



SUE LESTER CAMEL TREKKING IN THE SIMPSON DESERT, AUSTRALIA

BY SUE LESTER

SURVIVING OR THRIVING?

The pain in her voice, her face, wrenched at my heart and gut. “I always wanted to take the train to Western Australia in wildflower season. Now I know I never will.” My stoic grandma’s unexpected confession filled the silence of her comfy kitchen. To me that seemed such a small dream, having decided at four years old I’d visit the Queen of England in her palace. At six years old, entranced by the movie *Born Free*, I had

added going to Africa to see Elsa the lioness to my list, and my convincer was a project on the Incas when I was nine, adding Machu Picchu, Peru to my to-do list.

In the kitchen with Grandma that day I was 22, so she was probably mid-70s. She was healthy, my Pop was not, and her dream of wildflowers faded away, dying with him. A small dream, but unfulfilled, and the pain of regret was immeasurable.

Choose the passport

So the next year, when my then-husband insisted I choose between having a mortgage and family with him or travelling overseas without him, my heart and gut voted with my passport. I went off adventuring around the world, making all sorts of mistakes across all areas of my life, though thankfully not too illegal or fatal. It wasn’t until my 40s that my heart and gut

started reconnecting with my head.

Some people thought I gained the wisdom that supposedly comes with age, but that is not true. Wisdom comes from applying knowledge, and learning from mistakes – it has nothing to do with the number on your birthday card. No, in my 40s I accidentally discovered personal development on steroids through 12 months of regular full-on immersion trainings that totally shifted my beliefs and even identity.

I had once loved to read 'Sum of Us' interviews in the Brisbane News, fascinated that people in their 20s and 30s could even think to establish their own businesses. I assumed then that I would have a job, employed in someone else's dream, all my working life. Thankfully, that changed.



SUE WITH JANE,
HER SPONSOR-CHILD IN AFRICA

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High price

I studied the personal development techniques I was benefitting from so much, and applied them in my role at the time as a state mentor co-ordinator for a national social enterprise. My responsibilities included recruiting, screening, training and supporting 200+ volunteer mentors for our various youth mentoring programs,



SUE LESTER DURING CAMEL TREK

plus training our field staff how to best train and support their students being matched to the mentors.

As rewarding as it was, the price I had to pay over the years became too high as it affected my health and travel plans. So, the same year I took out my first mortgage, at 45, I resigned and launched my own business as a Master Practitioner of NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming),

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SUE WITH
CHILDREN AT THE
GABRIEL LEARNING
CENTRE IN AFRICA

Hypnosis and Results Coaching. Joining a well-established natural therapies clinic, my speciality was unexplained infertility, and I also helped clients suffering with anxiety, depression, weight reduction and smoking.

Change and grow

This dramatic change was only possible with my own strong self-belief, a love of and excellent skills in my modalities, and the support on many levels from my new life partner, my mindset coach, the clinic owners and the delighted clients who referred their family and friends to me. Over the past nine years I've continued learning and playing, allowing my business focus to shift as I change and grow. It's been a bumpy ride.

I suspect I've even gained some of that wisdom I mentioned, and poured it into my first book, *The Face Within: How To Change Your Unconscious Blueprint*, which I self-published in 2013.

Now key note speaking, in-house training, workshops, webinars and writing are all part of my business, and I just love mindset coaching with women all over the world. Many are successful women who have given so much that they've lost connection with who they really are now, and lost that tingling spirit of adventure that makes life worthwhile.

Adventure is such a personal thing: for some it's trying a new restaurant each week or taking a train across a desert in Spring to see the wildflowers. For me, it's still about trying new experiences and travelling, and I have intentionally created a life that now includes all the excitement and satisfaction that both bring.

My African connection

A serendipitous meeting back in 1999 when I trekked in Nepal has impacted my life deeply. There I met the lovely Susan Saleeba, and together, under the majesty of the mountains, we mused on how one day we would both like to do volunteering somewhere really interesting.

Susan did just that in the slums of Nakuru, Kenya, in 2007, and returned there again to create a miracle called Nakuru Hope, which gives women a tool of trade so they can become self-sufficient. In 2009 she then opened The Gabriel Learning Centre, a school and orphanage there, which is now also a centre for volunteers from all over the world.

Susan's work is very much a part of my life now. Funds from my business, including a percentage of book sales, supports giving hope to these children that had none, some literally abandoned on the city dump, like six-year-old Jane, one of my sponsor children. Education, health

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and love, for all of us, make the difference between barely surviving and thriving.

I have made space in my life to volunteer at Gabriels for the past two years, loving every challenging moment, smile and cuddle, and will return in May 2018.

Come with me?

Sue Lester is now working on her forthcoming book Answering The Call To Adventure. In her travels she has been charged by a silverback gorilla in the Congo, canoed the Zambezi River dodging hippos, walked across the Australian Simpson Desert with 16 camels, and much more. Sue uses her adventurous travel tales to inspire women to rediscover their potential, and lives by the sea in Brisbane, Australia, with her partner Peter, their cat and budgie.

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Sue will now contribute a regular column about mindset and adventure to Honestly Woman magazine.



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