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BY BILL JARRARD

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Sleeping Angels - a story and poem of lost angels

Sleeping Angels

It started with science
Then they burst into life
Expecting one, instead two miracles
Twins – surprise, disbelief, and joy
Instant love and wonderment

Growing from poppy seed to blueberry
From raspberry to prune they grow
Then change, concerning prognosis
Two identical girls, but different
Healthy yes, but now fear creeps in

Growing, one orange, one plum
Identical, but not the same
Growing, one mango, one orange
Twin sisters, one Cherub, one Elfin
One thriving, one trying

Decisions are hard, wait and see, week by week
Growing, one grapefruit, one sweet potato
Now urgent, one to live, one to die
Disaster and devastation
Twin sisters arrive, both sleeping

Sleeping angels, beautiful and loved
By mothers heartbroken, and more
Everyone involved, everything done
Girls too wonderful for this world
Amazing and loving mothers – crying!

For Amelia Mary and little Hanna May,
and their beautiful mothers and grandmother

Grandpa Bill (Jarrard)
11th September 2019

In Geelong VIC, Australia

Before I die I want to…

On a flight to Brisbane I watched a number of TED Talks, including the inspiring Candy Chang who shared her story of converting an abandoned house into a blackboard where people finished the phrase ‘Before I die I want to…’.

Then John Hockenberry summed his talk up with ‘A life with intent, lived by design, covering the original with something better’ to find a way to do something.

Lastly Garth Brooks sang Standing Outside the Fire ‘a life isn’t worth living, standing outside the fire’.

Made me think of my life and my intent, the people I’ve loved and love, the things I’ve done, the adventures I’ve had, the decisions I’ve made and the impact these had on where I am now and the people who’ve shared my life.

As Frank Sinatra sang ‘I’ve had regrets, but too few to remember.’ For me the future is what matters, and living life with calmness, love and respect for all is important. But being unafraid to take chances, try new things, and sharing experiences with others is what gets me up every morning.

I love the ‘work’ I do, helping others see the world differently, Imagineering outcomes, skilling them to think more deliberately and more creatively, and challenging the way things are done.

Before I die I want to make a difference. I want to give those I love and respect everything I can. And I want to find out what I’m going to do when I grow up. As if that’s ever going to happen. LOL

What do you want to do before you die?

In Australia

How Lucky is She? It's only a tumour!

You know the scenario. The 'inspirational' speaker is introduced. She has survived a plane crash, he's lost 90 KGs and has now climbed Everest, he's an ex-con who now runs an international social enterprise.

What great stories, with lessons that motivate thousands. They're set for a long professional speaking career – how lucky are they!

This is the background to the light-hearted exchange I'm having with my remarkable wife Jennifer Goddard. Jen's story is amazing, high-school dropout, teenage mum, widowed at 21 about when she learns she's dyslexic – explaining the school challenges.

Today she has a Bachelor of Business and a Master of Entrepreneurship & Innovation, is a professional speaker, author of several books, including Brain Training for Kids, and editor of several others. She is founder of the Australian Memory Championships and was Chief Ops Manager for the World Memory Championships - Anthill Magazine named her Australia's Memory Maven. And as my co-founder in Mindwerx International Jen has presented in 22 countries and coaches people worldwide.

Quite the story. But wait there's more. Three weeks ago today she underwent 7 hours of surgery to remove a ping pong ball sized tumour pressing on her brain. Fortunately it was a benign tumour and the surgery went well, although it will take several weeks and possibly months to fully recover.

What a great addition to her story, the brain trainer who gets a brain tumour, how lucky is she!

In Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Woo Hoo, It's Monday

Years ago when I actually worked for a living (I like to tell people I'm not a consultant, I've just been successfully unemployed for 23 years) I always enjoyed getting in the lift at quitting time on Friday.

As I entered I'd say 'Thank God It's Friday' and others would pipe up with something similar. But then I'd finish with 'yeah, it's great, only two days until Monday', and of course everyone would moan or laugh at my 'joke'.

But for me it usually wasn't a joke, I really did love Friday because there were only two days until Monday, and I loved Mondays even more. And why wouldn't I?

After all, the weekend was a time to relax, play with the kids, be with family and friends, get outdoors, even have a romantic dinner. It was time to recharge so the coming week started with energy and creativity.

I loved Monday. I'd arrive at my office by 7:00 am giving me an hour before my team arrived. This was my time to set my focus and goals for the week. That first hour of Monday wasn't for 'doing work', it was for focusing and planning.

That was what Monday mornings were, and still are, all about. Planning what I'm going to do – today, this week, this month, and on occasion with the rest of my life. Then at the start of each day I take a few minutes to review, reflect, and if needed revise my focus and priorities.

We all have a lot of things to do each day, so if things are a bit overwhelming for you this week try to take some time to focus.

Maybe you'll even start to love Monday!

In Australia

Antidisestablishmentarianism - Power of Words

The power of words was one of many lessons my dad taught us as we grew up. Each evening mum would have a 3-course meal for us to enjoy around the dining table (except Saturday which was Sloppy Joes on TV tables watching Disney) and on occasion conversation was devoted to new words.

One I recall with clarity was on long words and dad brought out a doozie - antidisestablishmentarianism. While he did his best to explain it, it was challenging for us kids to truly grasp it. So it was with delight that many years later I saw it used in a newspaper article, and it made complete sense!

I was on one of my annual lecturing stints in Israel and the local paper was running articles on the various factions within Israeli politics. This article outlined strategies used by orthodox groups to counteract those seeking to liberalize some of the country's long-standing policies, such as shops opening on the Sabbath. So how did my word get used? Let's break it down.

Establishment – the status quo
Disestablishment – breaking down the status quo
Antidisestablishment – resisting the breaking down of the status quo
Antidisestablishmentarian – a person resisting the breaking down of the status quo
Antidisestablishmentarianism – the philosophy of those resisting the breaking down of the status quo

So the article looked at strategies of supporters of Antidisestablishmentarianism. What a wonderful way for me to reconnect with my father's lessons and be reminded of the power of words.

In Israel

Brain Break Imagineering - Need an idea? Take a nap!

I've always been a visual person, which is why I like the creative thinking skill of Imagineering – imagine what might be and engineer it into reality. So when a Byte Stories email arrived telling me a competition for best liked stories ended in 48 hours, I knew I had to take action.

So I went for a quick nap – me, Missy our little dog and Jen even joined me after a few minutes. As I stretched out I placed a clear focus in my mind to work on – come up with a Byte Story topic readers would value and like, that I could write and post within 30 minutes.

My mind wandered over past events, near and distant – things I'd done, people I'd met, stories of my kids and family, and more. It was pleasing and relaxing to recall some good times and fun events, and I knew I'd have a great topic soon. This was the sort of creativity I enjoyed, letting images and memories float by, connecting with new thoughts until an answer, design or solution appears.

Then something Jen said hit me, why not do a story on how to take Brain Breaks for generating creative new ideas? Brilliant – simple and hopefully of value for you the reader. When you're stuck looking for an answer or idea, sometimes the best thing to do is to just relax and stop concentrating.

Go for a walk, hang out some laundry, or have a nap and let your mind just wonder around what you're trying to think about. Then when the idea strikes, get to work and make it happen. Imagineering in action! Good luck.

In Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

Tony Buzan, Mind Maps and Multiple Intelligences - Seven People That Changed My Life 7

I first started using Mind Maps in 1988, but it was 1993 when I read The Mind Map book and first learned of Tony, and began the real shift of my focus to Deliberate Creative Thinking.

Then when I introduced Jennifer to Mind Maps to help her study, the passion for Tony's work took off. His methods made such a difference to Jen that in 1998, when I imagineered Mindwerx I did it in a Mind Map, and one of the key influencers in that was Tony Buzan, even though I knew little about him.

In 2000 on a trip to England Jennifer and I met Vanda North, then head of Buzan Centres and I suggested we start a Buzan Centre in Australia. We did just that the next year and it was about then I first met Tony.

We were at his studio in England overlooking the Thames countryside as he explained his writing process to me, and over a lovely lunch attended by Tony, Vanda, Jennifer, my son Will and myself; I knew Tony and I would be great friends.

And today we are. Not only has his work in learning how to learn and multiple intelligences significantly impacted hundreds of millions of people, it has heightened the mission Jennifer and I are on to promote creativity, innovation and advanced learning methods. We support Tony's goal of Global Mental Literacy, and in so doing have worked with Tony around the world.

In the many hours and days Tony and we have worked and played together he has made a massive impact on our lives, and I believe we have also influenced his thinking.

In England, United Kingdom

Jennifer who showed me no challenge is out of reach - Seven People That Changed My Life 6

I 'met' Jennifer on 4 Jan 1997 while waiting in an office to see if anyone was using it while its normal resident was on leave. When she arrived I knew it was in use, so I went off and found someplace else to work.

It was day one of a new consulting assignment and shortly after starting I was asked me to take on a more urgent, important and risky project; and I knew I'd need help to get it done. I asked a colleague who he'd recommend and he directed me to Jennifer, the woman I'd 'met' a few days earlier.

She was happy to assist and over 3 weeks we interviewed staff, reviewed a lot of material, developed some innovative concepts, and completed a vital strategy for the business. In this time I knew I'd met someone who could brilliantly turn my ideas into working models and it was clear we were a great team. But then it went further.

We were both single and after 3 weeks Jennifer asked me to dinner, and in short we've been together ever since. Why? Because right from the start she has challenged me to be more than I am.

On our first date we talked about trekking to Mt Everest, which I'd always been told was beyond my capability, due to my weak leg from contracting Polio as a child. But next day Jen brought in info on treks to Nepal and in a week we were booked to go. That was one of our first adventures together and we've had many since then. Jen changed my life and continues to do so as we explore the world taking on new adventures as the mood strikes us.

In Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Bill Conway to Dr. Deming - Seven People That Changed My Life 5

Shortly after becoming a senior manager I attended a 6-week residential executive program at the Australian Graduate School of Management. There I heard about Total Quality Management (TQM) and sometime later went to a seminar with Bill Conway, ex-President of Nashua who was talking about the subject. He was clear, concise, passionate and told us what was needed for a business to thrive.

By morning tea I felt I had some answers, so I called my office to organize a meeting of my team for the next morning – some changes were going to be made. I spoke to Bill and he encouraged me to start by working on my CEO. So early next morning I wrote a memo to Alan telling him TQM was vital to our business and that as CEO it was his role to lead it. He asked me to show him more.

So I invited two CEO friends to lunch with us, during which they talked about what TQM meant to their businesses. When they left Alan simply said ‘Well I guess you’ve got a new job, find a replacement, take some time off, and start your new role when you get back – and let me know what you need’. That was Alan.

Together we led the TQM charge and I spent the next ten years passionately promoting continuous improvement to all sorts of organizations. Bill Conway not only taught me about TQM, he introduced me to Dr Deming whom I was honored to meet before he died. Bill and Dr Deming changed my professional journey. Today my book on TQM ‘Hidden Gold’ written with friend Jo Kruithof is still sold by SAI Global

In Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Edward de Bono’s Serious Creativity - Seven People That Changed My Life 4

In 1986 I was in my first senior management role. Alan had promoted me to manage Admin for the bank’s data processing which as usual I wasn’t qualified to do. This included Finance, HR, 8 Computer Facilities and Computer Security - 9 managers and 200 staff.

When Alan asked me to take the role I told him I knew nothing about Finance and hated HR, but he simply said “It’s easy, just remember debits equal credits and make HR work or shut it down.” That was Alan.

Several months into the role things were starting to work well, but I had a team of very different people so I was looking at ways to help us work together better. About then I attended an Edward de Bono seminar.

Edward is creator of Lateral Thinking and a leader in creative thinking as a skill. At the seminar he introduced Six Thinking Hats for the first time and I was fascinated by its simplicity. So I bought 10 copies of his book, took them back to my team, and on Monday we started using them.

In almost no time we found how valuable they were and started using more de Bono methods in coming months. Since then I’ve been a de Bono fan and in 20 years I’ve trained thousands in his methods and used them in countless facilitations.

I’ve even used his methods in a workshop where Edward was a mere participant, and that was fun! Edward taught me and the world that creative thinking is a skill anyone can learn and improve, and it’s been my mission to spread his concepts via Mindwerx which I started in 1998.

In Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Alan encouraged me to get my fingers burnt - Seven People That Changed My Life 3

At 30 I started thinking about getting a serious job and I had the great fortune to meet Alan Findlay a man with a vision for what I might do and the courage to give me a chance. It was 1983, my daughter Kylie was just born, and it was time for my career. So I wrote a major bank suggesting I'd be ideal for a computer security job, which I saw as a new growth area.

My boldness paid off and I was interviewed by Alan for a position as Security Analyst. Next day HR called to offer me a Senior Analyst, Security & Control position, a more senior role which hadn't even been discussed.

I suggested a mistake had been made and insisted on going back to discuss the role, at which time Alan outlined the position as he saw it. When I told him honestly that I had no experience in such a job, he simply said "It's never been done before, so take it and I'll give you a month to figure it out. When can you start?" That was Alan.

I took the job and over the next 8 years Alan promoted me every 18 months to new more senior roles I again had no qualifications to take. But he knew I had talent I didn't see, so he kept challenging me until we both had corner offices in a high-rise block and were on the management board of an 18,000 person organization.

This 8 year 'career' taught me I could do far more than I believed, and is summed up in a phrase Alan said often "Bill, you never know how far you can go until you get your fingers burnt, so go get some fingers burnt." That was Alan.

In Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

The Girl on the Beach - Seven People That Changed My Life 2

It was summer 1974 around my 21st birthday and I met a girl on the beach at Surfer's Paradise who would cause me to explore the world with new eyes. I don't recall her name but in our few hours together we talked about travelling the world and a book she was reading, The Drifters by James Michener. When we parted she gave it to me and the next day I devoured that book.

The Drifters was about six people the same age as me and their travel through Europe. As protagonist, Michener plays a wise mentor, connected in some way to each of the six young people. His occasional interactions with them are lesson filled, and in one scene they discuss when they should go to university, get jobs, or be married, and all six agree this is best done while in their twenties. Michener provocatively disagrees and advises they live their lives now, and not worry about formal education, serious careers, or family until 30.

This had great impact on me and there on the beach I decided not to look for a serious job until I was 30. Within months I turned down a promotion, moved to London, then explored Europe in a van, lived on a Kibbutz and excavated an ancient tomb. In 1976 I returned to Canada and 1980 saw me back to Australia.

Just after my 30th birthday my first child was born and I started a new job that led to an executive career. I'd done what Michener advised and the girl on the beach started it all. I never saw her again to thank her, but her gift changed the course of my life.

In Gold Coast, Australia

Seven People That Changed My Life - 1 : My parents and our move to Australia

Parents always have a significant impact on our life's journey, after all without them we wouldn't even be here. My parents Bill and Gladys were and are I'm happy to say two of the best.

When I was young they allowed me to explore my world, encouraged me to try new things, to make mistakes and then make amends. They shaped my values, spurred my education through word play and gave me a love for reading.

But perhaps the biggest change they made was in 1971 when they decided to move to Australia. I was the oldest of four children and at 18 they allowed me to decide to join them or not. I recall the day well.

I was in my first weeks of university and Mum had my car for some reason, so she picked me up at day's end. As we drove home she casually said "Oh by the way your dad has quit his job." He'd been with the company for 20 years and was in charge of Western Canada distribution, so that was quite a surprise.

Then she said "Oh and we're moving to Australia!" What? Where did that come from? Then she added "And if you want to come you'll need to buy your own ticket."

What she meant was that at 18 I had to make my own decisions and take my own actions. So after 3 days consideration I bought a ticket on a ship that took us from Vancouver to Sydney in February 1972, leaving 7 days after my 19th birthday.

I left behind a fiancé, lots of friends and started a whole new life. It was a major change in my journey, which was about to take many new turns.

In Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

Seven People That Changed My Life

One's life is in part shaped by people we meet, whether we realize it or not, and in an average lifetime of 25,000 to 30,000 days we will meet a lot of people. Some will have little influence on us, while a few will in some way change our lives.

In a series of stories I want to mention seven people that changed my life. Not that there were only seven, but because I want to write about this in sets of seven, and the challenge of narrowing it down to seven was an interesting challenge.

And so in future I'll almost certainly write about Seven More People That Changed My Life. But to start, the first I'll write about are:

1. My parents and our move to Australia
2. The girl on the beach in the summer of 1974
3. Alan my mentor and getting my fingers burnt
4. Edward de Bono and creative thinking as a skill
5. Bill Conway from TQM to Dr Deming
6. Jennifer my wife who told me no challenge is out of reach
7. Tony Buzan, Mind Maps and multiple intelligences

My hope in relating these stories is that I can once again appreciate and acknowledge those who have influenced my journey so far, and perhaps encourage you to reflect on those that changed your life. I may also do a full version of these as an eBook, so would value comments on that idea.

I'll begin the first story in my next Byte Story entry.

In Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

Real Adventures and Lessons from a young Boy's Life

As we get older, I've just turned 60, we realize if we're lucky, that much of who we are and have been was formed in younger years. My formative years, years that shaped my values, beliefs, style and much of my personality, were when I was 7-10 living in the North End of Winnipeg Canada and which I've captured in a book initially written for my children 'The North End Years'.

They were great years full of fun, fear, exploration, learning, adventure, death and more. For example that first year in the North End I was in Grade Two and school was not where I wanted to be. There was too much to do outside. Exploring the territory, making new friends, getting into trouble, playing games and more. But I was lucky I had a great teacher that year Miss Smith who made our young lives exciting with her stories.

My favorite was 'The Boxcar Children' by Gertrude Warner which told the story of four orphaned kids who make a home in a boxcar they find in a forest. The adventures they had, as read by Miss Smith each day, were exciting and imaginative for us kids and it led to my own adventures hiding in our coal-bin in the basement of our house. From here I watched for friends and foes and 'saw' life unfold around me as my imagination soared. This was perhaps the start of my deliberate use of imagination to achieve my goals, and more than 50 years later I'm still doing so. What stories I wonder peaked your imagination, it could be fun to find out, so give it a try and then share them.

In Winnipeg, MB, Canada

My North End Years

My North End Years

Dark and stark, remote and forbidding
Ridden with crime and full of danger
So said some, so said many - of my North End

A child, learning to learn and ready to race
Arriving in a new world - wide, strange and entrancing
Eager to explore, eager to embrace - my North End

Three years they lasted - too long for some, too short for one
Three years of experience, action and wonder
Three years with family, friends and foes - in my North End

Tears and smiles, fears and heroes, hates and loves - and Death
So much fun, so much to come - in so short a time
So much wisdom for one so young - from my North End

A world of change, a world full of life, a world of opportunity
The school, the park, the alley, the house, the cinema, the store
All were important places in this new world - in my North End

King Tut, Churchill, Kennedy, Cuba and the Soviets
Aladdin and Sinbad, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans - and Zorro
Heroes and villains - real and imagined - all part of my North End

Pals and parties, Cubs and Koombuyah, pirates in the park
Surrounded by friends and foes - some strong, some weak
My gang, their gang - ready to fight, ready to die - in my North End

A time to live, a time to try - all the time in the world
A few short years, a great many experiences - a glimpse of life
A time of wisdom, the best and worst time to live - my North End Years

Bill Jarrard, Sept 2002

In Winnipeg, MB, Canada

About Author

Bill Jarrard

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Husband, Father, Grandfather

Why is the website called bytestories.com?

This is a place for "byte-sized" stories and there is a 1500 character (about 250 words) limit for two main reasons. Firstly, we want you to know that "War and Peace" isn't required to leave your mark. Secondly, it takes about 2 minutes to read each story meaning you can head here whenever you want a quick (and entertaining) read.

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