

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE JOURNEY

Careers are funny things. You often start them thinking you would like to do one thing and then end up somewhere else you could never have imagined.

I wasn't the most engaged student at school. I don't know why, but I never fitted in. Much to my parents' horror I came home in the first week of Year 12 and said, 'I'm leaving to do a secretarial course.' I was the last of their kids who might go to university. Off I went to TAFE. For two weeks I repeatedly hit the wrong keys on the typewriter while not being allowed to look at my fingers. Then I left. But I was still excited about my working life.

I got a job as a checkout chick at Woolies. From there I moved up to being meat packer in the Woolies butchery. Those were the days when supermarkets had butchers. I loved this job, strangely enough. I can still rattle off the cuts of meat. I even learned butchers' speak.

Moving along after tiring of a bullying butcher, I worked at a Mobil service station as a console operator. It sounds flash, but I pushed the buttons to release the petrol pumps. I got to play shop with the confectionery, which was fun. I liked this job too. Then I became an office assistant at a brake and clutch centre. I'm not sure why I thought that was right for me. My life took a turn when someone hired me to be a bookseller in a suburban bookshop. I was only 18. She told me after that I seemed the type of person who wouldn't mind doing the dirty work as well as the flash work. I took that as a compliment.

Twenty years later, after doing all I could ever have imagined in bookselling, I knew it was time to jump ship.

I stepped out with the help of family and started working for myself and founded *Good Reading*, a magazine for book lovers. I feel very lucky. I am surrounded by books and people who love the world of books and the sharing of information. We share a love of opening up doors to adults and children to make a difference in their lives. That was 16 years ago. I am still very satisfied. For now.

As I look back at this chequered career history, each role and each lesson I learned brought me to doing what I do today. I took from each job something that I apply here at this moment in my life, both at work and in my personal life. There have been plenty of mistakes, but each one has had a silver lining. I have learned the ability to multitask, manage databases and inventory, work with people (some fabulous, some difficult), plan complicated tasks, mentor, create opportunities and, most importantly, to make sure I and those around me enjoy every day while we work. You always need to smile and laugh.

Having read articles in this issue, and through knowing many of you in the LIS industry, it seems that many of you have travelled a similar course to mine and found your own way of finding where you best fit and what you most enjoy.

Career trajectories can go up and down or move sideways. But looking back, I think most of us would agree it's always a worthwhile and exciting journey. 🌟

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