

EDITION #97 Spring/Summer



KATE RAMSAY AND THE **A n D** COACHES WELCOME YOU TO OUR STAYING IN TOUCH NEWSLETTER.

In **Learning Moments** we take another look at misogyny and the gender pay gap. In **Did you know?** we explore the quality of grace and look at the benefits of being in a 'flow' state. Our **Good read** is Hugh Mackay's latest book. **AnD to close** an ICYMI about what's happening to the statues of eminent men by The Dad's Shift campaign in the UK.

## Learning moments - on misogyny

Kate writes: Just when I thought I'd explored all there is to know about misogyny, I was further informed by Kate Manne, Associate Professor at the Sage School of Philosophy at Cornell University, in her closing address for the 2024 Sydney Writers' Festival and reported in the June edition of *The Monthly*.

Titled *The future of misogyny*, Manne's essay taught me about the concept of 'himpathy'. Manne defines this as 'where men who commit acts of misogynistic violence receive disproportionate and undue sympathy and concern as compared with their female victims.' Manne explains that an outcome of 'himpathy' is that people may care more about what happens to the perpetrator than the impact of his actions on his female victim.

Later in her essay Manne explores the difference between misogyny and sexism:

*I take misogyny to be the enforcing and policing of patriarchal norms and expectations, while sexism comprises beliefs that serve to naturalise and rationalise a patriarchal order: the idea that women are 'naturally' caring and men are 'naturally' dominant over us. ... Feminism and misogyny are thus, unfortunately, all too often in lockstep as cultural forces. Misogyny is frequently a response to the anxiety that comes in the wake of feminist social progress. Sexism takes women to be inferior; misogyny may glean the reality we are not and lash out in anger at women being in every meaningful way men's equals.*

This analysis resonated with me when a woman in a senior HR role in a male dominated industry recently told me about what she called 'scared males' – to

describe some of the men who are not coping with women being recruited into traditionally male roles in her organisation.

## On the gender pay gap

Kate R writes: I recently had the privilege of co-facilitating and presenting at a breakfast event in Newcastle hosted by HUNTER WILD – a not for profit that supports women in STEM. At the event, called *The Great Divide: Understanding and addressing the Gender Pay Gap* I presented the current pay gap statistics (11.5% in the overall workforce according to the ABS) as well as a brief history of equal pay in Australia, then shared my thoughts on what more needs to be done to eradicate the gap. Next a representative from Hunter Water told us some of the excellent initiatives they're doing to overcome The Great Divide. Participants then workshopped the issue in 5 small groups all of whom made some highly innovative suggestions for further change. Let me know if you'd like a summary of these.

Both misogyny and the gender pay gap are covered in depth in my recently published book *A hell of a lot of glass – achieving gender equality in the workplaces of Australia*. Please contact me if you'd like a copy.

## Did you know? - on grace

Kate writes: I'm always delighted when there is a piece by Julia Baird in *The Sydney Morning Herald* because I love her writing and the way she sees the world. On August 24 Baird wrote in the SMH about Michelle Obama's recent speech at the Democratic convention during which she told the crowd she believed Harris and Walz would lead the US with 'compassion, inclusion and grace'. Baird added that she was thrilled

Obama referred to grace because her latest, excellent book, is called *.Bright Shining – how grace changes everything*.

So what is grace? Baird quotes author Marilynne Robinson to define grace as ‘that reservoir of goodness, beyond and of another kind, that we are able to do to each other in the ordinary cause of things.’ Baird then gives some examples of acts of grace such as nurses sponging patients, volunteers ladling out food in a soup kitchen and blood donors regularly donating blood.

I too loved Obama’s reference to grace in her nomination speech because I’ve lived in a house called Grace House in the Northern Rivers for the past 25 years. I’m in the process of selling and moving back to my roots in Adelaide, and I intend to take the quality of grace with me. Once settled, I plan to search out ways of contributing to my new community with grace.

## Did you know? – being in flow

An essay in the Science section of the 27/7/24 *Guardian Weekly* titled *Grow with the flow* explores how we can achieve a flow state and the benefits of doing this. Written by David Robson, the piece dispels the myth that we are happiest while resting. Rather, research from the ‘70s has found that we are happiest when we are involved in high levels of mental focus - whether this is while swimming, playing the violin or indeed writing a newsletter, what counts is the feeling of immersion and mastery.

Robson recommends that the state of flow is best achieved when we find the ‘sweet spot’ between our ability and the difficulty of the activity. If the task is too easy or too hard we get bored or distracted. He references the book *The Pathway to Flow* by Julia Christensen who is a senior scientist at the Max Planck Institute in Frankfurt. Robson stresses that we can all build on our ability to enter the flow state.

## A good read

Kate writes: Social psychologist Hugh Mackay’s latest (and possibly last) book is *The Way We Are - Lessons from a lifetime of listening*. The back cover summarises the book well:

*Amidst our epidemics of loneliness, anxiety and depression, and the impacts of entrenched poverty and*

*ubiquitous technology, The Way We Are examines the major trends that are shaking the foundations of the Australian way of life.*

These trends include loneliness, poverty, fake wisdom, the Boomers’ legacy, listening skills and even whether we’re ready for gender equality. He proposes that what is now needed is a ‘kinder, more cooperative, more compassionate and more egalitarian society.’

I have just two grumbles about this good read:

On gender equality Mackay suggests that misogyny is a symptom of male self-loathing, so overcoming it should begin with helping men to change. I can’t help thinking there was a hint of ‘himpathy’ in his take on this deeply entrenched aspect of the Australian culture that continues to have dire consequences on women.

And as an aging feminist my hackles rose when I read Mackay’s opinion that there’s a ‘very short journey from passionate revolutionary to punitive puritan’.

## And to close

ICYMI (in case you missed it). If you happen to be travelling in the UK sometime soon you might notice an unusual sight - statues of men important enough to have a public statue of themselves are currently holding toy dolls to their chests wrapped in baby slings.

This is part of a campaign led by The Dad Shift, an organisation of men, dads and co-parents in the UK. As well, they have written to Prime Minister Keir Starmer calling for improvements to parental leave for working men.

According to The Dad Shift, fathers in the UK are entitled to just 2 weeks paid parental leave at a rate half the minimum wage. As they have told the PM, ‘proper parental leave for fathers and co-parents is good for mothers, good for babies, good for fathers and good for society including improving health outcomes for all.’

What a clever campaign! Here’s hoping the statues enjoy having a baby wrapped to their chests for a while, and that this graphic message gets a positive response from the Starmer government.