Small Moments *IN THE* Big Picture

SPRING 2026 EDITION

JOINT PUBLICATION OF
AACAD AND CPCA

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JOINT PUBLICATION

AACAD | CERTIFIED PRACTISING COUNSELLORS AUSTRALIA

Welcome

We are pleased to bring you this edition, which explores ideas, insights and perspectives that support reflective practice, professional growth and stronger, more inclusive communities.

President's Message

> "Sometimes healing, reflection and reconnection begin in the smallest moments"

Dear Members,

A new journal is upon us. The small moments, seemingly insignificant at the time perhaps, something that we don't see the significance of until later. Perhaps even too late to acknowledge except to ourselves as we reflect.

When the topic was proposed, I thought about it for a long time and I would like to share one of the most significant and impactful moments of my career. This moment happened before my career even started, in my university years.

I had just changed courses from Business Studies to Behavioural Science. I had failed miserably at business maths- so, of course, the first unit I had to do in Behavioural Science was - Statistics (ominous music sounds). I was sitting in the lecture theatre looking at hieroglyphics on the board, listening to alien sounds coming from the lecturer. I had no idea what was going on. Luckily I worked up the nerve to approach the lecturer and told him I didn't understand a word of it. He didn't brush it off or look down on me. He said" don't worry, just come to the lectures. Watch and listen, don't worry about taking notes, we go over it again in tutorials"

I did what he said- I attended the lectures and tutorials completely bewildered.

Until one day, about half way through the semester I looked at the board and realised I understood what was on it. I could do this.

That simple act of kindness and understanding led to my staying in psychology and having a long career.

And I got a Distinction for statistics.

So, as we read these articles, and we consider the impact, let's reflect on not only the impact we have but also the impact of others upon us.

Sometimes it's the smallest thing...

Once again , I commend this journal to you . Please share it with your colleagues.

In the near future we will be introducing our grant recipients and their research projects. Until then ...

Keep being human

Cheers

- Mark Cresswell, CPCA President

Learning to Stay: Becoming a Counsellor

Aaron Barton

> *"These moments taught me that counselling is not always about creating movement. Sometimes it is about allowing enough space for movement to emerge on its own."*

There are moments in counselling that look insignificant from the outside.

A pause.

A breath.

A client looking down at the floor before saying something they have not said before.

A counsellor choosing not to fill the silence.

These moments are easy to miss because they are not dramatic. There is no grand breakthrough, no perfect intervention, no sudden resolution. Yet, for me, some of the most meaningful parts of becoming a counsellor have happened precisely in these small moments.

Early in my development as a counsellor, I leaned heavily on the structure of what I had been taught. I thought carefully about the next question, the appropriate reflection, the technique I was using and the therapeutic approach guiding the session. That scaffolding was reassuring. It gave me something to hold onto while I was still learning to sit with uncertainty and trust the process.

In those early moments, silence could feel like something that needed to be managed. Emotion could create an impulse to respond quickly. I sometimes found myself searching internally for the "right" therapeutic thing to say. Over time, something began to shift.

I started to notice that some of the most important moments in a session occurred when I resisted the urge to do anything at all. A client might pause, and instead of immediately offering another question, I could remain with them.

A client might become emotional, and rather than trying to move them away from discomfort, I could trust that the emotion itself had a meaningful place in the room. Sometimes a client would say something significant and there would be no need for an insightful response. A nod, a few quiet words, or simply sitting with them in that space could be enough.

These moments taught me that counselling is not always about creating movement. Sometimes it is about allowing enough space for movement to emerge on its own. There is a subtle shift that happens as counselling skills become more integrated. The technique does not disappear, but it becomes less visible. Silence begins to feel more comfortable, curiosity becomes more natural, and there is greater trust in the client, the relationship and the process. Perhaps this is one of the quieter transitions in becoming a counsellor: somewhere along the way, we stop trying quite so hard to sound like counsellors and begin learning how to be one.

It can show up in small ways: no longer feeling responsible for solving a client's problem, allowing a silence to stretch, or recognising that the client already holds knowledge about their own life that we could never possess.

These moments may seem unremarkable, but together they form part of the bigger picture. Becoming a counsellor is not only about learning theories, techniques and interventions. It is also about developing a way of being with another human being.

The small moments begin to accumulate. Eventually, we realise that something has changed.

We are listening differently.

We are less afraid of silence.

We are more comfortable not knowing.

And perhaps most importantly, we begin to understand that our presence does not always need to be impressive to be meaningful.
Sometimes the therapeutic moment is simply this:

A person speaks.

Another person remains present.

And for that small moment, that is enough.

Courtesy of: Aaron Barton

Blended Horizons.... Merging Mental, Physical and Cultural Health in Outback QLD

Ben Cavanagh

> *"My professional journey has taught me to stay grounded, curious, and well-tuned to a patient's needs in the event of a psychological and/or physical emergency."*

Courtesy of: Ben Cavanagh

Hi all, my name is Ben, I'm a paramedic working on a remote mine in North-West QLD. I am the onsite paramedic to over 1200 personnel and am fortunate to be able to support the surrounding remote First Nations communities, as well as a cultural heritage team onsite.

Throughout my sixteen-year career working remotely, I have put a lot of emphasis on building my skills in attending to client's physical wellbeing and have developed a great respect for the impact of mental wellbeing along the way. As the majority of the workforce are transient, and away from their families, mental wellbeing is a priority and patient presentations are consistent.

My professional journey has taught me to stay grounded, curious, and well-tuned to a patient's needs in the event of a psychological and/or physical emergency. Ive learned that when the radio goes off, the lines between physical and psychological distress become blurred, and I am relied on to support patients in navigating that

distress. Unfortunately, in my line of work, I don't always see people having their best day, sometimes it can be their worst. I take pride in being that stable, kind, and gentle figure who can look to rectify the situation and support the patient through the situation that has presented.

When working with First Nations patients, I'm well aware traditional clinical rooms cannot always be the best area for a discussion. Moving a session outside—whether we are going for a walk or using an outdoor space for physical movement—fundamentally shifts the power dynamic and allows a more open discussion on life issues.

In my time thus far, this approach has assisted many from the cultural heritage team and the adjoining communities. Working this way permanently changes your perspective. I arrived thinking my job was to save lives and teach coping mechanisms, but every day teaches me that the most powerful thing I can do is simply show up with grounding, respect, and a willingness to truly listen.

Complementing my clinical background, I'm a second-degree black belt in Taekwondo and have worked with youth in 'Anti-bullying' initiatives. This part of my life has given me a unique pathway to connect with the younger generation who have struggled in this arena —utilising structured exercise and martial arts principles to direct a physical approach to wellness, instil discipline, build self-worth, and foster a deep respect for others. Importantly Taekwondo has allowed me to represent my state and various other competitions through my career and allowed me as a youth with issues, to be a better person and guide others now!

- I was honoured to receive a **'Traditional painting'** from a traditional owner, recognising my clinical assistance to the community, this was such a generous recognition and means a lot to me and is framed in our home.

Courtesy of: Ben Cavanagh

The Quiet Work of Change

Paul Farley

> *"A career is built from small decisions. Change is built from small acts. Understanding is built from small corrections. Perhaps humility is built in much the same way."*

A funny thing happens when you spend enough time working in psychology.

You start to realise that the moments that matter most are rarely the ones anyone would think to photograph.

There are no trumpets when a client finally sees the pattern that has been running their life for twenty years. No certificate gets handed over when someone sets a boundary for the first time. Nobody rings a bell when a person who has spent years running from discomfort decides, for reasons that may look almost absurdly ordinary from the outside, to sit with it instead.

The profession is full of big ideas. Attachment. Trauma. Personality. Cognition. Behaviour. Development. Formulation. Enough competing theories to keep several generations of academics gainfully employed and several thousand students awake at three in the morning wondering whether they actually understand any of it. But the work itself is often much quieter. I suppose my first small moment was deciding I wanted to do it at all.

For years I had worked in oil and gas. Offshore. Onshore. Supervision. High-risk environments. The sort of places that sound more like co-ordinates than geography and where mistakes have a tendency to become very expensive, very quickly. It was a world of machinery, systems, procedures, pressure and people who needed to know what they were doing when things went sideways. I was good at it. And yet, somewhere along the way, good stopped being enough.

Not because the work was meaningless. It wasn't. There is something deeply satisfying about being useful when things are difficult. About having the experience to walk into a complicated situation, make sense of it and help get people safely through the other side. Perhaps that was part of the reason psychology eventually found me. The environment changed. The machinery changed. The stakes changed.

There is a tendency to make career changes sound much more profound than they usually are. We retrospectively turn decisions into destiny because human beings are hopelessly fond of tidy narratives. We like to imagine that we always knew where we were going. I didn't. I simply reached a point where the idea of spending the next part of my working life helping people navigate the machinery inside themselves seemed more compelling than continuing to work around the machinery outside them.

So, I followed it. That small decision eventually became a career, and the career became a different way of looking at people. Which brings me to another small moment, and one I remember rather clearly. My first real client breakthrough. I won't tell you what happened. Their story belongs to them, not me. What I can tell you is what it felt like to watch the penny drop.

There is a peculiar difference between knowing a psychological concept and watching it become visible in a human being. In this case, we had been working around an issue that had been quietly sabotaging the client's progress. The problem wasn't a lack of intelligence or motivation. They simply could not yet see the machinery operating underneath what they were experiencing. And then, suddenly, they could.

It was subtle. A change in expression. A pause. The kind of moment that could easily be missed if you were waiting for something dramatic. But I saw it. And I remember thinking: there it is. Not because I had fixed anything. I hadn't. The client had seen something.

That was the moment the theory stopped being something I knew and became something I understood. There is a difference. Study gives you the map. Clinical work eventually introduces you to the terrain, complete with potholes, unexpected weather and the occasional stretch where the map becomes more like an interesting idea as opposed to anything useful for navigation.

The first time you experience that, it changes the way you read everything afterwards. Then came another small moment, considerably less satisfying. My first client who simply never came back. We had been making good progress. The work appeared to be moving somewhere useful and then, without ceremony, the person disappeared. No final session. No tidy ending. No opportunity to ask what had happened or whether something in the work had shifted. Just absence. It is a surprisingly strange experience.

Therapeutic work is built around relationship, process and meaning. We are trained to pay attention to beginnings, middles and endings. Even an ending that is difficult can be worked with. You can talk about it, understand it, repair it, grieve it or at least put a chair underneath it and call it something.

An unexplained ending leaves you standing in the doorway of an already darkened room. For a while, the mind does what minds do. It fills the gap. Did I miss something? Had I misunderstood? Had the work become uncomfortable? Was I too much? Not enough? Had I imagined the progress? Possibly. Possibly not. And there was the lesson. You can do good work and still not get to know how the story ends. That is a difficult thing for a professional ego to swallow.

Counselling has a wonderful way of building your ego and then, when you become a little too comfortable with it, quietly taking a hammer to it. Because the longer you work in psychology, the more difficult it becomes to maintain the comforting fiction that understanding people means being somehow exempt from being a person yourself. It doesn't, and this is where the remaining small moments belong to the therapist.

Knowing about maladaptive attachment doesn't make you immune to attachment. Understanding defence mechanisms doesn't stop you defending yourself. Recognising cognitive distortions doesn't mean your own thinking becomes a pristine laboratory untouched by emotion, desire, fear or wishful thinking.

Sometimes you can see the pattern

perfectly well and still walk straight into it.

That might be one of the more humbling discoveries psychology has to offer.

We can explain a behaviour beautifully and still struggle to change our own.

Psychology doesn't remove the human condition.

It gives you a slightly better vocabulary for noticing it.

And perhaps that is why some of the smallest moments in this profession carry such weight.

A client who finally says no.

Someone who recognises the beginning of an old pattern before it becomes a familiar disaster.

A person who tolerates five minutes of discomfort where previously they would have escaped it immediately.

Someone who speaks about themselves with a little less contempt.

From the outside, these things can look almost embarrassingly ordinary.

Inside a person's life, they can be seismic.

There is a peculiar symmetry to this work. We spend years developing psychological knowledge, and that knowledge initially feels like armour. Then, if you stay in the profession long enough, it starts behaving more like a mirror.

You see yourself in it.

Sometimes uncomfortably clearly.

A career is built from small decisions. Change is built from small acts. Understanding is built from small corrections. Perhaps humility is built in much the same way.

As I move forward, I think that is the strange privilege of this work.

One small moment at a time.

The Micro-Intervention: Finding the Big Picture in the Small Stuff

Annabelle Maloney

> *"The 'big picture' isn't something we just arrive at one day. It's a mosaic. It's thousands of these tiny, quiet, human moments stitched together."*

The Micro-Intervention: Finding the Big Picture in the Small Stuff

When we're working in the thick of it-whether you're in a busy community mental health hub, supporting someone with a disability, or sitting in a quiet room with a client navigating a rough patch-it's easy to get caught up in the "big picture." We're constantly looking at the long-term goals, the NDIS plans, the systemic hurdles, and the clinical outcomes we're supposed to be hitting.

But if I'm being honest, the real work? The stuff that actually shifts the needle? It rarely happens during the formal reviews or the big breakthroughs. It happens in the quiet, blink-and-you'll-miss-it moments. It's the "small stuff" that actually makes up the big picture.

The Power of the "In-Between"

Think about your last few sessions. What actually sticks with you? It's rarely the grand, life-changing epiphany. It's usually something much smaller. Maybe it's that split second when a client finally drops their guard and makes real eye contact. Or that moment of silence where you both just sit with the weight of something difficult, and for the first time, they don't feel the need to rush away from it.

We often call these "micro-interventions." They're not flashy, and they're definitely not the kind of thing you can easily tick off on a KPI report. But these moments are where the therapeutic alliance is actually forged. It's about being human with another human. When we're fully present, we're sending a signal that says, "I'm here, you're safe, and we're doing this together." That's the foundation for everything else.

Why the Small Stuff Matters

In our line of work, we see a lot of heavy stuff. It's easy to feel like we're just chipping away at a mountain that never gets any smaller. When we focus only on the "big picture"-the recovery, the independence, the total resolution of symptoms-it's easy to burn out.

But when you start looking for the "small moments," the whole landscape changes. It's about noticing the tiny wins. Maybe it's a client who usually struggles to leave the house managing to walk to the local shops. Or a person in aged care who, for a few minutes, remembers a song from their childhood and lights up. These aren't just "nice" moments; they are the evidence that change is happening. They are the building blocks of resilience.

If we ignore these, we're missing the

heartbeat of our work. We're so busy looking at the horizon that we're tripping over the gold right in front of us.

Bringing it Back to the Room

So, how do we keep this front of mind without getting bogged down in the admin?

For me, it's about slowing down. It's about checking in with myself before I walk into a session: Am I here to tick boxes, or am I here to connect?

It's also about how we talk to our clients. Instead of just asking, "How have you been this week?" try asking, "What's one small thing that went okay for you this week?" or "What was a moment this week where you felt just a little bit more like yourself?" You'll be surprised at what they pull out of their pocket. It's rarely the big stuff. It's the coffee they enjoyed in the sun, the conversation they had with a neighbour, or the fact that they managed to get out of bed on a Tuesday.

A Note to My Fellow Practitioners

We do a tough job. We hold a lot of space for a lot of people, and sometimes that takes a toll. But there is something incredibly grounding about focusing on the small moments. It reminds us that we don't have to fix everything in one go. We just have to show up, be present, and notice the small shifts.

The "big picture" isn't something we just arrive at one day. It's a mosaic. It's thousands of these tiny, quiet, human moments stitched together. So, in this next season, I'm challenging myself—and I'm inviting you—to pay a bit more attention to the small stuff. Document it, share it, and celebrate it. Because at the end of the day, that's where the real magic is.

Small Moments

Martin (Marty) Morris

> *" A small moment of genuine connection, respect, and understanding can become the beginning of a person's healing journey."*

When people look at my career, they often see the awards, the public recognition, or the moments when local politicians shared my story in Parliament. They see the major milestones. What they do not always see are the many small moments that paved the way to those achievements.

As a proud Aboriginal man, mentor, and counsellor, my journey has been shaped by community, connection, and a belief that every person deserves to be heard. Today, I work at Ungooroo Aboriginal Corporation in Singleton NSW as a Social and Emotional Wellbeing Officer (Counsellor) and as a Mentor in the Barranggirra Program. However, one of the most influential periods of my career was working with Upper Hunter Community Services, where I developed and implemented the Youth on the Move Program in Muswellbrook, New South Wales.

Through this program, I supported disengaged young people to reconnect with education, employment, and society. Watching young people rebuild confidence and create positive pathways for their future was both challenging and rewarding.

Looking back, the pivotal moments in my career were not the award ceremonies or public acknowledgements. They were the moments spent sitting with people who felt forgotten, listening to stories that had never been told, helping someone take their first positive step forward, or watching people realise that their future could be different from their past.

Those moments taught me that change often begins quietly.

One of the biggest lessons I have learned as a counsellor is that people rarely remember every word you say, but they remember how you made them feel. A small moment of genuine connection, respect, and understanding can become the beginning of a person's healing journey.

In 2024, I was honoured to receive the TAFE NSW Gillis Award and a NAIDOC Award for Professional Achievement. Receiving these awards was a proud moment, but what made them truly meaningful was knowing they represented years of work alongside communities, families, and people. They symbolised countless conversations, long drives to support clients, difficult discussions, and everyday acts of care that often go unseen.

In 2026, I was humbled to once again receive the TAFE NSW Gillis Award, along

with another NAIDOC Award recognising Professional Achievement. To be recognised a second time by my peers, my community, and the education sector was incredibly powerful. It was not simply about receiving an award. It was recognition that the work being done in our communities matters and that positive change is possible when people are supported and empowered.

These achievements reminded me that success is never an individual accomplishment. Every educational body, mentor, colleague, Elder, family member, client, and community member who believed in me contributed to those moments.

Another pivotal moment in my journey was having my story shared in Parliament by Dave Layzell MP Member for Upper Hunter. It was a significant occasion that reminded me there are many people whose voices are not often heard. I realised that my role was not simply to have my own story shared, but to help represent the experiences of those who have faced barriers, adversity, and disadvantage, while continuing to demonstrate remarkable strength, courage, and resilience.

Yet even that significant occasion began with a small moment. The decision to speak up. The decision to advocate. The decision to believe that lived experience has value and deserves a place in conversations that shape policy and services.

The theme of this journal, Small Moments in the Bigger Picture, resonates deeply with me because counselling itself is built on small moments: a moment of trust, a moment of courage, a moment of understanding. These moments may seem insignificant at the time, yet they often become the turning points people remember years later.

As I reflect on my journey, I am grateful for the recognition I have received, but I am even more grateful for the opportunity to walk alongside people during some of the most important moments of their lives.

The awards, the programs, and the public milestones form part of the bigger picture. However, it is the small moments of human connection, cultural pride, compassion, and hope that have truly shaped who I am as a counsellor, mentor, and person.

They remind me why I started this journey and why I continue it today.

Courtesy of: Martin Morris

Two Worlds Theme Cover
-Artwork by Martin (Marty) Morris

The Work Lives in the Quiet

Julie Pemberton

> *"And I don't think those seconds matter less because they're small. I think they matter more."*

In support work, we rarely get to celebrate the highlight reels. There's no grand ceremony when a ticket is resolved, no standing ovation when a client finally feels heard. The work lives in the quiet. And it's in those quiet moments that the real impact is made — or quietly undone.

There are times when you're in a room with someone who's broken in ways you can't fix, who's in real pain, who has been skipped over so many times it's become the shape of their day. And you do the check-in. The prompt. The gentle "are you okay?" because that's the task, and the task moves on, and the person in the room gets set back down on their bench until the next round. And then there's you, the worker, who has been on your feet for nine hours, who has been smiling at people who can't stop telling you they hate you, who is expected to find the empathy again for the next person walking through the door. And nobody asks how you're doing. You're not a person in that moment. You're a pair of hands with a badge. In the big picture of aged and disability support, the work looks like routines. Meds, meals, transfers, the paperwork that follows. And it's all of that, sure. But it's not the routines that stay with you at the end of a shift. It's the stuff in between. The client who's been silent for three weeks and suddenly cracks a joke — not a polite one, a real one, the kind that makes you snort and then have to explain why you're laughing. Watching someone who hasn't dressed themselves in months pull a sock on by their own hand and look at it like they've just built something. A hand squeeze across a noisy day centre where nobody else is looking. An older bloke who doesn't talk much, humming along to a song you put on because you remembered he liked it, and his eyes closing, and that's the whole afternoon.

These moments don't make it into the notes. You can't log "client looked at me like I mattered" under intervention outcome. And yet they're the reason you get in the car at the end of the day and don't crash. They're the reason someone, months later, says to you, "You were the first person who didn't treat me like a file number." And I don't think those seconds matter less because they're small. I think they matter more. Because that's where a person gets to be a person again. Not a client. Not a case. Not a "vulnerable individual with a care plan." Just a guy who likes that one song. Someone who needed one human being in the room to say, without words, I see you, and you're not a task on my list. That's the work. The quiet, unrepeatable stuff. And it sticks with the people we support long after you've packed up your bag, clocked out, and gone home.

Stories to Wear, Carry and Treasure

Cynthia Puxty

> *"Small creative moments, we may find space to pause, reflect and reconnect to our inner wisdom."*

When I saw the theme Small Moments in the Big Picture, I immediately thought of a painting I created called **Tizzy Owl**.

The word tizzy can mean being a little overwhelmed or emotionally stirred — but it can also mean being dressed up, adorned, or "all tizzied up".

That double meaning feels deeply familiar to me, and perhaps to many women too: the tension between what we carry inwardly and how we express ourselves outwardly.

Tizzy emerged through many layers of paint, pattern and reworking. She has been painted over and returned to more than once, with the texture of previous versions still shaping what she has become. In that sense, she became more than a painting. She became a reflection of how we are shaped — not perfect, not by starting over, but by layering, transforming and becoming.

Creating tiny treasures has been with me since childhood. Looking

Courtesy of: Cynthia Puxty

back, I can see that making small beautiful things gave me a private world of imagination, comfort and safety. Over time, what began as refuge has matured into skill, meaning and a deep part of how I now understand creativity, healing and reconnection.

This same idea moves through much of my creative work. In my woodland talismans, I gather symbols of earth, crystals, feathers, moss, mushrooms and adorn my wild feminine faces — small fragments that speak to intuition, protection, shadow and belonging. In my ocean Mermaid talismans, shells, pearlescent shimmer, semi precious stones and sea-like textures carry the feeling of tides, emotion, memory and renewal.

> More recently, my **Treasure Pins** have become tiny wearable artworks made from fabric, lace, flowers, fibres, charms and symbolic pieces -Each one created to be worn, carried or treasured.

In each piece, the small details matter. A feather may become a reminder of lightness. A shell may hold a memory of softness or grief. A sculpted raven may speak to hidden wisdom. A scrap of lace may carry ancestry, femininity or tenderness.

These small moments of choosing, layering and making become part of a much bigger picture: the way creativity helps us reconnect with ourselves.

I often find that the first five or ten minutes of creating are full of what I affectionately call **"the ugly"**. The canvas is empty, the colours feel wrong, my body feels uncomfortable, and doubt begins to speak loudly: This is going to be awful.

Over time, I have learned not to take that stage too seriously. I see it now as part of the process. One way I move through it is to do something impulsive with the materials — make a mark, place a colour, layer something unexpected, stitch or glue something before I have fully worked it out. I let the "ugly" thing exist. Then, almost without noticing, I am creating.

The awkward first layer becomes part of the story. The mistake becomes texture. The wrong colour leads somewhere. The piece starts to show me what it wants to become.

Perhaps life is like that too. Many new chapters begin with uncertainty, discomfort, doubt, or a sense that things do not yet look beautiful. But if we can stay with the process, gently, curiously, without demanding perfection too soon — something meaningful can begin to emerge.

In counselling, I have come to value these small moments: the pause before someone finds their words, the image that explains what language cannot; and the quiet recognition that something inside has shifted. Creative practice can offer another way into those moments — gently, safely, and without needing everything to be explained at once.

Courtesy of: Cynthia Puxty

Many of the women I am drawn to support are navigating seasons of change such as identity shifts, relationship changes, body changes, grief, creativity, ageing, and the question of who they are becoming beyond the roles they have carried. In these seasons, small creative acts can become surprisingly meaningful, small objects can become a reminder. A pin on a scarf, a talisman on a shelf, a shell held in the hand, may seem simple, but they can quietly reconnect us to intention, memory, beauty, and self.

In my counselling and creative therapeutic work, I often see how women are not looking to erase their past or become someone entirely new. More often, they are seeking a way to understand the layers that they carry. They need to honour what has shaped them, and to find beauty and meaning in the process of becoming. Creativity offers a gentle pathway into that conversation.

It does not always ask us to explain everything. Sometimes it simply invites us to choose a colour, gather a texture, hold a symbol, stitch a thread, or place one small object beside another until something begins to feel true.

This is why I created **The Journey Collection.** This is a gathering of pieces designed to be worn, carried and treasured. Each painting, talisman, scarf, pin, journal or adornment is an invitation to pause, reflect and reconnect with the beauty and wisdom we carry. They are not simply objects. They are companions for the journey — small reminders that our stories, even the layered and unfinished ones, can become something meaningful.

For me, the small moments change the bigger picture: choosing one colour, staying with the awkward beginning; adding one more layer; or deciding that what once felt ugly may still become beautiful. Whether through a painting, a talisman, or a tiny Treasure Pin, I have come to believe that creativity does not need to be grand to be meaningful.

Sometimes healing, reflection and reconnection begin in the smallest moments; choosing a colour; holding a shell; stitching a thread; placing a feather; or seeing something beautiful emerge from what was already there. Perhaps that is the quiet gift of creative practice: it reminds us that we too can be reworked; relayered and reimagined — not by erasing what has come before, but by allowing it to become part of something beautiful.

In those small creative moments, we may find space to **pause, reflect and reconnect to our inner wisdom.**

Courtesy of: Cynthia Puxty

It’s The Little Moments That Matter Most

Emily Radford

> *“ Not every small moment needs to lead somewhere bigger to matter.”*

If you were asked to paint a picture of your life, what would you capture?

Chances are, you’d start with the bigger things. Your home, your family, perhaps the uniform you wear to work. You might add a bright sun in the corner of the sky, a pet at your feet, something that hints at a favourite hobby, or your car in the driveway.

Looking at the finished artwork, others would probably get a pretty good idea of you, your life, and where you are currently. What it wouldn’t show, though, is the story behind it. The moments, connections, conversations, opportunities, challenges and setbacks that helped create the person and the life they see in front of them.

These are what we call the smaller moments.

Some are memorable, while others seem completely insignificant at the time.

They are the conversations we have, the people we meet, the opportunities that present themselves, the little wins we have, the challenges we face, and the decisions we make along the way.

Some of these moments lead to something more.

A conversation becomes a connection. A connection creates an opportunity. A challenge pushes us in a direction we hadn't planned to go. A small decision changes what comes next. Looking back, we can sometimes trace these moments through our lives and see how one led to another, quietly influencing where we ended up.

But not every small moment needs to lead somewhere bigger to matter.

Some stay with us simply because of how they made us feel, what they taught us, what they meant at the time, or what they came to represent. They may never become a milestone, an achievement, or something another person could see in our finished picture, but they become part of how we experience and understand our own story.

Some small moments create the path. Others are what make the path meaningful.

When I look back at my own life, I can see both, and how they have contributed to who I am and where I am today.

I can think of chance encounters that became connections, conversations that opened doors, and people I met through the most ordinary circumstances who would later influence the direction of my career. I can think of questions I asked simply to clarify my own knowledge that became something more, and challenges that, while unwelcome at the time, pushed me towards paths I may never have otherwise explored.

Then there are the moments that didn't lead anywhere at all, but stayed with me anyway.
The passing comment or compliment that someone probably didn't realise would stay with me as strongly as it has. The genuine, heartfelt thank-yous you receive for just doing your job. Having clients who valued our rapport and the work we had done so much that they sought me out after I changed organisations. Watching someone achieve something they had been working towards. Realising that something I had said, noticed, questioned or done had meant more to someone than I knew at the time.

Through my work, I have come to appreciate just how significant these seemingly small moments can be. What feels ordinary or routine to us can be momentous to someone else.

While these moments haven't necessarily changed the direction of my life, they have shaped me in quieter ways. They have influenced how I understand people, how I approach my work, and what I value within it.

They haven't just shaped the way I work, though. They have challenged me, changed the way I think, and contributed to who I am as a person. In many ways, these seemingly small moments have contributed to my bigger picture just as much, if not more, than the moments that changed its direction.

> So the next time you look at a painted canvas, don't just look at what is on it. Take a minute to appreciate the brushstrokes, each and every single one, because just as our smaller moments contribute to our story and shape our bigger picture, it is these brushstrokes that create the art.

The Little Things: My Eat Pray Love Moment

Tina Smith

> *"Burnout, self-reflection and the small practices that bring us back to ourselves"*

In Bali, I sat down with a tarot reader expecting curiosity and perhaps a story to take home. At the time, I was stress-eating, desperately hoping for success and feeling as though I was failing in my career, relationships and life, although I could not understand why.

She began with small talk, then turned over the cards. Before saying anything else, she repeated the same message three times: "You are a very hard worker." Thinking I had misunderstood, I asked her to clarify. "You are working too much," she said more forcefully. As I selected more cards, she stopped me: "You rush. You need to slow down."

The message was hardly new. A friend had been telling me the same thing. My father had urged me to take time off. My body had been adding its own commentary through exhaustion and a host of health problems. Yet, in that unfamiliar room, the message finally landed. A short encounter brought the big picture into focus: I had believed the answer was to work harder, stay longer and do more.

I was paddling upstream. Although I had prioritised a holiday, I was still driving myself harder than ever while seeing little progress in any area of my life. Without

Courtesy of: Tina Smith

realising it, I had been searching for an explanation. Perhaps I needed to slow down before I could hear the answer—and be ready to receive it. Insight may arrive through a stranger's observation, a friend's exasperation or the body's quiet warning. At first, the message may be a whisper: fatigue, a sore back, poor sleep or reduced patience. If we continue to push, it becomes harder to ignore.

The encounter did not transform me overnight—change is a process—but one small moment brought the bigger picture into focus. It gave me a clear direction: work smarter, not harder; value the little

things; slow down; and trust that rest will not make everything fall apart. In fact, rest may be the key. I had to reflect on what doing less would look like for me.

The World Health Organization (2019) describes burnout as an occupational phenomenon caused by chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It involves exhaustion, growing distance or cynicism towards work, and reduced professional effectiveness. Compassion fatigue may overlap with burnout but is more closely associated with repeated exposure to others' distress, trauma, grief or decline.

In counselling, aged care and other helping roles, going "above and beyond" can become a hazard. Warning signs include irritability, poor concentration, disrupted sleep, dread before work, emotional numbness and reduced empathy. Similar strain can arise from unpaid caring, employment, household responsibilities and relationships.

Taking over may seem efficient when one person habitually anticipates needs and organises tasks, but it can create a self-defeating cycle: the helper becomes more burdened while others have fewer opportunities to build confidence and competence.

In care settings, this may contribute to learned dependence, in which a person becomes accustomed to others completing tasks that remain partly within their capacity. Dependence should not be presumed deliberate: pain, fatigue, fear, depression, medication effects or cognitive and functional changes may affect participation. Respectful care provides the assistance required while supporting choice, time and safe independence (Elkholy & Abdelsalam, 2022).

Delegation can therefore be both a time-management strategy and an act of respect. Inviting others to participate, accepting a different method and setting boundaries can reduce overload while supporting their agency: brake before you break.

A useful way to understand our capacity for stress is the Window of Tolerance, developed by psychiatrist Daniel J. Siegel (Siegel, 2020). Within this window, we can reflect, communicate and respond flexibly. Above it is hyperarousal, marked by urgency, anxiety or irritability; below it is hypoarousal, marked by numbness, withdrawal or operating on autopilot. Chronic stress can narrow the window, causing smaller pressures to trigger stronger reactions.

For me, rushing was a clue that I was moving outside my window. Slowing my physical pace, thinking more carefully and doing less helped me return. In this context, self-care is not merely a reward after the work is done; it is nervous-system maintenance that supports sound judgement, ethical boundaries and genuine connection.

Small Practices That Help Us Return

Regulation rarely requires a perfect routine. It is often built through small, repeatable moments: lengthening the exhale; placing both feet on the floor; stepping outside; eating before becoming depleted; reducing sensory input; naming what is happening; contacting someone safe; or postponing a non-urgent decision. When we are hyperaroused, the task may be to reduce speed and stimulation. When we are hypoaroused, gentle movement, daylight, music, warmth or safe connection may help restore energy. The aim is not to eliminate emotion, but to regain enough capacity to choose a response.

Boundaries are part of this practice. "No" can be a complete sentence, but it can also be expressed with care: "I cannot take that on today," "That sits outside my role," or "I can help with this part, but not all of it." A boundary may generate disappointment

or resistance. Remaining steady, saying what needs to be said and resisting the urge to over-explain can preserve energy for what matters. Slowing down is not the same as becoming passive. Rest is not avoidance. Both can be deliberate, ethical choices.

Reflection becomes more useful when it moves from "Something is wrong" to "Here is what requires attention." Simple self-assessment tools can create that shift. They are not diagnostic instruments and should not be used to judge ourselves. Their value is in making patterns visible, starting a conversation and identifying one manageable next step.

The Wheel of Life is a visual reflection tool for rating satisfaction across areas such as health, work, relationships, finances and recreation. After rating each area from zero to ten, ask which low score needs attention, which strength supports you, and what small step might lift one area by a point. It supports reflection and goal setting but is not a diagnostic assessment (Swart, 2022). For me, the sustaining things are wonderfully ordinary: time with my cats and my son, sitting under the mulberry tree, picking cosmos, pottery and art.

For one week, note what leaves you energised, neutral or depleted. For each depleted item, ask whether it can be reduced, delegated, delayed or balanced with recovery. This simple audit turns "I am tired" into information that can guide one practical change.

The tarot reader answered a question I had already been asking. I had viewed stepping back as counterproductive—even as failure. Yet being present and mindful is not an obstacle to success; it helps make sustainable success possible. Her message invited me to practise what I preach: protect my nervous system, move at a human pace and loosen my attachment to every outcome. Work smarter, not harder. Allow someone else to row for a while.

As a first-born daughter, a mother and a perfectionist who has often felt cast as the family scapegoat—and after several traumatic years—slowing down remains a challenge.

Perhaps the most useful life assessment begins with three questions: What is wearing me down? What brings me back to myself? What is one small action I can take before the warning becomes a crisis? The answers may be modest—a boundary, a deep breath, a slower walk, a cup of tea, an appointment, rest with a cat or a quiet afternoon under a tree. Small moments do not sit outside the big picture; they are how the big picture is made.

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A Counselling Journey

Susan Wallace

> *"The time it takes to make an Origami Crane can be enough time to express, share, collaborate and make small steps towards change."*

The time it takes to make an Origami Crane can be enough time to express, share, collaborate and make small steps towards change.

Some years ago, I challenged myself to learn something new to create connection with my community. I chose Origami workshops which got me out of a comfort zone and into my community. Origami had always appealed to me - accessible & creative beauty.

After advancing from plain coloured paper (some hilariously frustrating but do-able learning challenges), to Japanese wood block print patterned paper was a rewarding enhancement to my basic craft iterations. The beautiful paper is based on the great works of artists past. Meeting people from all walks of life, doing crafts for various reasons, was a joy in small interactions and communal learning, helping each other along the way. Intercultural connections were a bonus too!

Courtesy of: Susan Wallace

Shared experiences empowered me to step out further into community, helping people in my regional town devastated by natural disaster. I learned that shared experience, community and small moments can add up quickly to help people in need. A chat, check-in, a meal, a hot water bottle, just listening... I had no academic or professional experience in human services, but I'd learned from

Origami that we can learn and share along the way. I studied my first small course, to minimise harm around trauma impacts.

Next, I studied community services and then got accredited in crisis support volunteer work on the phones. I always find time to fit in some Origami Cranes though. Next was counselling, and I completed my diploma recently and I'm now at the beginning of an exciting new journey after joining the CPCA. Many small moments have synergised to help me find my place in communities and helping services.

The Origami Crane is a universal symbol of friendship, hope and peace. It's an accessible, intercultural 'small steps' craft. It is collaboration within oneself, with community, and builds on past and present artistry, crafts and advocacy, towards a better future.

My volunteer community is doing an upcoming self-care Origami Crane Crafternoon, to coincide with World Suicide Prevention Day and the International Day of Peace. This is full circle for me, helping one another to help others in a creative, caring, learning and collaborative space. Friendship, Hope and Peace.

SUMMER JOURNAL

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