

John Macmillan, the Prime Minister of Australia is caught between the past and the present. He loses contact to his true life. Meeting the girl with nine toes, she teaches him how to become more in contact with his feelings and emotions.

The girl with nine toes

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The girl with nine toes

We live in a world where human evolution has taken giant steps over the last decades. The Computer, Internet, Video games, iPods and other information and entertainment tools are an everyday part of our private and professional lives. Daily stress and consumption of information is extreme and almost impossible to assimilate into our normal thinking structure. The media bombard us with news and views, images that shock and disturb our inner Balance. Schools are falling apart as they become fortresses trying to protect our children against aggression, anger, injury and even death. Many people have forgotten how it feels to lie down in newly mown grass, beneath the sun, listening to the birds singing and the other soothing sounds of life. We have lost contact to ourselves, to our emotions and to our spirit. This is a story about people finding their way back into the awareness of feeling whole. It is a story about waking up and having the courage to look at life from the inside of the heart. How often do you think back to the past and think “If only I had done that differently!,, Sometimes with regret. Sometimes with sadness and sometimes, even with a feeling of hopelessness. This is a tale about a man who chose to change his way of living. No easy decision for anyone, especially when it means swimming against the current; but, what was that saying? *Only dead fish swim with the current.* I hope that you, the reader will enjoy reading this book and also feel moved to make a change, because I believe that everybody has the power to make a change in his or her life. Just ask yourself–what will change in the future if I do this differently?

Ray Wilkins FRSA Belgium 2007

The girl with nine toes

A story about personal growth

RAY WILKINS

BAREFOOT BOOKS

The girl with nine toes

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BAREFOOT BOOKS

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Chapter 1

*H*e could hear the rhythmic sound of his running shoes whispering across the forest floor. The sun shining through the gum trees sent shadows of light down to play their weird games on the narrow path he was jogging through. He could feel his heart beating faster in his chest and his breath started to slow down as he felt himself slipping into the running flow rhythm to which he was accustomed. Somewhere behind him he could hear the noise caused by his two bodyguards; he could hear them grunting and cursing trying to keep up with him. As he jogged through the trees enjoying this brief feeling of freedom his thoughts wandered back to the events of the day.

The alarm clock started its hysterical screaming at seven o'clock and wouldn't stop until I managed to roll over and press down the button. I had a headache, most probably because of the booze that I drank at the barbecue organised by the Lion's Club last night. I also felt a dark cloud wrapping around my thoughts, a feeling that I've had a lot frequently lately, since Mary died two years ago, actually. I immediately felt the tears coming into my eyes so I quickly swallowed them down with a glass of water and three Aspirin. At the breakfast table I started reading the "Canberra Times" there was a new article about me, discussing about how weak I was, hanging onto the shirt tails of my friends in America, and basically informing the public that I was failing the country, and if something didn't happen soon Australia would become the next third world country. Unemployment was rising

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and my rate of popularity was sinking. Even my housekeeper kept looking at me through hooded eyes, clouded with disappointment as she was clearing up the breakfast table.

I heard the horn of the car outside in the driveway, it was time to go to work and I only wanted to go back to bed.

On the way to Parliament House I fell asleep in the back seat, but when we stopped at the separate entrance I had my eyes open, ready to seize the day. I walked into my office and started going through my agenda for the day, all the appointments and meetings, pages of information that I had to read through. But all of a sudden I felt dizzy and disoriented. Falling into my chair I took some deep breaths and put my feet up on the desk, and I soon began to feel better; I started my days business.

Somehow everyone I talked to seemed to be boring or I just had the feeling that they were not quite telling the truth I found myself nodding my head saying the proper “yes's,” “no's,” and “that’s interesting,” at the proper moments. Everything my eyes saw appeared colourless—almost grey—and there was a feeling of emptiness within my body that I couldn’t shake. Maybe I should make an appointment to see Doc Weber *before* my annual check-up comes up. Anyway, I stumbled through the day without making any grave mistakes and now here I am on the banks of the Murrumbidgee getting some exercise and fresh air—trying to find my way back into a life where I can once again feel good about what I am doing.

I kept on running, listening to the sounds of the river and my breathing, when all of a sudden I lost my balance. Falling to the ground, I felt the earth give way beneath my legs and I started sliding down an embankment towards the river, hitting my head on a rock. Everything went black and I heard nothing but silence.

“John, John wake up! It’s time for a change, open your eyes!”

This is exactly what I did and I found myself looking into the deepest, blackest eyes I had ever seen in my entire life. The

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eyes belonged to the face of a very old, black man, wrinkled and scarred, standing naked in the sun, carrying a spear in his right hand; a woomera was hanging from his shoulder. He offered me his arm, and standing shakily with the help of this strange man I asked, “Who the hell are you and what are you doing here? What happened to me? I have a terrible headache and my men are probably searching for me and getting very worried—so if you want to kidnap me do it right now!” The stranger looked deeper into my eyes and passed his right hand slowly in front of my eyes and whispered in a soft, enticing voice

“Let your pain become smoke and your worry a river mist rising in the dawn.”

“Hey what was that? My headache’s gone and for the first time in months I feel lighter than a sixteen wheeler truck!” The strange man remained silent and turning into the tea tree scrub he beckoned me to follow him. There was a winding path going down to the river and the air started to get cooler. I could feel a light breeze that was scented with wattle. I had no idea where I was going but at the same time I had a feeling of *Déjà vu* – as if I’d already known what was going to happen. Soon we came to the edge of the river and there, sitting on a large rock, was a small Aborigine girl singing softly, trailing her hand in the slowly flowing water. The old man looked into my eyes and said.

“This is the girl with nine toes, she will change your life.” Then he simply disappeared. I was shocked and, as if I had been hypnotised, I went to the rock and sat down in front of the girl with nine toes.

“Welcome to my home *Turamma*—do you want to live or die?”

I looked at her, seeing a face that was full of wisdom and purity and, at the same time, as innocent as a small child’s; there was the beginning of a smile on her lips. I stuttered.

“Live of c ...c ...course.”

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“Okay *Turawwa*, if you really want to live, you must change many things in your life, especially your thoughts and the things in which you believe. Your very thoughts create your reality whether good or bad.” Her voice sounded like singing and I could not see her lips moving; her head was bobbing from side to side and her yellow eyes were shining. Even though I had no idea what was happening, I could remember the stories that the Aborigines told about a girl with nine toes. Stories I had never really believed. I was listening, watching and feeling in awe at what this little girl with nine toes was telling me.

“You are *Turawwa*, this means *leader of the heart*. You were chosen long ago to lead this country into a future where all people prosper, regardless of their colour or their beliefs. This is your challenge. The way will not be easy and it will take a long time. But first you must decide if you are willing to give everything you have, even your heart, to walk this path. Close your eyes. Go inside and ask your inner self if all parts of you—the inside and outside; the conscious and unconscious of the past, present, and future—are willing to fight together at your side through this life-changing process, to always stand at your side and to support you with all that they have. Yes or no?” I closed my eyes and even though the instructions were strange, I found myself asking all parts of my body if they were willing to support me in what was happening to me—even though I had no idea what it was. I got a load of yes's in reply and a tingling sensation in my belly. I shouted “YES!” and opened my eyes. Then she said;

“There is only one truth and that is the truth in which *you* yourself believe. Your first challenge is to learn to trust your inner self, your intuition, your teacher inside. This may be difficult—there are people out there who do not agree with what you say or what you decide. They will attempt to manipulate you and force you to compromise. They may even try to pressure you with threats or promises. But whatever they say, you must stand up for your own beliefs and decisions, no matter what the consequences

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are. If you stand like the tall gum tree with your roots firmly planted in the soil of trust within yourself, the winds of change will do the rest!" She then asked me to put my hand on my belly, where I felt the tingling sensation. "This is your center, your place of power and certainty; whenever you feel out of balance or unsure about a decision, place your hand here and feel the warmth. Now imagine forming a connection between your mind and this place, allow yourself to take advice and listen to the voices coming from this part of you, all answers should come from your center. With practise, this will become second nature to you."

I stood up, feeling surprisingly awake and looking down at her feet I could see for the first time that she really did have only nine toes! I heard somebody calling my name. I looked up to the embankment and saw Rick, one of my bodyguards, waving his arms frantically shouting at me to climb out of the gully. I started to say "Wait, I want you to meet the girl with nine toes ...!" but when I looked back at the water the rock was empty.

I climbed up to the place where Rick and Joe were waiting for me and told them how I had fallen down the embankment and hit my head. They looked at me in a funny way and Rick said "But there are no scratches or anything, boss and you were only gone for about two minutes anyway-are you feeling alright?"

"I feel better than I've felt in a long time boys, let's go home!"

Believe in yourself, it's worth it!

Chapter 8

He awoke to the sounds of soft voices and the smell of a cooking fire. He opened his eyes, he could see a low roof made of what looked like bark and branches. He was in some kind of hut and somebody was calling out his name, “Turawwa!Turawwa! The sun is waiting! come outside and seize the day!” He crawled out of the hut to see a group of Aborigines sitting around a fire drinking tea, a large black billy can was hanging over the fire. He walked up to the circle and sat down, an old woman who was tending the fire gave him a mug of tea, it tasted sweet and strong but it went down good. A man with feathers stuck all over his body said:

“Turawwa you have now reached the second stone crossing the river, this is the lesson of *self-trust*. There is absolutely no one in this world who you can completely trust, except yourself. How can you look inside the heads of people to see if they are telling the truth or if they carry the spear of integrity? But you can look inside of your own mind and heart to understand the songs the ancestors are singing for you. In every situation where you have to make a decision, even if the consequences may be dangerous or may hurt somebody else, even someone you love—you must follow your heart This is the path of excellence.”

My eyes started to water, but this time because of the smoke of the fire and I answered: “I think I am ready to jump to the second stone, but I am afraid of failing as I have often done in the

past.” I took another swallow of the sweet tea and looked across the fire at the man with many feathers. He responded:

“Think back to a time in the past when you were confronted with a big problem, when you had to make a decision alone, without the help or advice from anyone else. And the decision you made was perfect, even though it was difficult to carry out. How did you feel at this moment, knowing that *this was right?*”

I thought of a time when I had to make a decision concerning sending troops to the Timor region. Everyone was against it, but I wanted to fight for peace. As I was imagining myself standing alone and knowing without any shadow of doubt that the decision was right, I could see myself standing up straight, with my shoulders relaxed and a slight smile on my lips. There was a warm deep feeling inside my chest and, when I put my hand onto this place, the feeling became even stronger.

“This is your moment of *excellence*, use this power song every time you have to make a decision. If you do not experience it, then the decision is not right.” said Mister Feathers.

I opened my eyes to look around at the other people but to my amazement, I was sitting alone at the fire and all I could see was a flat, dusty stretch of earth dotted with stumpy, gnarled bushes and some dried up patches of grass. I stood up and looked up at the sun: it was hot, even though it must still have been early in the morning. I could hear voices coming from the nearby scrub and all of a sudden two children, a boy and a girl, ran out towards where I was standing. The girl said: “The girl with nine toes sent me to give you the new challenge. In order to help you on your way, I will do all that I can to assist you. I am on your side!” Her voice sounded quite soothing and kind, but for some reason she wouldn't look me directly in the eye.

“My name is Wootara and this is Yarawwa.” said the other child, a scruffy looking boy of about twelve.

“You have to decide which one of the two of us you can trust to be your guide—and you have to decide fast!” He explained,

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sounding very brusque and impatient. He looked straight into my eyes without a trace of a smile on his face. I had known situations like this very well in my past when faced with having to decide which person was right and which one was wrong. Most of the time, I tended to believe that the person who was polite and nice towards me was the person to trust; sometimes, it even went so far that I was afraid of hurting feelings if I said 'no' to someone. I looked at the girl and went inside to feel what my heart said. She smiled at me and batted her eyelids. I felt nothing. I looked at the boy; he looked right at me. I put my hand over my heart and it felt warm and strong. I declared, "It is you that I want, Wootara!" and Yarawwa just disappeared.

Wootarra turned towards the desert and mumbled something that sounded like "*follow me!*" And I followed. It was getting hot and I started to sweat, the sand squeaked beneath my bare feet and all I could hear was the silence of the desert but, after a while, Wootara stopped in his tracks "Listen Turawwa, *leader of the heart*, what do you hear?"

I closed my mouth and my eyes and concentrated on listening. After a while, I could hear what sounded like very faint voices coming from a long distance. "These are the voices of the ancestors connected to your inner voice, of whom you can ask any question, anytime, wherever you are. Here lies all the information and all the answers you will ever need to be happy and successful—but the only way to be able to truly hear the voices is to listen with your heart."

One smile can move a mountain

Chapter 12

The moment my head touched the pillow, I fell asleep and the first thing I saw was Wootara's small wiry body crouched under the shade of a coolibah tree.

"Turawwa, there you are, we have been waiting for you!" Sitting beside him was a small scraggy bush dog that looked suspiciously like a cross between a dingo and a fox terrier.

"This is Bongo, he will help us today!" With that he jumped up, motioned for me to take the lead and off we went into the burning country. Everything was yellow, orange or white, broken only by the brown, black colour caused by the shadows of a rock or a tree. The land was flat and hot—full of dust, sand, and the occasional kangaroo. I soon realised that I could walk, close my eyes and at the same time listen to my new *inner voices*.

You are the leader, but also the healer—believing in yourself will give you the strength to know which direction to take. Your intuition is your inner teacher. Your challenge is to bring this boy and his friend back to his family who dwell behind the great Red Rock—follow the path of your heart. All of a sudden, I turned to the west and started running, looking back to make sure Wootara and Bongo were following me. Then, all I did was follow my intuition, turning when I knew that it was right, slowing down or running faster or sometimes even stopping to let the other two catch up with me. Every now and then I stroked Bongo's dried up ears and asked him if I was on the right track. If he licked my hand I knew I was right and I wondered if he would bite my hand if I was wrong .

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We seemed to have been running for hours, when, all of a sudden, high on the horizon, I could see a huge red rock sitting all alone in the open country. Then I knew I was bringing my two friends back to the right place—their home. Behind the rock, there was a small camp with a few scattered bark and wattle lean-tos, a fire, and a man sitting next to the fire who stood up and waved his arms—it was the feathered man.

“Turawwa, you have jumped the second stone!” He shouted.

As I ran up to the fire, Wootara pulled on my shirt-tail so that I had to turn around. Taking my hands into his small bony hands and looking deep into my eyes he told me,

“Thank you for bringing me home”

“But you said *you* were my guide, and yet, you and Bongo followed *me* the whole time.”

“We simply guided you to lead with your intuition and you found the right path using trust,” he answered in his gruff, impatient voice. “Now I give you over to my Father.”

I took a step towards the fire where Mr Feathers was standing. He clapped his hands once and I opened my eyes hearing somewhere in the distance a dog barking.

Have the courage to be different

Chapter 18

John closed his eyes. He found himself standing alone in the middle of the scrub, no shoes on his feet, naked except for a cloth tied around his middle. It was hot and still. He had a spear in one hand and a round flat stone in the other. He was standing perfectly still, waiting. He could see the goanna walking lazily up the track towards him, its head swaying from side to side, its blue-tinged forked tongue flashing in and out, tasting the air. He slowly raised the arm clutching the stone, holding his breath as if the world would stop turning, right at this moment. He aimed, without any doubt about missing, and launched the stone. It hit the lizard in the head and in the same instant as John threw the spear, it pierced the thick skin of the reptile's neck and, in an instant, it fell dead to the dusty ground. John walked up to the dead creature, kneeling down he put two fingers into the blood streaming from the neck of his prey and painted two stripes onto his forehead. He then muttered a small prayer of thanks to the soul of the lizard. He looked up and saw standing in front of him, the feathered man.

"Turawwa welcome back to the country!

"John shook his head as if to clear away cobwebs, and looking at the lizard he said. "What have I just done? I have never killed a living thing in my life, I consider myself a pacifist and yet, I just killed a poor helpless lizard without blinking an eye."

The feathered man lifted the goanna from the ground by the tail; it must have been about three feet long. He looked at it and

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then at John: "This is your next lesson, Turawwa, to learn that souls that die keep the warrior alive so that he is able go on fighting for freedom and justice for the people he loves. A warrior knows no borders. You have already learned to trust your inner self, to believe in your own power, and to have the courage to express your feelings, but a warrior goes even further. Being connected to your past brings you the knowledge and dreams to create your life, just as now you were able to hunt and kill the goanna spirit even though you have never thrown a spear. A warrior lives in eternal peace, he knows no war, no battles, no hate, no fear, no discrimination, no anger, Yet he possesses the ultimate weapon—the power of passion!

When passion is ignited, it never stops burning, but it not only burns, it also brings light into the darkness and gives warmth where there is cold. You have turned off your passion in the past, because you were afraid of hurting others. This is your personal experience, but it is not the reality. In fact it is the direct opposite; when passion is not shown, you are not able to give of yourself and, through not giving, you are creating emptiness and pain within your loved ones. A warrior does not know the meaning of surrender. At the moment when he recognises his vision, all his life force, feelings, thoughts and emotions are directed to achieving his goal and no power on earth can deter him.

However, the most strongest weapon that a warrior possesses is the power to love. You have learned a lot about love and, later in your quest, you will learn more about what love really is. But for now, it is only important to know that the love of life is the force that feeds you, the light that guides you and the army that fights at your side."

John heard a noise that sounded like thunder and in an instant the feathered man and the goanna disappeared. Once again, John was standing alone in a strange country.

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"Hey, Turawwa, are you ready to learn how to throw the spear or do you want to rest in the sun and work on getting more brown?" John turned around and there was Wootara, standing beside a giant anthill, carrying two spears and a woomera under his arm.

"Wootara! Good to see you again, my boy!"

"I'm not your boy, I'm your teacher! So just shut your mouth and listen to your next lesson. A spear can only kill if it is thrown properly. Not only must your aim be true, but also your timing. Your eyesight is the direct line from you to your target. Your spear is the extension of your hand and the woomera is the extension of your arm. You must use your breath and count your heartbeats. So watch very, very, closely."

Wootara took the spear-launcher from under his arm. John could now see that it was shaped like a long oval with a small notch at one end and underneath a place where you could hold the woomera in your hand. He fitted one spear into the notch and let it lie straight on the surface, he then took hold of the grip, and drew back his arm, aiming at the tea tree standing about twenty yards away. Wootara took a deep breath, then with a loud exhale launched the spear. It left the woomera true and straight and struck the trunk of the tree, quivering in the hot air. "Throwing a spear is the same as wanting to make a point when you are speaking to your tribe. Your first step is to know your exact target and that which you want to be understood and then to hold this in your mind, in your heart and in your eyes. The next step is to be perfectly focused and still. Take a deep breath, count your heartbeats and breathe deeply. After you have counted ten heartbeats, let your spear fly and breathe your life-force out into the same direction as your spear. Follow through with your body until you once again come to rest on both feet with your weight placed slightly more onto your right foot. A warrior expresses himself through the language of his body. That which he feels and that which he conveys through this body language must be in

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balance with his mind and spirit and fly true. Otherwise his spear will not be accepted by his partner, and the heart will not be pierced—and the heart is the place where you must always aim and never miss.

John understood perfectly what this boy was teaching him and couldn't help being impressed by the wisdom and clarity of the message. He walked up to where his little teacher was standing and took the other spear and the Woomera from his small scarred hands. He closed his eyes, forming an image of the tree inside his mind. Opening his eyes, he placed the end of the spear in the notch of the woomera, drew back his arm holding the spear-launcher and, without too much pressure, he aimed the tip of the spear at the tree, took a deep breath and on the tenth beat of his heart released the missile with a mighty cry. The spear landed three meters to the right of the tree and struck a rock. "Turawwa," said Wootara in an unusually polite tone. "Your aim was good, your breath and heart were perfectly in balance and your body danced the ways of the warrior. This time you did not pierce the heart, but with time and practice you will hit your target. You have learned how to throw the spear." Wootara's voice was becoming fainter and fainter and John noticed that the landscape was changing. Everything was starting to turn into a misty yellow and the last words that he heard were "...In the next dream the warriors path will continue ..."

John could smell the scent of fresh coffee wafting up the stairs coming from the kitchen. He sat up and once again as before, went through the memory of the dream, every image and every word. He even had a feeling that his shoulder felt sore caused by the unusual movements needed to throw spears.

Prosperity without love is like a tree
without roots

John Macmillan, the Prime Minister of Australia is caught between the past and the present. He loses contact to his true life. Meeting the girl with nine toes, she teaches him how to become more in contact with his feelings and emotions.

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