



Nurturing yourself

*Mindfully living
your experience*

MEREDITH & AMARA

And then this....

INTERVENTION

- * 6 months of very intensive intervention June – Nov 2015
- * neurosurgery
- * 2 months of very high dose chemotherapy as an inpatient
- * 6 weeks of radiotherapy as an outpatient

OUTCOMES FOR ARI

- short term memory very lost
- communication greatly compromised
- executive functions - planning and organising - very limited
- could barely sustain a jog for 20m
- unable to sit still for more than 5 mins
- but finally tumour-free 😊

4 years on...



Embracing vulnerability

“We often try to numb vulnerability, but you can’t selectively numb emotion; you can’t numb the hard feelings without numbing joy, gratitude and happiness. Then we become miserable.”

Brene Brown

(TED Talk ‘The Power of Vulnerability’)

Amara

Mindfulness practice 1

Chapters

- **Meaning making**
- **Warrior woman**
- **When laughter returns**
- **The memory keeper**
- **Walking alongside**
- **Letting go**
- **And now...?**

Meaning making

- A meteor of a diagnosis
- Survival mode – moment by moment
- Confrontation with death and dying
- Why Ari?
- Allowing curiosity in:
 - what can I learn from this?
 - where is the meaning in this?

Meaning making

What nurtured me?

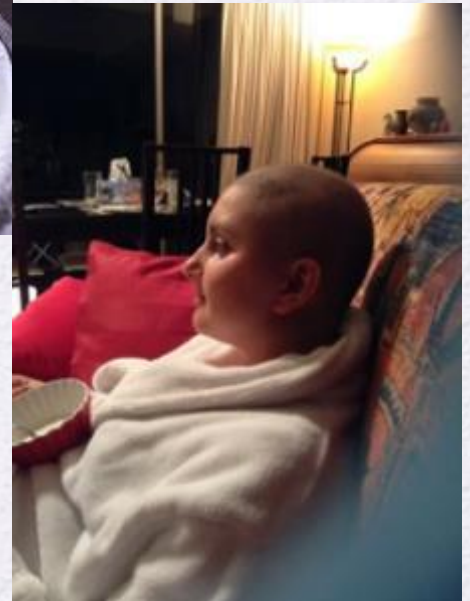
- A network of love and caring from Sydney, Melbourne, Yea, Afghanistan and America
- Dr Lis Lane, Mindfulness CD, Cancer Council

‘There is nothing to be fixed in this moment. Simply allow your experience to be your experience without needing it be other than what it is.’

- A little bar at St Leonard’s Station

Warrior woman

- Animal instinct of protection
- Hypervigilance
- No stone unturned
- How can anyone else look after our beautiful girl?



The Book of Ari

- “Stars cannot shine without darkness”
- Ari, you have been through hell and back. You have fought through the hardest of times and you inspire me. I am so proud of you and everything you have accomplished. I look forward to knowing you for a long time and then some. Always remember I’m here for you and so is the A-team. We love you, never forget that



Doria, Paris & Liz ICU

Warrior woman

What nurtured me?

- The Book of Ari
- My own journal writing
 - the process of making meaning
- Synapse
 - first NDIS plan
 - warmth and humanity
 - The Warrior Team through each NDIS iteration

Journal entry 6/8/15

Ari, we love and cherish you.

We place you in the hands of the surgeons.

And we will be there when you wake up

To hold you and love you

And welcome you back

To give you the strength of a lion

To continue your journey

Life is what it is

Breath, heart, kindness, love



When laughter returns



What nurtured me

*"Thinking of you
Meredith.*

It will get better.

*You will all feel
happy again
and the sun will
shine.*

*It's hard to keep
believing that
but you must."*

Sal 17/7/15



When laughter returns

What nurtured me



When laughter returns

What nurtured me

Re-emergence of Ari's belly laughs

13/12/15

After a shower a couple of days ago, Ari appears with a towel over her head

Me: You look like Mary (aka Jesus' mother)

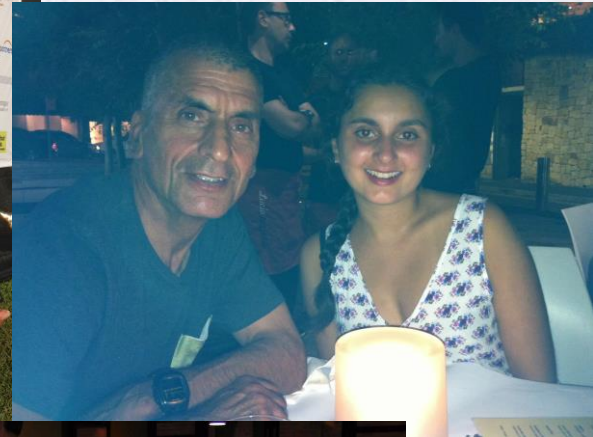
Ari: No, you're Mary

Me: So who are you?

Ari: I'm God so you need to worship me!!

The memory keeper

- Fear of forgetting the old Ari
- How to come to terms with the unfolding new?
- What about my girl?
(19/12/15)



The memory keeper

What nurtured me

Making our own
celebrations

- Survival Day
- Ari's 21st



Walking alongside

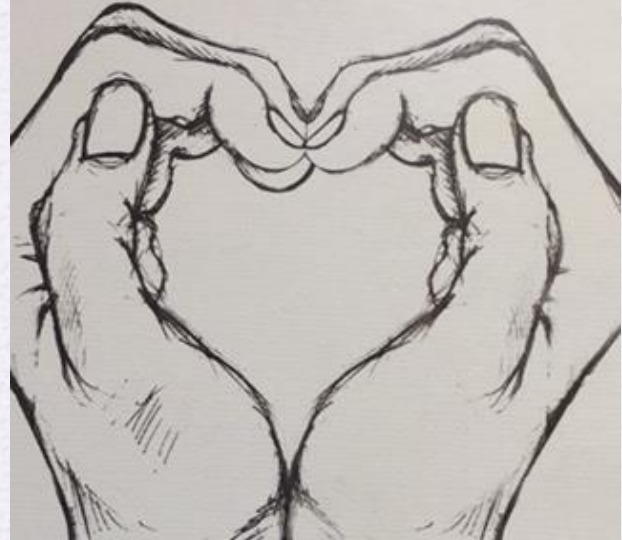
- Adjusting to Ari's pace literally and figuratively
- Holding space for Ari to be different
- Creating another story – Doing and being



Walking alongside

What nurtures me:

- Ari's joyful presence and resilience



- When I can just be Mum hanging out with Ari

Walking alongside

What nurtures me:

- Jacqueline, a wonderful psychotherapist
- Capturing gratitude practice
- MBSR (Mindfulness based stress reduction): Openground



Walking alongside

What nurtures me:

Excerpt from **The Quiet Power** by Tara Mohr

And I came to know that this was it.

The quiet power.

I could give something mighty, lasting,
that stopped the wheel of chaos,
by tending to the river inside,
keeping the water rich and deep,
keeping a bench for you to visit.

Letting go

Physical challenges

- Grounding focus – out of mind into body
- Tassie 2017
- Katherine Gorge 2018
- Colo River 2019

Annual weekend away with eldest daughter

Mindfulness Sundays

France!

Thelma and Louise weekends

What nurtures me



Letting go

- Entrusting Ari to others
- Space for Ari to grow
- Building Team Ari
- Hire Up
- Private Facebook group
- Ari's weekends away

Hi everyone anyone able to take Ari next Friday 20 Sep over to Jamie Berry's at Strathfield for a new group he is running called Brain Waves? It sounds interesting with some cognitive exercises and peer support. The shift would be from 2.15pm - 6.15pm picking Ari up from home and taking her to Strathfield then home again. Thanks very much Meredith 😊😊

And now..?

- We **have** come a long way – Ari's program now
- Talk about **'hard basket' issues** – independent supported accommodation, financial security ????
- Grow Team Ari with key team members – neuropsychologist, therapists, Amara, personal organiser, **lifestyle coordinator**
- Grow Ari's **Circle of Support** and connections with new and old **friends; build belonging**
- Discernment – who/what is **life-giving**, for me and for Ari?
- **Hawaii** – here we come!!

“Wow! Just seen you and Ari on TV. So wonderful she is fit and well. Proud moments for you all. You must have such a smile. Hard times behind you.” (Elizabeth)

Amara

Mindfulness practice 2

Thank you

Thank you!

We welcome questions and comments