

On Valentine's Day, I received an unexpected email. Not a romantic one. Sorry!  
It was from Christine Hall, our Project Manager at OWN, the Older Women's Network of which I am a member and Board member.

Christine had identified me as a Storyteller, which I think means I find it difficult to shut up. She asked me if I would be interested in filling in for the 70's slot for the February Generation Women event in two weeks time, and explained what this was all about.

So being a girl who can't say "No", here I am.

I am Lyn Maciver and I turned 74 on 13th February.

Secrets? Confessions ? What a challenging topic?

It has opened up lots of closed doors in my memory. Some will remain firmly closed tonight.

Some of you may have come here tonight expecting to hear lusty tales of unbridled sexual encounters over a lifetime ... so I am sorry to disappoint you.

It would have been fun to turn up tonight, masked, dressed in tight black leather, high heeled boots, whip in hand to confess to being an ageing Madam Lash.

Although I did teach at a Sydney girls' high school in the 70's where Madam was reportedly a former student, I am not Madam Lash.

I might have shared with you how serious and shy I was as a young woman and yet managed to travel around India, aged 19, on 4th class trains, but it would take another night to do justice to that intrepid journey and the things I learned and experienced more than half a century ago.

SO WHAT AM I GOING TO REVEAL TONIGHT?

Many years ago, my older daughter gave me a book of daily meditations by Anne Wilson Schaef entitled "Meditations for Women Who Do Too Much"

Guess that might give you a clue to my revelations.

I am a Lapsed Workaholic.

I suspect I am not the only one here tonight so I am going to share with you some common womanly themes and wisdom from Anne Wilson Schaef and her contributing authors.

As there are more than 366 daily meditations, plus some extra on special topics, I have had to be selective, but hope to provide some insights into the perils of being an over achiever and a woman who, at times, has done too much.

So here we go -

To quote Leslie M. McIntyre on the subject of EXPECTATIONS.

"Nobody objects to a woman being a good writer, or sculptor, or geneticist IF at the same time she manages to be a good wife, good mother, good looking, good tempered, well groomed and unaggressive".

Does that strike any familiar chords?

There is probably no group of people in this society or elsewhere who try harder than women to meet the expectations of others.

As a result we are always looking outside for validation, and, in doing so, we risk losing ourselves.

## ILLUSIONS

Probably our most useless illusion is that of CONTROL, which goes hand in hand with PERFECTIONISM, and we all know how stressful that can be.

It is a form of self-abuse and our illusion of control is a barrier to new encounters, insights and creativity.

## MULTI-TASKING

Hands up if you are a master or mistress of multi-tasking?

Proud of yourself?

Well, jugglers aren't paid too well, and, sometimes they get hit on the head with the balls they are trying to keep in the air.

Generally speaking, and have you noticed, men do not multi-task.

Have you heard the story of the man who comes home from work to find the house in chaos?

Dishes in the sink, no delicious aroma of the evening dinner, toys strewn everywhere, children watching TV.

In alarm, he rushes upstairs to find his wife languidly reclining on the bed, reading a magazine, drinking a glass of wine and looking very relaxed.

"What is going on?" he asks her.

She gives him a lovely smile, and says,

"You are always asking me what I do all day.

So today I thought I would show you, by not doing it".

## REGRETS

Katherine Mansfield once said,

"Make it a rule of Life, never to regret, and never look back.  
Regret is an appalling waste of energy. You can't build on it. You can only wallow in it."

All of us have made bad choices and mistakes. We cannot change the past. We can only learn from our mistakes and build on the past with new insights.

## SOLITUDE

Our solitude is one of the pleasures that only we can arrange, because it is up to us to regenerate ourselves. We have the right to do so, and if we do not model respect for our own needs, including solitude, our children and others will never learn that they also deserve their time alone, too.

It is a sensible response to the frantic pace of life most of us now lead.

We do not have to be part of the frenzy.

And for me, having just joined a local choir, Urban Voices, singing has brought a new source of joy and pleasure into my life. As the world seems to be increasingly out of tune, it is really uplifting to sing in harmony with others.

On Monday nights for about two hours, 40 to 50 of us come together to practise and share food for the Soul. It confirms our capacity as human beings to share simple pleasures.

## HONESTY

In this high-tech, fast paced, information focused world learning to be honest with ourselves goes hand in hand with nurturing ourselves and others.

Many of us have been afraid to speak our Truth honestly, personally and professionally. We have been afraid of losing our jobs, our friends, everything that we believe is important to us.

Yet, as we become more honest, we begin to untangle knots of dishonesty, self-centredness, control and confusion.

This is absolutely essential for wellness and survival.

LAUGHTER has been described as the human body wagging its tail.

These days laughter seems to be in short supply and is probably why I turn first to the cartoon in the newspaper rather than the latest scandal or sensational disclosure. It accompanies what for me has become most important which are

## RELATIONSHIPS

I have found among the most important of my secrets are my LASTING RELATIONSHIPS which for me are about UNCONDITIONAL LOVE.

So much of current public and private discourse has become focused on THE ECONOMY, about trade and transactions, banking, finance, property and profits and wealth creation.

Important as these may be, LOVE is not a Transaction or Credit and Debit account. Deposits do not always yield immediate returns, but loving deposits are never wasted.

Many generations of women have loved and nurtured others.

Tonight in Generation Women, I would like to acknowledge my own wonderful Mother, Lucinda, and her loving Mother, Isabella, whose lives spanned more than a century from 1889 to 1991 and who migrated to Australia in 1923 to escape "the troubles" in Belfast. Their lives were impacted personally by two World Wars and the Great Depression.

My paternal grandmother, Mary Connor, who bore 13 children to my grandfather and brought them all to maturity on the goldfields of Mt Morgan.

What an amazing achievement given the privations she must have surmounted on those goldfields. Her life spanned the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In closing tonight, I would like to especially to thank Christine for pushing me beyond my comfort zone to be here. It has been well worth it.

And a sincere Thank You to the Production team, Donna Logue, Brooke Farmer and Karen Crombie. Full marks for professionalism.

In closing tonight, I would like to give you an Irish Blessing.

MAY THE ROAD RISE UP TO MEET YOU  
MAY THE WIND ALWAYS BE AT YOUR BACK  
MAY THE SUN SHINE WARM UPON YOUR FACE  
MAY THE RAIN FALL SOFT UPON YOUR FIELDS  
AND UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN  
MAY GOD HOLD YOU IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND.

THANK YOU ALL AND GOOD-NIGHT.