

## What we do and Why we do it

In her presentation, which is available to be viewed in full ([click here](#)) or as an abridged version ([click here](#)), Joanne Dickson rsm draws on research she conducted with her university colleagues to explore the relationship between purpose, vocation, spirituality and wellbeing.

Purpose is multi-layered and there is the practical question of *what we do* and the deeper question of *why we do it*. Exploring the motivations underpinning our actions can help us recognise what liberates us and what binds us. When there is greater coherence between what we do and why we do it, the research shows that this leads to increased wellbeing.

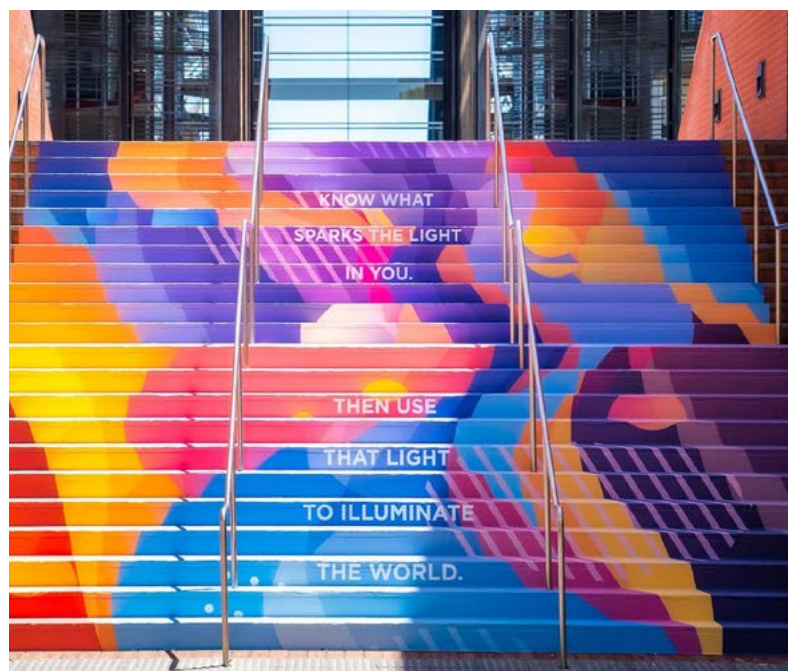
At the heart of this is vocation, which is a deep sense of purpose that can draw, inspire and energise our lives. Our sense of calling is not something we discover once and then simply complete. It is a lifelong journey of listening, discernment, letting go and embracing what is new. Joanne shares the story of an Irish Sister whose childhood delight in daffodils, the beauty of the landscape and a deep Celtic spirituality continues to nourish her. Her vocation has unfolded through many transitions, including moments of letting go and embracing the new.

Joanne also presents St Teresa of Ávila's image of the garden to describe the spiritual development that can unfold throughout a life. Teresa speaks of four ways of watering the garden. The first, drawing water from a deep well by hand, requires active effort and discipline. The second uses a water wheel, making the work easier with God's help, and represents spontaneous prayer and the

prayer of quiet. The third is like water flowing from an overflowing river or stream, representing deeper contemplation, where the soul is richly irrigated and rests in peace. The fourth is rain when God waters the garden entirely and we become receptive to divine love.

Hope can emerge through the gifts we have been given. Sometimes our gifts become so deeply part of who we are that we respond almost instinctively, bringing ourselves to a situation without fully realising the impact we may have. In moments of difficulty, even a small act of courage, creativity or generosity can create connection and offer hope. We are called not only to recognise our gifts, but to use them to become *artisans of hope*.

Joanne concludes with words painted on the steps of the university where she works: **Know what sparks the light in you then use that light to illuminate the world.** These words offer a simple invitation to recognise what gives us energy, meaning and purpose and to allow those gifts to become a source of light and hope for others.



# Refilling Our Cup

Many of us spend our days caring for, supporting and encouraging others. While this can be incredibly rewarding, it also requires energy, patience and resilience. That's why it is important to make time for our own wellbeing.

Think of your wellbeing as a cup. Each day, work, relationships, household responsibilities and life's challenges can take something from it. If we don't take time to refill our cup, it can become depleted, making it harder to offer the compassion, patience and support that others rely on.

Looking after yourself isn't selfish – it's essential. By paying attention to our physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing, we are better equipped to care for others. The best care for others begins with caring for ourselves. Self-care doesn't require large amounts of time or money.

Small, consistent acts can make a difference: taking a walk, enjoying a quiet cup of tea, spending time with loved ones, getting enough sleep, or asking for support when we need it. These simple moments can help restore our energy and resilience.

Let's take an opportunity to pause and reflect on our own wellbeing. What helps to refill our cup? And how might we make space for those moments in our day?

One way we can do this is by taking a few moments to pause and reconnect by doing the grounding exercise that Jo Oak has recorded for us ([click here](#)).

*Jane Hall, Wellbeing and Health Manager*



## 1 October - 31 October

This month you are invited to:

- ✓ Watch the abridged version of Joanne's presentation and Jane's which is approximately 16 minutes and includes the reflection song 'Dancing with God' ([click here](#))
- ✓ Watch the complete video of Joanne Dickson's presentation which is approximately 24 minutes ([click here](#))
- ✓ Watch or listen to the grounding exercise ([click here](#))
- ✓ All of the videos can also be watched on the ISMAPNG Youtube channel
- ✓ Get together with others for a Kitchen Table Conversation in your local community or join the Zoom on Thursday, 8 October at 3.30pm AEDT.