



Acts of Kindness

Two Privileges

The first privilege I experienced in the last week or two, was an opportunity to have a special conversation with a wonderful human being who made the decision to stop all treatment for her terminal illness, apart from palliative care.

Her loving family had purchased a guided book experience for her from **my manifesto** and they expected, with the urgency of her situation, (days, perhaps weeks to live) that this gift would not now be taken up.

Surprisingly, perhaps for all of us, but most definitely me, she declared herself up for the task and wanted to do it asap! Negotiations about the logistics began, and ended with me in a hospital room, with Annette and her eldest son and daughter-in-law, in a guided personal manifesto discovery session.

Given the context, I as coach-in-person, modified the seven key questions from our book, *My Manifesto: a compassionate guide to reveal your best life*, to uncover what Annette wanted to lay down as her personal manifesto, her legacy statement.

The upshot is, together (with Annette and her two family members contributing by offering their observed experience of Annette throughout their lives and assisting me with the refining process of turning the 'raw material' of her manifesto into a polished gem) we arrived at her personal manifesto words.

The energy in that room was so heightened that I felt goosebumps all over my body. The uniqueness of this conversation in my life profoundly affected me. I will forever be grateful. *

The second privilege I experienced this week, was when taking my turn on a family roster with my husband as we supported his nonagenarian mother who was permitted to return to her home after a dramatic health incident. She was home on the condition that she was not left on her own, for the duration of the next month. During this month, it was our role to assist her to adjust to being home again, to reclaim her confidence, and to provide details of her activities that would help the family decide what support she needed to be able to continue to live in the family home.

Unsurprisingly, she has returned to life in her own home of many decades, with a gusto which would not look amiss in a teenager on their first coming of age outing!

One of her loves is her garden, both flowers and vegetables. She happily used her long-handled hoe and tilled the soil to prepare for the planting of some snap and snow peas.



After more than an hour of unhasty hoeing, she had the soil prepared and it was time to come in for lunch. She had worn her iconic thongs on her feet for this tillage but still took some convincing to wash her feet before coming back inside. (her expression seemed to be, “whatever for? I mean to continue after lunch...”)

My husband, good country stock, suggested using the hose on the back lawn. I am sure he said, “We’ll hose her down, feet I mean.” Underneath my breath, I might have been heard to mutter, “Next you will be suggesting the sheep dip...”

She dutifully stood on the lawn and allowed him to spray her feet with a stream of water from the hose. She sat down and I picked up the towel to dry her feet, as I could see that doubling over to do it herself was uncomfortable, if not impossible.

I dried her feet and legs.

This action reminded me viscerally of the biblical story of Christ washing the feet of his disciples. The full import of the humility of this action struck me impactfully. I was moved beyond measure.

Two privileges. Two blessings.

* Vale Annette who has since passed away peacefully.