

CHAPTER 11

A Whaling Time at Bunbury High

All of a sudden just when my Lights were to go out again, my Life was given a jump start, a new purpose with something else to live for amongst hundreds of children.

It was a good Friday – after phoning Susie, the head cleaner at Bunbury High School, we met for an interview at 11am. We connected as if we had known each other for years. The moment we shook hands, I knew my new job was secured.

“You seem ideal, can you start on Monday?” Susie asked.

“Certainly, what time in the morning?” I replied with a gigantic enthusiastic smile.

“We have two four hour shifts, 5.30 – 9.30 in the morning, then we come back between 2 and 6 in the arvo”. Susie continued to show me around and explained my duties. She introduced me to the ladies in the canteen who were very accepting and friendly, it was with them we were to spend fifteen minutes after our morning shift, enjoying morning tea with stories and laughter.

There are also seven part-time casual cleaners who come in for two hours at 4pm, mainly to clean the classrooms, toilets and office. My responsibilities were centred on the open areas of the corridors and quadrangle and two hours each morning in the gymnasium area.

Also that Friday, I was given confirmation, when I returned home, that my lethal depot injection was ceased from the pressure from Noel’s letter and the threat of exposure. Knowing that and the dramatic change to my environment, situation and circumstances, I wouldn’t be lonely amongst the children so I was able to instantly stand up out of my pit and step back into the Light out of darkness, there is no need for medication just constant meditation to keep in tune and balance. Starting on the Monday, there was no indication to the staff that I was down and out the previous Thursday evening – on the contrary, I was the Brightest one at the school.

It is a wonderful school – all past students dating back to its grand opening in 1923 would agree. Located on Bunbury prime real estate, high up overlooking the City and inlet to the west and wrapped around by the Indian Ocean to the east and north. What majestic views from most of the classrooms. Students could easily day dream looking out the window.

My first impressions, beyond the inspiring aspects and architecture and surrounding views, were similar to most schools. It was a stark, drab, boring institute under the sterile militant education system in tones of grey. It buzzed with approximately nine hundred students exploding out of class at breaks and after school that livened it up. Much like Harvey, and other schools, the aesthetics lacked motivation, inspiration and character, no matter how much I would clean, it will still appear dark and drab. For students in all areas to learn, one must be motivated and interested.

During my first day while working, I became very observant, imagining improvements in all I saw. The dingy corridors with scratched lockers, dull faded and dirty wooden benches, ugly messy rubbish bins, dark sterile staircases with peeled back black railings, taking you up dirty grey concrete steps. I soon mentally transformed the entire school to display its full potential, seeing young loving geniuses walking hand in hand everywhere.

Perhaps Harvey High and the townscape project with the Street Kids was just a forerunner for Bunbury to be the model school and City for the rest. Nothing is really wasted in what we do, although it may seem that way at the time. I thought of the multicultural school to be an ideal introduction to improve the Cities. Let the children show the way.

Most of US starting a new job are keen, taking in our brooms, but not all use them. By the end of the week, during my midday break, I produced a before and after proposal to brighten up the school and all in it. Using a double set of thirty-six photographs and a five page report applying the same colourful palette of Harvey, I submitted it to the Deputy Principal Len Hill,

who I met earlier who dealt more so with operations. Len respected me as an Artist, knowing me from Kelsue and the local art scene.

The following Monday, after my morning shift, I was called into the Principals office. The Principal, Brian Wansborough and Len were both impressed and approved my proposal.

“I’ve become so accustomed” Brian admitted, *“to the schools appearance, until seeing these photograph’s I wasn’t aware of the degradation. We’ll support you with any materials needed, your \$500 estimate might be on the lean side, for maintenance it’s better to use quality paint”*

“Thanks, I agree Brian, Townsend Paints Supplies recommended a high grade sign writers acrylic that should stand outside elements up to ten years. I appreciate you giving me the green light, when can we start?”

“Right now, if you like” Brian replied with a sense of eagerness, seeing my afterwards photo’s in felt pen.

Len added, *“The Year 9 and 10 students that have free periods on Tuesdays and Thursdays will be made available for you to co-ordinate, how does that fit?”*

I was somewhat overwhelmed, *“Great, I can work in well with group students. The project won’t interfere with my cleaning hours or the student’s classwork. I have between 9.30 and 2 to fill in most days, it suits me ideally. It can be something we will all be proud of”*

We concluded with Brian saying, *“I believe so. I’ll be interested in the student’s response, but your expertise will have to over shadow it all. I wish you well with it”*

I walked out ecstatic that a government school actually gave me the thumbs up and a more or less free run to give its school a face lift. It was the Principal of the day, no way would my proposal even be considered at Harvey with its Left-Brain militant head of ’92. Here the door was open for me to continue where I left off from Harvey.

To educate the students, I displayed the before and after photographs on one of the display boards and Brian made a mention of the Project in the weekly newsletter. As expected, the students were a little standoffish at first. Observing the attitudes and behaviours of the students on arrival, I would estimate about 75% of the children had been brainwashed into the muddy mainstream of living, most – particularly Year 10 onwards – had fallen to the system and given their childish virtues up to be lost to adult mindedness. Another mission was to diminish that percentage.

I established a flexible plan of approach to involve everyone and spread the work across the whole school instead of focusing primarily on one section. I welcomed the challenge and allowed at least two terms to complete it.

I made a start at the canteen, which desperately required a fresh look; it was the most focal point come morning recess and lunchtime. Within days I completed three rubbish bins to spark interest while gaining a talkative audience firing all sorts of questions about life and occasionally about painting. I encouragingly invited student participation with some forty plus bins to paint. Soon a few bolder students managed to pick up a brush to assist, which helped support others to step forward or “GO FORWARD” which is the school motto. I decided to give each bin a name, an affirmation name commencing with my thirteen love aspects. I chose names to remind students of positive, encouraging and supportive words. A student could feel down, a failure, then by stepping out of the class going to a happy colourful bin, with the word Dedication, Devotion, Discipline, Determination, Patience, Tolerance etc, perhaps it may lift them or help a friend to encourage and support another in need. Many bins had marine and surfing themes; here are a few examples. They certainly livened up the corridors along with the coloured seating.

By dividing the free period students into groups of four revealed the best result. I offered them the choice of the groups and what area they preferred, for I would only allow those who want to participate to participate to do it for the Love of it – never got a refusal, happy to say. I had groups working on staircase railings, outdoor settings, separate benches, corridor seating and walls, canteen area.

Everything wasn't all perfect sailing. I had to constantly float around to attend any mishaps, such as, organising cleaning for accidental paint spills, ensure the right colours were used in areas and once when I was distracted by one group, another in one of the staircases was running amok painting their names and who loves who all up the concrete stairs. Personally, I liked it as it had spontaneous art character. I had the girls help me wash and scrub it off before it dried for Brian and the teachers would only see it as unacceptable graffiti, and possibly jeopardise the project, it did lower the standard.

Within two weeks, the Project was well felt and talked about. School pride was established in all students as we revolutionised Bunbury High into a kaleidoscope of colour, the focal point being an 18 metre humpback whale in the quadrangle.

Brian and the teachers took a keen interest in its development. Brian was well pleased when I landed the world on his desk, not his shoulders. A concept of a worldly seascape in the quadrangle. I shared with him all my and the students new ideas prior to creating them, in doing so Brian and I became good friends, he found me most intriguing, admiring my boldness and eccentricity which he had but had to keep it well under lid in his position, so I was able to freely express it for him. He mentioned one day that he always wanted a Harley. Imagine the sixty year old Principal roaring up to the students in his leathers over his suit, I can.

It was just as important to me to have Brian's and the teachers backing as it was to having the students support for the success of the Project. I made it our school project not mine.

Moving along with the above areas in progress, I wanted to dress up the dark canteen area, ideally I would have it turned around 180° to face the quadrangle instead of the enclosed corridor. Well in the meantime, I decided to display 50 x 30cm wooden panels around the canteen fascia, something similar to what Tara was involved in at Harvey High.

Once mentioned to the Art teacher, she jumped at the suggestion after just completing a structured monotonal exercise of the same subject, this was the opposite giving a free open choice on any subject related to Love and Peace, not violence or negativity and using full rainbow palette with metallics and black and white. I was offered a four week programme with her Year 9's and 10's in two forty-five minute sessions a week. I thoroughly enjoyed conducting those classes, with no charge. My wife Sue and other academic teachers may not accept me teaching in class without a degree. The Principal however, certainly saw me to be more qualified than most with my twenty years experience. The result drew plenty of interest, shown here.

I would leave Harvey at 5am and return between 7-10pm, but still kept up with Olivia and the Street Boys, mainly over the weekend when I'd visit Simon and Tara. Olivia decided to return to Mt. Barker to her elder daughters, during March and April she took Emy for a hiking holiday to Tasmania. They loved it, saying,

“Kelvin, it's your type of country, rainbow country, you'll be well appreciated there. You must go to the south”

It took very little convincing, Olivia loved it enough to fall pregnant – the new baby mellowed her. Three girls, three fathers, over three decades.

The entire Project and my job were put on the line only a few weeks from commencement. During the lunch break, I would often be approached by groups of inquisitive students, on one occasion I was amongst twenty or more Year 8's, when one yelled out.

“Do you make love to the dolphins?”

I clearly answered him, saying, *“Don't be bizarre, I love dolphins and connect and understand them”*

Another day, several asked me about drugs. I told them,

“I don't smoke, our body is not designed for smoke. Those people who feel they need marijuana to overcome stress, they would be better off eating it in biscuits or cakes”. I took care with my answers, knowing whatever I said was gospel to Year 8's and 9's. As it was the above comments were taken out of context when the mothers of two students overreacted by phoning the local radio talkback show complaining about the cleaner at Bunbury High. It went to air –

“My son came home from school telling me that the cleaner said he has sex with dolphins”. He obviously never heard my remark. Another mother followed up to her complaint with *“My son told me that I should eat marijuana in biscuits not smoke it, telling me the school cleaner told him”*. Then it went further than the media, the Minister for Education received complaints. I was unaware of all this until Brian urgently called me to his office to explain myself, for the Minister wanted my resignation. Telling Brian the truth he soon dissolved the matter warning me of the Golden Rule, not to talk about drugs, sex or religion to students. I often break Golden Rules, I continued with much greater caution and wisdom.

Now with the pleasant weeks of autumn approaching, I focused on the Project on the quadrangle to convert it into an active seascape of the world, the countries flags around the

perimetre. The focal point will be Soozie, the 18 metre humpback whale with her two babies, Tara gold and Simon silver.

I would have Loved my own children to be at this school instead of Harvey, to be included in the creation. This way I have them mark their mark.

Once I laid out the whale I had more than fifty eager assistants keen to paint her, I managed twenty-four brushes to share. It was SOOZIE the whale that united and ignited the school becoming a talking point at school and home to the point the media came in to expose her to regional Western Australia through the press and GWN television news. It was hoped other schools would get wind of it to create their own themes.

Now with a boost of student participation, they set the cues for me to have them produce various fish around the whale. So in chalk near the whale I invited the students by writing,

“Paint a fish. If you wish”, not having a great response to reach Soozie standard, so I added, *“How you wish”* to give them the freedom of choice, this attracted many young artists.

Over lunch period there would be there were about seventy happily creating all sorts of fish and marine creatures with plenty of onlookers. The english teacher remarked.

“This is amazing Kelvin, to see so many students working together enjoying themselves in their free lunch period, if only we could get them to work half as much in the classroom, we’d be happy. All the teachers are talking about it in the staff room”. Sally, the other Deputy Principal, had her act together, a very polished teacher with great dress sense, wearing a very colourful complimentary wardrobe. I appreciated Lady Di, the ever smiling and efficient receptionist, always on the go, was so angelic in all that she assisted me with. As the weeks unfolded, many teachers started to add colour to the natural tones. Even our straight Brian sharpened up with some colour in his shirts and tie. When love and colour is in the air, it becomes contagious.

By now, my popularity and rapport with the students had even surpassed that of Harvey High.

Just for fun, like Harvey's "skool sux", in chalk on the red brickwork near a main entrance of the quadrangle, I wrote the Pink Floyd classic,

*"We don't need no education,
We don't need no thought control,
Teachers, leave us kids alone"*

This message rang through the school, gradually fading off over a week or two.

I was pleased to read an added line by a student or was it a teacher?

"We are just another brick in the wall"

It was all well received for arts sake.

Advancing with the quadrangle, Brian had six concrete soak wells without holes delivered from the City Council to use as planters for trees and palms. I gave each one a theme and planted petunia's and pansy's around the fruit trees. In a few years there would be ample organic fruit for the students. There was a orange, mandarin, plum and peach tree. To add more colour and practical protection from the sun and rain, I approached Peter's Icecream company, who were happy to sponsor US with umbrellas.

Now with everything taking shape, I suggested to Brian and the P & C committee that we have an Open Day to classrooms and the Project so the parents and friends could see the students achievements they've heard so much of. Brian offered me a space in the parent's weekly newsletter to advertise. I was disappointed that I wasn't permitted to attend Tara and Simon's P & C meeting in Harvey, so I happily attended Bunbury's with plenty of positive input, I took it on to co-ordinate the school fete in October.

Over the three months the involvement with the children on the Project along with the clearance from the drug overdose, brought me back in to fine-tune/balance, into ONENESS, back to Life. Leading up to this Opening Day, feeling part of each of the students, you may not comprehend this, but by just glimpsing into the pupils of any student, I could see their souls and all their past lives. Secretly, I shared it with a few spirited ones, who related immediately to them. I warned the students not to spread the word otherwise it could jeopardise my job if taken out of hand. However, I did share and teach numerology to those interested, as I could back that on this level more so. Even Brian with his open mind, entertained my perception of his birthdate. His was so rare and amazing, 28-7-1935, no wonder he is No. 1, the Principal having five planes; I have three of them, which helped US to connect on a personality and spiritual level.

Another artist event I became involved in was the Rockeisteadford performance, I was asked to help out with the 13 x 7 metre backdrop to represent their theme, "Heroes". Totally due to Brian and an excellent drama teacher Bunbury were the reigning State champions. It was a privilege following the seventy odd students through. Brian gave this art sector his full support to reach his goal to have a performing art centre built adjoining to the gymnasium the following year.

While all this was happening from kicking a football around with the students I decided to rebuilt my fitness up by joining a local Bunbury football team. I trained twice a week straight after cleaning. I was well received as NgAng with no stigma and discrimination on age, when asked I answered truthfully that I was over thirty. Body, Soul and Mind all need to be well balanced, each stimulate each.

We had everything well prepared and presented for the Opening Day and my retrospective exhibition.

Over the past few months, with my creative cells open again, being freed from drugs I, in my spare time, produced several new paintings. I had planned to hold a joint exhibition with my photographic friend Greg at the gallery we sold as Kelsue, but because of the owner's attitude and conditions, that all works must be for sale and wouldn't allow Greg to play his banjo with the two singer guitaist I invited for the openning and to bring our own food in so Greg and I cancelled it. Brian suggested I hold it here at the school free of charge and he would provide all the wine from his winery.

I borrowed a few of my major works from yesterday to display a cross section of my artwork dating back to the 70's.

The Open Day was an ideal sunny day; many families enjoyed the afternoon. Many of the parents were past students and were overwhelmed by the transformation. The evening exhibition was equally successful.

The Mayor of Bunbury, Ernie Manea, with a few of the councilors, were most impressed, as was Melissa a member of the Buddhist group I attended and liked. A week later, I returned her favour by attending her singing concert at the entertaining centre. It was during her second song "If only you could be here" that I connected to her soul, as she poured her heart out. What I experienced I felt as our souls fused together, I cannot explain other than two Lights ignited as one awesome brightness, totally independent to the personalities as Melissa was not open to it but felt an incredible sensation as she mentally and emotionally dwelt deep into her heart for a few seconds during the song. For me that feeling continued on in a Spiritual Love affair. On a Soul to Soul basis.

After the mayor suggest that the City would be amazing with a facelift using a similar Marine theme. So during the weeks to follow, I presented a proposal to the Bunbury City Council. It was well received; I had planned to have a selected team of twenty youths to assist from unemployed, community service criminals, mentally ill. We would work in conjunction with the City Council Parks and Garden Workers. Many questions were fired at me, such as maintenance, cost, but I had solid answers to back the Project which was well supported by owners of the thirty main business houses in the City Centre plus twenty signatures of a cross section of ratepayers and ten tourists. My survey petition helped secure my approval.

There were several roundabouts in the main street where two artist friends of mine had previously constructed sculptures. I designed a fountain with four dolphins (fibreglass) life size, emerging out of a pool of water with a merman and mermaid embraced in Love four metres up at the apex. Water burst out of the dorsal fins of the dolphins and out of the crown of the heads of the figurines. Colourful flowers surrounded the pool. The Mayor and all Councilors were most excited about the design, which gave me the icing for my proposal. The City approval was to free me back in to freelance art at long last to give in the cleaners job and phase out the school project to work part-time for the City Council and part-time towards a planned exhibition in San Francisco that friends in Santa Clara had organised for early in the next New Year.

Meanwhile, Melissa was constantly turning around in my mind since her performance, my infatuation growing daily, she as a Labour Party member had just been nominated as a candidate for Labour's Bunbury seat and was extra, extra busy with her campaign and work as a lawyer not having time to scratch herself or meditate. Definitely not to be distracted by any colourful Rainbow Peaceful Warrior. A relationship was the last thing on her mind.

So I tread her ground very carefully and sensitively not to invade her space other than delivering a small bouquet of flowers with a supporting Love note every Monday, which she truly appreciated.

Weeks earlier I had mention numerology to her and Melissa was interested in the summary of her numerological birthdate I gave her at a Buddhist meditation at the time. I found her date 11-8-1966 most interesting and very complimentary. Melissa is certainly a very determined, devoted and strong individual as the three 1's suggest. This Golden Child had become overly stressed giving into society to be a business woman with no time for self and definitely no time for me, well at least until after the election, she suggested.

By August, I was glowing; my Life was looking mighty bright. City Council prospects, art exhibition, school artwork, fit as a fiddle with my new footy team all ignited through Love. With my heart fully open to Melissa added a sparkle to everything else.

Then it all started to turn around, put on ice. My car was stolen twice in as many days in car parks in the City. I reported it to the police with a happy chirpy face, confident of its quick return. On both occasions the Kingswood was discovered abandoned less than five kilometres from where I parked it, having only a few drops of petrol in it. So I decided to upgrade security by painting my Love heart Peace sign on the bonnet again with a Love slogan on the rear. No one would steal such an obvious vehicle and would be too embarrassed to drive it.

It was Melissa's 30th birthday at the time, I was excited for her and made her a beautiful sacred card with a lotto number (one game), and gave her a native statue that represented the native Spirit of NgAng along with a beautiful bouquet of flowers and the loan of my sacred painting 'Stirling Inspiration'. She was overwhelmed, in particular when she won \$406 on the lotto. Being Melissa, she gave me back \$400, which I hesitantly accepted.

"Kelvin, you have the power to give, so do I, you now must learn to receive" Melissa wisely acknowledged.

I intended to follow her with gifts for a week to extend her 30th celebration. I delivered the best of chocolates one day, then a set of True Love perfume another, a delicate frock the next until it all came to an abrupt end, Melissa's boss had reported me to the Bunbury Psychiatric Clinic which contacted Graylands.

The morning after signwriting my car it was written off on the way to work at sunrise, when a truck drove straight through a stop sign not far from the school. It was the talk of the school when I had it towed there to rest. My journey had come to an abrupt end, Resting In Peace.

On impact, without wearing a seat belt, I mentally flicked myself back in the seat to avoid the windscreen and escaped without a scratch, not too bothered by the accident only the inconvenience ahead. I delivered the frock to Melissa and explained the accident, then returning to Harvey that night, with a friend about 9.30pm, three police knocked at my back door.

The sergeant was very saddened, with a tear in his eye.

“Come in boys, is there something wrong?” I asked.

“Kelvin, unfortunately, I have some bad news, we have received a fax from Graylands rescinding your Aftercare”, the sergeant explained.

“Oh no! What’s the complaint?”

“We were only saying on the weekend, seeing you amongst the people in the street, how wonderful you looked and your success at Bunbury High, the best we’ve seen you, then this bloody fax came through. That’s all we know. Sorry you have to come with us”

“I know I cannot fight against the order, so I’ll gather my toothbrush and a few things”

After my last rough ordeal in the back of the paddy wagon, the sergeant seeing me so calm, together and healthy and co-operative, overruled his rules to allow me to sit in the front with him. We shared a very interesting conversation on the way back to the loonie bin.

For God’s sake, Why! Why! Why! Why now... Just when this White Eagle was about to take off I am now UNJUSTLY caged.

Travelling through the High School adventure there were many lessons taught and learnt for all concerned. My most important one was “appropriateness”. I thought twice before I acted to ensure I wasn’t to be misinterpreted and that I didn’t overstep the line, even though I often walked on it. The out of whack/balanced solicitor (like the psycho nurse in Albany) was most inappropriate in her actions, not to approach me.

I leave this school with outstanding commissions for the City, unfinished business at the school and Brian has commissioned me to produce an impressionistic painting of Bunbury City for a series of wine labels.

It is hoped that the teachers have and are learning from Our Project.