

# Don't add... Subtract.

By Fiona Brown

**W**hen I was in my mid-thirties I lost both my parents. I am the second eldest of nine children and we all felt the heart-wrenching loss with no-one at the helm as our front line, leading us through life. It was a tumultuous time that caused me to reflect more deeply on what I wanted to be and do for the remainder of my life.

My job as a nurse continence advisor in rural and remote areas of Australia was a very independent and rewarding role. I was very experienced, exceeded others' expectations and generated great outcomes for my patients.

Sadly, I felt extremely unsupported by my managers. As the toll of work, extensive travel, and raising two young children time increased, I began to feel nauseous each working day and my eyesight began to blur.



My body was sending me a message. Eventually I listened and decided to take all of the leave I had owing to me. I met with my managers to express my feelings and intentions, telling them I may not return and would decide later. I walked out the door feeling relieved.

The following five months were empowering as I began to lighten my load and get the monkeys off my back. I kept getting a crystal-clear message in my mind telling me loudly, "Don't add... subtract". Having a better life wasn't about being more, doing more, or having more. It had to begin with less. With firm intention I began letting go. I let go of guilt about leaving my patients behind.

I tactfully let go of friends who were more takers than givers. I let go of expectations of myself trying to be everything to everyone, and aiming to be the perfect mum putting the most nutritious meals on the table every night. I let go of the habits of daily routine and it felt great. My nausea disappeared and my clear eyesight returned.

I recall waking one morning, unconsciously sighing deeply, and saying to my husband “I like me now....I remember who I am”. ‘I’ was what I had been yearning for. I had allowed the needs of those around me, and the demands of my work to take me out of alignment with myself.

Taking time away from work was the best thing I had done for myself in years. It helped me get into alignment with who I really am. That was the day I decided to write my resignation letter. For the first time since I was fourteen, I became unemployed. It was scary but I had faith it would all work out.

The day of my 40th birthday was sunny despite being the first day of winter.



Walking around our garden I noticed a small patch of sand. I picked up a stick, drew a line in the sand and said to myself, “once I walk over that line I will never be unhappily employed again”. I stepped over that line with trust and certainty and carried on with my day.

With no attempt to seek work I was offered three jobs within two weeks. I took a one of those jobs, working part-time. This enabled me to also begin my own business in wellbeing and personal leadership development.

That was my first significant experience of the power of letting go. It is a practice I come back to often and one I share with many of my clients. It is heart-warming and rewarding to witness the positive changes that result for them too.

So, I ask you...”What are you ready to let go of”?



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