

I am going to read this as when I said it without reading it took too long. I wouldn't do that to you.

I have to start where I was raised on the farm of "Birahlee". This foundation had an immense sense of belonging and place for me. The farm was in the northwest corner of the Toodyay shire and at the end of the Bolgart west road. After the back paddock there is Julimar State forest. We sold the farm five years ago when Dad died and mum moved to Perth. The farm produced predominantly wheat, merino sheep and polled Hereford cattle. I was raised with my dad and Mum and Mums first child Mike who's Father had died before Mike was one, my sister Jen and my younger brother Pete.

At an early age I was aware that there was a rhythm to life by the cycle of seasons and those seasons determined what was done on the farm. Dad would put the rams in with the ewes in February and in June lambs would appear. He seeded with the opening rains and harvested before Christmas in time to go on holidays to Rottneest or Safety Bay.

An early memory was walking back to the house from the cattle yards one cold morning with Dad carrying this bucket full of milk. This particular morning I heard a flock of white tail black cockatoos coming from the bush in the north. I said "Dad the cockies are passing I can get out my shortie pyjamas, summer is coming".

It wasn't until I met my girlfriend Jane in Perth who's Dad was a Doctor and she said 'my dad was never around when we were growing up' It was then it occurred to me my Dad was always around and I was often with my dad. My Mum called me 'Dads right hand man'. My dad wasn't an overly affectionate person, he'd give us kiss at night when he tucked us in and listened to our prayers, but I needed more so I'd steal hugs from the back of the motor bike hanging on to him tightly smelling Dads sweat and feeling his chest vibrate as he yelled commands at the dogs. I liked that spot. When Dad got sick of answering questions he would say "it's a wigwom for a gooses bridle". But normally he was very factual never swaying from the truth. In the sheep yards one day I was probably this high and I said "what's that Dad?" Dad called things as they were "that is the ram's testicles" and he went on to explain their function. Now that Dad has died I wouldn't put him on a pedestal as much as I loved and respected him. Like all of us he had a couple of dark gremlins that lived within that dominated on occasions. He never wanted to meet them and compassionately ask "what are you all about?"

Mum and Dad were very active members in the Bolgart community. They were generous with their time and were involved in many events. Dad didn't always come to church but he supported by giving the farms first grain each year. Fortunately church wasn't every week as the Anglican Minister who was based in Toodyay had to visit Calingiri Goomalling too. Church was uninteresting I didn't really comprehend things when the natural world was easy to understand as I am a visual person. I love St Augustine's church and preferred being with Mum when she was on cleaning roster when no one else was there.

One of my most enjoyable church services was just after we'd had a winter holiday in Jurien Bay. We must have spent a lot of time at the beach in the water on our foam boggy boards as I came home with the whole of my front raw with a rash. Mum said 'darling if your tummy is too sore to sit in church you can go and find Grandpa. I was out of there in a shot running up passed the Catholic Church to find Granpa in the garden with Edith Piaf blasting out of the back door. He said "there you are" as he hosed down a carrot and gave it to me. I was instantly healed and in heaven on earth with my Granpa. When one thinks of people who inspire you my granpa is right up there like a cherry on a cake. It was Granpa who first gave the family the connection with the land and my cousin Todd is still on Granma and Granpa's farm "Brooklea" Goomalling side of Bolgart. I can't recall ever **not** believing in God and it worried Granpa that he couldn't believe. I remember saying to him when I was young "Don't worry Granpa that you don't believe in God". "God believes in you and he's bigger".

When I was twelve I was confirmed one evening with others in St Phillips church which stands alone on the Toodyay/Bolgart road. Being confirmed was fine but it was a book Hughie McGuinness the Minister gave me that truly opened my eyes. It was a photographic book on the tribes of Papua New Guinea. I couldn't believe there were people who lived like that outside of my small farming community. It was a gift that had a transforming effect on the rest of my life. I wanted to discover the world and I did with the farm being the stable harbour that I always returned to.

I daydreamed my way through high school I did not live in the here and now as I just dreamed about where I was going to explore. One day my friend Troy said to me "what are you thinking about?" I said "actually I was thinking about seeing the Pyramids"

At 19 I was living in Melbourne with my girlfriend Lucy who I had trained to be a Mothercraft nursing with. I did go to St Jude's Carlton with my Aunty Fran who has been a Christian forever. She encouraged me to go to St Matthews Shenton Park when I came back to Perth as she had uni friends there. I was renting with friends in Nedlands so I did try to go to church but I stopped when they put me in a cell group with people I had nothing in common with.

Lucy and I bought a one way ticket to Rome where we head south to stay with her family in heal portion of Italy.

After Greece, Turkey and Cyprus we got a boat to Haifa Israel. When we got off the boat someone handed us a small bible. I accepted mine but never read it. Lucy didn't accept one. Being in Israel in 1983 was easy, free and deep. The places were familiar to me, like when you go to London for the first time and see the places from the Monopoly board all around. In Tel Aviv we signed up to worked on ste Moshe, south west of Jerusalem. We picked, packed and ate grapes, clipped peach trees and raised chickens to six weeks. I told Lucy Jesus used to take himself off to orchards to pray on his own. Lucy and I weren't that holy. After work each night we would sit in the orchard watching the sunset while we tried

to solve the worries of the world ourselves with the influence of Jordon hash. Not as beneficial I am sure. Each weekend we would go off exploring on our own or with others from the Moshe. It was easy to hitchhike as long as you let the military personnel get the first lift. We went to the Dead Sea, camped up the top of the Masada fortress went in a row boat on the sea of Galilee, camp on the beach at Ashdod and along the Red Sea Gulf of Aqaba.

After Egypt, Lucy ran out of money so head off to London. I stayed in Africa for nine months flying home from Johannesburg for my sister's wedding. I flew back to Zimbabwe to start my travels again but the day I arrived in Harare I was knocked over by a car. When the bruising on my head had subsided enough I had to come back to Australia. I felt totally ripped off. My bones healed and I worked at Lady Gowrie CCC for one year and I was itching to travel again and be with my brother Mike who has taught at the Hamburg International School for many years. When I told Mike that I wanted to come over he said "Fleurso you've got to come over soon" as he was going to Melbourne to do some study'. ARRHH I didn't have any money working with children. I thought I have my heavy vehicle license I'll go up north! So I walked along the terrace and asked two mining companies for a job and within weeks I was living at Pannawonica where I drove haul paks, the water cart and worked as the loadout operator where they gave me the nickname 'Dixie hose bag'. It was an immense experience. I had to join the union and I did have to go on strike which affected my saving plan slightly but there is no way a single girl would survive had I crossed the picket line, I would have been run out of town. So I head to Germany via Zimbabwe where I had many adventures in another beautiful African country and I stayed with my friend who managed a tobacco farm.

I loved being with my brother Mike and travelling with him in Europe and Scandinavia. I left him to go to Ireland and London where I flew over to New York. I was heading to Canada as I had a work visa for that Commonwealth country. I caught up with some American students that I'd met in Kenya before whom I climbed Kilimanjaro with after I had recovered from hepatitis that I got on a camping safari trip. There was one guy who I was particularly interested to visit in Maryland. Peter had come to be with me in Perth and wanted to have a relationship with me but we didn't as I had a boyfriend. This time I didn't have a boyfriend but he didn't want a relationship then because he was preparing to leave for Mali where he was to work for Peace Cor as a geologist on a water project. I was devastated. For the next few months I travelled the Deep South and stayed with Servas families. I was running around a field in Missouri one day with my hands in the air yelling God take away this pain. Looking back that was a significant turning point towards God leading my life. I kept stumbling into more Christian people than usual.

I went into Montreal Canada and met up with two Canadian girls Mike and I had met In Norway. A friend of theirs was going tree planting in Ontario. I thought I'll do that too I had to give back to the earth after all that taking at

Pannawonica. I worked as hard as a shearer and had an appetite to match. There was a group of Christians there earning money on their summer break. One girl Julie went into a catholic church in a town where we were getting supplies from and found a NIV bible for me. She would tell me which bits to read and I had to get back to her the next day with any queries. I liked reading in my tent where I would hear the loon and moose call The bible started making sense to me. Mum and Dad came and had a holiday across Canada with me. When they went home I missed them terribly but I really wanted to go above the arctic cycle before heading south. I phoned a guy David who I had tree planted with and told him how sad I was cause my parents have just left. Dave said "where are you?" and he picked me up from the heart of Vancouver and took me to be with his beautiful family in North Vancouver where his dad was the minister of a church. I got a boat up to Juneau Alaska travelling to Whitehorse the capital of the Yukon Territory. I went into the office at Christ Church Cathedral and told the secretary I needed somewhere to live. There was a lady standing next to me who said "come and stay with us our daughter has just moved out". I worked in a receiving home for children where they lived temporarily while their parents sorted out issues. One week the church hosted a conference for the women of the nine Indian tribes of the Yukon. I met a minister's wife Lee Sax who said to me "if you ever get the chance come up and visit us". "I said I just might just do that". So I went to Old Crow a remote Indian village on the Porcupine River above the Arctic Circle where the Gwitchin Indians live. I loved being in the Yukon experiencing such a different way of life primarily due to the extreme difference in climate.

My brother Pete came over to be with me and I thought I'm going home.

I started work straight away at Sir David Brand Centre, Activ foundation and at PMH in the Occupational therapy department. I was living with 2 girlfriends' two streets away from St Matts and on Sundays I would go to St Matt for half an hour before work and sit in the back row and listen to some hymns. No-one approached me I was out of there before being invited for a cuppa to meet anyone. But slowly I felt OK about being in a church again. I started going back to the 5:00 pm service and met some really good people. I had established myself in a church for the first time in Perth.

I own this land

I am this land

23 years ago I was at my friends place for dinner Gerald and Guundie Kuchling. Also there was a guy David who worked with Gerald at the zoo. He is not a Christian. That was not the only reason things were complicated he didn't want to marry I didn't want to live with him. I wanted lots of kids he wanted none. There were compromises because we couldn't be apart. We would marry and have one child. We balance each other he is too much in his head I too much in my heart so we sit comfortably on the collar bone with nature as our shared seat.

We have continued to travel where there are rain forests. Mind you it is not a holiday it is hard work with not much sleep he is in heaven fully alive in a forest night and day finding animals he hasn't seen before. And yes we have been to West Papua and saw some of the tribes from my first book that I received on my confirmation when I was 12. We were at the highland s of Doble bac where they still wear their traditional dress. But the younger men are starting to wear footy shorts over their penis chords which does look pretty bizarre.

I want to get back to my Dad. Any time at all on days off I would be up at the farm especially when Mum and Dad had holidays I loved that space.

I love Richard Rohr's book. A new cosmology nature as the first bible. That just makes sense to me. I am at home wondering around the farm talking to God. Sometimes I would yell God where are you and the sun would come up and shine a golden glow on the small creek grass and gently sway in the breeze. I would have to say sorry Lord. Another time I must have been feeling inadequate we have many non-Christian friends. I was walking along the southern boundary of just all gravel and I came to this small purple plant growing strong I understood that that is what it is like sometimes to follow Christ. I also really resonate to Bill Ploktin who wrote these amazing books Nature and the Human soul and Soul craft. Brilliant books about growing through nature.

When I came back from working in Canada I had two jobs one as a family support worker with the ACTIV foundation and one at PMH in the occupational therapy dep where I played with kids that were on the burns unit and orthopaedic ward. David worked at Perth Zoo and I with children both semi to low earning jobs but Betty McSkimming found us a home in Balga for 59 thousand. God has blessed us in so many ways by being in that suburb.

At work one Sunday all these kids were around this one patience bed and I got talking and they were a youth group from a church just around the corner from our home Balga Presbyterian Church. I started going there. I am still associated with what remains of that church by being involved with Balga Detached youth workers.

As I married a naturalist I was not surprised to hear David say that he would like to name our daughter after some Australian flora or fauna. I thought it may be cassia but it was Carlia. A genus of skink. Carlia likes her name.

Our neighbours David really liked children went to a great little Baptist school just over the road in Girrawheen so Carlia was allowed to go there to. That was such a blessing for her 9 years of primary.

When I

Chaplain

End of the farm

Here is a little bit of me

1. Birrahlee north west corner of T shire. 15 kms west of Bolgart closest town. The farm had predominately wheat, merino sheep and Hereford cattle.

Growing up on a farm highlighted to me that there was a rhythm to life and we were just a small part of being connected to it all. You worked with the seasons. There was birth of lambs and calves and the planting of the seed, then there was shearing and harvest. A Time for Everything

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:

a time for birth and death, a time to plant and to harvest,

a time to kill and a time to a time to mourn and weep over the loss,

a time to laugh and play when we went on holidays to generally Rottnest and Safety Bay each summer after harvest,

This is my **peg bucket** but more than 55 odd years ago it was the milk bucket. One morning I was walking back from the cattle yards Dad carrying this bucket with an udder amount of milk in it and I heard the cockies coming

2. Later in life my friend Jane said her father was never around he was always busy being a doctor. It hadn't occurred to me until that point that my Dad was always there and I was always with my Dad. Mum and Dad were good farmers who respected the land they knew they were only temporary guardians. Dad always gave the first wheat to the church and they both fully gave themselves to the farming community of Bolgart.

3. Like everyone I was full of questions around 3 to 4. My Dad was thee to give a straight answer tailored to my understanding. What is that Dad as I was standing behind a ram? That's the ram testicles which stores the seman which helps the ewe to make the lamb.

4. Jurian Bay, Granpa

5. Confirmation, the tribes of Papua New Guinea day dreaming of travelling be good to meet Eckhart Tolle

6. Melbourne with Lucy St Judes Aunty Fran, St Matts

7. Away with Lucy Israel Haifa, bible grapes, travelling

8. Egypt Africa for 9 months, hospitals

9. Sister's wedding

10. Mike Lady Gowrie Pannawonica

11. Zimbabwe it took 3 hospitals to teach me not to take life for granted, to honour, respect and be grateful for the life Hamburg Europe

12. Ireland London New York When I was in Kenya Kilimanjaro American students
13. Servas Heart broken running around afield in Missouri saying God take away this pain. I had never not not believed in God but there were definite stages where my walk with Christ as my guide took on a deeper meaning.
14. Tree planting Julie and bible, Mum and Dad, Dave Ward Alaska, Whitehorse Old Crow Bay Pete
15. Sir David brand PMH ACTIV Foundation PMH on Sunday St Matts 8:00 am service
16. Continued to travel Solomon's Philippines
17. Gerald and Guundie, where are you God
18. 2 trips s East Asia, tribes of Papua New Guinea, Borneo with Carlia
19. Carlia
20. Betty McSkimming Balga, Todd and Lynn 10 years Emmanuel
21. Pete YouthCARE emails you would be good at this
22. Dad sick, missing farm, Dad was perfect for me but he did have some black ducks sitting on his shoulder. He never took them off to have the conversation with them and say 'what are you all about' Rashid
23. Man with the rake you do all the right things for the wrong reasons, yo do things to impress man not God, you give in order to get. A lot of this characteristic originated from my family of origin
24. Warriapendi building relationships giving space play, advocates for invertebrates
25. There are only two lasting bequests we can give our children... one is roots, the other wings.
26. steven covey