

The Tapestry

My sanity has left me.

Stripped from me slowly but surely, like pulling on a loose thread of clothing, only to have it fall apart when all I was trying to do, was tidy myself up a bit.

I used to love coming here, the shoreline with its gentle rolling waves, warm sand between the toes and the noise of the gulls gently cawing in the distance. Nature's rich tapestry teasing me, reminding me, pulling my very being apart, right down the middle for all to see.

Its family you see, the ones you hold most dear, that often cause you the most heartache. Sometimes it can feel that bad, it's like you have lost them forever, I'm left wondering if there could be anything worse. There probably could be, but it only feels like that because you love them.

My son, despite of all my best intentions has chosen a less than desirable path for the moment, which has left him separated from us. One of the joys of parenthood is knowing your children have their own free will, but still feeling responsible for their choices, and the consequences that oft come with it.

I'm sitting in the sand now, the place we used to fish and kick the footy. Watching the sun sink lower in the sky with my self-esteem attached, a mixture of other feelings decides to take the journey as well. The scenery is less bright now, the sky's colour turning ever so slightly. The breeze adds a cooling touch to the sun's diminishing radiance while lying sprawled out, hoping the world will swallow me whole to give me the briefest of breaks from my own thoughts.

When he calls or I go visit, I don't always know what to say. Sometimes I get angry, other times I say barely anything at all, a voice in my head offers advice:
Don't get angry, stay calm, listen before you respond, validate where you can.

Ironically, the voice is yelling at me, as if it can't be heard. Maybe it's hard to hear because I haven't the energy to listen. I'm tired, this isn't my first rodeo, and I think many parents out there rarely have the pleasure of dealing with these situations just once in their life, or not at all. It's human to suffer fatigue, it doesn't make you more or less than any other parent.

The sea slowly but surely crawls towards me. Closer to where my body makes an indent in the sand, where my toes are digging at the gritty warm substance like tiny little shovels making furrows in its coarseness. It reminds me of how insignificant I feel. If I stayed, the waves would roll over me, and drag me out to the depths, leaving no evidence of my visit.

I think sometimes I should have paid more attention instead of giving so easily the gift of freedom. Maybe that's why he lost his way. Maybe the plethora of other things available in a teenager's life was too much even though we had offered guidance on them all, things like socials, peer chat or unknown friends.

I miss him now. Other thoughts appear quiet, lost in a void of nothingness. Now surrounded by memories, from first school moments to exploits on anything with wheels accompanied with the usual abrasions and tears. Birthdays, Christmas shenanigans, it all feels a bit much as my eyes become moist, and I'm ready to scream at the top of my lungs in this secluded spot.

As I unleash a furious roar, my senses are drawn back to the world, the oceans cold wet touch, tickling my toes, then retreating, as if to give me respite before doing it all over again. Opening my eyes reveals the sunsets beauty, its warmth has dissipated but the sky's softened form is sinking below the horizon, leaving a wonderful glow to the heavens, the colour of fiery embers mixed with cloud.

At this point, I realise that can't give up, I must find a way to rationalise it, come to terms with these situations, find a way forward. A professional I knew once said, "You do the best you can at the time, with the tools you have."

This makes allot of sense now, giving balance to the daily comings and goings of dealing with children in general. However, as a parent I think there is something to be added to this. We need to work constantly at enhancing those tools.

As I stand, edging back from the encroaching waters before they envelop me. I consider how life's current challenges could be viewed differently than they first appeared. A reset point is needed, so we can start again, with better structure, more support, implementing measures we have learnt that work and removing those that don't.

I came to this place lost, but am pleased that at least to some degree, taking the time to absorb my surroundings, and step away from the noise has helped me to find my way back. It's a challenge to let go of the idea that you must be infallible as a parent, partner, or friend. Sometimes you just need to be still, take a few deep breaths, and remember your humanity.

I'm grateful for my visit here today, the breeze begins to usher me home, and as the sunken sun bids me farewell, I leave the shoreline quietly thanking it for its memories and its solace. Reminding me that few things are perfect, and that on the odd occasion, there is beauty in our failings.