

A photograph of a long, dimly lit tunnel, likely a mine or underground railway. The tunnel walls are lined with reflective material, possibly insulation or safety lining. In the distance, a bright light source, possibly an opening or a large light fixture, illuminates the tunnel. Several workers wearing hard hats and high-visibility vests are visible in the middle ground, standing on a set of tracks or a walkway. The overall atmosphere is industrial and somewhat somber due to the low lighting.

IN IT FOR THE **LONG** HAUL

Making the most of the FIFO Lifestyle

JOHN TOOMEY

In it for the Long Haul.

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First Published in 2021 by John Toomey

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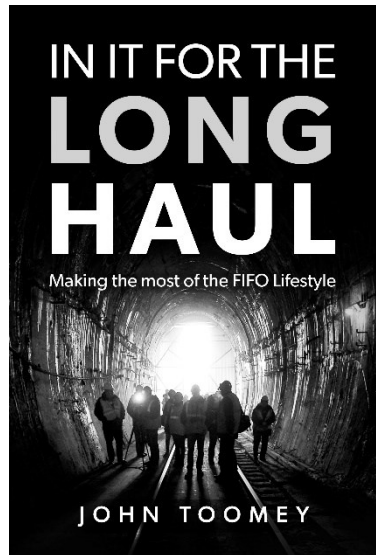
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Making the most of the FIFO Lifestyle

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Endorsements

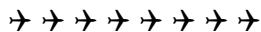
I first met John Toomey in 1998 when he arrived at Richmond to become part of the Coaching Staff. We knew back then he was a bit of a different unit, thinking differently and helping us in ways that many don't consider.

Two years ago, hitting my mid 40's, I became dismayed at how many of my old friends had let themselves go and were now struggling with poor physical and mental health. I wanted to do something about it, so John is the person I turned to. He knows his craft but shares his message with care and humor.

When he shared his book with me, I knew he was on a mission, to care for Australians who are battling and to bring some stability to families and a bright future to the kids they are raising.

Read this book. Not only will it help you, but it will also empower you to help others. You will be supporting John, and myself, to make life better in Australia.

Matthew Richardson
Richmond Football Club
282 games, 800 goals 1993-2009
AFL Hall of Fame
Richmond FC hall of fame
Channel 7 and 3AW AFL broadcast teams 2020 - present



In it for the Long Haul.

I have known John for over 30 years, and through our shared interests have spent countless hours talking about health and wellbeing.

He is a great academic but more importantly is able to take his knowledge and deliver simple concepts.

The life experience and the practical messages allows people to feel comfortable and confident that they can embrace a healthy wonderful meaningful life.

It's a conversation we all must engage in - how can I be better tomorrow than I am today.

Enjoy the journey of the book and learn from a wise authentic human being.

Paul Roos

Founder & Director at Performance by Design

Australian Football Hall of Fame

7 Times All Australian, Twice All Australian Captain 1991-2

All Australian Coach 2005

Leigh Matthews Trophy 1986

AFL Premiership Coach 2005

Foreword

In this life we all have challenges to overcome. Sometimes we make good decisions and other times we don't, but it is always up to us to keep things moving forward in a helpful direction.

The FIFO workforce, many could argue, is a big part of the backbone of the country. Natural Resources create a significant portion of Australia's wealth. For many years, good people have traveled away from home to work in remote regions, often in challenging situations, to serve the needs of our mining corporations, oil and gas companies and a variety of other smaller industries.

Along the way, many pressures have come to play on individuals and families. Marriage breakdowns, addictions, mental illness, and suicide have become common stories.

Yet many would look at the situation from the outside and see the earning potential, the leave breaks between shifts and the lifestyle flexibilities as tickets to prosperity and freedom.

As an Australian and as a father, these things distress me. I wish to see all people living good lives, finding success and happiness, and enjoying the fruits of their labors. But many are not.

I first met John Toomey in the late 90's when he sent me an audio program he created about the relationship between modern nutrition, degenerative disease and environmental breakdown. I knew then that John is a man who cares deeply, and who researches his topics well to come up with solutions that all people can embrace.

In recent times, we have reconnected and still John is a wonderful source of wise guidance and clear thinking. It seems his foundational mission is to improve life, for others.

In it for the Long Haul.

So, when John shared that he was writing this book, and that he hoped I would write a foreword, I could not accept fast enough.

In these pages, you will find sound guidance, useable strategies, and thought-provoking perspectives, all written with a deep level of care. I feel that John's wish is for you and your family is that the FIFO lifestyle will bring you stability, success, and fulfillment.

Enjoy

Greg Chappell AO, MBE – Former Australian Cricket Captain

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“Life is what happens when you are busy making other plans.” – **John Lennon**

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“There are a lot of things I wish I would have done, instead of just sitting around and complaining about having a boring life.” – Kurt Cobain

“Should be compulsory reading for everybody in Australia, in the world...and even beyond. And you can quote me on that.”

- Elliot Goblet Comedian and Funny MC.

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“Where you are now is where you once decided you wanted to be. There is no sense in second guessing the wisdom behind the decision. It made sense at the time.”

Harry Palmer

Taking Care of Home Base

Whilst you are away at work, there is a world that continues at home. You may have a partner at home, perhaps with kids. It is crucial for your peace of mind and productivity at work that your home base is well set up and functions smoothly.

I am aware that often this is not the case. It is heartbreaking to hear about workers who pick up their phone at lunchtime to read a text that says, "You need to come home immediately" while onsite and busy working.

Such a situation creates high levels of distress and can be a powerful distraction that could lead to accidents and injury.

People working on mining and construction projects are operating in potentially dangerous environments. So many things can go wrong, so workers need to have a clear mind and focus on the job.

Battling stresses at home can consume one's attention and dull their awareness. It can take away one's ability to sleep restfully.

Is your situation at home fully set up to support you whilst you are away? And are you doing what is needed to help keep things stable at home?

Creating Agreements

Agreements are powerful if made with commitment and sincerity. They provide a stable foundation upon which things can be built, including relationships.

When you decided to become a FIFO worker, did you sit with your partner and discuss it to ensure they were entirely "on board" when you applied for your role? Or did you submit your application first and tell them later?

It is important to note that it is never too late to create a new agreement.

When creating such an agreement, you are expressing all your thoughts, both of you, about what is needed, what your expectations are, and what you feel you can and cannot do.

It is crucial to bring everything out in the open. What are the collective obligations, like paying bills, caring for children, tasks around the house, caring for ageing parents, community responsibilities and many other things?

When it is all open and transparent, you can set to work with your partner creating agreements about who will do what, how things will get done and what will be your backup plans if things change or fail to turn out as planned.

To make things work, all you need to do is hold up your end of the bargain, keep your agreements, and be honest if ever you have a challenge with doing so.

Everyone is different. I know that I can be forgetful sometimes, so I put things into my phone calendar as a reminder. Part of keeping my agreements involves me making sure that I do not forget. It is not someone else's role to remind me.

Part of your agreements should be around establishing a support structure for the home-based partner when challenges arise that may be overwhelming.

Setting Up a Support Structure

If your partner is at home and has others to care for, like children or ageing parents, sometimes they may need support, and you will not be there to help them out.

So, what will you/they do?

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Who can you or they call upon to be there for support when needed?

This situation requires an explicit agreement. It can be serious. For example. What happens if your partner, while caring for kids, receives a call to say that an ailing parent has been rushed to the hospital? They cannot just leave the kids to be with their or your parent.

A backup support plan is needed. Who can you create a support agreement with who is prepared to drop everything and be there so that your partner can move quickly?

If your children are young, you may well need more than one person there as your backup support. Therefore, it is crucial to predict all possible scenarios to ensure you can make a call and put a plan into action when needed.

When you fail to put support structures in place, you will likely receive a message at work that will leave you feeling powerless and stressed.

Who are the people in your life you completely trust and know on whom you can depend? It may be a sibling, a neighbour, a close friend or even a parent. The people you choose mustn't let you down.

It is also helpful to understand that this sort of thing is coded into our DNA. We are community-based beings, and we gain enrichment when we get a chance to help others out. It is part of our innate desire to serve our community.

It would undoubtedly be helpful to you to make sure you keep the ledger well balanced and help others whenever you can. You may recall a familiar adage, "The more we give, the more we tend to receive." But it is crucial to realise that giving with the expectation of receiving is not giving; It is manipulating.

Keeping Your Relationship Strong and Vibrant

If your relationship is not strong, you will create anxiety, stress, and sleepless nights for yourself. Further, whilst you are at work, worry will

take your mind off the job and put you, the job, and your colleagues at risk.

Some of you do dangerous work, or you are the partner of someone doing dangerous work. It is so important that those who are doing hazardous work are not experiencing anxiety around their relationships.

This is so important.

Every doubt, mistrust or miscommunication can become mental cancer that can destroy a life. Therefore, you must conduct yourself with honour in your relationship and care for your partner's feelings.

And remember, you are both human beings. Therefore, it is essential to "cut each other some slack" and allow for off days, negative moods that may arise from fatigue, loneliness, discouragement, or external challenges.

Sometimes, choosing to be offended by what your partner says or does, is as significant as the offensive statement or action. An old parenting mentor of mine once told me, "Do not try to engage your kids' cooperation when they are either tired, sick, hungry or stressed. They are operating in reptile brain mode."

When you or your partner are tired, sick, hungry, or stressed, you will be in reptile brain mode. It is vitally important to be aware of that because sometimes, your partner will say things to you that are reactive and not meant to hurt. If you see that for what it is, you will be ok. You can be a bit like a batsman who ducks under the bouncer and allows it to go through to the keeper.

Choosing to be offended can be a doorway to anguish, anger, and a whole raft of negative emotions.

It Takes Effort

What can you do each day to uplift your partner? How can you encourage your partner daily?

Have you got your partner's back?

In my life, I have been passionate about supporting my partner and friends to go for their hopes and dreams. Every person on the planet has the right to explore their inspiration and go for a big goal.

As a partner, I choose to support that, help out where I can, give them a push if they need it, always be encouraging and support them through their disappointments. And all the while, ready to celebrate their wins with them.

If you intend to continually help your partner become the "very best person" they can be, you will have a good life. And this does not mean you have the right to admonish them or make them wrong when they make a mistake or go off the rails a little. Nobody enjoys being made wrong.

But you can seek to understand and support your partner to get back on track with strength and love. Remember, your partner is a human being.

Put Yourself in Your Partner's Shoes

You have your life, and your partner has theirs. You are entirely familiar with your daily existence. You may think you know your partner's everyday existence, but all you know is what you see. You have never experienced it.

My suggestion to you is to take more interest. Talk about it. Share feelings and listen with interest and curiosity, and seek to understand. If you think you know, you will breach trust.

We can all take a lesson from Darryl Kerrigan in "The Castle". He and his wife had this extraordinary admiration, respect, and reverence for each other. No wonder his quotes have become folklore.

When your partner makes a mistake, or even when they do the wrong thing, remember that you too have made mistakes in your life. There

have been times when you did wrong. It is ok. Human beings are not perfect creatures, but we can all learn.

Having compassion for your partner will place you in a position where you can be more connected, understanding, and helpful. As a result, you will build trust.

I have an old friend. He never did enjoy school. He is a brilliant artist who could not quite get his head around all the other subjects at school and was often bored. Sometimes, his boredom saw him wander off and do things that got him into trouble. For example, playing with fire one day, he burned down a large shed. Picking him up for the Police Station, his Mum put her arm around him and said what she always said at times like this. "Don't worry, mate. It's just a bad day!"

He told me that those words got him through his teenage years and into adulthood, where he became a brilliantly successful and internationally recognised artist.

Trust is Essential.

I was having a conversation with a woman not too long ago. I had met her recently and was inquiring about her life. I am always most interested in people, and I love to learn about their lives.

She began to tell me about the failure of her marriage and how her ex-husband had cheated on her. She said she was not able to forgive him for such a shocking breach of trust.

I find this to be a typical scenario, so I asked her a question. "What were your marriage vows?" She looked at me and said, "I do not know. That was a long time ago. So why do you ask?"

I shared that I find it fascinating that our marriage vows are probably the first time in our lives where we declare to the world how we are going to be, what we are going to do and how we are going to conduct ourselves. It is a moment when we make a solemn pledge. So, I shared I am amazed that most people have no recollection of their marriage vows.

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I then went on and shared that one common vow is to love and honour our partner. If ever we have engaged in criticism, abuse, disrespect, ridicule, or any related action, then we have broken our solemn oath.

As I contemplated this topic in my own life, I knew I had breached my vows many times. Of course, it takes a great deal of effort to honour lofty vows. But a breach is a breach and needs to be amended.

So, I asked this lady if she had ever breached her marital vows? I said that I understand her hurt connected with her husband's breach but had she ever broken her solemn vow.

She called me a few days later and said, "Thank you for our chat. I got to realise how awful I was to my husband at times. I realise that I had not honoured my marriage vows. So I do not feel angry at him anymore and feel more connected to him. It will be a relief for our kids."

I want to remind you again. You are both human beings. You will make mistakes, and you will do dumb things. Seek to be understanding. However, "I am only human" can never be your excuse. You must own your own mistakes. However, taking the attitude to your partner that they are human and prone to errors gives them the space they need to own their mistakes.

Remember, when you make someone wrong, they become defensive and shut down. Therefore, communication is not possible from that place.

In the next chapter, I talk about "Striking when the iron is cold", a powerful skill that gets everyone out of the heat of the moment. It is not possible to have a rational discussion when you are either angry or reactive. Such a situation is a pathway to conflict and regret. Do not go there.

Sharing your intimacy

I understand that this is an area that can be sensitive. But I feel that it is crucial.

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Back in the '90s, I read "Kosher Sex" by Shmuley Boteach, a New York Rabbi. He talked about the importance of keeping all your sexual behaviour for your partner.

Note: Some might think it odd that I read this book as I was raised a Catholic. However, after I finally extracted myself from my catholic upbringing, I read more from other belief systems.

Rabbi Boteach went as far as to say that you should not ever masturbate when away from your partner but resist the desires and wait for when you are together. He shared that it creates a much closer bond and a more profound connection during lovemaking.

He is not coming from a moral platform. Instead, he offers his readers tools for building a stronger, richer, and more enduring relationship.

I am aware that Rabbi Boteach wrote this book well before mobile phones and the powerful internet-based media resources we have access to, including Skype, Zoom and FaceTime. I am also aware he was probably talking to an audience who might be separate from their partners for short periods on a semi-regular basis, like those travelling for business. Perhaps he did not consider the plight of FIFO workers who are continually away from their partners for more than two weeks at a time.

I raise this because I believe there is a trap into which many have fallen.

Porn!

Boredom, loneliness, and animal level urges can culminate as intense levels of desire that interfere with sleep and create an unwanted distraction. Many people turn to masturbation when they are away from their partners. It is normal.

However, if you are using pornography as inspiration for your solo session, then you may be creating somewhat of a wall between you and your partner, mainly if your partner is not aware of what you are doing.

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When you engage in porn without your partner knowing, you break trust and create something you are forced to hide. These two things, breaching trust and hiding things, can break down your capacity to connect honestly and openly with your partner.

I want to make it clear that I am not making a value judgement here. I am not a fan of porn, mostly because I have read about the porn industry and know that many actors are desperate people who are sacrificing everything just to get money. However, I have also learned that an alarmingly high percentage of people working in the porn industry were once victims of child sexual abuse.

My invitation to you is to be completely open with your partner. Share your intimacy with them. You have Skype, FaceTime and many other avenues for live, face to face connection. This keeps you together and prevents actions that may cause separation.

You Are Part of Something Bigger

My parents were married for nearly 50 years before my Dad died. Of course, they had their challenges and their tough times, but their loyalty to each other was strong.

There were times when my Dad's drinking, and his efforts to give up smoking, made him intolerable. He could be angry and aggressive. However, two things kept them together.

First, my mother was a patient, kind and forgiving woman. She always had space in her heart to forgive.

The second was their shared desire to contribute to their greater community, to make things better in the world for those less fortunate.

Whilst we ran pubs, they tirelessly raised money for a Boy's Orphanage, cared for the elderly in the community, and always put on a Christmas Lunch for the older people in our neighbourhood who had nowhere to go on Christmas Day. I remember those lunches with much warmth as our family served the meals and ensured everyone had a wonderful day.

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Outside of that, they were always involved in local sporting clubs as coaches, administrators, and helpers. So when we moved into the Windsor Hotel in Miles in Queensland in the mid-'60s, my Dad realised there was an excellent social opportunity when he discovered the old, abandoned horse racing track. Within a year, Miles had a thriving racing club that brought the entire community together.

These actions they engaged in raised their self-esteem and kept them together and aligned. They were working together on something much bigger than each of them as individuals and as a couple.

When you are both inspired by something much more expansive and out in front of you, then you tend to live your life side-by-side. However, when your primary focus is your relationship, you spend too much time toe-to-toe.

My question for you is: "What is something that you and your partner can be involved in that will bring value to others?"

What can you do together that will leave you feeling good about your life? It may be something that improves your local community. But, on the other hand, it may be something that relieves the suffering of people less fortunate.

I always remember my Grandpa. He was a profoundly wonderful man. Whilst he was never religious, his wife, my Grandma, was an active member of her church community and took care of the flower arrangements on the alters and around the church. The flowers were always fabulous.

My Grandpa grew the flowers. He was retired but worked tirelessly in the garden to produce extraordinary flower crops so that my Grandma could do her thing.

And as an aside, when my Grandpa rose at 5:00 am every morning to water his gardens, he first made two cups of tea and sat on the bed to

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enjoy time with his wife before starting his day. Those little things are so important.

Gratitude for Your Partnership

There are so many lonely people in the world right now. Some of you who are reading this book are single and perhaps experiencing a degree of loneliness.

If you are in a relationship, have you stopped for a moment to feel gratitude for what you have.

Many of us get caught up in thinking about what is wrong with our relationship, how it could be better or why our partner is not who we want them to be. We can get caught up in our righteousness about some petty squabble and allow ourselves to forget that this is the person with whom we fell deeply in love.

Taking time out to allow yourself to experience gratitude helps to alleviate these feelings. Taking time to write, every day if you need to, all the things about your partner you are grateful for is healing.

Suppose you practice gratitude for your partner and your relationship. In that case, when you connect to talk, you will meet through the eyes of appreciation instead of the displeasure of resentment.

If you have a relationship and it is in reasonable shape, you are one of the lucky ones. It would be wise for you to appreciate that.

Creating Workable Routines

You are not just trying to survive this. This is your life. Let us work to make it great. What did John Lennon Say?

Many people do get lost in thinking about the future or the past. For example, they often take on a job and decide they do not like it, but they will endure it for a few years because of the money or convenience.

That is a wrong attitude. This is your life, right here, right now. How are you going to make it work for you so that it is fulfilling and enjoyable? I am talking to you, the worker, and you, the person at home waiting for your partner.

Routines and Clear Agreements

Creating clear and workable agreements, about who does what and when, makes a home run smoothly. When no agreements are in place, things fall apart, and normally one person starts to feel like a law enforcement officer as they seek to get others to contribute.

Tension, conflict, and resentment follow.

Putting the Kids to Work

When my kids were little, we gave them chores to do around the house. There were a variety of jobs that included:

- Feeding the dogs
- Bringing wood in for the fire
- Tidying the lounge
- Taking out the garbage
- Taking out the compost
- Tidying their rooms.

We did not have a system where they were paid for their jobs or fine them for not doing their job. So we talked with them about providing valuable service in the home, doing their bit to keep everything moving.

Over the following weeks, we found ourselves constantly having to remind them and regularly striking incredible resistance as they tried their best to avoid their tasks because they had “better” things to do.

As a kid, I remember being too scared of my Dad to avoid a chore. So, I got into them quickly to get them out of the way. But I was not going to use fear with my kids.

We then tried something that worked. We talked with the kids again about the jobs they were going to be doing. We then asked them to write up their agreement to do those tasks and to sign it. We then placed it on the fridge.

If a task was not completed, we asked, “Are you going to fulfil your agreement?” And they did.

It was such an excellent system because all we had to do was remind them of the agreements they had made.

Managing Tasks at Home

If you are in a relationship and want things to work smoothly at home, then it can be an excellent idea to decide who will take responsibility for what and when.

There are tasks to be done inside the house and jobs to be completed outside the home. Some are regular because they have a due date, like putting out bins and paying bills, and others can vary due to other influences like lawn mowing and garden weeding or gutter cleaning.

How smoothly could your home run if everyone had their duties, an easy-to-read timetable, and a commitment to doing their bit? Then, while you are not there, your partner would feel supported.

If you have kids, they will be building self-esteem because they are doing their bit, keeping agreements and doing something of value for others.

When you return from your shift, it also means that you know what you need to do around the house. It helps you to slip back into the routine of life in the home.

For example, you might have a list of tasks that are regularly yours when at home. They might be things like:

- Cook the dinner each night.
- Mow the lawns.
- Check the gutters and clean if necessary.

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- Bottle the Kombucha and prepare the next batch.

Every 2 months, you might have tasks like:

- Clean the Windows on the outside.
- Trim the path edges.
- Clean the Oven.

It does not matter what the tasks are. What matters is the family coming together to share the load, create agreements and then committing to keeping those agreements. When you do this sort of thing, you are teaching your kids excellent values and self-discipline.

You may even decide to put it all into an Excel spreadsheet and have everyone enter their tasks into their reminders on their mobile phone.

Relationship Routines

Putting things into place that you and others can look forward to is helpful and uplifting.

For example, you remember your partner is the person you love. You fell in love with this person. It can be most enriching to have a designated “date night”. Perhaps you can take it in turns to take responsibility for what Date Night looks like - but knowing that it is an immovable date in the calendar creates a positive connection and a closeness.

The same can go with your kids. For example, you may have a child who is mad about football, fishing, or skateboarding. So you can organise a “date event” with each of them too.

My son loved Skate Boarding. We regularly visited different Skate Parks*. My job was to get him there and to stay for as long as he wanted to stay. I would take a book and read, or sometimes watch. It was an enjoyable thing for both of us.

Perhaps it is a regular seat at the football when you are home or sharing time working on a different hobby. These are the things your kids look

forward to and will make your return home less routine for them and more of something to anticipate.

*** A Note about Skate Parks.** Have you ever been to one? They are amazing. I have never seen anything work as they do. The kids are respectful, and everyone gets their turn. Nobody gets to dominate, no matter how skilled you are. Big kids take care of little kids. It is beautiful. Workplaces across the world could learn a lot from Skate Parks.

Coming Home is Not Your Holiday

There is an interesting thing that happens to some folks who travel for work. There can be a sense that whilst you have been away, doing it tough on your own, bringing in the money, that you are entitled to have a few days break.

On the one hand, I understand that. But on the other hand, it is profoundly selfish and destructive.

While you were away working, even if your partner does not have formal employment, they have kept the home-front running. They have kept things in order so you may keep your attention on your work.

When you come home, sure you will be entitled to some recreation, but you also must do your bit. If you have young children, for example, your partner might need a break.

This is your life. It is what you signed up to. It is not two weeks on and then one week holiday. It is two weeks away, one week at home.

You do not “deserve” anything just because you have been away.

And if you are the home-based partner, you do not “deserve” anything simply because you have been holding things together whilst your partner is away.

As soon as you believe you “deserve”, then you are no longer a team. Being an effective team takes work, sacrifice, respect, and continuous commitment to something bigger than you.

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Suspicion, Mistrust and Broken Agreements

Do not create things you feel you need to keep secret from your partner. Secrets create separation. You may be able to hide it, but you will not be able to hide its presence. Your partner will feel that something is amiss.

Being honest, straightforward, and transparent is the key to creating relationships that are trusting and free of suspicion.

If you break an agreement or drop your end of an agreement, own up immediately. Take responsibility. Do not justify or blame. Just own it and repair the damage.

These actions build trust and remove suspicion.

A Note for The Single Worker

You, too, can have agreements with yourself about what you will do when you get home. A plan creates productivity and valuable use of time and resources.

When you have no plans, you are likely to waste a lot of time and succumb to boredom.

What can you contribute to your community? Are there sports clubs that need a hand? Can you take on a productive hobby? What can you contribute?

Chapter Summary

If you have a partner and family at home, you must have things sorted there for your peace of mind at work.

You never want to receive stressed and urgent “You need to come home now!” texts while working remotely.

Unrest at home creates distress at work and puts you at risk of mistakes.

Have you got suitable support structures in place?

Agreements are the bedrock of a stable life.

If you do not have clear agreements with your partner and your children, it is not too late to create them.

What is needed? What do you need? What does your partner need?
What do your kids need?

Bring everything into the open, including obligations and responsibilities.
Nothing hidden.

From here, you can create agreements and backup plans.

Keep your agreements. If ever you feel you cannot, then talk about it ahead of time. Communicate.

Do what you need to do to ensure you remember what you have agreed to do and when.

Support structures are crucial for when things happen at home, and you are not there to help.

Take this seriously. Who can you depend upon to care as much as you do, to show up as you would, in the case of an emergency?

Predict what may happen, and then have a clear plan in place when it comes to your kids, a backup for your backup.

Choose people who will not let you down.

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Do not forget to do your bit and help out wherever you can. Keep your ledger well balanced.

Strong relationships prevent worry and poor sleep. Weak relationships can do the opposite.

Worry and anxiety whilst doing dangerous work can be fatal.

Conduct yourself with honour in your relationship and take care of your partner's feelings.

Remember to cut each other some slack. You are human beings.

Taking offence at something is often as bad as being offensive. So, patience and understanding are your keys.

Sometimes your partner is tired or stressed. Allow for that. Pick things up tomorrow.

Make a daily effort to uplift, encourage and be supportive to your partner.

Nobody enjoys being made wrong.

Be prepared to put yourself into your partner's shoes. Have an appreciation for what is happening in their life.

Learn to take more interest and listen to understand. Ask questions. Give your partner the green light to talk. Everyone likes to feel heard. Listening with interest builds trust.

Remember. Everyone has a bad day from time to time.

Trust is essential. You can build trust by keeping your agreements and being reliable.

If you are married, what were your wedding vows? Have you kept them?

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Remembering your partner is a human being and may make mistakes, helps to stop you from being reactive. But when you make a mistake, “I am only human” is not a valid excuse. Make amends.

Strike when the Iron is Cold.

Share your intimacy. Being away from your partner for two weeks can be challenging. Solo sex may not be a great idea. Connect with each other.

Connecting this way is a healthy strategy to prevent you from choosing porn, which can destroy you.

You are a human being, not an animal. It is good to behave like one. Succumbing to low-level desires and turning to porn means you have something to keep secret from your partner.

Take the time to become completely open with your partner.

Part of the glue that keeps a relationship strong is both parties being committed to something bigger than your relationship. Is there a cause that interests you?

Where are you needed in the community?

What is broken in the world that you both would like to see fixed?

What can you work on together to make the world better?

“When you are inspired by something much bigger and out in front of you, then you tend to live your life side-by-side. When your major focus is your relationship, you spend too much time toe-to-toe.”

How can you support your partner’s passion?

If you are in a relationship, are you feeling grateful for it?

What are the things in your relationship that are “right”, “wonderful”, “incredible”?

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Enduring a situation because it has advantages is not suitable for your wellbeing. So how can you find a way to like it?

Creating clear and workable agreements about who does what and when makes a home run smoothly.

If you have kids, give them some responsibility. For example, create task agreements with them.

Creating written agreements with your kids can work well.

Dividing up tasks and creating a schedule helps to ensure that everything gets done with no conflict or blaming.

A schedule helps you to slip back into a routine when you arrive home from your shift. You then know what needs doing.

Relationship routines are so important with your partner and with each of your kids. Perhaps even with your close friends.

Go and check out a skate park. Witness the mutual support, the patience, and the care.

Coming home from your shift is not your holiday. You need to step into life at home and pick up the slack.

As soon as you think you “deserve” something, you are no longer a team player.

Keep your nose clean and be responsible. Do not create reasons why your partner might lose trust in you. Keep your agreements.

If you are single, manage yourself well. Have things to attend to when you return home from your shift.

Life Tips from This Chapter

Creating Agreements is not a flippant thing. Both parties need to have their full attention on what they are doing and make a clear commitment. The first serious agreement we often make is a marriage vow, but many put them aside and forget about them once the party is over.

Bring your marriage vows out regularly and refresh your commitment to them.

If the agreements are challenging, like they can be when one partner is choosing to start a career as a FIFO worker, then it might be helpful to seek the support of someone you both trust, to help create the agreement and then witness it. This could be a good friend, a religious minister or both of your parents.

If you are to bring a person in, you both need to create an agreement with the person that they will hold you to your agreement in the spirit it was made and never to take sides.

There is a wonderful book called “The Four Agreements” by Don Miguel Ruiz. It is a small book and is easy to read. Your kids will enjoy it too.

About The Author

I was born on a Cattle Station about 50km from Roma in Queensland in 1960. In 1963, we moved to a Dairy Farm outside Toowoomba, and then in 1967 to The Windsor Hotel in Miles. In 1970, with 8 kids in tow, my parents sold up, headed for Melbourne, and took over the Morning Star Hotel in Hoddle Street Abbotsford.

Over the next 6 years, I learned many great lessons. First, I had to learn how to be part of what was going on but stay out of trouble. Three years of Christian Brothers education toughened me up. I spent my final three years at Marcellin College, a wonderful school where I realise that I could create a great life if I so desired.

Four years studying Physical Education followed. I became heavily involved in Surf Lifesaving at Jan Juc and played a lot of Football. In 1983 as an Amateur, I represented Victoria and was the lone emergency for the All-Australian Amateur Team.

My footy success was no based on Natural Talent but a love of training. I planned my training and worked hard. The older blokes at Marcellin Old Boys used to call me SOS, which years later I learned stood for Son of Spartacus.

I quit playing at 24 because I wanted to study more and work in High Performance Roles in the then VFL. I enrolled in a Masters Program at Victoria University and in 1986 started as Head of Conditioning for Richmond Football Club.

When I was 21, I helped my best mate develop Australia's first Fitness Leadership Course. It was his idea and his baby, to help train aerobics instructors. A few years later, I developed a course for Gym Instructors. I realised then that I wanted to teach people about Health, Fitness and living an energetic life. I wanted people to Thrive.

Over the years between 1986 and 1999, I worked in several VFL/AFL Clubs and, also, delivered a lot of seminars in companies on Fitness,

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Nutrition, Disease Prevention, Stress Management and Work Life Balance.

After being fired by Richmond along with most of the Football Department at the end of 1999, I decided I had done my bit in Football and chose to move on. I wanted to go full time in Workplace Wellbeing Education.

Over the years, I have continued to study and learn. I have worked with people of diverse talents including Yogis, Qi Gong Masters, Doctors, Naturopaths, Osteopaths, Chinese Physicians, Ayurvedic Physicians, Meditation Teachers, Artists, Musicians, Spiritualists and would be gurus. Since 2005, I have studied Human Consciousness extensively using The Avatar Course Materials developed by Harry Palmer.

All the while I have sought how I can inspire people, educate them and give them the knowledge and the impetus to take action. Supporting another human to become personally responsible for their life is perhaps one of the greatest gifts we can give.

A few years ago, I was finally able to articulate my mission.

To touch the lives of thousands of Families, by providing exceptional and helpful education, guidance, and inspiration to workers, so that they may be safer and more productive at work and more engaged, happy and content at home, and more involved and supportive in their communities, so that they may live great lives, and empower their children to do the same.

I have been married twice, have a wonderful Son who is now a Dad, and two Step daughters who also have their own families.

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Wide Awake Wellness is my company. My Website is there for you to use. Please register for my newsletters so I can support you and your family to keep moving forward.

All my articles are brief and to the point, so I promise not to labour you with intense and lengthy reads.

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