



UPLIFT GLOBAL COMMUNITY GATHERING, LET'S EXPLORE: WHAT THE FIRES ARE TELLING US

Everyone is invited to an UPLIFT gathering to enquire and explore, *What the fires are telling us*.

The evening will feature a guided meditation and collective prayer with **Bhavani Lev**. A presentation from Cellular Biologist, **Bruce Lipton**, about the *Field and the Power of Collective Intention*. Devotional Chants with **Deva Premal & Miten**.

An open conversation with **Bruce Lipton, Ganga Mira, Prince EA, Holley Somerville-Knot, Jean Renouf, and more**, to explore what is the most loving and authentic response we can make, both individually and collectively, during this unprecedented time we are facing.

Entry is by donation, with all proceeds supporting fire relief efforts (no-one will be turned away for lack of funds). Mullumbimby Civic Hall, Thursday 16 January, from 6pm.

More info from facebook.com/upliftconnect

ART ON SCREEN

Come on a visually stunning journey through the daily life at the magnificent **Hermitage Museum**, and retrace two and a half centuries of legendary art and history.

Featuring the largest collection of paintings in the world, the Hermitage has been a meeting place for foreign artists, architects and intellectuals, creating connections through art and culture, and is forever marked by the acquisitions of the enlightened Empress, Catherine II, whose personality has continued to fascinate art historians and critics over the centuries.

At the Byron Theatre, Sunday 19 January at 3pm. Tickets available at www.byroncentre.com.au

TELL YOUR STORY, BE AUTHENTIC, AND CONNECT

For the past 6 months George Catsi has been co-presenting *The Authentic You Masterclass*, with Mandy Nolan; a two day intensive that uses their professional skills and insights to support people to be more powerful and engaging speakers. Over the two days, they touch on personal narratives, and how these inform who a person is, and how they present to others. Lecturer in Design Thinking at UTS, Dr George Catsi spoke with *The Echo*.

What is George Catsi's story? What is surprising about you?

Personally, my life has taken so many twists and turns, but I've generally been the one driving myself around those bends. I learnt very early that experience means so much to how I learn, and how I learn about people. I thrive on it. I like to try things. I like to meet people and hear about them. I'm inherently curious. It keeps me engaged with people and the world. I became a registered nurse when I first left school – a sister – I loved the people that I came across and was always asking their story. I always remember a 90-year-old woman who was so vibrant, so alive, so charismatic (had to get that word in), that I asked her what was her philosophy on life? She said 'I never stop learning, I never say, "I know." Because once you know – then there is nowhere to go – no new perspective or insight on something. Beware of anyone who says they know. Because 'knowing' is the end of the story. Stay open to learning. That is what keeps me alive.'

I'm not a nurse anymore, but it always surprises people to learn that, and shifts their perspective on me. I think that is what our masterclass works on, finding surprising parts of people – then bringing that to the fore.

Why are people's personal stories important when they present?

When someone tells a story, they are exposing / revealing a part of themselves. We get an insight into who they are, into how they place the events around them, into the context of their opinions. It is not personal stories as much as the tellers' response to the stories that makes us interested in someone.

Isn't it inappropriate to share your personal stuff in a professional setting?

It's totally okay to share your story in the work environment. In fact, I would say it is essential. It allows empathy to emerge, trust to be built, and importantly, a sense of who you are to be revealed. We are not robots, but complex beings that are an accumulation of the things that have happened to us, and our responses to them. A story can reveal your mistakes, and what you learnt, or your success, and why you succeeded. Or it might reveal a part of you, not connected at all to your work persona, which is inherently part of your being. I always tell stories of what has worked, and hasn't worked, in my life. What I've learnt, and also what I am still struggling to grasp. Whenever I do this, I find my work relationships strengthen, and when in a leadership position my rapport deepens.

What is charisma?

Charisma – most don't think they have it, but wish they did. I love the dictionary definition,



'A compelling attractiveness or charm that can inspire devotion in others.' When you read this, you think cult leader, or nationalist political leaders (think fascist dictators or Trump – might be the same thing). I think charismatics in this camp have given the word a bad name. Inspiring devotion, then using it to send their followers to oblivion, plus all those who get in the way of their brand of utopia. However, you have to step back, and try and see what it is that is going on. Charisma appears as a comfort in their own skin, such that they can stand in a crowded room and exude quiet confidence. This confidence radiates energy that others inherently pick up on. It can manifest as someone being interested in you, and not just themselves. It can shine as a passion for something – be it an interest or a cause – but which is not delivered as an obsession that bores others to tears.

If you don't have charisma, can you develop it?

Of course. As height, wealth and fashion don't matter, then anyone can develop it. Basically, you don't need lots of dollars to develop yourself to be someone who engages others. When we do our masterclasses, we work on having people be comfortable in their own skin; such that you can stand there and be looked at – even when not speaking – and that you can learn to enjoy the gaze of others. For me this is the foundation of charisma.

Who are the people that you think would most benefit from a masterclass?

For me, the classes work for people who are at a particular point in their life. Basically, they are thinking 'fuck it, I want to speak what I am thinking – that my life has had experiences that are valid and interesting – and may be of value to others'.

This can be across a range of professions – from those that require some form of public speaking – to those whose communication might be more individual, to little at all, but you want to speak out from there. We live in a time where we need to hear what people are thinking. And we need it to be communicated in a way that inspires others to act, to believe that they too can make a difference, whether it is on a global, or local, scale. If 16-year-old Greta can speak at the UN, with no training, and inspire millions, well then, what are we all waiting for?

In running this masterclass, what are the stories that have most surprised you?

I'm astounded at the courage of people who have done this masterclass to reveal things that are so personal or passionate. Seeing people reveal a deeply sad or difficult part of their life – not to seek sympathy – but to use their life experience to make a difference... some people have said things that they have never told others before. It is deeply rewarding to be guiding these stories out, in a way that empowers people.

The two day masterclass, running Saturday 29 Feb, 9am-5pm, and Sunday 1 March, 9am-1pm, concludes with a small presentation of curated presentations – like mini TED talks. The Authentic You Masterclass early bird enrolments have been extended to 20 January. Enrolments and enquiries mandynolan.com.au

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