



All the Questions you've ever wanted answered!

What was the inspiration behind your Memoir Resilience? In 2007 I hit rock bottom in life. I was in the throes of my first breakdown and my 18yr old daughter had just disclosed her sexual abuse at the hands of the man I was about to marry in two weeks. Resilience chronicles what lead to those life changing events and how I built myself into the resilience person I am now. I wrote the book to encourage, empower and inspire all that read the book.

Were there any writers or books that influenced Resilience in terms of style/theme/form etc? Well, don't laugh but I had listened to the audio version of Jimmy Barnes memoir "Working Class Boy" and it actually gave me the strength to talk about the very difficult issues I needed to talk about in the book. I had also read Bri Lee's book Eggshell Skull.

What research did you have to do for Resilience and how did you go about it? Well this was a tough one. Most of the first two chapters are based on childhood memories and the rest of the book is a combination of journal entries, letters, memories and actual court documents. I hadn't read the court transcripts for many years and it was an emotionally turbulent time re reading the miscarriage of justice in our case. Having moved on from that time it was an unexpected shock to realise how much emotion was still attached to that time and place.

How did Resilience come to be published? I had read and researched lots about the publishing game and I came to the conclusion that if I wanted to publish the book on my terms and with the content and cover I wanted – a self-publishing package was the only way to go. I did invest in a brilliant editor in addition to the base line editor offered as part of my package with Ultimate World Publishing in Melbourne. I found an overseas Editor with a PTSD psychology background to do the in depth editing that the memoir required and that was a wonderful experience. Sarah, my editor drove me to do deeper than I thought possible and to draw out elements of the book that make it better and a deeper experience for the reader, well I hope that's what I've achieved.

Who are your writing influences? I have always been a reader and I've read just about all genres of books from Pookie as a child to Little Women in my teens to memoir, self help, science fiction through my adult life. I love a good story as much as the next person but I particularly love stories with strong female lead characters and triumph of the little guy over evil, that sort of story is great for the soul. I like books that "pack a punch" and leave you thinking and inspired. I hope that's what I've written.

What are you working on now? Lots of things actually. I've started on my next book "whole Again" which is a self help book and an in depth look at the strategies that helped my develop my resilience to life, helped me see happiness and enjoy life again. I'm learning all about blogging and have started to write articles on trauma, resilience, and positive life messages for my website tonilontis.com, I'm writing my talk for a number of speaking engagements. I've just written a couple of chapters for a book by US author TA Russell who writes about bullying.

Have you had any interesting or surprising reader responses to your work? Not as yet but I love to hear from my readers, good, bad, everything. Your comments are what drive me to write better material and help me grow as an author. I started this writing game later in life so I want to learn and learn quickly.



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When did you first start writing? When did you decide that you wanted to 'be a writer'? I have written in diaries all my life and the earliest memory I have is writing a little song when I was about 8yrs old called "Blue Berry Ride" a strange little song about a fairy riding a blueberry. Seriously I wish I had thought that being a writer was an option when I was younger. I love this way of life, I love to write and at 52 I feel like I have a lot to write about and not a lot of time to write it in.

In changing career paths, have you ever felt sad that you've left a healing profession behind? I'd been in nursing for 30+years when I decided in July 2018 to shut down my consulting company and leave nursing for good. It was an easy decision, I had reached the end of that career and had accomplished all that I wanted to in it. I had this book mulling around in my head for at least the last 5 years and I just made a decision to do it. I don't think I'm leaving behind the healing profession just changing the healing focus. My aim now is to heal hearts and minds with food for the soul. So I still feel like I'm in the healing profession.

Do the dogs help you write? What a great question. I have two precious little fur babies Tikki a King Charles Cavaller x maltase who is 6yrs old and Indie a toy poodle x Australian silky. They sit under my feet whilst I sit at my desk and keep me company whilst I write. My animals are one of those "strategies" that build resilience. Animals are great therapy and they do remind me to get up and walk around once in a while, go for a walk outside.

What is the best time of day for you as a writer? Any time for me really. Inspiration comes at all times of the day and I've learnt how to capture those moments and get them down on paper to use at some stage. Therefore, I have notes everywhere in my office and on my phone. When I wrote Resilience, I was often woken in the early hours of the morning and wrote until dawn. Its so quite and peaceful whilst the world sleeps and it's just you and what you're writing, a beautiful time of the day.

How has social media impacted your work as an author? I have discovered the power of "good" in Social Media for its ability to reach and connect with people all over the world. I've invested time and money into learning how it works my key platforms work so that I can use them to create positive change in people and therefore build resilience.

What do you wish you had known before starting a writing career? How wonderful it is to write for others, how great it is to have a positive influence on people, what a joy it is meeting others in this industry.

Name a work you wish you'd written – The Harry Potter Series of course!

Name a book not your own that you wish everyone would read Timothy Ferris – 4-hour work week actually.

Name a regret, literary or otherwise I have no regrets, regrets are wasted emotion!

Name your greatest struggle as a writer Harnessing that feeling that I'm missing out because I started writing so late in life. Reminding myself its one day at a time, one connection at a time and just keep on going, don't stop!



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Name a question you wish you had been asked Can I write the screen play of your book 😊

What was the last good book you read? Say Hello by Carly Findlay and Becoming by Michelle Obama

Which book changed your life? Don't Sweat the Small stuff...and its all small stuff by Richard Carlson PHD

Do you keep a diary? Absolutely I couldn't function without one.

Who is your favourite fictional hero?

What's more important to you: the way a book is written, or what the book is about? Hmm I actually think it has to be a combination of both elements. I've read books that have wonderful information or story lines and the way its written ins confusing. Conversely, I've read plenty that are well written, but the story or information is boring.

Quote from your Book | Favourite Quote I love quotes and book quotes in particular are great but my quote from my book is my go to when I need to focus my life and that's my mission which is – My mission in life is to raise my two extraordinary children to and through adulthood and to create e beauty within myself and others with humility and love. Everyone should have their own mission statement, a good one will always help you focus your life in times of competing wants, needs and time critical moments.

As a child, what did you want to do when you grew up? I actually wanted to be a singer songwriter.

What does your family think of your writing? My immediate family as such an amazing support system for me and their encouragement makes it all worthwhile.

What do you like to do when you're not writing? I love gardening on our 3 ½ acre property, walking on the beach, sitting with my goats, dogs and llamas on our property and reading.

What is the most unethical practice in the publishing industry? Denigrating those of us that self-publish, like we are not good enough to share space with "proper published" authors.

Does writing energize or exhaust you? A little bit of both. At the beginning of a session I am energised and just write and write and write and it flows and then I'm exhausted at the end.

What are common traps for aspiring writers? Not getting a good editor to read and edit your book.

Do you try more to be original or to deliver to readers what they want? I research what readers want to read about but then weave what I need to write into that.

Do you think someone could be a writer if they don't feel emotions strongly? Anybody can write and should be encouraged to do so. Everyone is unique and that makes your writing style like no one elses. Just because you done feel emotions strongly does not mean you cannot write them down in a want that keeps the reader interested and engaged.



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What other authors are you friends with, and how do they help you become a better writer? I am so new in this business that I am just starting to make friends with other authors, surprisingly the two who have been most helpful so far have been an American author who writes about bullying Thomas A Russell and Queensland mystery writer CT Mitchell

Do you want each book to stand on its own, or are you trying to build a body of work with connections between each book? My strategy at the moment is that I will have a connection between Resilience and Whole Again after that I'd like to write something completely different

If you could tell your younger writing self anything, what would it be? JUST do it – get over yourself and just write what you're passionate about the rest will follow.

What was the best money you ever spent as a writer? Paying for the services of a good editor. I searched for someone who fit the genre of my book and with the second qualifier being that they had to have had some experience with the psychology of trauma.

As a writer, what would you choose as your mascot/avatar/spirit animal? My goats! I have 7 of them Whiskey, Cuddles, Snoopy, Rocco, Suni, Jasper and Champers.

How many unpublished and half-finished books do you have? Oh about 3 at this stage in varying states of being written.

What does literary success look like to you? Hmm – paying off the mortgage, being published multiple times, having a core of loyal readers, speaking nationally and internationally, but most of all have the power to inspire, influence and engage with people to bring about change, healing and hope.

What's the best way to market your books? Oh that I'm still learning – website, social media, speaking and one on one connections, so far.

Do you view writing as a kind of spiritual practice? Absolutely it is for me – I learn more about what I stand for and believe in all the time and that's spirituality for me.

How long were you a part-time writer before you became a full-time one? I just went straight into full time writing.

How many hours a day do you write? Anywhere from 0 – 12 hours a day...depending on what's happening in my world and any deadlines I have.

What period of your life do you find you write about most often? (child, teenager, young adult) Definity Now!

What did you edit out of this book? there was so much edited out of the book – personal things that may have hurt those particular family members that may have read the book at some stage.



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How do you select the names of your characters? I tried to use names that reflected the personality of the character I was writing about Eg Ammon means Demon in hell, pretty apt name for this person in my book!

Do you read your book reviews? How do you deal with bad or good ones? Yes, I read all my book reviews, I want to learn and be the best writer I can be so that means assessing what's written about my work and seeing how I can improve. Rejecting anything that is obviously unhelpful is part of that process too.

What was your hardest scene to write? The hardest scene, well the hardest scenes to write were those in the first two chapters about my childhood. They had the most edits, the most removed, the most reworks, the rest of the book flowed more easily.

Do you Google yourself? I didn't google myself, but my husband did and does because he's the computer nerd and want to check how I appeared online.

What one thing would you give up to become a better writer? My pride and ego have to fall by the wayside if I am going to be the best I can be.

What is your favourite childhood book? Pookie Puts the World Right by Ivy L Wallace.

What is the most difficult part of your artistic process? Definitely editing, its long, painful and exhausting when you just want to get your book out there.

How long did it take you to write the book? I started writing in July 2018 and it was finished at the end of November 2018 – I just wrote and wrote day in and day out.