

**FEATURE**

A personal journey to health

**FAITH TALK**

Weeding the soil of life

**MY STORY**

Pain with purpose

# Learning to like myself again

Confronting fears and making changes, one step at a time



# SALVOS

MAGAZINE



*"It takes as long as it takes.  
Be gentle on yourself."*

*Author unknown*





## The Salvation Army is about giving hope where it's needed most.

### What is The Salvation Army?

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.

### Vision Statement

Wherever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.

### Mission Statement

The Salvation Army is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus by:

- Caring for people
- Creating faith pathways
- Building healthy communities
- Working for justice

# Salvos Magazine

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## Healthy habits

Most of us want to be physically and emotionally well. We try to look after ourselves, and our loved ones, especially as COVID-19 rages around the world. Many of us know how quickly, and dramatically, life can change through physical or mental ill-health.

In this edition, three people share their health stories and the challenges they faced to turn their lives around. Christine talks about not focusing on weight loss but working on the different segments of her life each day; Robyn shares how she came from a place of not liking herself anymore, to making some changes and reaping the benefits; and Brad shows how reaching out for help, physically and spiritually, enabled him work through some damaging habits to come to a place of wholeness.

Weeding out negative habits is rarely easy and in Faith Talk this week, Danielle talks about how a gardening project with her son helped her see the impact of 'weeds' in her own life and the importance of digging them out – roots and all!

For all these stories and more, go to [salvosmagazine.org.au](http://salvosmagazine.org.au)

Simone Worthing  
Assistant Editor

# Everyday rhythms of grace

A personal journey to a healthy mind, body and spirit

**WORDS** CHRISTINE WALLER

2020 was a season where we all needed a whole bunch of grace. July 2020 was when I chose to offer that grace to myself.

I was in the middle of an ‘interesting’ year and felt like I was travelling okay, considering the circumstances in our world. Deep down, though, I knew I wasn’t living my best life.



A check-up with my doctor presented me with a different picture. There were high blood pressure issues, my cholesterol levels weren’t looking that impressive, I was getting headaches and blurred vision and my depression and anxiety were starting to make noises in the basement of my life.

My lovely doctor had a stern, but grace-filled chat with me and encouraged me to choose to make some changes. “Your health”, she reminded me, “is about concentrating on the whole person – a segment every day.”

I left with a referral to a dietician, the promise that I would connect with my psychologist, that I would make time to do something in my week that energises me and that, overall, I would be kind to myself.

## DAILY STEPS

And so, my journey to grace-filled, ‘segment a day’ health began. This process lined up with a Bible verse that was really resonating with me – Romans chapter 12, verse 1. It says, “So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering” (*The Message* translation).

“

**This time, I wasn’t just focusing on weight loss.**

”

I was hopeful, but gnawing at the back of my mind were the many times that I had tried this before. If you can name the weight loss program – I can guarantee you that I’ve tried it!

This time though, I wasn’t just focusing on the segment of weight loss and the number on the scales, but all the segments that I hadn’t made the time for, or realised the joy and freedom in – those that make me the person that I am.



PHOTO BY TINA WITHERSPOON ON UNSPLASH

A second difference was a gift that God sent me via social media. I shared on Facebook about starting this journey and my friend Yvonne messaged me and asked whether we could support each other. Six months later, we still message each other on Saturday mornings to check in, encourage and share a whole bunch of grace.

Everyone's life segments will look different and that's how it's meant to be. God made us each unique. Here are some of the segments I'm focusing on throughout my week:

### MENTAL HEALTH

Looking after it proactively rather than reactively. The creative journaling based on author and social research professor Brene Brown's technique that I'm working through with my psychologist is fabulous, and has been so helpful.

### DIET

Filling my supermarket trolley with vegetables and fruit instead of processed foods.

### HOBBIES

Taking time to do things I enjoy such as jigsaws, Lego, high teas, reading and cross stitch.

### PHYSICAL

Enjoying Parkrun. I also aim to walk every day this year.

### FUN

Watching movies, bush walking, catching up with friends.

### FAMILY

Date nights, spending time individually with my adult kids, catching up with interstate or overseas family through phone calls, Zoom, and in-person when the borders open.

### STUDY

I am studying a diploma in Community Services.

### MUSIC

I am continuing to learn the harp.

### SPIRITUAL

Starting each day on the lookout for what God is doing and living the life that Jesus modelled through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Being involved in a 'life group' where we read scripture and share the challenges and joys of living our faith, sharing podcasts, prayer and music. Remembering that God is in the details of my life.

### JIGSAW CAFÉ

As a result of these changes, I commenced a 'jigsaw café' in my home. Six to eight people would 'book in' for the 3-4 hour session, receive a jigsaw to start on, make new friends and enjoy a 'cuppa' together. ►

Similarly, I began a ‘Lego Masters Café’ and an ‘Escape to the Chateau’ high tea where we watched the British documentary series of the same name and shared a socially-distanced high tea. Using something that I enjoy was a great way to connect with people during the COVID-19 restrictions.

“

**I am learning to value myself in this journey.**

”

**IDENTITY**

Six months in and I have lost the first 10 kilos that the doctor suggested, and my blood pressure and cholesterol have greatly improved. More importantly, I am learning to value myself.

Singer and songwriter Lauren Daigle wrote these words in her song *You Say*, which six months ago could have come from my pen:

*“I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I’m not enough*

*Every single lie that tells me I will never measure up*

*Am I more than just the sum of every high and every low*

*Remind me once again just who I am because I need to know.”*

My identity is who God says I am. Loved and enough – just as I am. Even when I’m not making progress, I know that I am imperfect and I’m enough!



Christine enjoys the occasional treat as part of her overall plan.

Over these past six months, I’ve learnt that it is wise to practise the pause, to regroup and celebrate where you are, right here, right now. I can’t focus on every segment at the same time, so I hit the pause button on that area until it’s time to hit release again.

My daily intention is to continue with this new rhythm and to live authentically as God made me to be – healthy in body, mind and spirit. In this journey I need a whole bunch of grace – why don’t you join me in 2021 and live your best authentic life?

*Major Christine Waller is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) serving in Adelaide, South Australia.*



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

# Learning to like myself again

Confronting fears and making changes, one step at a time

WORDS ROBYN LORIMER



PHOTO BY BRUNO NASCIMENTO ON UNSPASH

It took an overseas trip, knee surgery and losing a close friend to cancer that made me realise I needed to change the way I was living. My health – mental and physical – was at a point where I just didn't like who I was anymore.

I didn't like photos being taken, knee pain made walking any distance nearly impossible, and things I had always enjoyed had now become difficult. I felt a complete failure in so many areas of my life.

When I came home from a trip overseas, where I really had struggled, I decided enough was enough. I had already been booked for some knee surgery, and now was the time to make a change.

Only a few years ago I had lost a close friend

to aggressive brain cancer, and it really shocked me that life could be taken so quickly. So, with her in mind, I put a challenge out to a group of friends – I needed to make changes in my life and would they help me? There wasn't anything we could have done to save our friend, but we could do something to get fit and healthy and live our lives to the full.

I had my surgery and part of the recovery was to lose weight. For years I had struggled with my weight, and it was a key part of my life where I wanted to regain control. I began attending a weight-management clinic and my journey started with a proper eating plan and exercise.

This was all very positive, but the problem I kept facing was confidence. If you don't have confidence or faith in yourself to make the ▶



PHOTO BY MARIANA MEDVEDEVA ON UNSPASH

change, then the change won't happen. If you don't believe that you can do this, then you won't. For such a long time I had struggled with my self-worth and ability to change the way I felt about myself, that I had already failed even before I started.

So, I started with small weight-loss goals and minimal exercise. Weekly check-ins with my nurse allowed me to see weight change starting to happen. I didn't refer to it being a diet, but a change in eating habits.

Support from family and friends was life-changing. Two of my girlfriends joined this journey with me and together we supported each other with food hints, encouraging thoughts and sharing our successes and failures. Between the three of us, we have now lost over 70 kilos.

Then COVID-19 happened and everything changed. Work and church were now from home, and my check-ins with my nurse were online. I feared falling back into bad habits without that face-to-face accountability.

The pandemic did, though, get me into a rhythm of walking. On Sundays, I walked while listening to our online church service. In the past I had tried to avoid walking, but now it was something I looked forward to. My knees were getting stronger and I was losing weight – added incentives to keep going.

In May last year, I decided to walk the 8km Mother's Day Classic for breast cancer. I'd never done this challenge before, not having had the confidence to achieve it. Again, though, I knew that change had to happen; I had to stop telling myself that I couldn't do things and believe that I could. I walked more than the 8kms and it gave my confidence such a boost. I was inspired to try new things and push my limits further. I felt I'd been given a new lease of life.

So, after 18 months, I've lost nearly 30 kilos. This will be an ongoing journey, a work in progress, but that's okay. I'm so close to my goal that I just want to keep going.

I have found a new sense of freedom and happiness. I realised that this change in me couldn't just be physical; I needed to learn to like myself again and to embrace the wonderful life that God has given me. I'm learning not to let fear change me or stop me from living my life the very best way I can, and it is my hope that just this small snippet of my journey may encourage others to make that change. It's so worth it!

*Captain Robyn Lorimer is National Coordinator for the Salvos' Positive Lifestyle Program (see back cover).*



Scan here for more on finding meaning.



## Salvos support refugee soccer tournament

The Salvos helped support a recent soccer tournament in Toowoomba that brought together about 60 players from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The brainchild of Charles Kitapindu, a Mercy Community multicultural community worker in the Queensland Darling Downs city, the Spring Intercultural Football Carnival was a significant undertaking.

The Salvos got involved by donating some of the equipment needed after Major Deon Oliver, Area Officer for South West Queensland, put out the call to Salvos stores and family stores in Toowoomba and surrounding communities. Donations, mainly boots, came from as far as Roma and Kingaroy.

Charles, who fled civil unrest in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to Benin in western Africa in 2010, said that most of the players were new to Australia, having come from 11 different countries – many from Africa.

The four teams in the inaugural Mercy Community CAMS (Community Action for a Multicultural Society) Cup at the Toowoomba Sports Ground were Iraqi Ezidhan FC, Toowoomba African FC, Logan Stars FC and the Toowoomba Nepalese FC, with 15 players per team. The referees were provided by Football Queensland South West.

Charles, now an Australian citizen, said the carnival was “an important milestone” in embracing cultural diversity and strengthening community cohesion in Toowoomba.

He said the carnival went a long way towards



Charles Kitapindu accepts a donation of boots from the Salvos' Deon Oliver.

“acknowledging the gift to our nation” the refugee population was giving Australia, but also promoted working together collaboratively and in harmony in a multi-ethnic environment.

A recent Queensland Youth Strategy Future Building Forum in Toowoomba, recognised that sport provided an important pathway for young people with a refugee background in their social integration. “Since then, efforts have been underway to ensure institutional and cross-cultural barriers are addressed to increase young migrant and refugee background Queenslanders’ participation in community and professional sports,” Charles said.

He said the carnival happened only through the “tremendous and tireless contribution of valued partners” such as the Salvos. A continuing collaboration would contribute to “changing the world from the sports field”.

– **Darryl Whitecross**

# Weeding the soil of life

Pulling out the imposters that suck our souls dry

WORDS DANIELLE STRICKLAND

To make room for new things, nature lets go of the old. But sometimes, even nature needs some help.

Is it ever hard to tell what a weed is! Just saying. The best I could figure out is that it grows really fast, bears no fruit and has no beauty. Although that's not even always the case. My eight-year-old son brought home his school project to convince me that weeds were plants, too. I decided that he could plant a weed garden if he really felt compassion for the weeded ones, but that I wanted to help my existing garden grow. I'd start by weeding a lovely patch in my backyard. I felt a bit responsible, to tell you the truth.

So, I headed out, armed with ignorance and responsibility and bent over, tending my garden until my back was hard to straighten again. I pulled and pulled at what looked like weeds to me, and found the sweet satisfaction of pulling some out with the roots.

It did seem like a lot of work for what I assumed to be just aesthetic gains. A few days later, I realised the much deeper reason weeds need to be pulled ...

The existing plants began to flourish. Without the weeds sucking the nutrients from the earth, the plants had room to take a deep breath and drink in the precious life of the soil. And it did them a world of good. It did my soul a world of good. I felt the nudging of a divine whisper with deeper truth for the garden of my life.

And so it goes, to live well means a letting go or a little pulling up before a growing or bearing or beauty. A bending before a tall, stretching straightening in the sun. The death involved in resurrection is not just for aesthetics, it turns out. It's a deep work within. Under the surface of our lives there is soil for our souls that has enough nourishment to make us grow.

“

... allowing weeds  
to grow unfettered is  
dangerous to the soil.

”

But there are things in our lives that grow fast, furiously, bear no fruit and obscure our natural beauty. They can sometimes seem like growth, but they are tricky imposters who suck up our precious soil and keep us locked, limited and hidden. They include prejudice, bitterness, jealousy, self-pity, appetite, laziness, indifference, selfishness – those are the ones I've come to recognise in my life's garden.

In the hopes of improving my appearance, I sift through websites and spend half the day going to discount stores to find clothes that might just dress up my life, only to feel the energy and vitality of my day sucked dry. But then I remind myself that the outside of me is overrated, and I turn on some music, cook



a decent meal and spend time with people I love ... and my soul finds rest.

I'm tired and restless and reach for a sugar-coated doughnut, topped with my favourite ice cream or chocolate treat, to soothe myself. It doesn't soothe. It adds weight – not just physically, but the weed of my appetite unlocks a deeper hunger – one that I just can't fill. Not even with a big bowl of popcorn 30 minutes later.

Instead, I put in my earphones and turn on a podcast that leads me through 30 minutes of mindful meditation with scripture from the Psalms. I breathe deeply as instructed and take the 30 minutes to eat a different kind of food. Food for my soul. I feel satisfied. I feel presence. I grow taller. I live more deeply. I reach into the soil of life and emerge more alive.

Weeding is tricky. Identifying disguised growth lacking in depth and character is hard

work. But allowing weeds to grow unfettered is dangerous to the soil. To the plants. To growth. To our lives.

So, pull them out. Identify them by their easy and fast growth that withers your soul, and pull them all out at the roots. Replace them with the things already planted in you that are stuck, hidden and in the shade.

Let the sun shine on your God-given gifts, beauty and dreams. Let things go that don't give you life, and embrace the beauty waiting to emerge from your own soul.

*Salvo Danielle Strickland is an author, communicator and justice advocate. For details see [daniellestrickland.com](http://daniellestrickland.com)*



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

# Pain with purpose

Brad back on track with God after health and workplace crises

WORDS BRAD McIVER

I have never thought of myself as an athlete, let alone a marathon runner. But, after many years of struggles with my body and food, it was a whole-of-body, mind and spirit transformation over 10 years ago that allowed me to experience freedom in all of the senses of the word. And yes, I have run many thousands of kilometres since that time.

Having grown up in the Salvos as the child of parents who were officers (pastors) – and knowing the Salvos and our theology as the basis for my faith as a young man; I, like many others, sought fame, fortune and career through a range of pathways. These included hospitality, construction, sales and community service work.

“

**Little steps, baby steps,  
but always a forward step**

”

I was married and became a father at a young age. Through my early adulthood, I became drawn to alcohol and tobacco as ways to cope with stress, and I guess, to also be accepted among my peers. I kept up the attendance at church and the service aspects of being a Salvo for many years. Certainly, there was for me an ongoing struggle of values at play in my life. At times I was feeling very close

to God, and at other times feeling very far from him and anything but a representative of Christ and his love for the world.

Don't get me wrong; if you asked most people, they would probably say that I was a pretty good bloke, a pretty good husband and father. But I knew that I really was living two lives – the inward and the outward self were not in sync and certainly not in step with God.

This escalated after we arrived in the Northern Territory in late 2004 as a family of six, and I had a really well-paid leadership role with a construction product supplier. By this stage, my chubby boyish weight that I had always been embarrassed about, and which often limited my involvement and capacity for sport and being active, had blown out to a crazy 140kg. I was stressed, and my drinking and smoking were pretty well out of control.

Despite going through the outward observance of religion at that time, I did not have a living experience of the Holy Spirit at work in my life. I'm sure he was there, I'm sure that he was probably the voice that would call me to account for some of my dumb decisions, but I was choosing to ignore that voice.

Ultimately, I experienced a workplace breakdown and lost my job because I was so dysfunctional. This triggered Fibromyalgia and Isaacs Syndrome (which took three years to diagnose). Through it all, my amazing wife and family, as well as friends, supported and cared for me. It was at this lowest of low



Brad, right, continues to run regularly, often with friends and colleagues, as part of staying healthy and fit.

points for me that I fully surrendered to God, literally crying out for him to take control, and, of course, he did. I really can't describe the experience in any way, other than being completely washed clean by the presence of God through the Holy Spirit.

This commenced a slow but deliberate focus on developing healthy rhythms physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Little steps, baby steps, but always a forward step. A short walk, a mentoring conversation, a time of silence and prayer, a time of sharing with other men about my feelings. Simple things that, together, started to allow me to accept and love myself, to see myself as God sees me.

With each step, prayer, scripture reading and mentoring session, I felt stronger and healthier. Eventually, it was marathons, cycling, swimming, bushwalking and team sport

that became the spaces where I could meet with God and meet with others. There was a wholeness in me I had never experienced before. Oh, and I had lost 60kg along the way, so that was kind of cool.

My encouragement to you is this: How might your full surrender to God, to his will and purpose for your life, transform you in ways that you never expected or have never experienced before?

*Captain Brad McIver is the Salvos' State Manager for Homelessness in NSW and the ACT.*



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

## Coconut raspberry balls



PHOTO BY ANDREA REDFORD

### Ingredients

1 cup frozen raspberries, 2 tbsp maple syrup, 1½ cups rolled oats, 1 tbsp chia seeds, 1 tbsp coconut oil (melted), ⅔ cup desiccated coconut

### Method

Let the raspberries defrost until just thawed.

Place raspberries, maple syrup, rolled oats, chia seeds, coconut oil and ½ cup of the coconut in a food processor.

Process the mixture until smooth, then transfer to a bowl.

Cover with plastic wrap and leave in fridge for about four hours until the mixture thickens.

Place remaining ⅓ cup of coconut in a small bowl. With clean hands\*, roll 1 tbsp of the raspberry mixture into a ball. Then roll in coconut to coat. Repeat with remaining mixture.

Enjoy!

*\*Having your hands slightly wet can make rolling the balls a bit easier.*

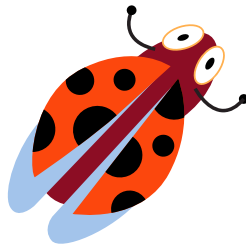
## Funny things kids say



"Why do they call them waiters when we are the ones who wait?"



"I'm not feeling very worky today"



"You have a bug on you, but it looks great!"

## Bible byte

"So I give you now a new commandment: Love each other just as much as I have loved you."

John chapter 13, verse 34  
The Passion Translation

	8			5		3		
4	5			6				1
9			1				6	
		1		2				4
	6						8	3
8					4			
2						7		
		5		3	2			
			5	8				

## Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

## Tum-Tum

On which page of this week's *Salvos Magazine* is Tum-Tum hiding?



**Answers:** 1. Bananas 2. Sleeping 3. 15 minutes on a stationary bike. 4. Nearly 100 trillion. 5. Around 20,000.

3	7	9	5	8	1	4	2	6
6	4	5	7	3	2	8	1	9
2	1	8	4	9	6	7	3	5
8	2	3	6	7	4	1	5	9
7	6	4	9	1	5	2	7	3
5	8	1	8	2	5	7	4	3
4	3	7	1	4	5	8	9	6
4	5	2	3	8	1	9	6	7
1	8	6	2	5	9	3	4	7

## Quick quiz



PHOTO BY KAZUEND ON UNSPLASH

1. Eating which fruit can help improve your mood?
2. Which activity burns more calories – sleeping or watching television?
3. Which exercise is equivalent to laughing 100 times?
4. How many cells does the human body contain?
5. How many breaths a day does the average adult take?

# Did you know?

- During your lifetime, you will eat about 30,000kg of food.
- Beards are the fastest growing hairs on the human body.
- One of the ingredients needed to make dynamite is peanuts.

# Positive Lifestyle Program

The Salvation Army's Positive Lifestyle Program (PLP) is a fully supported eight-module course that helps you gain a deeper understanding of who you are as a person. It aims to build self-awareness, self-esteem and assertiveness, while also exploring issues such as discontentment, fear, anger and fatigue. The program covers:

- Self-awareness
- Anger
- Depression and loneliness
- Stress
- Grief and loss
- Assertiveness
- Self-esteem
- Future directions

For more information, or to register your interest, go to [salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/positive-lifestyle-program](https://salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/positive-lifestyle-program)

Please note that the Positive Lifestyle Program is not a crisis support service. If you require immediate emotional support, we recommend calling Lifeline on **13 11 14** or visit [beyondblue.org.au](https://beyondblue.org.au)