



SEPTEMBER 2020

Q MAGAZINE

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q comment:

Some More Words of Wisdom from the team at Pride 365 Certified



Today is Wisdom Wednesday: Today we realise that words are not always the answer. Although communication is key, words are such a small part of that. Instant messaging has reduced language into pixel form and so much can be lost in translation. Face to face communication is often more effective due to the presence of expressions. Sometimes to get a point across it is not words we need at all but actions. Silence with actions (or even stillness) can sometimes say more than words and when we are with those who are willing to listen, we can all connect on a much deeper level. Although we might not want to connect with

everyone like that, nor even be understood to that extent, boundaries are important. A positive step is to remember, that in your next conversation, it might be a lack of communication and understanding that causes us to become negative rather than anything else.



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q feature: GREG GOULD

by Sarah Mason

GREG GOULD is one of Australia's most exciting and popular entertainers. Currently achieving global success with over 20 million views of his award-winning music videos and number one album '1998'. His powerhouse vocals and charisma have fostered a genuine connection with his audiences as he continues to break new ground with his artistry.

A natural born performer, Greg has been a consistent part of Australia's musical landscape since becoming the runner up of 'Australia's Got Talent' in 2013. Greg's career has since gone from strength to strength touring the world to sold out shows and hitting the international festival circuit. Greg has headlined major events like the Full Moon Fest in New York City, the Sydney Mardi Gras official after party and Hamburg Pride, where a song Gould wrote 'Today' was chosen and performed as the Official Anthem 2017.

Greg released his much-anticipated album '1998' in April 2020 to critical and commercial acclaim, debuting at Number One on the Australian Charts. The album contains 17 reimagined hits from the year 1998 with collaborations including Damien Leith, Rhonda Burchmore, Inaya Day, Cosima De Vito, Katie Underwood, Zoe Badwi, Joanne, Lynne McGranger, Tania Doko and the Choirboys frontman Mark Gable. The album caught the attention of Dame Olivia Newton-John who sent Gould a heartfelt video message after he dedicated the album to his late step mother Sharon who lost her battle with cancer during the making of the album, all profits of 1998 go to the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness & Research Centre.

'The Boy Is Mine' - the lead single from 1998, features Home and Away actor Lynne McGranger in Gould's self-directed music video delivering a strong Anti-Bullying message which amassed over 200,000 views and was placed on high rotation by MTV in 64 countries globally. The track is a collaboration with house music legend Peyton and charted at #7 on the Official UK Commercial Pop Charts.

HI GREG, CONGRATS ON THE SUCCESS OF 'THE BOY IS MINE', I UNDERSTAND THIS VIDEO WAS BASED AROUND YOUR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH BULLYING, ARE YOU ABLE TO TELL US ABOUT THE LEVEL OF BULLYING YOU EXPERIENCED AS A CHILD? It was pretty horrific, beginning when I started singing in school actually. It was a very different time.

There was no Idol, X Factor, The Voice that made singing "cool" and especially for a boy "only girls sing" it started with name calling but then it progressed to very physical where I ended up having both my two front teeth replaced and coming home from school with black eyes.

WHAT STEPS DID YOU TAKE TO TRY AND OVERCOME THESE HARROWING EXPERIENCES? I had to get used to being on my own. Music was both an escape and comfort for me. I used to listen to Jenny Morris's Shiver album (that album became my best friend) on repeat with my headphones on as I sat in the middle of the oval - thinking this was the safest place as there were more than one teacher there. High school was tough too as I craved all the wrong kinds of attention that I never got in primary school - I really didn't enjoy school - it wasn't til my mid 20's that I remember having real "friends"

HOW DAMAGING HAS THE BULLYING BEEN ON YOU LONG TERM? It still effects me today for sure, but every day we learn new things and im a very positive person. I'm grateful to have a platform to be able to share my story with others to know that it does get better or if anyone shares a similar experience to me - that they hopefully feel less alone. Since releasing this video its been really affirming for me with people sharing their own experiences with me and how they dealt with it (or weren't able to) and I'm proud that this video could be healing for them, as it has also been healing for me.



HOW DIFFICULT WAS IT FOR YOU TO STEP UP AND TAKE TO THE STAGE TO SHARE YOUR TALENT TO THE PUBLIC? Gosh. I love Music and I love to sing - thats never been difficult for me - I still get nervous because I truly care about what I do and the public to me feel like that long lost friend I never had - im so grateful to get to do what I love and share my gift with people.

WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR COURAGE THESE DAYS? I have built a really strong inner foundation i think through all of my experiences and the most important thing to me about any success, failure or opportunity - is relationships. People matter to me and I have built some really beautiful friendships as an adult that continue to inspire me to follow my dreams and make music.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE IN THE SAME POSITION AS YOU WERE? Stay strong and be true to yourself. As hard as it is try not to let it spoil your day or whatever it is you're doing or feeling. Blowing out someone else's candle doesn't make yours shine any brighter. Kindness costs nothing and can do so much.

THE BOY IN THE VIDEO HAD SOME NICE FEEDBACK AT SCHOOL FOLLOWING THE VIDEO'S RELEASE. WHAT HAPPENED? Yes! I was blown away when his mother told me that the young actor who plays the boy in the clip Xander Dark, went to school the next day and one of the kids in his class came up to him and said he was proud of him and that hes sorry for bullying him in the past and he now looks out for Xander on the playground. Powerful stuff!

WHAT MADE LYNNE McGRANGER SO PROUD TO BE ON BOARD FOR THE VIDEO WITH YOU? Lynne and I had collaborated on the album for our duet 'Buses & Trains' already and we really got along well. I have a lot of time and respect for her as a human and as an artist. Recording the duet with Lynne was an unforgettable experience, as was doing this clip. She really loves what she does and cares so much - it was a joy to watch her sing and pour her heart out into the song and a masterclass to watch her in action behind the camera - what an incredible actress and an Australian icon. I was very honoured to work with Lynne.

Gould released the second single from '1998', 'Bitter Sweet Symphony' with Bachelor Girl's iconic frontwoman Tania Doko and Grammy nominated legend Eric Bazilian on 24th July. This two-track single also features a special version of Eric's iconic original (What If God Was) 'One of Us'.

Greg follows in the tradition of great artists who aren't defined by any one genre and his diversity of sound fulfils an enduring promise of always delivering honest, soulful music that's straight from the heart.

Connect with Greg online @greggouldmusic and LISTEN to his new album 1998 on Spotify/Apple Music OUT NOW.

For more information visit www.greggould.com.au



q beauty: **BE ENLIGHTENED**

Hyperpigmentation is a broad term used to describe concentrated areas of skin that become discoloured due to excess melanin production. Often harmless and limited to the face, neck, hands and chest, most common forms of hyperpigmentation include solar lentigines, also known as sun, age or liver spots; and melasma, or 'the mask of pregnancy'.

Although people of any age, sex and race can develop this condition, it is more prevalent in women of lighter skin tone and is usually attributed to a host of environmental and hormonal factors, including unprotected sun exposure, medications, and increased oestrogen levels.

While treatment options can include intense pulsed light (IPL), cosmetic surgery and dermabrasion, tyrosinase inhibition is proven to be the most effective and safest treatment to date. Offering a gentle and superior alternative to hydroquinone-based formulations, Enlighten by Evidence Skincare (ESK) uses a relatively new tyrosinase-inhibitor, 4-n-Butylresorcinol (4nB), to lighten skin and reduce future melanin deposits.

Pronounced "4-n-beautal-resorcinol", 4nB has been proven to be the most effective depigmenting agent when compared to industry alternatives such as hydroquinone, arbutin, azelaic acid, and kojic acid, and produce faster results in as little 6 weeks with less skin irritation.



Formulated with sensitive skin types in mind, Enlighten combines 4nB with antioxidant multitasker, niacinamide (vitamin B3), to help regulate normal skin cell function, improve the skin's moisture barrier, and reduce the transfer of melanin to keratinocytes where pigment is deposited. In addition to its hyperpigmentation benefits, Enlighten is also shown to help balance sebum production, increase collagen synthesis, and reduce post-inflammatory redness.

Suitable for daily and long-term use, Enlighten can be paired with other active ingredients, such as vitamin C and alpha hydroxy acids, for enhanced depigmentation and overall skin rejuvenation.

Available globally via Evidence Skincare (ESK), Enlighten retails for \$95 RRP (50g). Go to <https://www.eskcare.com> for more details.



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q coming out: **DREAMING BIG**

I am Baburam Poudel. Born in the mountains of western Nepal nearly fifty years ago in a village called Nawalparashi, my upbringing was culturally rich and economically poor. To be poor in a third-world country is to be very poor indeed.

Fortunately, my mother believed in education. She also welcomed my presence cooking, cleaning, dancing and singing with her friends. She loved me. Protected me. Respected me. My parents did not force me into an arranged marriage.

My mother worked very hard. She was generous. She was kind. She always looked to the future for her children. Even before I was raped by a family member, she told me, 'Keep away from him. He's bad, that one.'

By the time I was 12 years old, I knew I was attracted to boys more than girls, even though most of my friends were girls. Same-sex attraction was not heard of in my village of fifty houses, nor was it heard of in the next largest town two hours' walk away where I attended high school, tending my small farm to pay for tuition and food for my brother and me.

This was 1985. In the remote, rural patriarchal society, Nepalese women had few rights. Young gay men had none. Amid the rigid traditional belief that only male and female exists, homophobia was rife. There was no formal sex education in the country. Birth control had only just been introduced. The AIDS epidemic was spreading through Asia. The news regularly reported police beatings of gay men. My religion rejected 'people like me', believing if you could not or would not make babies, you were worthless. I did not want to shame my parents. My own internalised homophobia and fear of abuse kept me in hiding.

Staying silent meant staying safe.

Silence also forced me to live an isolated life. My world brimmed with pretence, anxiety and depression. Despite my strong, brave soul, I wanted to die.

I finished high school in 1991 and studied Science at university, but had to drop out because I could not pay the fees. I pursued a career in hospitality, becoming qualified and experienced in all aspects from reception to cleaning to food preparation and cooking. I left Nepal when I was 22 to seek fortune in the United Arab Emirates, but was deceived by the employment agent in Mumbai, India. He took most of my money and all of my chance to get to Abu Dhabi.

For seven years I lived in the slums of Mumbai. Not all slums are created equal. The first one was disorganised and dirty. The residents used the alleys as toilets. Dogs attacked you for your food. There were no mosquito nets.

I became gravely ill with malaria, typhoid and pneumonia. Fortunately I had made friends. One of these friends took me to hospital. According to the emergency doctor, I had just hours to live.

Recovering slowly, I found work easily. I worked three jobs in one day seven days per week, sleeping just four hours at night before starting all over again. These were my worst days. I was lost and alone. At times, suicide seemed possible and preferable.

Living in a windowless room the size of a large cupboard with a blue tarp for protection from the monsoon, one day my six roommates were out and I found myself alone. From my locked suitcase, I removed a magazine.

Furtively, I read an article about the stigma of being gay. About how society's attitudes needed to catch up to the reality of how people live their lives. About how gay men suffered daily discrimination, which led to depression and suicidal thoughts.

For the first time in my life, I understood that I was not the only one. That there may be answers to the thousands of questions clouding my head. That I might live my truth.

Until then I had searched for answers through religions. I was born Hindu, and pursued insight through Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Hari Krishna and Sai Baba. They taught me that I was impure, inauthentic and non-productive.



The magazine article had been written by an Australian named Geoffrey Heavyside. I made contact with him. We became friends. When Geoffrey came to India to set up support and advocacy for gay men, I worked as his translator. Through the Brimbank Community Initiative, he has helped hundreds and hundreds of people find their safety, negotiate the system, and live full lives.

Through utilising self-help and local community-based organisations, Geoffrey empowered the poor to access food, education, housing and employment. He provided financial, legal and medical support to gay people who had been abused. He advocated on health issues associated with gender minorities. He worked with the UNHCR. When the time came, he established support networks through social media and developed online tools to support people through suicidal ideation.

Over the years, we talked about Geoffrey sponsoring me to move to Australia. In 2007, I did move to Australia. I got work in kitchens and worked my way up to the position of chef, but did not make friends easily. I was quiet, shy and unused to expressing myself. My English was improving but nowhere near fluent. I didn't know my way around. How would I ever meet anyone, let alone someone to love and love me in return?

The gay scene seemed out, loud, almost aggressive. I tried nightclubs, online dating, meeting people through mutual friends. Aside from a couple of fun nights, I felt financially, physically and emotionally used, scared, even more isolated. I wanted a special person to share my life with. To trust, respect and understand. Together.

My dad passed away in November 2014.
My mum passed away in January 2016. My best friend, mentor and house-mate, Geoffrey Heavyside passed away in January 2020. Now I walk alone.



I know these most important people want me to live my happiest life. To do this, they have given me an assignment: do not fear, do not be silent, do not hide yourself. Live a full life.

For too long I have feared pure rejection.

I fear not getting a job, losing a job, barriers to promotion. I worry — every day — about how I will earn enough money to live. I am unable to access community benefits and health services due to discrimination, for example with the stigma of HIV AIDS. I feel unwelcome in the mainstream community. I fear losing the few friends I have. I worry that my family will reject me. I am a target for financial exploitation, physical harassment and sexual abuse. I fear that my self-esteem will never recover. For people of colour, discrimination doubles.

This is why it has taken me forty-seven years to muster the courage to show my true feelings. Though a few close friends, family and colleagues know I am gay, today I come out to the rest of the world.

The human experience is unique to every individual. My gender identity, sexual attraction and relationship to my body are mine alone.

From today, I will not live behind. I will live my full life and, through, Brimbank, I will empower people like me to do the same.

q create: **TODD MCKENNY**

INTRODUCING A NEW ONLINE MARKETPLACE FOR AUSTRALIANS, BY AUSTRALIANS

The logo for TODD+CREATES is displayed on a purple rectangular background with rounded corners. The text "TODD+CREATES" is written in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. Two thin yellow horizontal lines are positioned above and below the text, centered.

TODD+CREATES

Following the success of TODDMASKS, which has generated over \$70,000 in revenue for independent stage and screen costume creatives in the first month of operation, Todd McKenny is expanding the concept with a brand new online marketplace, TODD+CREATES.

toddcreates.shop has been created exclusively for independent, Australian creatives and small businesses who produce and ship their products in Australia. Initially TODD+CREATES will focus on the categories such as Lifestyle (homewares and art), Fashion (clothing and accessories), Kids (toys and clothing), Pets (clothing and accessories) and Weddings (bridal accessories, bridesmaids and groomsmen accessories, decorations, wedding favours).

Friends Todd McKenny and Sas Lyon were discussing how catastrophic the current health crisis had been on the entertainment industry and this led to the formation of TODDMASKS. That site successfully created a platform for Australian, handmade goods to be sold direct to the Australian public and to assist people who would normally be making costumes for the entertainment industry to have a platform from which to sell their products.

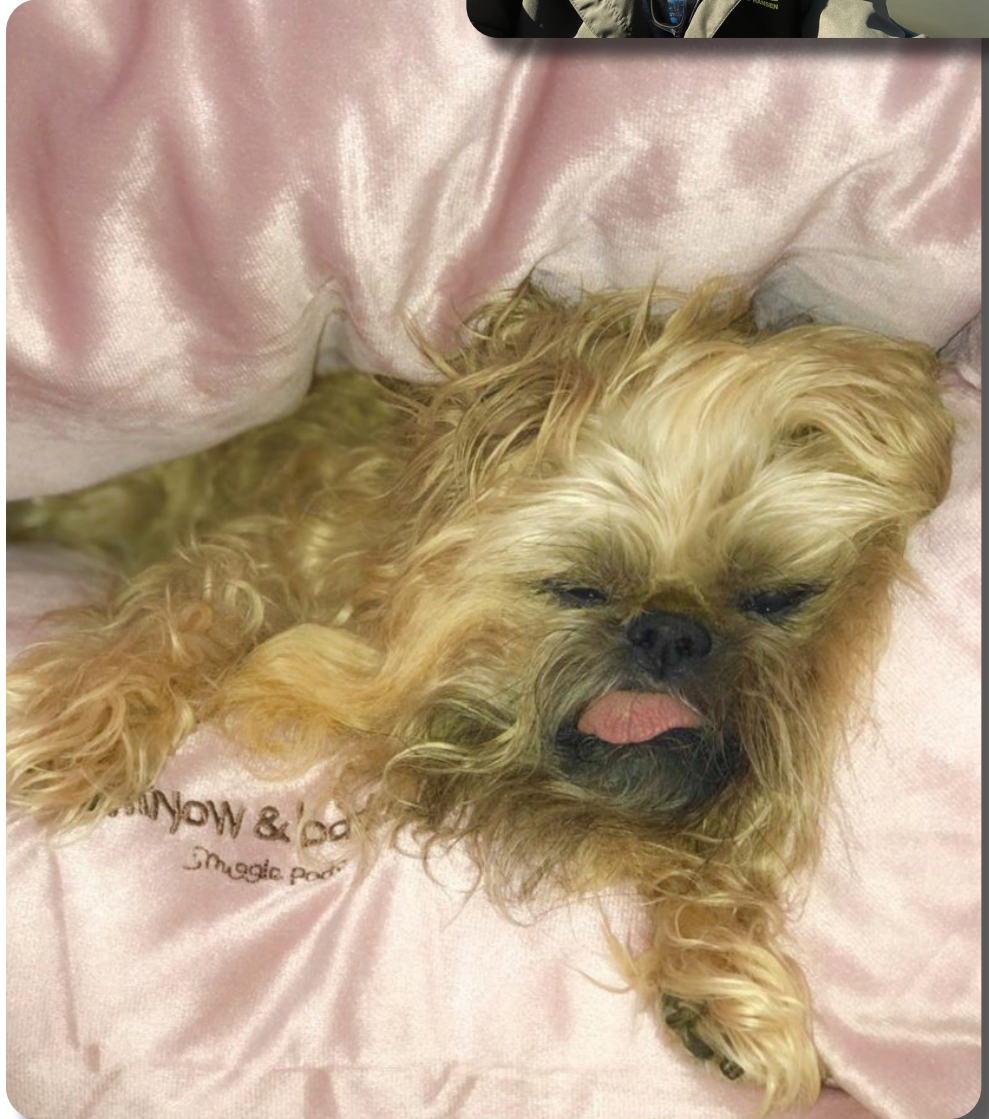
Todd and Sas recognised that the success of toddmasks.com could be continued by expanding the platform to widen the reach, and enable other local individuals and small businesses access to an easy and professional online platform from which to sell their products. The TODD+CREATES marketplace is for Australians who are ever increasingly purchasing online and by Australians.

Creating a website and online marketing platform can be an unreachable goal for many small and independent operators, and working with international marketplaces can be a daunting task for those who have not sold online previously. TODD+CREATES will be staffed in Australia and will offer the invaluable one-on-one support and guidance for new sellers that has seen TODDMASKS grow into such a success story.



"Sas and I are incredibly proud of the success of TODDMASKS and proud to have been able to support our theatrical costume makers during these stressful times," said Todd McKenney. "The thing I love the most about TODDMASKS is the feeling of Aussies helping Aussies, and that is what we would like to achieve again with TODD+CREATES. This is an opportunity for more Aussies to help more Aussies, a positive platform to help keep many small Australian businesses afloat during these uncertain times."

For more information, please go to www.toddcreates.shop
Facebook and Instagram @toddcreates



q book: THE DOOR & OTHER UNCANNY TALES

The act of violence runs through everything I write.”
Dmetri Kakmi, *The Door and Other Uncanny Tales* (NineStar Press)

The Door and Other Uncanny Tales (NineStar Press) is a departure for Melbourne essayist and author, Dmetri Kakmi. It represents his first full-scale exploration of his passion for the literary gothic.

The stories in this collection draw the reader into a psycho-sexual vortex in which fantasy and reality collapse to create nightmarish worlds from which there is no escape. They are powerfully charged, dream-like explorations of violence, neglect, regret and the need for love, graced with poetic elegance. Make no mistake, however, these are disturbing tales that push boundaries.

Living paintings, spectral children, cannibal serial killers, lost souls, haunted houses, and ancient evil proliferate in *The Door*. Combined with Dmetri Kakmi's gothic imagination and mordant humour, the result is fiction that is provocative and unsettling.

This collection contains three new and three previously published stories, including the acclaimed "Haunting Matilda", "The Long Lonely Road" and "The Boy by the Gate". There are diverse starting points. Most stories are set in Australia, though "The Long Lonely Road" is set on the island of Tenedos in Turkey, where Kakmi grew up, and centres on a Muslim boy. The main character of the novella, *The Door*, which lends its name to the collection, is Greek and homosexual. Some stories have queer characters, most do not. Several stories have female main characters.

Putting the collection together gave Kakmi pause for thought.

"Where do stories come from? The best I can do is to say they come from an unconscious urge inside the author and find sentence on the page," Kakmi says. "Often you do not know what you are writing about until someone—a friend, a reader or a critic—draws your attention to the subject matter. For instance, when my first book *Mother Land* was published a reviewer said it was about how violence can affect a community like a virus and spread to the most unlikely individuals. 'Is it?' I thought. When I looked closely, I saw that on some level it is. I just did not realize it at the time.

"The act of violence runs through everything I write. For me it is the ultimate existential question. I am attracted and repelled by it."

Kakmi says that the other thing that links these stories is children, often in dire situations.

"Given my upbringing at a volatile time in Turkish history, it is inevitable I keep going back to the locus, trying to understand what happened in the Grimm's fairy tale of my childhood, and why? Ultimately, I sought to create finely wrought tales that will entrap readers in my head, like flies in a spider's web. I hope they are suitably rattled by the experience."

Kakmi's best known works are *Mother Land* (2008), his memoir of growing up in 1960s Turkey, which was published to widespread acclaim in Australia, England and Turkey, and the children's anthology, *When We Were Young* (2007). His essays and short stories appear in a number of anthologies.

The publisher, NineStar Press, is a boutique publisher of quality LGBTQA romance, erotica, paranormal, and literary fiction based in New Mexico, USA.

The Door and Other Uncanny Tales

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THE DOOR

*AND OTHER
UNCANNY TALES*

DMETRI KAKMI

q serial: PORN STAR - EP 6

With my headshots from my two photo shoots I made a list of all the porn companies I could audition to. I also decided to tier them from the most professional and prestigious to the more smaller, independent ones. The more prestigious gay porn companies were also the more commercial, with bigger budgets for their films and a higher quality of production. That was ultimately the type of company I wanted to work for: professional, well-known with a good brand name that would launch my career as a porn star and allow me to make money. Why do it if not done well. However I was also aware that I had to start from somewhere and decided to approach the more niche and independent porn companies.

I was ready to begin sending off applications when I thought of doing a little further research. Why not reach out to anyone I knew who worked in porn?

There were two porn stars I knew, who had relative success, the more successful of the two, Ari, I knew personally.

I met Ari through Mike, a friend and someone I used to go clubbing with. Over the years Ari gained a reputation on the gay circuit, winning a number of gay beauty pageants in the US after he bulked up. Ari had a nice build, but he was boring and not very smart. However isn't that what we love about our porn stars? For their looks and not for their smarts?



It was Mike who told me about Ari's career by showing me his videos online. There, on Mike's phone was Ari, on his knees with a dick by his mouth and his face covered in sperm. He was looking straight at the camera as if declaring how hot the sex was. Saying I felt intensely jealous was an understatement.

By then Ari was living in Miami, contracted under a well-known porn company. When he was not working he was teaching English as a foreign language and performing as a go-go-boy at large industrial-sized gay venues or doing porn. I tried contacting Ari to arrange a time to speak but he did not answer my calls or acknowledge my texts. I reached out to him on social media but he did not respond. He deleted me from his friends list and so I left it. Through Mike I learnt that he eventually left porn, moved to Boston where he was headhunted for a company that specialised in online technical solutions for companies. He lived in a spacious apartment and made a decent salary. Ari did everything wrong and got everything right.

The second porn star I got in touch with was Adonis Silver. He kept Adonis, which was his real name, and one that was apt for porn, and Silver was a translation of his Greek surname, Argyrides. For someone who loves porn I was surprised I never heard about him. I found out about him through a fuck buddy of mine.

'We've made it as a country,' he said. 'We even have Greek porn stars now,' he joked. I googled him. His images revealed a man of average height, with a good build. His photos showed him posing by a pool with his buttocks in the air, or having a threesome, or holding his dick as he posed for the camera.

His profile mentioned he worked as a personal trainer and had he stayed away from the gym and had he not stayed away from carbs he would have been rounder in the middle. He was in decent shape for a second tier porn star.

From Athens he spring boarded to London where he worked as a personal trainer before switching careers appearing in a few gay films. In comparison to Ari, he was not as sought after nor as successful. Of the two men Adonis was definitely the budget porn star, B-List at best. He was a changeable, almost forgettable bottom when compared to Ari's strapping chest and big penis.

Through his social media account I tracked down Adonis' email and I wrote to him. He responded a few days later answering my questions with a blasé message that could be summed up with this: porn is fun, the guys are hot and the cash could be better. It was hardly good career advice. I wanted to know how the industry worked from someone actually in the industry. There was only so much I could learn online. I emailed him back again, asking for more information but I received no response.

'Are all gay porn stars this fickle?' I thought.

q music: TOM GOSS'S NERDY BEAR

"Nerdy Bear," Tom Goss's new summer anthem, pays homage to the subset of plus-sized gay men that enjoy super heroes, play video games and wear cute glasses with clever graphic tees. It's a pop track, with a big, snappy sound and an infectious melody, that also contains a smooth sultry R&B vibe along with instrumentation that will make listeners feel like they're sliding into silk sheets. *"We've all seen the movies where the nerdy girl is hot, but she doesn't know it,"* says Tom. *"She has to take off her glasses and let down her hair for the world to recognize her beauty. I say hell no to all that. The nerdy bear is already as cute as can be!"* Tom Goss's "Nerdy Bear" is available on iTunes, Spotify and all major digital platforms. Its music video is on YouTube.

"It would be hard to pinpoint what I love most about nerdy bears," continues Tom from his LA home. *"From my experience, they tend to be gentle and warm. They want to have a good time, they're easy to get to know and of course, they're cuddly. To me, that's a winning combination."*

Tom designed the song to lift listeners up and make them smile, something he believes we need more than ever. *"Given the hot mess that is 2020, I feel like I have a responsibility to create music that brings people together and helps them to see the world in a positive light."*

Tom Goss was raised in Kenosha, Wisconsin, a small city on Lake Michigan, between Chicago and Milwaukee. Much of his youth was spent focused on his studies and on wrestling. He didn't feel much in the way of sexual and emotional desires growing up. In fact, he didn't go on his first date until he was 22, while in seminary, training to be a Catholic priest.

That was when Tom realized he did have an appetite for sex, only it wasn't towards women or even the men that society deemed as handsome. His attraction was toward plus-sized men, known as "bears" in the gay community, and nerdy ones to boot.

"Nerdy Bear" is authentic to my experience and relays my unique perspective that beauty doesn't fit a standard mold," he says.

Michael Serrato (Big Gay Sketch Show, Neil's Puppet Dreams) directed the music video for "Nerdy Bear." It was shot in NYC, primarily on the Chelsea Piers and at Rockbar NYC, a well-known bear bar in Chelsea.

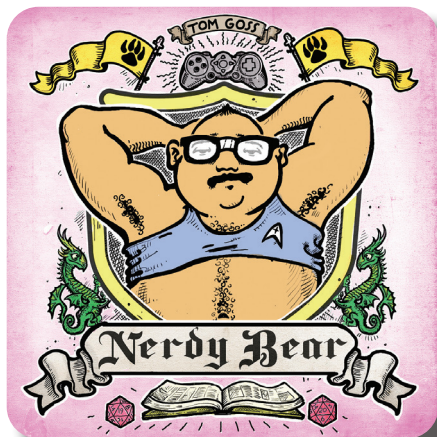
Tom wanted to keep the video fun and simple. He interviewed a bunch of candidates for the right man to play Nerdy Bear, and eventually chose Jason Villegas for the role of his romantic interest. *"When I saw Jason's pictures, I knew he was the one. I can't tell you how much joy I got from editing his face for dozens of hours. His smile is perfection!"*

In the video, Tom manages to show off his basketball dribbling skills and he even pulls off a bit of drag, appearing in several scenes as Princess Peach from the Mario Brothers video game. *"I was happy to wear the dress and tiara,"* he laughs. *"It's the embodiment of the video game hero becoming the real-life hero. The nerdy bear saves the day!"*

"Nerdy Bear" follows the release of Tom Goss's full-length album, Territories, that included six music videos and his first Spanish-language single. He promoted the album last winter with a nationwide and European tour.

In April, Tom released the single, "Dancing in My Room" and three COVID-inspired music videos that featured Max Emerson and eleven artists singing in multiple languages.

Since the pandemic, he has spent his time in quarantine working on a myriad of new work, for himself as well as for other artists and their projects. *"I'm excited for the opportunity to give back to the community and help other queer artists tell their unique stories,"* Tom says, adding optimistically that, *"It's going to be a fun 2020."*



Visit <http://tomgossmusic.com> or follow Tom on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @tomgossmusic

q stress: 5 DAILY BUSTERS

5 daily stress busting rituals you need to know

Now more than ever, mindfulness and stress management are crucial elements for a happy, healthy and successful life. How we care for ourselves, and how we react to difficult situations, will determine how stress affects our overall health, wellbeing and happiness. Numbers released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that Australians are stressing more than ever, which is not surprising given the current global pandemic, along with the subsequent economic ramifications we are confronting. While 75% of us are currently impacted either physically or mentally by stress, this doesn't need to be the case. Let's take a look at five stress busting rituals to put you on the path to a more balanced, fulfilled, and stress-free life:

1. Mastery is NOW

We have over 70,000 thoughts per day, and most of those thoughts (about 90%) are dominated by worry, concern, and limiting beliefs connected to what's happened in the past, or what may or may not happen in the future. Awareness of these thoughts is the first step, followed by the understanding that you are in total control of them. Everyday obstacles are a fact of life, but it's all about how we tackle these obstacles and the thoughts that accompany them. Once you start living in the NOW, you can't help but become excited by your momentary existence, without worrying about what has already happened, the future, or things that are outside of your control. At first it will be challenging to halt your concerns regarding what was or what may be, but with repetitive practice this will become a healthy habit, changing the way you view your world for the better. This is Mastery!

2. I Love, I Love, I Love

Taking a few minutes every day to wake up with gratitude will immediately raise your vibration and allow for more positivity and success in your life. Gratitude is one of the highest vibrations we can feel along with love, freedom, and empowerment. Starting your day with thoughts of gratitude can set the tone for the entire day, and the energy of gratitude can help change your mood from stressed to serene, or from overwhelmed to elated. There is so much to be grateful for, whether it be your family, your health, your home, or mother nature, and making a daily gratitude list shifts your vibrations from focusing on what you don't have to what is already abundant in your life, manifesting even more abundance as a result.

3. Bring the Drum Beat to Your Feet

The practice of meditation is proven to enhance both mental and physical health, and the benefits are endless. So too is the practice of exercise, so why not combine them! A walking meditation (especially those with sacred drumbeats) are a fantastic accompaniment to exercise, enabling the busiest of people to experience the benefits of physical activity and mindfulness in unison. There are so many powerful walking meditations available, and it's another fabulous way to set a positive, dynamic, and inspiring momentum for the day ahead. The Quality Mind Global app offers a fantastic 10-day beginners' meditation course which is free.

4. Your Thoughts & Words Vibrate

We all have an inner voice, and the control that we exercise over this internal super-power will literally determine how we feel. Your inner words guide your mind and body towards the experiences you will have in life, and without careful direction, they can easily spiral, impacting your outer world along the way. We are always our own worst critic, but making a conscious decision to first acknowledge, and then change that negative record playing inside your head when it arises is one of the most empowering and life changing transformations you can make. It's helpful to pay attention when you suddenly start to feel stressed, upset, or moody. Often these shifts in emotion are the result of a critical inner voice, and once you pinpoint the thought that evoked the feeling, you can take control by consciously deciding not to listen. Instead, try practicing positive self-talk and power statements that are the exact opposite of that thought.

5. Attacking Overwhelm 'Head On'

Overwhelm can be like adding cyanide to your morning coffee (metaphorically speaking), and if not addressed, it can hinder your mental and physical health, potentially resulting in burn out, anxiety, irritability, insomnia, loss of focus, illness and more. Your brain has limited resources and can only grasp 7-9 chunks of information at once. As soon as this is exceeded, we naturally go in to 'overwhelm mode'. Here are some examples of these 'chunks' from one of my recent clients: Covid 19, home schooling, my marriage, money issues, my weight, my sick father, my child's behavioural issue.

It's helpful to start by removing the overwhelm from your head and putting each of your areas of concern (bricks) on paper or a whiteboard, enabling you to distance your brain from it a little. Then individually rate them out of 10, (10 being extreme), prioritise them in order, and just deal with each issue one by one in order of priority. Consider why you are allowing this to affect you, and what

steps you need to take to make this better? Awareness is the first antidote to overwhelm, and then the simple action of beginning with a plan will help to alleviate your stress or anxiety.

*Richard Maloney is the author of **Stress Free – How to Thrive Under Pressure in Unprecedented Times**. He is the CEO of Quality Mind Global, an international mindfulness business with over 500 clients in 30+ countries and founder of the #1 employee engagement licensing company in the world, Engage & Grow Global. Find out more about Richard at www.qualitymindglobal.com*

*Imagine a life in this new world where
performing at your highest peak is a given...*

STRESS FREE



How to Thrive Under Pressure
in Unprecedented Times

RICHARD MALONEY

q exercise: THE MYTHS EXPOSED

Why 10,000 steps is a myth, and what to do instead

The public health messages around exercise have remained the same for years. “Find Thirty.” “Walk 10,000 steps.” We do our best and feel guilty when we don’t quite hit those targets. But have you ever wondered what the scientific basis of these are?

The thirty minutes slogan was based on the assumption this was the amount of aerobic exercise needed each day to help prevent weight gain due to our increasingly sedentary lifestyle, while walking 10,000 steps, was a marketing ploy.

Back in 1964 the Yamasa Company was busy putting the finishing touches to its first wearable pedometer in time for the Tokyo Olympics. They chose to call it “manpo-kei”, which translates into 10,000-steps meter. It’s a nice round number but there was no scientific evidence to back it up.

If your wearable step tracker is constantly reminding you that you haven’t reached your daily target, it’s time to stop chastising yourself and look at what to do instead.

Aim for quality rather than quantity

Going for a brisk short walk is better than a longer amble through the park. Though any opportunity to get up and moving is helpful to lower your risk of heart disease, improve your mood, clear your mind, reduce stress and boost your energy. Aim for consistency in the intensity of your walking, making it fast enough to get your heart rate up but still possible to have a conversation. The ideal cadence being 100 steps plus per minute. Consistency in your habit is what contributes to the ongoing health benefits.

Remain upstanding

In addition to walking every day, spending more time on your feet has a number of advantages. The use of variable height desks has become increasingly popular for the health benefits associated with reducing the time spent sitting on our bottoms. Research has shown their use improves working memory, attention and executive function (planning, organising and making decisions) but not weight loss.

Adjust your activity expectations during lockdown

If your normal exercise routine left the building with the arrival of Covid-19, look for ways to remain physically active across your day. The greatest benefit to increasing your step count is when you’re starting from close to ground zero. Here increasing your daily step count by 2000 steps brings the greatest boost to your general health. Otherwise over 6000 steps is cardio-protective and if you’re generally walking 7500 steps a day, you’re doing well. Naturally if you’re used to walking 10,000 steps each day that’s fantastic too.

What if the thought of exercise brings you out in a rash?

Not everyone thinks fondly of exercise, especially if it conjures up images of getting hot and sweaty in Lycra© While 44% of Australians are meeting the weekly requirements of 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise per week, 22% don’t do any. Allergies, exercise intolerance and excuses aside, the benefits are there for the taking, but perhaps in a different guise. Dancing, gardening, walking the dog, or chasing the children all count. Regularly getting into nature or living close to a green or blue space has been shown to increase the amount of time you spend moving outside, without even noticing.

Use exercise to boost your mood

Rather than undertaking exercise just for general fitness, it’s a daily essential for maintaining your mental wellbeing and lowering stress. If uncertainty, anxiety, worries or symptoms of depression are weighing you down, getting out for a walk, swim or cycle ride will shift your psychology and bring you to a happier place.

Here both aerobic and strength (weights) training have been shown to promote better mental health.

Mix it up to avoid boredom

If walking is your thing that’s great but adding in a couple of weights or resistance training each week is also recommended. Or you might like to explore eccentric training. This doesn’t involve having to wear fancy dress but relates to the type of muscular activity being used. Muscle strength is vital to balance and how well we function especially with age. An eccentric exercise is where you choose to sit slowly into a chair or take the lift to the sixth floor and choose to take the stairs down. This is ideal if mobility is limited or you want to avoid stressing the cardiovascular system while getting the same metabolic, mental and cognitive benefits associated with aerobic exercise.

It's time to ditch the myth of the 10,000 steps and seek to move more and sit less as the new exercise prescription.

*Dr. Jenny Brockis is a board-certified lifestyle medicine physician, global speaker and best-selling author specialising in brain health, mental wellbeing and social connection. Her new book *Thriving Mind: How to cultivate a good life* (Wiley) is now available online and at all good bookstores. www.drjennybrockis.com*



Thriving Mind

HOW TO CULTIVATE A GOOD LIFE

DR JENNY BROCKIS

WILEY

q happiness: 3 WAYS BACK

3 Ways To Bounce Back When Things Don't Work Out

2020 has been a tough year for everyone. Things not working out can feel like a daily occurrence in the unpredictability of COVID Life which means that our ability to bounce back is fundamental to not only our mental health but our happiness. How big you build your resilience muscle will depend on your willingness to experiment with the uncomfortable and to do it daily. It is only by surfing the edge of our comfort zones that we realise how capable we truly are. But where to begin?

Experiment 1 / Focus... On Your Words

Sigmund Freud once said 'words have a magical power. They can either bring the greatest happiness or the deepest despair.' The reality is that the language you use will determine your ability to bounce back. The challenge is that we are innately biased towards negative words. Barbara Fredrickson, a founder of Positive Psychology discovered that "you need to generate a minimum of five positive thoughts for each negative one, to experience "an optimal range of human functioning." Whilst it's harder work to be positive try experimenting with changing your negative internal conversations daily into positive ones. How? Try using the Name It Reframe It. It's a simple as observing your negative language throughout the day. When a negative word comes into your mind Name It by calling it out or writing it down Eg. I suck at this, then Reframe It by simply stating the complete opposite to yourself e.g. I will be great at this with practice. This simple practice employed consistently can build your self belief to the next level!



Experiment 2 / Courage ...Grows Through Acts Of Micro Bravery

Resilience is born out of leaning into fear and experience tells me that the practice of micro bravery is one of the best ways to build it. Experiment with Micro Bravery by doing small things each day that make you feel uncomfortable. It can be as simple as having a difficult conversation, signing up for an online class to learn something you know nothing about or sharing something that makes you feel a little vulnerable with someone else. Small acts of bravery practiced over time build the courage and confidence to lean into bigger acts of bravery enabling you to unlock potential and navigate adversity in ways you never imagined possible.

Curiosity... Is Born Out Of Self Observation

If awareness is the first step to change then observation is our greatest lever for turning our awareness on. In order to bounce back better when things go pear shaped, creating the space to observe how life plays out in our heads daily via journaling is a gamechanger. Writing down your thoughts, feelings and behaviours enables you to connect the dots between how they interact. We become observers of our brain's behaviour and build a relationship with our mind that helps us work with it more effectively. Try on 15 minutes of daily journaling, set the alarm on your phone and just sit alone with your thoughts a pen and a piece of paper. See what comes up and out. No filters allowed just observation. Don't stop your practice if you have nothing more to write and you are only 5 minutes in. Just sit in the silence...trust me it will surprise you.

I make no apologies for being a Happiness Hacker who delivers a hard message when required. Learning to bounce back better is not about life getting easier, it's about embracing the fact that uncertainty is a constant and the more capable we are of adapting to that the more joy we will experience in each day.

Penny Locaso is the world's first Happiness Hacker on a mission to teach 10 million humans how to intentionally adapt in order to future proof happiness. She is the author of Hacking Happiness (Wiley \$29.95). Visit www.hackinghappy.co

**'Penny Locaso pulls no punches to deliver hard-hitting
insights for living a more fulfilling life.'**
Nir Eyal, best-selling author of *Hooked* and *Indistractable*



HACKiNG

HOW TO INTENTIONALLY ADAPT
AND SHAPE THE FUTURE YOU WANT

HAPPINESS

PENNY LOCASO

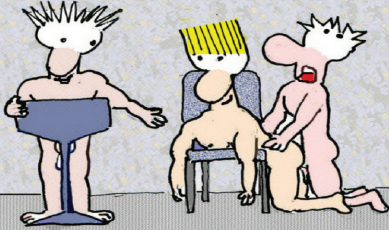
WILEY

Gaylord Blade

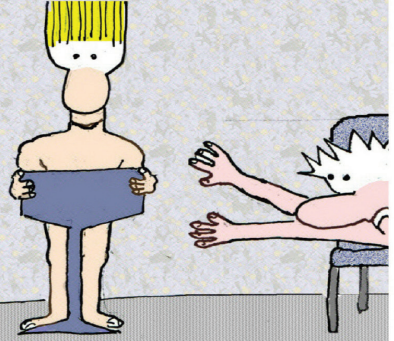
The award for 2020 Slut of the Year
again goes to ... Gaylord Blade

SLUTS-OF-AUSTRALIA ASSN. AWARDS DINNER

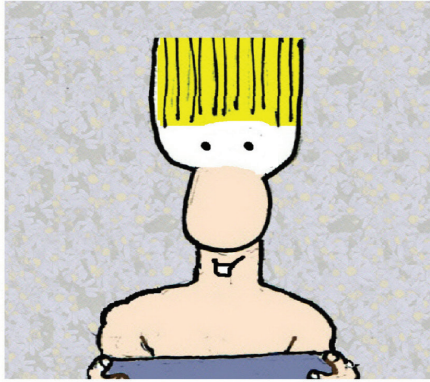
SLUT OF THE YEAR



I humbly accept on behalf
of sluts everywhere ..



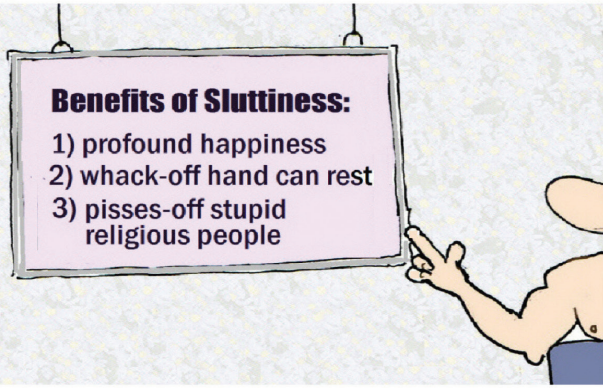
before antibiotics, sluts
were seen as contemptible..



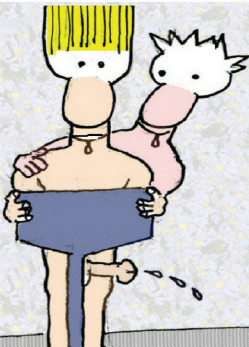
.... but now we know that sluts
provide vital benefits to society

Benefits of Sluttiness:

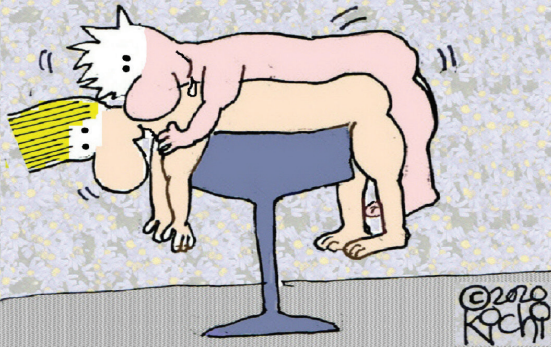
- 1) profound happiness
- 2) whack-off hand can rest
- 3) pisses-off stupid religious people



I hope you enjoyed dinner
and now if you'll be patient
until this guy finishes me



I'll serve dessert to each one of you,
which, as always, is a SLICE OF ME!





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