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**SWITCH ON
TO YOUR INNER STRENGTH**

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by

Sandy MacGregor

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DEDICATION

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To Andrew Robert MacGregor, my son born on 9th November 1964, to whom I am constantly grateful. Andrew has been a tower of strength to me, particularly when I needed him and as I look back on my life so far, I realise just how much I have learned from him and how he has actually inspired me towards my present life's purpose.

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Thank you to everyone who has so generously shared their personal experiences of inner strength and allowed me to use them in this book so that others may benefit.

My heartfelt appreciation to all those who have contributed to this book by attending my seminars, joining in the discussions and helping me along my own journey of learning and growth.

FOREWORD

When Sandy was a young cadet at Duntroon, the Military College where he was educated, he learnt one of the most important maxims of leadership theory. It was drummed into his head over and over for the four student years he spent there. The words were, “Never ask a soldier to do something which you would not be prepared to do yourself.”

Sandy lived by this rule when he became a Tunnel Rat in South Vietnam in 1965. On arrival, as the man in charge of the first Australian Engineers sent to that conflict, Sandy found that the standard procedure for the American forces was to just blow up the entrances to tunnels when they were found. Up until then no one had done the unthinkable – that is, nobody had gone down the tunnels after the enemy.

Sandy knew this had to change.

When Australian troops found the entrance to tunnels in War Zone D in October 1965 Sandy saw the chance to send our men down there. But who to send first??

For Sandy the answer was simple and, armed with a 9mm pistol in one hand, a bayonet in the other, and a rope tied around his ankles in case he was killed or wounded, he went in! After this feat of leadership it became common for Sandy's men to go into the tunnels and this yielded a rich reward of documents, weapons and other supplies. Sandy had led from the front and it was reasonable that his men would do things which he had shown by example.

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But that was all a long time ago and far removed from Sandy's life now, in which he teaches people about learning techniques, thinking skills and the deliberate use of their inner strength.

The important thing about what he teaches now is that he still leads from the front! And the example of leadership he has given us in his personal life is far more powerful than that which earned him a Military Cross in Vietnam!

In January 1987 a tragedy of the worst imaginable kind struck Sandy's life suddenly and senselessly. Without any warning, three of his daughters were viciously murdered in the safety of their own home in a hail of shotgun fire. They were the innocent victims of the crazed rampage of a young man with a gun. There was no rhyme nor reason to it, there was no way to prevent the crime and, worst of all, there was no way to say "Goodbye".

Sandy was driven to the edge of emotional collapse by this. But in this crisis he reached down deeply into his soul to find reserves of inner strength that he hardly knew existed prior to the crisis. Sandy connected with his own wells of inner strength, tapped them and overcame the debilitating effects of a great personal trauma.

It usually takes a lifetime to gain enough experience of life's turbulent course before one can claim to have a modicum of wisdom – the old are the wise. What a pity it is that we become wise often only at the end of our lives. It is invariably too late to influence others; the "wisdom" may be there, but the drive and energy to take the message to others is often gone.

I believe that for some people the "getting of wisdom" is telescoped down to a shorter time frame than normally comes through the "wisdom of age". Some people get it when they

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are quite young. This telescopic effect is usually through dire circumstances, requiring a difficult period of introspection. It is not usually through choice. The benefit for the rest of us, when it happens this way, is that the drive and energy to take the message to others is still there. To my mind it all begs the question of whether there is a purpose to suffering.

It would not be possible to find the person who has not suffered something somewhere in their lives. One of the problems with this suffering that we all go through is that it is impossible to put a gauge on suffering. It is impossible to compare one person's pain with another's. What may be a minor incident to one may be a major catastrophe to another.

Sandy MacGregor's tendency to leadership, combined with just a trace of flamboyance in his personality, make it natural for him to want to make the link with all of us; to find the common ground between us. Sandy's idea is to go further than just establish the fact that we share common experiences. His idea is to look into the question, "So what?". His idea is to examine the possibilities that the mental processes we find from somewhere in a crisis, can be extended into our everyday lives.

Can we use these processes, this inner strength, to get rid of the ghosts in our cupboard, the things that hold us back. Can we use this strength to assist with healing? Can we use it to direct healing? Can we use it to think creatively? Find solutions that had previously evaded us? Explore spiritual purpose? Once we open our minds to think about it these are some of the interesting questions that face us. Sandy's first book *Piece of Mind* is about how to relax in 30 seconds and using an eight step process to work and achieve goals faster. *Switch On to Your Inner Strength* is about how to use a deeper state of mind where even more clarity is reached. One

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outcome of this clarity is that you can examine issues in your life which lead to your goals. As the number of true stories in the book show, Sandy has certainly been successful in reaching out and making a link with many many others. We all stand to benefit from this.

Many of the great ideas start out as uncertain fantasies; flights of the imagination; tentative hypotheses. Science often catches up later on with the imagination of the dreamers. In the field under discussion in this book the gap between the dreamers and the scientists is not as great as one might at first think. Scientific interest in the power of our inner strength is growing continuously.

No one has an exclusive right to special knowledge in this field. As the presence of the various personal stories shows, this book is not just about one person's reaction to trauma. It is an inclusive work about how a large number of people are discovering the same things that Sandy has found out. This book can be about you too.

Sandy now writes, conducts seminars and accepts speaking engagements to lead other people to discover their own inner strength. He uses the techniques described in this book in his personal and business life every day and believes that they can be adapted to a wide range of other fields. He has built a vibrant and successful business and still follows one of the principles he learnt at Duntroon: "Never tell anyone to do something which you would not be prepared to do yourself."

David Mason-Jones
Author/Writer
Singleton, New South Wales

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◆ SWITCHING TO INNER STRENGTH ◆

Think of all those in your circle of friends. Have you ever seen a situation where two of them are faced with a similar emotional challenge? One rises to the occasion and copes the other doesn't. One succeeds, one fails. Why is this so?

Think of your work environment. Have you ever seen someone who is progressing well, suddenly stopped by an unexpected obstacle? An obstacle they can and could overcome, but don't. Have you seen someone else in the same career who clambers over obstacles one after the other to make it to the top? Same career, same obstacles, one succeeds and one fails. Why is this so?

Think of the television news. Can you recall seeing a report about a victim who has suffered a great injustice? The news reporter invariably tells us that the victim's life "has been ruined" by the terrible experience. But have you ever browsed in the bookshops and seen the stories of people who have gone through the same injustice, conquered its traumatic effects and lead lives of great moral victory? Story after story tells of the victory of the human mind and spirit in circumstances where they could have been excused for just giving up. The victory is invariably one of the inner strength of those individuals, not their outward circumstances.

What is the difference between people in these

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circumstances? Is it luck? Is it education? Is it who they know or play golf with? Is it their ethnic background, financial resources or social status? No! It is probably none of these things that ever makes the final difference.

The real difference so often lies in that ill defined quality known as their *Inner Strength*. And to make the point a little finer, it is not just the existence of their inner strength that counted, for it is an assumption of this book that everybody has stocks of inner strength, it is their relative ability to access their inner strength that was important in the end.

What an appealing idea it would be if we could all use this inner strength. But why not? Why can't we all use it or, can we? Why is it that the television reporter can be so certain about predictions of ruin, when, left to themselves, people often recover from the worst traumas?

One of the purposes of this book is to open you to the idea that it is possible to use your inner strength in a conscious, self directed and deliberate way.

Viktor Frankl, in his book *Man's Search for Meaning* described the process of inner strength. Many holocaust victims were shot, gassed, and otherwise murdered violently. For these people any will to survive was transcended by the physical violence of their deaths. It is also true that many of those who died in the holocaust, died of sickness, deprivation and exposure. Of the people who were not actually murdered, the ones who had goals, who had a family they knew they had to survive for and those who had a great purpose, tended to be the ones who withstood enormous difficulties and survived.

Those who were not obeying some great purpose, those who were not gripped by the need to achieve an important goal, soon found no meaning in the daily struggle for life, gave up psychologically, and eventually died.

Some years ago, I was quite brutally sexually assaulted at knife point. This, teamed with the ensuing trauma of coping with family concern, and medical and police activity, left me in a dismal state of mental upheaval, which was unremoved with any type of professional counselling.

In order to reclaim myself, manage the distress and return to a considered normality, I plunged into your “power of the mind” technique and thoroughly soaked myself in large, satisfying doses of meditation and healing.

The results are not only remarkable self therapy, but a very new and real acceptance of myself, of other people and the life around me.

From a CALM Participant who does not wish to be named.

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Many people have used their inner strength without consciously knowing what they are doing. They have used it in a way that might be called instinctive or intuitive. Many others have used this strength in a conscious way knowing it to be there when they need it – these people used their inner strength deliberately. Can you imagine the results if you started deliberately using your reserves of inner strength to overcome challenges and create opportunities in your life?

What then is inner strength? And can we pin down the concept to a neat definition, a scientific formula of words that will be true in every situation? Probably not. Instead, the best way to look at inner strength is by giving a series of examples that are the evidence of, the tell-tale signs of, the existence of inner strength. For this reason a number of true stories have been included in this book at the conclusion of each chapter and occasionally in the body of a chapter.

I will also attempt a working definition of inner strength. This is because, as a Civil Engineer graduate of Sydney University, I just cannot resist the urge to start with a definition. It satisfies my engineer's need to work with the known, for everything to be logical and for all parts of the structure to be measurable. I will, however, call it a working definition because I am fully open to the idea that my definition may be improved upon. Indeed by the end of this book you, the reader, may wish to formulate your own definition which may be quite different from mine.

My definition is this: “Inner Strength is that deep quality of our mind and spirit that enables us to create opportunities in life or rise above adversity. I'm saying you don't have to go through it to rise above it – you can just tap it. It is an inherent part of our creation (or existence) as beings and it allows us to rise above adversity if and when it strikes.”

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These wonderful words from Marianne Williamson were used by Nelson Mandela in his 1994 Inauguration Speech.

*Our deepest fear
is not that we are inadequate.*

*Our deepest fear is that we are
powerful beyond measure.*

*It is our light, not our darkness
that most frightens us.*

*We ask ourselves who am I to
be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?*

Actually, who are we NOT to be?

*You are a child of God.
Your playing small doesn't serve the world.*

*There is nothing enlightened
about shrinking so that other
people won't feel insecure
around you.*

*We are born to make manifest
the glory of God that is within us.*

*It is not just within some of us
it is in everyone.*

*And as we let our own light
shine we unconsciously give
other people permission to do the same.*

*As we are liberated from our
own fear our presence
automatically liberates others.*

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Inner strength is an inherent part of our creation (or existence) in the same way that our physical characteristics are an inherent part of our being. People differ markedly from one another in their physical characteristics. So too it may be in the way of inner strength. As people differ in their talents, or in their powers, so they differ in the degree of their inner strength. But though we may all differ, what is certain is that this inner strength is in all of us to a greater or lesser extent. I suspect that once you start a conscious, self directed and deliberate exploration of your inner strength you will be surprised that it is there within you in a greater, not a lesser, extent.

There is another similarity too between how people use their physical powers and how they use their inner strength. Whatever physical characteristics we have at birth, one fact is for certain, these are only our physical potential. Some people take their bodies for granted and rarely exercise. It is no surprise that such people will never achieve high sporting prowess. Other people actually abuse their bodies by excessive smoking, use of drugs, bad eating habits and utter laziness. It is no surprise that such people perform physically at a much lower level in life than their original potential.

On the other had some people develop the original potential of their bodies by a reasonable lifestyle and a program of exercise. It is no surprise that these people achieve a higher level of physical achievement than the other two groups.

So too it may be with the powers of our inner strength. Some will take it for granted, neither developing nor abusing it but just letting it lie dormant. Some will actually abuse that part of their creation and some will do things to develop those powers. Of those who wish to develop their powers of inner

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strength some may wish to simply go on a mild and continuous regime of exercise like an early morning walker. Others may wish to go on a gruelling and difficult training session just like a marathon runner. The fact is however, the choice is yours. I believe it is a good idea, and would really encourage everyone to start on some development program to exercise and use your inner strength. The degree to which you use it, whether as an early morning walker or as a marathon runner, is up to you.

What may be a sad fact of life is that for many of us the powers of our inner strength have lain dormant for many years as we have been busy with the other pressing needs of life. The sad fact is that if we don't use it we will never know what we could have done.

Before I go too much further, I'd like to also comment on another facet of this subject that fascinates me. It might fascinate you too. It is the question of why, in the very last years of the twentieth century, someone would feel the need to sit down and write a book about inner strength. The reason this fascinates me is the fact that human beings have known about the existence of inner strength almost since time began. The knowledge of inner strength is not confined to a particular culture, religion, philosophy or era. It is ancient knowledge to be found in the oldest literature and it is also modern knowledge to be found in contemporary thought.

I have recently come across the book called *Psycho Feedback* by Paul G Thomas, printed in 1979. It's a wonderful book for students in this area and is full of the scientific proof of the power of the subconscious and how we can use it. Here's a little of what he says about a *Founding Father* – Coué.

“Emile Coué was a French pharmacist who in 1870

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became fascinated by the power of the mind and its relationship to health. Around 1880 he opened a free clinic at Nancy and effected many miraculous cures. He was an international celebrity in the 1920s but unfortunately far ahead of his time in USA. We now know that the significance of Emile Coué's work comes across the span of years like a clarion call.

“Coué's greatest insight formalised in his book *Self Mastery Through Conscious Auto-suggestion* was:

When the imagination and will power are in conflict, are antagonistic, it is always the imagination which wins. This law is as immutable as the law of gravity.

“And the corollary:

When the imagination and will power are harmoniously pulling in the same direction, an irresistible force is the result.”

This corollary is so important and it is the subject of my book *Switch On to Your Inner Strength*. Said in a different way, it could be – when the conscious mind and the subconscious mind, with positive self talk, are both working towards the same goal, the result will be achieved faster and easier.

So why the need to write now? Maybe it's because the subject is not recognised widely, maybe it's to help influence parents to demand that our children should be taught how to use all their power. Maybe it's to help us deal with change.

The rate of change, the acceleration, is enormous. I can remember being at Sydney University where the first computer in Australia was housed. It was referred to as “the monster”. It was a valve computer occupying a huge room. In 25 years it has come down to a desk top computer; in the next 10 years to lap top. I guess the only thing that is certain is change – and that can be scary.

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I really think however, the need to write now arises from what has happened in Western culture over the last two hundred years or so. The most significant thing that has happened in Western culture has been the influence of materialism. This has been underpinned by the scientific and industrial age and has led to the rapid progress we have made in the physical circumstances of our lives. Whilst I speak broadly of Western culture, and come from a position within a Western culture, I believe that some of these trends have also been apparent throughout the world over the same period.

All this physical progress has culminated in our own time. It has resulted in paradoxical situations where our physical progress has caused us to lose contact with the physical realities of life. Just think of life in a city apartment block, or in an ordinary house anywhere in Australia. The dwellings are rainproof, windproof, insulated, heated, air conditioned, carpeted, mosquito proof and so on. The trains we take to work are smooth riding, sound proofed, and climatically controlled. When we get there our workplace is invariably enclosed from the sun, wind and rain and is air conditioned. Everything is controlled so we never experience the contrasting sensations of hotness or coldness, darkness or light, wind or sun, or the feeling of rain pelting in our faces.

Let me give you a tremendous example I read of in a recent *Sydney Morning Herald*. The fact is that it is now impossible to properly see the night sky from Sydney. The light given off from the city, the man made light that is, has swamped the incoming lights from the stars. Of the three thousand individual stars that should be visible with the naked eye from anywhere in New South Wales, only about 100 can now be seen from the centre of Sydney. Two things have happened here. Firstly, our progress has cut us off from the

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simple physical pleasure of seeing the stars. Secondly, and worse, we are now severed from the mental and spiritual adventure of staring up on a starlit night and wondering about the meaning of it all. We have lost one of the great physical prompts that made past generations think about eternity, constancy, beginnings, ends, purpose and spiritual meaning.

One of the problems of the twentieth century is therefore that we have lost touch with ourselves, our physical selves as well as our inner selves. The challenge for many of us is to redevelop contact with ourselves and rediscover the use of our inner strength.

This is not to say that Western culture as a whole has utterly lost its way on the subject of inner strength. Many institutions, groups, writers, artists and ordinary people have held instinctively to ancient knowledge about our inner strength. What it is to say, however, is that the consciousness of the powers of our inner strength has been on the backburner in our culture for a long time.

The history of human development has been patchy. Sometimes great advances are made in one area of human endeavour whilst other areas of achievement catch up later. The last 200 years has seen unparalleled advances in every aspect of our physical surroundings. Just think of the advances in public health, transport, electronics, manufacturing, distribution and power generation. The list goes on and on and it's indisputable that these things have dramatically improved our standard of living.

But in this period of physical advancement the use of many of our spiritual powers has languished. The reason for this is that it was quite natural, upon seeing the dramatic advances achieved by the scientific and industrial revolution, that people should think that all their problems could be

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eventually solved by material progress. In other times and in other cultures the opposite has happened. People have achieved great spiritual, philosophical and artistic advances whilst living in conditions of utter poverty when compared to the standards of living we enjoy today. Just think of the spiritual achievements of the English Mystics in medieval times, or the Aboriginal people of Australia, or the American Indians, or the great works of people like Shakespeare, Johann Sebastian Bach, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Michaelangelo and Beethoven. Their material standards of living can only be described as abysmal when compared to the standards we enjoy today. And yet they used their inner strength to achieve great advances for mankind.

But certainly, when we look at the patchy nature of human progress, we have been in a materialistic phase over the last several hundred years. We have believed that the answer to our problems lies in material solutions.

This belief is either breaking down or reaching a point where people no longer believe that purely material solutions are the answer to all their problems. An example of the breakdown of the idea that everything can be solved by physical solutions came with the work of Maxwell Malz, the author of *Psycho-Cybernetics*. He was a plastic surgeon who noticed that his repairs to people did not have any effect on the people themselves. In the case where people suffered lack of self confidence because of physical disfigurement, he found that his operations to change the disfigurement gave the people no improved hope. They still lacked confidence, they were still damaged on the inside. Maxwell Malz found that he had to accompany his surgical work with a process of mental work as well, creating “imagined memories”, building in them the thoughts of a possible new life. Malz also describes cases

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in *Psycho-Cybernetics* where the patient has formed a negative image of something which is actually healthy, for example a nose. One patient came to him complaining that her nose was grossly oversized, so much so that she felt she was disfigured. It so happened that she also suffered a personality disorder.

Dr Malz managed to prove to her that her nose was normal and gave her a program of mental exercises to do so that she would come to believe this. She did the exercises for 21 days and slowly her mind changed until she perceived her nose as normal. As her bad image of her nose disappeared so too did her personality disorder. In my work I use the words, “the sub conscious mind does not know the difference between imagination and reality”. It is a similar concept to Malz's idea of imagined memories.

We are on the verge, or we have recently just begun, an era of new awareness of the potential of our inner strength. I don't believe that we should seek to overthrow the exciting advances that materialism has brought us. Who would want to do that? But I do believe that we will start to use our mental powers and the strength that comes from within in a much more deliberate way in our daily lives.

How then can we use it? How can we use our inner strength deliberately? What benefits can come to us if we can discover techniques to tap into this rich resource? The rest of this book will help you find the answers to these questions. I will give you a theoretical basis for your study and, more importantly, some really practical advice on how to get there. Remember, the aim is, Deliberate use, Deliberate use, Deliberate use.

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A note from Sandy:

Michael is an inspirational example as to how he regularly uses his inner strength. He is the Youth Ambassador for the Hills Shire District, a trainer of ten Australian ski racing champions and founder of Seminar House Strategic Personal Training.

Michael is also the Junior Australian Coach for Ski Racing.

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I awoke at 8am on 13th March 1993. It was a beautiful day as a few loner clouds sailed through the ocean blue sky, like giant icebergs. I was full steam ahead in the direction of my chosen destiny. I had established an honour's grade in the short time I had been attending college. I was winning a local ski race series in both my age group and the Open Men's Division, which was in line with my goal of becoming World Champion. I had a fantastic trainer, a beautiful girlfriend and a family that facilitated unconditional love like nothing you had ever seen. Life was a grand piano and I the great pianist.

At 8pm sundown that evening my life had taken on a slightly different direction. To begin with it was not my bedroom that was to be my point of refuge but rather a large white building, commonly known as a hospital. I was taking an arsenal of nine tablets and capsules every four hours in a poor attempt to deal with the torturous pain alone. It was not the most serene state that I had encountered _ not a time to begin reflection, but I was vaguely aware of a few facts. Firstly, continuing college was no longer a viable option for me. Secondly, my opportunity to chase after a world title had been robbed and lastly, my right arm which was so essential for me to not only achieve my goals but also continue my hobbies, was no longer functioning. I could no longer move nor feel it and that was something I had better get used to. Shortly after, the tests proved it would probably remain paralysed and painful for the rest of my life. High speed ski racing accidents can be very unforgiving _ very costly!

It was two years before this incident that I began a pilgrimage of personal development and it was here I had been introduced to Sandy MacGregor's work. The Peaceful Place concept which I believe is the genesis of Sandy's work, has been incredibly powerful for me. I have utilised it countless times to have pain literally vanish in seconds and it is here where I often turn to before making important decisions. Albert Einstein once said "Imagination is more important than knowledge", but too few of us ever utilise our power within us, based on this simple truth. Sandy MacGregor is an exception to this rule and I would say Einstein's statement is the essence not only of his profound work that he delights in sharing with us, but also the basis of his phenomenal success in life.

Michael Dayes, New South Wales

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◆ PATHWAY TO THE PRESENT ◆

It often takes a crisis before we discover our inner strength. What a pity that this quality so often lies dormant for years and is only activated when our backs are well and truly to the wall. This has certainly been true in my case. It is sad to reflect about the waste of human potential represented by these long periods of dormancy in all our lives.

So that you will understand how I have come to this position I would like to take some time to share some things about my life, my own journey, with you. None of the things I will tell you is for the purpose of blowing my own trumpet, or engaging in self pity, or in seeking sympathy. The purpose is so that, as you continue reading this book, you will know exactly where I am coming from. Later in this book I may say some things, about forgiveness for example, which you might find extremely challenging. By understanding my journey you will be able to see that I am not just repeating things that I have read in text books. I have really experienced the power of my inner strength and I have seen others also experience the same power in their lives.

To understand my background, I'm a military guy, a retired Colonel. I went through Duntroon, the Royal Military College in Canberra and graduated from there in 1960. When I was still a young officer the army sent me to Sydney

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University where I completed a Civil Engineering degree. This was necessary because, on graduation from Duntroon, I was allocated to the Army Engineers. Then I worked for a few years as an engineer, building roads and bridges and other field constructions and Oh! Here there was a minor difference from the work my civilian colleagues were doing, in the army we also learnt how to blow up our constructions once we had built them! Believe me you cannot get a more analytical, logical, prove-it-to-me, black/white person than a combination of being a military guy and being an engineer. It is, I think, simply impossible. I fitted the mould exactly and valued the concepts of logical thought, meticulous planning and careful analysis above the ideas of intuition, emotion and dreaming. All this was before the Vietnam War.

Then, in 1965 I went to South Vietnam with the Australian forces at the Bien Hoa airbase. I commanded 3 Field Troop – the first engineers to support the infantry.

We'd heard about the Viet Cong tunnels all over Vietnam but up to that point none of us had actually seen one. One day in October, 1965, in an operation in War Zone D the infantry soldiers found some tunnels and called me forward. I remember standing there near the entrance and thinking, "There's the tunnel, boys ... what do we do now?"

Up until that time tunnels hadn't been searched out. When a tunnel entrance was found the procedure had been to pump smoke and tear gas through the tunnel to expose more entrances, and then seal up the entrance by blowing it up. What we did was to actually go down the tunnels and crawl around in the silent blackness of the still dank air. Some of the tunnels were so small that you could not turn around in them. You had to keep on going until they opened out and then when there was another room off to one side, then you could

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turn around. But then again some other tunnels were just a little bit higher so that you could squat up in them and turn around. It was extremely frightening work but as soon as we went down the tunnels we found intelligence (that is, paperwork), and that was particularly so in that very first area of tunnels that we had found, the tunnels of the Ho Bo Woods. We had landed right on top of a major Viet Cong headquarters and we took out ammunition, equipment, tons and tons of explosives, and over a hundred thousand sheets of paper. One of the things we obtained was the current assassination list that the Viet Cong had compiled on their political and military enemies in Saigon.

For the role I played in the tunnels I was awarded the Military Cross, one of the highest orders for bravery. I also received the American Bronze Star from the United States Government as recognition of my work.

When I returned to Australia I progressed in my military career, for a time continuing in the regular army, and then, for a time, in the army reserve. Upon leaving the regular army my civilian career progressed well and I joined the ranks of the ambitious corporate executive. My moment of personal crisis had certainly not yet arrived. Up until this point my experience of life had generally been a favourable one where I had succeeded at just about everything I had put my hand to. Sure there had been problems along the way, including a most stressful few years in my married life, but I thought I could handle everything that came up. Through the work that I did as the National Production Manager for a bedding and furniture company my mind was constantly confirmed in the analytical, logical processes I had picked up in my army days and in my education as an engineer. All in all things were looking up.

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During the 1980s something happened which caused me to realise that the scientific advances, particularly in medicine for example, were not necessarily providing all the answers we wanted.

During this time I faced a family problem involving my son, Andrew. It was this experience that was to start me on an inward journey of discovery about the use of the mind, relaxation states, faster learning and power of the inner strength that is in all of us. This was not to be my crisis but I later realised that the experience was like a guidepost which pointed me in the right direction when my crisis came.

Andrew had suffered the effects of asthma for fifteen of his seventeen years. It had always been a problem and it just seemed that the conventional way of treating it didn't really work. Andrew's attacks became worse and worse until his bouts with asthma required hospitalisation and treatment with a cortisone drip in his arm. The worst thing was that there seemed to be no medical prognosis for Andrew's recovery. In army terms, all we were doing with Andrew was fighting a delaying battle with no real plan of winning. There had to be a better way, a way in which we could win the battle against asthma.

I took Andrew to a doctor and the doctor taught him how to relax and release stress quickly _ during the actual asthma attack. It really helped Andrew. One of the problems of asthma is that, once a bout commences, it is not unusual for the victim to become frightened and panic a little. This panic causes more difficulty in breathing, the difficulty in breathing causes more panic, and so a dangerous spiral pattern of cause and effect sets in. Relaxation can break this pattern and Andrew was mastering it, taking control of it. Andrew's deliberate use of his mental persuasion over his body was

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more powerful than the latest drugs. What an interesting insight that was!

Then Andrew, who rode a motorbike, had an argument with a bus one day and lost. His leg was badly broken below the knee – a ghastly mess with bone shattered and sticking out. For a time there was every chance that Andrew might lose his leg. He was advised that cortisone, which he needed to control the infection (nothing else would work) inhibited the growth of bone marrow, so the best solution was to amputate the leg.

I called back the same doctor who had previously helped Andrew control asthma. The doctor said he could help Andrew control his infection and that Andrew could also help to control his own pain and assist his healing. Andrew undertook the mental discipline of directing his own healing and so the next thing I saw was Andrew recovering with his leg and getting better with asthma, both at the same time. A miracle – completely foreign to me!

There was something going on in Andrew's subconscious mind that I couldn't understand. I said “Hey Andrew, it's so powerful, teach me”. And so he did. It took me a year and in that year I proved to myself that there was such a thing as a powerful subconscious mind. During six months of that year I released 22 kilograms of weight using only my mental powers to do so. I was able to bring down my blood pressure by 20 points just standing right in front of the doctor and could also reduce the strength of my pulse at will. I was excited. Proof! I devoured every book I could possibly find on the subject. *The Power of the Subconscious Mind* by Dr Joseph Murphy was the first one and then that referred me to many more. I was off on a new journey.

So in this process of development there was a little chink

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starting to open up in my belief system. I could see that some of the conventional ways of medical treatment were lacking and I became open to the idea that the power of the mind might be far greater than I had previously given it credit.

After a while the chink became bigger and bigger because the most important thing for a “prove-it-to-me-person” had been provided to me – proof! The case of my weight release was proof because I purposely took no other measures such as dieting or exercise to shed the unwanted kilograms. I knew that I would never ever be bored again in my life because there was just so much to do, so many things to learn about and that learning could be so much easier.

Then, on 23rd January 1987, the real stuff of personal crisis came for me. I had the most traumatic experience when three of my daughters and one of their friends were shotgun murdered in the safety of their own home. Jenny and Kirsty were twins and 19 years old, Lexie was turning 16 the very next morning and their friend was just 19 too. They were far too young to die, they were just innocent kids, blameless victims of a crazed attack.

That was a real shock to me and shock is the first thing that I can really recall. When I was told about it and how it happened and all the other details I was just dazed, really dazed. I didn't accept it, didn't buy it, didn't believe it and couldn't possibly reconcile how such an act of extreme random madness could happen to the members of my family. Again, going back to the idea of my basic mind-set which I have described to you, it violated that logical process I believed in which said that a logical cause would have a logical effect. I couldn't come to terms with the idea of chaos, the idea that my girls were the victims of an utterly chaotic random chance.

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At first I hadn't started the anger process, or that process where I desired revenge. Revenge, hatred, bitterness, these were emotions that were yet to come. For me it was just disbelief, total disbelief – and then shock. Vietnam hadn't prepared me for this.

It was when I was in this dazed condition that the wife of an old friend from my Duntroon days reached out to help me. And luckily I had the good sense to reach back and take the hand she offered. Michael Burge, before his untimely death a while before this, had first extolled the virtues of the Insight Seminars to me and introduced me to Insight I. He too was a retired Colonel, in charge of Insight Australia, which basically runs self development programs and his wife Kathryn taught these programs. Kathryn offered the hand of help and advised me that as I had already attended Insight I, I should now do Insight II.

Kathryn was a wonderful friend in this time of grief. When Kathryn said, "Look Sandy, just do it, just trust me and do it." It wasn't hard to trust and I really got a lot out of it. As a digression from the story for a moment, I just want to add here that when or if you ever face a crisis, you can be sure that there will be friends to help you. The help might come from a friend from a long time ago, or a recent friend, or, I believe, it might even come from a stranger. You might even be surprised by the area from which the help is offered. The important thing is this – grab hold of that help and work with it as hard as you can. Don't worry too much about thanks at the start, this can come later. Use the help. The true compliment of thanks can be shown to your friend by your willingness to work with his/her help. In the final analysis, (there's that word again) the fact of you ever actually saying "Thank you" may not even be necessary at all. Your helper

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might actually be performing a duty of thanks that he/she has to someone else, or fulfilling a spiritual purpose. Your chance to show gratitude will come when you recover from your crisis and have the opportunity to pass on the help. Help can be like one of those chain reactions, starting at one point but quickly spreading, by a series of links and connections, far and wide.

But back to the story. There is no doubt that the Insight Number 2 course did help me; one of the things it brought me to was a group of people that I could relate to. I was encouraged to release grief by talking about the event, by talking about the girls, by doing as much of the natural grief process as is possible. I did not get the chance to bottle up my emotions and for this I'm forever grateful. I've now learned that by pushing down emotions, not expressing them, having the “stiff upper lip”, not talking about events, goes a long way to causing post traumatic stress.

I had another helper too and that was my son Andrew talking to me. In the midst of his own grief about his sisters he was able to spare some emotional strength to reach out and help me. Andrew's help was a wonderful example of a man with access to his inner strength. How else, at a time of such personal trauma, could he take his mind from himself and help someone else? I learnt that it is not only on the battle fields of war or in the tunnels of Vietnam that heroism is shown. It is actually all around us.

Andrew helped me to go into my own mind and seek, find out and answer questions. And gradually I got to the stage of working with the passion for revenge, the anger that raged inside me and the hatred that I felt toward the person who had killed my daughters. And in the process of going into my mind I dealt with all the bitter questions of “Why me?” and

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“What have I done to deserve this?”. If you ask the wrong question, what do you get? That's right _ the wrong answer. For me the question brought up guilt. Feeling guilty does not serve a purpose. The sort of questions brought up for me were “Could I have been a better father?” “Could I have somehow prevented this? Somehow? Somehow? Somehow?” I've found that a quick way through that guilty feeling is saying something like “I did the best I could do with the tools that I had at the time”, or “I accept what I've done and now that I know I'll do better next time.”

I disciplined myself to meditate each day and, like an athlete in training, attempted short sessions at first but built up to longer periods later on. I was in meditation for 20 minutes at a time, then for 30 minutes and then for an hour a day just sitting quietly in my room with all sorts of questions (and answers) coming to me.

I really want to emphasise, when talking about the grief part of it, how important it was to talk about the children, to have fun with the thoughts that are there and not to bottle up anything. There is a strange way that guilt that can creep in at times of grief. The strange guilt is that you can feel that it is not appropriate to laugh or chuckle at the funny things the children did when they were here. You can even feel guilty for being happy that the children brought so much fulfilment to your life because you think that this thought might be selfish. The thought can torment you, “How can I be happy about them when they have died so tragically?” The guilt can also come because it is a social expectation that at such times all should be sadness. You must resist any such tendency when dealing with grief. Bring it all out in the open, talk about it, remember the wonderful things, relive the good times, talk about it, talk about it, talk about it!

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There is a danger in not talking things through. The fact is that if you don't talk about it you will push it down into the subconscious mind. If the whole crisis goes into the subconscious mind without being dealt with, it could become post traumatic stress. The subconscious then deals with the crisis as hot sweats, nightmares, unexplained anger and totally irrational behaviour. Not talking about it is a reason why some Vietnam Veterans suffer post traumatic stress about the war. Some talked about it when they came home and some didn't, and the same has probably applied to all service men and women who have returned from all wars.

Now I was also lucky because I had Ian and Lara who were only 3 and 5 at the time. They brought it up all the time because the girls had been a part of all of our lives and we used to go camping and go out as a family and of course they would talk about the girls in person, in a familiar way and without the need for any hushed reverential voices. I remember people saying to Ian, one year later, two years later, "How many brothers and sisters have you got?" and Ian would say, "Oh I've got four sisters and one brother." And the person asking often said, "Four sisters? I thought you only have Lara." He'd say, "Oh, no, I've also got Jenny, Kirsty and Lexie." To Ian it was just as though they were in the next room. There was no denial about it, he knew that they had died, but he still saw them as a part of his network of relationships. You know when a child speaks like that it's really healthy and it helped me too. It helped me and others around us to be able to keep on bringing up their names. We have their photos on the mantelpiece, where we can see them, and every time I speak about them, quite frankly I smile. There is no doubt that Ian and Lara have helped me in the grief process by keeping on talking about their sisters.

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So talking about the area, any grief area, is a way to go about handling grief. This can apply when you grieve about a great variety of circumstances. You may face a situation of grief concerning the loss through death or divorce of a marriage partner. Your grief may be about some practical thing like the collapse of a business that was important to your self image or, upon retirement, the loss of your job that did so much to define who you were. You may even grieve, as you get older, for the loss of your physical stamina or your good looks, your beauty or just the loss of the carefree days and friendships of your youth. The circumstances of grief are almost endless, but whatever is your own private grief it will help if you can face it in a relaxed meditative state and remember all the good things.

But then grief is a progression. It is a progression through a particular mental state and then leading on to somewhere else. The length of grief can vary from being almost momentary in some people to other cases where it lasts for years. I know that we live in a society of fast foods and other quick fixes that are offered to us daily, and what I am about to say could be misconstrued by some to mean that I advocate a fast food, quick fix approach to grief. I don't and I know that *time* is one of the most important things when dealing with grief. It is however also true that a long term and sustained grief can be quite unnatural and totally debilitating to the life of the grieving person. To explore ways of directing our minds to deal appropriately with grief is therefore a good thing. It may even represent a return to some of the things we knew instinctively in our culture before the industrial revolution ever began. In many cultures there have been, and there are today, certain ritualised forms of grieving which ensured that it became a process and not a permanent state of

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existence. This is the type of thing I advocate in my work.

When it comes to other issues like anger, hate and revenge I had to handle that inside my mind too in a meditative process. I gradually got the message that to be hateful, to be revengeful, to want to hurt the person who killed my children, would only make me be the same type of person. I could become lost for the rest of my life in a quagmire of hatred and bitterness. I valued my life too much to allow that to happen. I saw it quite clearly, if I was going to be consumed by hate and anger and by revenge then that's the type of person I would become myself. For me to let go the inclination to hate, was the process that I knew I needed to go through. It wasn't an easy process but I quite clearly got the message after meditating. The message went like this, "Hey if you're going to be hateful, if you're going to be angry, if you're going to be revengeful, if you're going to think these thoughts about the guy who did this or anything else, then you'll end up the same way."

Now that was quite a revelation and it was the beginning of me thinking, "Okay I've got to do something about it – the thoughts of hate that is – I've got to go through this barrier to something else."

The first step in going *through* it was to come to an acceptance of where I was and what had happened. This involved accepting that chaos, not order, not logic, not reasoned thinking had ruled on the night of 23rd January 1987. So the process for me was acceptance first, acceptance of where I was, acceptance of what was happening with me, acceptance of my whole life. That takes into account love and it takes into account the handling of guilt.

I have already spoken a little bit about guilt but it was rather a big issue for me. I thought of every possible single

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thing that I'd ever done in my life to harm others. In my worst moments I concluded, "I deserve this." So I thought of all the bad things, all the wrong things – and there were lots – and this all came up in my mind, and if you take it on board you just feel worse and worse. And so I realised that the next step in overcoming hate and moving on through the process to a position where I could jettison the feelings of hate, was that I had to aim at forgiveness.

The ultimate aim, what might seem the unachievable aim, would be to forgive the person who had done this thing. I soon realised that if there was ever to be any forgiveness, the process ultimately had to start with me, myself. I went through all these other things that had been causing me guilt, all the things that I had done in my life to harm others. One by one I forgave myself and others, saying "Hey it's okay it's okay, it's just human." I went through this forgiveness process with the help of books and with the help of the Insight course recommended by my army friend.

About this time I started to experience a new sort of thought coming into my mind during meditation. About a month after the girls were killed I was getting quite vivid pictures, really vivid pictures of them. Now I'm a person who doesn't visualise by seeing when my eyes are shut – like being able to see your dreams. Some people dream in colour, some people dream in black and white, some can easily visualise in meditation, they just shut their eyes and "see" pictures. Some people "hear" clearly and some "feel" a lot. I find that I am one who "feels" but I don't often "see" things clearly. But in this case I was "seeing" things, I was "seeing" Jenny, Kirsty and Lexie quite clearly, they were talking to me. This worried me and I went through the whole process of thinking I was going quite mad or something.

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And then I could recognise their voices and they were saying things like, “Hey I’m all right, I’m all right I’m happy up here, I’ve done my tour of duty, I’ve finished with the earth, I’m a lot better off up here, I’m enjoying it you know.” This is the sort of thing that came through to me and then Lexie would come in to the meditation and say, “Oh come on Dad! Get off your butt and get into gear!” Lexie was quite a rebel and that’s how she would speak to me. Or she would say things like, “Come on! Do it Dad!”

I was quite enjoying going to my meditative state and having “conversations” with the girls and thinking about them quite often. Through this process of talking with them I came to be a little bit at ease with “where they were” and “what they were doing” because I knew that they were “out there somewhere”. Just what “out there” meant was a little hard for me to really put my finger on. Maybe it was to do with some form of energy, yes energy, that appealed to my logical part – you know Newton’s Laws and all that – energy is neither created nor destroyed (but it can change its form). Maybe it could all be my imagination as well. Whatever it was, and I still find it hard to put it into words today, it gave me a deep sense of spiritual insight. And whatever it was, it was a form of energy or a life force that was very powerful.

Worried by the whole concept of having such vivid visions I decided to write to the person in the United States who had originally founded the Insight Seminars. His name is John Roger and I posed a series of questions including whether it was possible that I was seeing the girls. His reply was, “Yes! Absolutely!” But then he challenged me with a profound concept.

He put it to me that while I was doing that sort of thing, while I was bringing them into my mind every day, I was

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actually hanging on to them. And by hanging on to them I was inhibiting their spiritual progress. Well that was like a real big stick, I mean there's no way in the world that I would turn around and inhibit anyone's progress. I didn't really understand what "progress" meant at that stage, but there was no way that I wanted to inhibit their progress. Right now I was really beginning to understand that this form of energy that's out there is their soul. I was beginning to understand that they are living on, and wherever the soul goes, or whatever it does, it needs to have the freedom to go.

I knew a little bit more now and so I decided to "let them go". That was rather overwhelming for me because it meant that if I let them go, that meant not attracting them to me, not bringing them into my mind, not having conversations with them, not seeking them out. John Roger gave me a couple of clues to help. He said, "Let go and let God" and he also advised me to always send my love.

I was on the threshold of understanding these sorts of "spiritual" concepts. Deciding to follow John Roger's advice and "let go" the girls was an extremely traumatic time for me, and I shed many tears. It continued to be difficult for another couple of weeks and then all of a sudden I felt comfortable about it and it's been fine since then. Of course it doesn't mean I don't think of the girls and the good times we shared.

Now I just send my love and light any time that they come into my mind. I imagine my love being like a ray of light or a ray of energy or something like that. My love goes along that ray of energy and they get it somehow or another and it also gets back to me. How it happens I don't know. One thing I do know is that when you try to explain concepts such as these you pretty quickly get to the limits of what language can actually communicate.

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I came to the realisation through this that if I was capable of sending my love to the girls then I had to be able to love myself before I could share it with others. It was the same compelling logic that applied to forgiveness. So right now the biggest change I had to make was to learn to love myself. If you try to love others but haven't got sufficient love for yourself then it's not real, true, love you are giving out. It might be a form of love, an honest attempt at love, but it will be limited. Think of it like a water tank with a tap at the bottom. The water in the tank is like the love in you. If the tank is only half full and the tap is turned on then the water, the love in the tank, will soon run out. If the water in the tank is brimming full or overflowing, then the tap can be turned on and the water be allowed to gush out lavishly. So it may be with human love. Loving yourself is that important! And what is loving yourself? Basically it's taking responsibility for yourself – for your own growth.

And what's the major obstacle? Oh ourselves, our mind, our subconscious mind. Our patterns – our belief patterns, the way we think, the way we've been brought up, that's the major obstacle and that's not easy to handle. Sometimes there are things that we've just got to let come up, let them work out and let them go.

Having accepted and practised all these things, the acceptance of myself, the forgiveness of myself and the love of myself, I could then turn to applying these concepts to others. Acceptance, love, forgiveness. I forgave others around me who have caused me anxiety in my life. That wasn't too hard, but then it got down to the guy who murdered the girls and his forgiveness. Not until I'd done all the other forgiving and loving could I even approach that subject because, deep down, it was still tied up with the revenge bit. So in the

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process of forgiving the person that's involved I must say that I have rationalised it to some extent and have turned it into a problem that may well be a little bit easier for me than others in a similar position. My rationalisation was that this person was mentally unbalanced, deranged, and as such, he's not really with us, he's got something else that's taken him over, he's like another energy. And so, eventually, I was able to forgive, forgive the man who took the lives of my daughters.

It has all been an amazing journey of self discovery. A journey in which I discovered the potential of the human mind and spirit to overcome great distress. I became aware of the existence of an entire portion of our world which had hardly been touched upon in my formal education and career experience. I became aware of my own inner strength, and by knowing about this, I became aware of the inner strength of others about me. Now I look for it and see it in others all the time.

The experience has changed my life, it has made it much fuller. The new discoveries I have made have not required me to cast out any of the old tools that I previously learnt about logic, analytical thought and the scientific method. It has enabled me to take on board this new body of knowledge in a way that coexists with what I knew before.

There is an idea that is contained in the Baha'i writings – it is that science and religion are complimentary, they need each other to achieve the correct balance. Science, by itself, will get lost in the quagmire of worldly materialism. Religion, by itself, will get lost in superstition. Science and religion together give the balance, rather like the two wings of a bird in flight. The bird cannot fly with one wing, it needs two to achieve the balance. It appeals to me to paraphrase this Baha'i idea. In the world in which we live the logical processes of the

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conscious mind and the contemplative processes of the subconscious mind compliment each other. Logic, by itself will get lost in the quagmire of worldly materialism. Meditation, by itself can get lost in mumbo jumbo and superstition. Use of the conscious and the subconscious mind together gives the balance just like the two wings of the bird in flight.

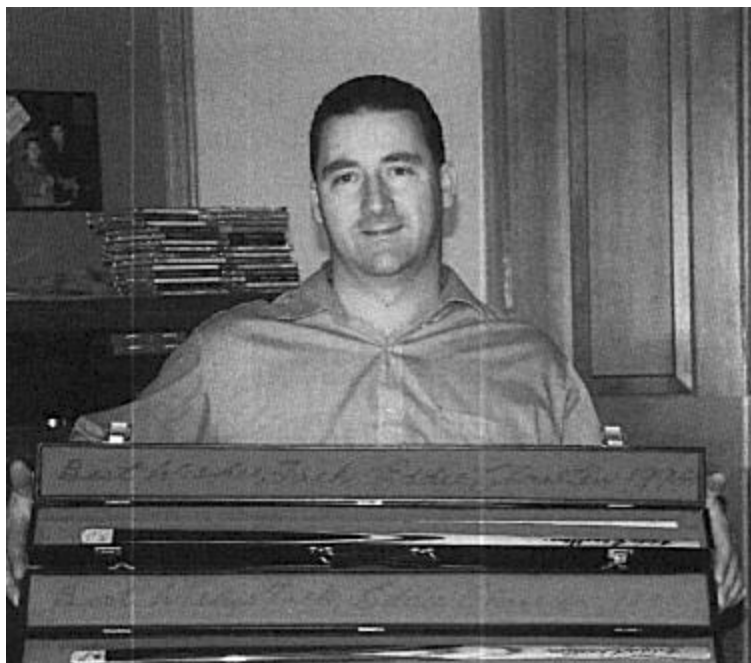
Awareness of both can create an incredible power of inner strength and my life and work are now dedicated to helping others achieve their strength. I have come to see my role now as one who can coach others. Take the analogy of a famous Olympic athlete or swimmer who excels in their event. That person has had a unique experience in life. What does the swimmer do with that experience when it is over? Does he/she just go back home to take up where life left off before the swimming began? Or does that swimmer use that experience to help others, to become their coach? I think the best way is to help others. And this is the way I see my role today. I have had a unique experience, one that was not pleasant and one which I dearly wish had never happened. But there is no taking it back – it is a part of my life. So what do I do with it? Do I just go back into the manufacturing industry and take up where life left off before all this began? Or do I use that experience to help others, to become their “coach”? For me the best way is to help others. I like the challenge of leadership.

I know that I am not by myself in this reaction to a personal crisis. In Sydney alone, without thinking about the rest of Australia, there is a small band of people like myself who are using their experience to help others. When we expand our vision beyond Sydney and beyond Australia to the whole world I reckon we form the nucleus of a vast

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movement of people dedicated to coaching others. My life is dedicated to this purpose.

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I continually use Sandy's PP techniques in many ways, but primarily in my cue sport (eightball) and health. After winning local competitions, a great highlight for me was to beat Eddie Charlton in a best of three matches in December 1992. I beat him 2 to nil and have his autographed cue and video of the matches to prove it! I told everyone I would beat the world champion and current Australian Champion and said "I could see his cue on my wall". That's there, and now there's another. In February 1994 I had a rematch with Eddie and was lucky enough to win for a second time against him, 2/1. This was an important match as it proved the first win was not just luck. I won the first game and Eddie the second. In the last game Eddie broke the balls and then I potted all 7 coloured balls and the black in a row to win.

Glenn Connor, Victoria

A note from Sandy: Glenn is truly inspirational _ despite being confined to a wheelchair following a serious motorcycle accident 14 years ago when he was 17 years old he has competed and triumphed against some of the best pool, snooker, eightball and nineball players in Australia.