

Letters of Thanks

Stepping Stones Course

Dear Tony, I am just enclosing this letter to thank you, and all those involved in the Stepping Stones course.

It has been a great help to me over the past 2½ years. If this letter can encourage others to follow through on their goals and focus on all the course taught us, please feel free to publish.

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I have just returned home from the most amazing week-end. Hot air ballooning in Canberra, at their Annual Ballooning Festival. Twenty-seven spectacular coloured balloons, floating over the sites of Canberra on a perfect autumn morning.

It's almost three years now since I did 'Stepping Stones' course. At the course, we were asked to set ourselves three goals – a one month goal (which was to work in my little front garden), a one year goal (a week-end in the snow – fun filled memories in a winter wonderland!) and a three year goal, which was just accomplished – hanging in a hot air balloon, way above a sleepy city.

My twin sister in the basket alongside me – we smile at each other – 'I did it!' 'You did!' she says.

But my life is far from perfect. My 24 year old son has a dual diagnosis of

Bipolar 1 Disorder and poly-substance drug abuse.

The last three years, since 'Stepping Stones' has been a roller coaster ride – through hell! He has been scheduled on Acute Mental Health Wards on seven occasions in the last 2½ years. I don't even want to recall the many crisis situations he has been in over that time, but it has felt like we have all been dragged through a horror movie we don't want to be in, and we can't turn off.

The situation in my family life is far from ideal, some relationships very strained. I still struggle at times through the chaos but am holding on to my balance pole and not letting it totally consume me.

Accomplishing my three goals has been a huge 'success' for me. Having these goals helped me focus on other things, cope better and get out there and live my life.

Thanks to 'Stepping Stones', I am learning to accept, I am learning to 'let go', giving me more energy to live my own life. I continue to educate myself also and do more courses when I have the opportunity, and I am holding onto my priceless support network, who help me manage and become more resilient.

So, thank you 'Stepping Stones' for helping me reclaim my life.

Barbara