wrestle with the decision to challenge themselves, those closest to them and the judicial system in requesting an apology and acknowledgement from their perpetrators (primary abuser) and Scouting Australia (secondary abuser). Forgiveness of a perpetrator, and the healing which this amends making process enables, does not come easily nor quickly. It is a process. This story is real, though the names of certain people involved have been withheld to reduce any harm that may be done to them. The abuser's name is used as his crimes are a matter of public record. The feedback I have had from other survivors is that the book provides insights and inspiration to survivors as they go through an otherwise lonely healing journey. Neither I nor any other survivors do not wish any agreement with Scouting Australia to inhibit my ability to publish my story. My request of Scouting Australia is to allow the publication of this story and not block or undermine its publication through confidentiality agreements as part of this settlement.

I am keen to engage in the mediation process in a way that is thoughtful, honest, intelligent, necessary and kind. I would ask you all to follow this lead and ask our mediator to ensure that all involved are held to the highest standards to ensure an equitable and just outcome is arrived at, for all involved.

Warm regards

At the end of the day we reached agreement for both the monetary and non-monetary outcomes. I felt a deep relief that there was no more outstanding business regarding my case. I had agreed and signed off on my damages claim and was finally free.

Restoration Matters

Restoration matters for all sides of the conflict. For me, my family, my community, the perpetrator and in this case, Scouting NSW. There are no winners in an historic case of child sex abuse. Up until today, my case had unfolded in a miraculous way. From the moment I had realised 30 years after the fact what it actually happened to me as a child, I took action to deal with the consequences and speak up. First to the Royal Commission, then to the police, then to the courts, and then to the perpetrator. The conversation I was able to have with my perpetrator had shifted something within me. It moved me in ways I will never forget. From that moment onwards I could forgive him after he acknowledged the harms he had done, the suffering he had caused and had made amends.

But there were other people who needed to understand the human cost of historic child sex abuse. The Board of Scouting NSW whose whole reason for being is the development of young boys into young men, leaders of the community.

But what happens when an institution like Scouting NSW fails to protect a child? How does it treat those who were harmed? How does it help the survivor to overcome the suffering and trauma? In my case I was lucky to have engineered an amends process in a courthouse. Most survivors are not that lucky, nor that determined to get resolution because frankly it is too hard.

These were the questions I needed to address with the board of scouting NSW.

They invited me for lunch. My meeting with them coincided with a strategic offsite where they were discussing the future of their organisation. When I arrived, I told them I was keen to share my story and personal experience of their own “restorative engagement” process. I was not there for lunch.

I concluded by observing that the way in which their organisation responds to the crisis of historic child sex abuse would define them. It would show whether they really stand for the ethics of dignity, respect and courage which is the basis upon which the scouting movement stands.

I outlined two paths down which they could consciously go. The first would be to continue to use an organisation-centric approach to child sex abuse. That means an acute awareness of the damage to the organisation’s reputation, the financial liability and the risk to the organisation’s future existence. It also meant a failure to heal the wounds their organisation had created decades earlier. I said that before I had started that meeting, they were within their rights to continue down that path.

But having heard what I told them about my own story, about my own struggles, I said they were now unable to un-hear my story or un-see the picture of me as an 11-year-old. To hide behind “we don’t know what we don’t know”, was no longer acceptable.

There is a second path, that fully embodies the ethics of dignity, respect and courage. And that path is a survivor-centred response to the damage their organisation is responsible for.

APPENDIX 1 - One in Six?

This means developing an acute awareness of the life destructive consequences to individuals that the trauma from child sex abuse brings with it. This means recognising and taking responsibility for the physical, material, emotional, psychological and spiritual Impacts every boy who has suffered sexual abuse within the context of their organisation faces.

I shared with them best practices in restorative approaches which embed reparation and re-storying at the heart of the organisation's response to the crisis. I told them that an institutional restorative response is possible when built upon the right principles policy and program. I shared that taking a survivor-centred approach and adopting best practices changes lives and organisations forever. I said it is their responsibility to get a 95% satisfaction rating from survivors, offenders and other participants in their restorative process, and if they're not getting that, they're not living by the values they espouse.

I told them it's time to change their thinking and the narrative around historic child sex abuse and create an approach that heals and does not cause further unnecessary suffering.

Restoration matters.

Doing it properly will disrupt the pattern of trauma that lies at the heart of so many survivors, their families and the organisations that failed to protect them. I want to see not just Scouts NSW but every institution in the world that has clusters of cases of historic child sex abuse and has failed in its duty of care to protect children, adopt best practices that set the standard is possible.

Healing and redemption for all lies at the heart of re-storying our past traumas, that's why Restoration Matters.

Reinvention

*Come transformation
Swirl past my body
Take me with you in your vortex
Leave me stable
Leave me clear
Relieve me of my discomfort
When it arises
Let me live with the feelings
Shift my centre
Allow will to melt in your hands
Make way for newness
See the small buds
Greening my tree
Making the most of me*

Sources of Support for Survivors

12 Steps groups

Adult Children of Alcoholics and Dysfunctional Families

Al Anon

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous

Narcotics Anonymous

Support Groups

Reachout

Blue knot

Safe Ministry <https://safeministry.org.au/seeking-support/>

1800 Respect

website: www.1800respect.org.au

Adults Surviving Child Abuse

Phone: 1300 657 380

Anglicare Counselling

website: <https://www.anglicare.org.au/directory-category/counselling>

Australian Childhood Trauma Group

website: www.theactgroup.com.au/

Bravehearts

website: www.bravehearts.org.au

Care Leavers Australia Network

website: www.clan.org.au

Child Wise

website: www.childwise.net

Find and Connect NSW

website: www.findandconnect.gov.au/contact/new-south-wales

Link Up NSW Aboriginal Corporation

website: www.linkupnsw.org.au

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MensLine Australia

website: <https://mensline.org.au/>

NSW Health Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV)

website: www.ecav.health.nsw.gov.au

Open Place

website: www.openplace.org.au/

Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia

website: www.rape-dvservices.org.au

Relationships Australia

website: www.relationships.org.au

Relationships Australia NSW & ACT

website: www.nsw.relationships.com.au

Service Assisting Male Survivors of Sexual Assault (SAMSSA)

website: samssa.org.au

Sexual Assault Services – NSW Health – NSW Government

website: www.health.gov.au/sexualassault

Suicide Call Back Service

website: www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Survivors and Mates Support Network (SAMSN)

website: www.samsn.org.au

Victims Access Line

website: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sexualassault/pages/default.aspx>

Specialist Police Resources

Australian Federal Police Sexual Assault and Child Abuse team

Qualified police trained to assist with responding to allegations of child abuse.

Phone: (02) 6256 7777

Institutional Support for Best Practices in Restoration

Restorative Way LLC

www.restorativeway.com