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# Success is what you make of it

## EVE FISHER

“I’VE FINALLY REALISED THAT JUST BECAUSE OTHER PEOPLE THINK YOU’VE MADE IT (OR NOT), DOESN’T NECESSARILY TRANSLATE TO A PERSONAL VIEW.”

THE year’s end is approaching, “success” is the word of the day and your favourite media outlets are screaming for you to start assessing your station in life.

After a year like this one, why wouldn’t anyone want to grind the gears of their ambition and make sure they’re on track for ... anything?

So what the hell is success anyway? Where can we find it? Will social media help? If no one is there to hear or see us be successful, are we still a success?

Just a few days ago Forbes seemingly got to the crux of the issue. It appears having a healthy brain is essential. “Don’t make your brain dumb: The neuroscience of success” assures us keeping the grey matter in tip-top shape will help us achieve our wildest dreams.

The Australian Financial Review weighed in and tossed about the idea that failure was nothing to be afraid of, but also nothing to be celebrated. “Failure is not always the pathway to success” asserted that long gone are the days when pumping our fists in a post-failure rev-up was the order of business.

So while we know “failure is not the opposite of success; it’s part of the success”, you’ve still technically “got to get the no’s before the yes’s” and “fail better next time”. At the end of the day, you’re expected to do whatever

you can to be successful. Whatever that may actually be.

The pressure to demonstrate this elusive success intensified not long after we were released from our pandemic shackles. There have also been yarns about success in your 50s, success after lockdown, success when you’re not being successful. I guess these writers assume everyone was feverishly chipping away at their dreams while shoved away in a tiny house with a partner they hated and 10 kids they wished they’d never had.

I wrote early during the shutdown that we should all be looking inward and reflecting on who we were in isolation. I urged folk to get to know themselves on their own, without the constant parade of friends, colleagues and acquaintances to add colour to our lives. Or give us validation. Or deem us successful.

Did I do much beside navel-gaze? No. Did I complete any to-do list, of any shape or size, be it home improvement or self-improvement? No.

Do I feel that my COVID year was a success? Hell yeah!

By some small miracle the little holiday property management business I started with a friend a year ago today started to blossom.

We hit our COVID-revised goal for the number of listings signed and while we aren’t personally earning the big (any) bucks yet, our little venture is a marker of success for my year because I care about it, not because anybody else does.

In truth, success to me is when I feel I’ve done something meaningful and tangible. It might only mean someone having a great holiday but that’s happening because of a service we provide.

Obviously I’ve created my own paradigm and the only measure of my success is that I’ve deemed it so. I’ve finally realised that just because other people think you’ve made it (or not), doesn’t necessarily translate to a personal view.

Some could assume because I was an editor at a national newspaper or a teacher or even a local politician, that I’ve found success in my life, but that’s their impression, not mine.

Never once, though, did I consider myself a success because those things didn’t move me, like

having my own business has. I’ve constructed my own rules and for the first time I’m not looking to others for validation.

If you want to view the deconstruction of success, you’ve only got to look at the scandal engulfing self-help “guru” Tony Robbins, who has been lambasted for not refunding punters who’d paid up to \$9000 to see him live before the virus hit.

Robbins is your classic success story. People put him on a pedestal and he’s no doubt got a few shekels lying about as a marker of his success. Yet when lockdown happened this man of means refused to do what other organisations did, and simply refund tickets. Months later people are still waiting for their cash.

Allegedly they’re getting their cash back but the damage has no doubt been done.

Why would anyone look to Robbins now for advice on being a better person? He’s no example. He might have the painted smile, the money, the brand and the books on the shelves, but he’s shown himself to have the true moral depth of a teaspoon.

That isn’t success, so I say anyway. Others may argue he made a sensible business decision.

Success is in the eye of the beholder. The more we look to others for validation, the less we give it to ourselves. It’s time to be our own No 1 fans.

## LETTERS & TEXTS

### SMOKERS’ RIGHTS WRONG FOR SO MANY OTHERS

FORMER journalist and Geelong Advertiser editor Graeme Vincent, in his opinion piece (GA, 11/12), demonstrates an experienced knowledge of the obvious hazards associated with tobacco smoke, both to smokers and bystanders.

However, he loses any worthwhile points he was attempting to make when he defends smoking as some sort of inherent human right.

Mr Vincent seems to think the \$136.9bn spent annually in treating the adverse health consequences of the addiction is somehow worthwhile as a vehicle for protecting the right of people to smoke in public spaces.

This is of course ludicrous as any democratic right has an equal (and often opposite) obligation to protect those who may be innocently harmed as a result.

Detrimental health effects from “side-stream” smoke inhalation by non-smokers is an uncontested and recognised health hazard and can lead to the many disease

outcomes that Mr Vincent has rightly identified as being likely to be contracted by smokers.

Let’s take steps to minimise obvious community dangers — seat belts, helmets, smoking bans — and if these measures are initiated at the “third tier of government” then we should applaud the concern that provokes the action, not decry it as an attack on our so-called human rights.

Mark Bennett, Manifold Heights

### TERRACE TRAFFIC WOES NOT AS BAD AS CLAIMED

RE your article on Ocean Grove street layout (GA, 15/12), I would

like to correct some misconceptions:

**FIRSTLY**, only a net loss of two parking spaces; **SECONDLY**, The Terrace has never been a dual carriageway; and, **THERE** has been no loss of “loading zone” parking spaces.

Delivery trucks are not allowed to block roads anywhere in Victoria — why should Ocean Grove be any different?

Traffic is always bumper to bumper in holiday periods.

I frequent The Terrace daily, and from my observation there has been little change in traffic, except

that deliberately engineered by disgruntled traders.

In regard to adequate consultation, I would think 3-4 months acceptable.

David Pownall

### MASKS REMAIN IN PLACE FOR VERY GOOD REASON

AS we head into the very busy summer period on our coastal areas, please do not forget to wear your face mask in the required areas — shopping centres, supermarkets and where you cannot maintain appropriate social distance from other people.

Also, the staff member who is asking, “Do you have a mask?” is not doing this to harass you, it is for all our health and safety.

Margaret Brown, Connewarre

### TEXT TALK

IN response to Mark (GA, 12/12) re Premier’s leadership to be admired, you seem to have left out the small issue of 800-odd dead under his watch, and the extremely forgetful people he has around him.

Short memory

## ADDY ONLINE POLL

Do you have air conditioning in your home?

YES 83% | NO 17%

Register your vote at [geelongadvertiser.com.au](http://geelongadvertiser.com.au)

## Geelong Advertiser LIVE SHOWS BACK AT LAST

GEELONG’S live performance drought is slowly but steadily ending.

For a region with such a steep history in developing live artists, seeing our venues and theatres stay dark for months on end has been a kick in the guts.

But our artists are nothing if not creative. From the irrepressible crew at the Piano Bar who have found a way to keep live performances going from the moment restrictions were eased, to the Queenscliff Music Festival organisers who have brought live music to the seaside town every weekend through the pop-up Pelican Bar, left-field thinking has allowed local punters the chance to finally quench their live performance thirst.

Today tickets go on sale to the general public for the first of our post-COVID major attractions — Midnight Oil’s March performance at Mt Duneed Estate — while the Geelong Arts Centre announced its lineup for its Summer Sessions series of performances.

Our summer events calendar might be noticeably thinner than in previous years, but the tide is definitely turning.

But while local audiences are catered for, opportunities for local artists remain limited.

It has been a long, cruel year for performers starved of work and it would be good to see local venues throwing some support behind some of Geelong’s homegrown talent as well as big-name national acts.

## ON THIS DAY

**1631** More than 3000 people are killed by an eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

**1773** At the Boston Tea Party, American colonists disguised as Mohawk Indians throw 342 chests of tea belonging to the British East India Co into Boston Harbour to protest a tax on tea, (pictured).

**1903** The first federal election is held in which women have the same rights as men to stand for parliament and to vote.

**1929** One miner shot dead in riots as 8000 miners converge on Rothbury in protest over use of “scab” labour to break a 10-month strike.

**1976** The Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act gives Aborigines freehold title to former reserve land in the NT and provides a procedure for them to claim other Crown land.

**1991** Kazakhstan declares its independence from the Soviet Union.

**2018** Sri Lanka’s president reappoints Ranil Wickremesinghe as PM nearly two months after firing him.

**2019** Mariah Carey’s song All I Want For Christmas reaches No 1 on the US charts, 25 years after it was released.



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