

What do I have to say to young people in 2023?

Lilly Gundacker

June 20, 2023



Networks

I have joined the alumni of the St Albans Secondary College where I went to High School in the Western Suburbs of Melbourne in the sixties and seventies of the last century. The Principal is retiring and we are asked to contribute to a booklet of farewell messages.

My Message

It was the anniversary year of St. Albans High, and I had left Australia in 1986.

Maybe one last chance to get to catchup with some old school mates, I thought.

So, we made our trip from Austria to Australia to attend the Jubilee reunion in 2016.

The following weekend we went to the Open Day at St. Albans Secondary College and met the Principal Kerrie Dowsley.

I was so surprised to hear about what had become of my old High School - from lowest pass rate in the state in my graduation year, 1971 to prestige state college!

I was pleasantly surprised by the warm friendly spirit, and despite not meeting any new old school friends, I came back home to Austria with a sense of pride and satisfaction.

Thank you for your kind words and for taking time to meet with us during your busy schedule.

I appreciated coming back to a brand-new perspective of my old school. Not only had I made something of myself, despite my "disadvantaged, Western Suburbs" background, now even my old school was really providing valuable community resources and making a difference.

Blog article: lilly.fam-gundacker.eu/st-albans-high-school-became-stalbans-secondary-college/

lilly.fam-gundacker.eu/reflection/

lilly.fam-gundacker.eu/high-school-reunion/

lilly.fam-gundacker.eu/grenzganger-bordercrosser/

Toastmasters

So, now, next level reflection.

What do I have to say to young people in 2023?

Last Tuesday, at the VIC Toastmasters meeting, I won the Table Topics session with my answer to that question. I was looking forward to receive the link to the recording so that I can edit out my response and post it separately. Many of my UN colleagues are extremely self-conscious of public visibility. Today, as the Computer Security conference continues to take place, I appreciate that it may not be a good idea to be too publicly visible.

Yet my calling is a different one now. I am called to be visible and to be public.

I urge young people today to keep channels open to the older generation. Current trends and developments are progressing so fast, it is often difficult for Baby Boomers (my generation) to keep up. Yet, we Baby Boomers are the virtual majority in the Western World. I urge young people today to ask questions and be aware of what was before. I pointed out that we had no internet or telephones when I was growing up. We got a television set when I was seven because I got hepatitis and needed to lay still to recover.

My Contribution

The link never came, and I contemplate (again) what am I prepared to contribute? It was at the last Toastmasters club meeting that I took control of the camera and figured out how to zoom in on participants while they were speaking from within the meeting room.

This very skill then became my asset at the WFWP side event when I also managed to receive access to the camera controls to zoom in on the speakers on the panel while I simultaneously [live-streamed](#) over Facebook.

Pros and Cons of Aging

My age is my asset in terms of wisdom and experience. However, I was feeling worn and tired as I considered whether Toastmasters would be my third virtual or first live meeting of the day. Considering I had another live meeting I wanted to attend later, I opted for virtual, in hybrid mode, knowing, that I am usually the only one who bothers about the recordings of the meetings. And despite my secret hopes and wishes that "somebody" would take care of the camera, even the previously proclaimed automatic recording function, had somehow been disabled. There was no recording.

Summer Solstice

It is June twentieth. Many of my sources are proclaiming the northern summer solstice to be a time of great change, new beginnings, and boundless opportunities.

My personal mantra to do good and be seen to be doing good is undaunted. The current [Computer Security in the Nuclear World, Security for Safety Conference](#), now taking place at the VIC intrigues and inspires me. As a former staff member of the Division of Nuclear Security, I am inspired by what is developing. As DG Grossi points out that the first and last such conference was eight years ago, I am jolted to realize how much has happened since. I am proud to have been a contributing factor in that conference, humbled by the amazing progress since then and fascinated by the aspects which most interest me, including aging, accountability and continuity.

Aging is a factor when dealing with security of nuclear power plants. Yet aging is also an aspect of human life and experience.

Back to my Toastmasters Table Topics question:

What do I have to say to young people in 2023?

I remember working with "liquidators", former colleagues at NSNS who had worked to decontaminate Chernobyl after the nuclear accident. These fine gentlemen were veterans who experienced the birth of the nuclear age. They continued offering their expertise until a staff ruling proclaimed that people beyond 70 could no longer serve as consultants in the office, or for travel to conferences, trainings or meetings.

Now, as I myself approach that very age, I have to admit, that some physical capacities are impaired and a little different than they were, even just a few years ago.

As I approach that age, I also think of many of my dear friends who have already left us.

So, my message to young people in 2023 is: network, ask questions, use the resources of relationships, particularly with people of experience.

You may be well educated and knowledgeable, quick, and lithe. So was I, at your age.

I do not regret having reached this age. In fact, I am so grateful.

I'd also like to encourage young people to reach out to assist older people, particularly relating to aspects of digital and social change.

I personally find the rapid developments in social media and technology quite challenging. I guess I am not really surprised to be feeling a bit lonely, as many of my peers have opted out of the digital world.

Don't get me wrong. I believe in balance. I believe in free choice. I'd like to support the options to maintain connection, even digitally in old age, as well as respecting individual needs, capabilities and interests.

[I'm feeling like a campaigner for aged rights](#). No, I am not an activist, or negative demonstrator. I would just like you young guys sometimes to understand, listen and just sometimes, have a little compassion, for us Baby Boomers who have survived this long. Afterall, if we are still here, we are also the survivors. That is a skill well worth learning.



Lilly Gundacker

Ozlilly's musings...

2 Comments



August 15, 2009 in Blog, Events, Personalities, Remember when Women

I am a border crosser - a "Grenzgänger" in German. I am an expert in Microsoft Office programmes (The Bill Gates - Windows conglomerate programmes) and now I have bought myself an Apple MacBook Pro (The predominatly anti-Bill Gates competition product.)

I am Australian but speak fluent German.

I am a woman, but surrounded by men.

I am intelligent and also emotional and sensitive.

At the end of the six years of primary school, I wanted to go to the catholic girls college like some of my school friends and as recommended by my grade six teacher who was a nun and by our local parish priest. He even came to our house to talk to my parents about it. They insisted that they could not afford the fees of sending their children to a private school, since we were five children and my oldest brother Ron was already attending St.Albans High School. So I also went to St.Albans High School and so did Gary, my younger brother.

I had to decide whether to learn French or German. Then, when it was time to send Eric to secondary school, my Dad had had a promotion, I had received a Commonwealth scholarship and Ron was on a cadetship from the PMG - the Post Master General which was later divided into Australia Post and Telecom. So Eric was the first one in our family to attend a catholic secondary college. George my youngest brother also then went to St.John's College in Braybrook.

In high school I wanted to do everything when we had to choose between commercial and maths-science stream. Since everyone knew that I was so intelligent, it was obvious that I had to do the maths-science stream. But I still wanted to learn to type and insisted that I wanted a typewriter for my 13th birthday. Dad got me one from work and bought me a "Teach yourself typing" book to go with it, insisting that I was too good to be just a secretary-typist.

In form two (at age 13) I had to decide whether to take Russian, art or commercial principles and practice in the following year. By then my younger brother Gary was attending the same school and learning to type as a standard part of his education.

I wanted to learn Russian and was jealous of my girlfriends Eva and Maria, both of Czech origin, who attended the Russian classes. My art teacher in form two, insisted I was too talented to not continue doing art and so of course I had to take art in form three instead of commercial principles and practice (CPP). He even hung one of my paintings outside the headmaster's office. I was fascinated by the business world and wanted to know all about it, but the timetable was just not accommodating and I continued learning maths and science, instead of CPP. I was the best in the class in maths and often got on my teacher's nerves with questions and corrections of his work.

In form four we had to decide again and I was shocked to discover a very intelligent school colleague left school for some seemingly trivial reason. I was devastated. I knew that Heinz Merkl was very intelligent and gifted, but perhaps not so disciplined or diplomatic. The teachers didn't know what to do with him. He was a trouble maker. Today I would compare him to my own gifted children, Andi and Nathan who really gave their primary school teacher a hard time because they were just too quick and demanding. Heinz and another school-friend left and disappeared out of my life, not without impacting me first. Another girlfriend of mine, disappeared during the school year, having asked me first what would I say if she said that she was pregnant. I knew that she was living with her step father and that their relationship was extremely personal and physical. I regretted later that my response to her was "serves you right". I guess I really could not imagine that she really was pregnant, she was only 15 or younger. But she suddenly just stopped coming to school too.

The choice in form four was science or humanities, and I was streamed into the maths, physics, chemistry mould, despite my personal longing to do biology which clashed with the other science subjects. I really did enjoy physics and realised that I was indeed clever enough to understand so much which was difficult for others. Socially, I was very withdrawn and shy. Many of my friends were dating and flirting. I had a good reputation as being friendly and helpful and clever. Many school friends often asked me for help and advice. I realised that I enjoyed listening to all sides and that even by just repeating their arguments logically, many problems and conflicts could be resolved and I was a popular counsellor and a good listener. I did not take sides, nor did I betray anyone. I had to take maths to support the physics. Physics and chemistry belong together. Maths was also supposed to help chemistry.

By form six, I insisted that I would not continue going to high school unless I could study biology. I actually spent a lot of my free time going through the form five biology book simply because it interested me. The form five curriculum was mainly botany. In form six we did anatomy. It was not really a surprise that I got a second class honour in biology then at matriculation. Pity that I failed chemistry and maths II though. Of course I had to study English literature in matriculation, again because my English teacher knew that I was so gifted and clever. I even went to the university libraries to do research about our English literature books. I think somewhere along the way, I did not understand what was really required for English literature. I can't blame the teacher, Mr Carmody, he was really friendly, but the system of external examinations was also not very accommodating.

Share this:



Related

What do I have to say to young people in 2023?

2023-06-20
in "Blog"

Lesson in history at Burg Rappottenstein

2013-10-06
in "Blog"

St Albans High School became StAlbans Secondary College

2016-06-12
in "Australia"



About the author

Lilly Gundacker

Lilly Gundacker is an Australian living in Austria, now in Vienna. With a loving husband and gifted adult children' she excels at Communication, Family, Marriage and is an Organizational expert. As a retired International Civil Servant and dedicated Unificationist she motivates, inspires, engages, and makes a difference!

Subscribe

Connect with | Login



Join the discussion



Lilly Gundacker · 12 years ago

Dear Boris,

Of all the activities I have written about, from the many I have done, it interests me to know why you chose that time I spent with PWPA? The First conference on Interdisciplinary approaches to peace was held at Sydney University in 1983. I was studying in Tasmania and was asked to support the conference and ended up filming it. The following year I was asked to join the staff in Canberra and worked on publishing and distributing the proceedings of that conference and preparing and organizing the next one which was held in Queensland 1984. I still have a copy of the proceedings and it breaks my heart when I see that these activities were apparently not documented and recorded/reported and thus do not appear on the web site of PWPA

<http://www.pwpa.org/pwpa-conference-list/>

You seem to be pulling on my strings of conscience, that perhaps it is still up to me to get this information documented?

+ 0 -



Boris · 12 years ago

Hi Lilly!

Found your name on Elke Wirths Plaxo, and loved your Grenzgänger.

Gosh you know how to write.

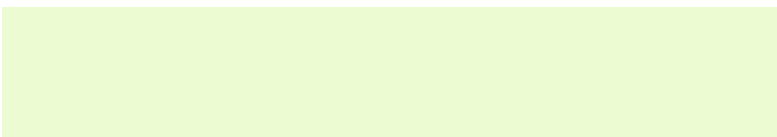
So captivating.

Would love to hear something about the peace academy you attended or worked for in Australia.

Take care and keep up that writing!!

Regards, Boris

+ 0 -



Contact

📍 Laudongasse 21/8, Vienna, Austria

✉️ Lilly.Austria@Fam-Gundacker.eu

Sign up for our Newsletter!

Send



June 12, 2016 in Australia, Blog, Places



Sunday was the open day at St Albans Secondary College. This was the reason I came to Australia this time.

I kept saying that a week in Melbourne in winter is no holiday. But since I have never been to any school reunions since I left school, I came with hopes of catching up with former colleagues from my St Albans High School days. Well, the one person I met was the one person I still have contact with, in fact, it was Maria Dobs who told me about the reunion. But we already went to kindergarten together and our Mums were good friends. In fact, Maria just confirmed it again, that it was my Mum that told her Mum to apply for the job as Physical Education teacher at St.Albans High where she ended up teaching until retirement, about 30 years.

It was interesting to see how the school had developed, grown and changed. Apparently now it is a high performance school of prestige. In my matriculation year we had the lowest pass rate in the whole of Victoria and probably the lowest pass rate ever for St-Albans High. I remember my German teacher died in the middle of the

year without replacement. There was no compensation in the exam. Funny, now 45 years later, Austria is just introducing centralized matriculation exams. I flunked German by a couple of marks, yet now living in Austria, many people take me for a German native.

Share this:

Facebook Twitter More

Related

[What do I have to say to young people in 2023?](#)

2023-06-20
In "Blog"

[High School Fail](#)

2016-06-21
In "AboutMe"

[That was 2016](#)

2017-01-17
In "AboutMe"



About the author

Lilly Gundacker



Lilly Gundacker is an Australian living in Austria, now in Vienna. With a loving husband and gifted adult children' she excels at Communication, Family, Marriage and is an Organizational expert. As a retired International Civil Servant and dedicated Unificationist she motivates, inspires, engages, and makes a difference!

Subscribe

Connect with | [Login](#)



Be the First to Comment!

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#)

0 COMMENTS



[Follow Lilly on Facebook here](#)



Contact

Laudongasse 21 / 8, Vienna, Austria

Lilly.Austria@Fam-Gundacker.eu

Sign up for our Newsletter!

Type your email here...

Send



June 11, 2016 in [AboutMe](#), [Australia](#), [Blog](#), [Events](#), [Meetings](#), [Philosophising](#)

Go to kindergarten together, parents speak the same language, then end up at the same high school for six years. Then part company for half a life-time. Travel half way round the world to attend the 60th anniversary of the high school and meet in the car park as we enter Moonee Valley Race Course. It was the St.Albans High School Reunion and Maria and I just happened to meet as we both arrived, she with a former neighbour and me with my husband. She lives in Canberra, I live in Austria. She works as an optometrist, I at the UN in Vienna. We both made the effort to come to the reunion. I'll post this on my blog and link to FaceBook, so will add my suggestions here. Next time, take the group photos at the beginning. Get name tags and include the years attended on the tags. I don't know what I was really looking for. The food was good. The music was too loud. And I wanted to see some old school friends. But when even my own younger brother did not know about the reunion, I can imagine that a lot of my old class mates also just didn't know. If you are out there, drop me a line.

Share this:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[More](#)

Related

[St Albans High School became StAlbans Secondary College](#)

2016-06-12
In "Australia"

[Like a LAN Party!](#)

2009-06-14
In "Events"

[What do I have to say to young people in 2023?](#)

2023-06-20
In "Blog"



About the author

Lilly Gundacker



Lilly Gundacker is an Australian living in Austria, now in Vienna. With a loving husband and gifted adult children' she excels at Communication, Family, Marriage and is an Organizational expert. As a retired International Civil Servant and dedicated Unificationist she motivates, inspires, engages, and makes a difference!

✉ Subscribe ▼

Connect with  | [Login](#)



Be the First to Comment!

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#)

0 COMMENTS



[Follow Lilly on FaceBook here](#)



Contact

📍 Laudongasse 21 /8, Vienna, Austria

✉ Lilly.Austria@Fam-Gundacker.eu

Sign up for our Newsletter!

Type your email here...

Send 



June 21, 2016 in AboutMe, Adventures, Australia, Blog, Events, Meetings, Philosophising, Remember when ...

Wir können es nicht jedem recht machen und nicht jeder mag uns, unabhängig davon, wie wertvoll wir als Mensch sein mögen und wie viel Gutes wir tun. Tun Sie das Richtige, aus den richtigen Gründen, in der richtigen Weise, aus Ihrer Sichtweise, und lassen Sie den Dingen ihren Lauf.

Thank you Todd. <http://blog.balance-tools.de/en/leading-with-heart/>

As I use the words of reflection from someone I know and cherish to express myself, allow me to “preach to myself”.

I came “home” to Australia now in the southern winter, using the excuse of the High School Anniversary celebration. It was a flimsy wish for closure or connection or extension, a wish to meet up with old school friends. But they are gone. They are no longer friends. They did not come. But perhaps there is another story.

Our year, the class of '71, at St.Albans High, had the lowest success rate in the state and probably the lowest the school had ever had, or ever had since. Unfortunately, I was in the majority who failed the external matriculation exam. My excuses at the time:

1. I had such a bad flu that I could not even think,
2. the examiners did not allow me to take my thermos of hot tea and medicine into the examination room,
3. my German teacher died in the middle of the year,
4. and before that he spent all his time taking the class photos for the whole school, so we actually had no German lessons,
5. I failed chemistry because I was not taking physics
6. I could not take physics because it clashed with biology
7. I failed maths one because I did not do maths two.
8. I didn't get the right advice from my teachers the year before.

9. I was too intelligent and learnt everything in class but never learnt to study

10. I was not encouraged to become the best, I was the girl and second best was good enough, let the boys be successful.

The list could probably go on and on, My self-justifications then were:

1. well I got a second class honour in Biology, despite the missing biology the year before,
2. I only failed chemistry by one mark
3. I only failed German by a couple of marks
4. I only failed Matriculation by five marks but had twenty marks extra in biology
5. I passed the German oral test.
6. I now live in a German speaking country and am taken for a native.

This is already long enough for a blog article and I am practising self examination. I will continue. If it helps anybody, the little bit of embarrassment and self-revelation doesn't really hurt after all.

Share this:

Facebook Twitter More

Related

[In Memorium Maresi \(Maria Teresia Silberbauer\)](#)
2017-04-10
In "Personalities"

[Investing in Yourself](#)
2022-10-13
In "Blog"

[Charity](#)
2013-08-26
In "AboutMe"



About the author

Lilly Gundacker



Lilly Gundacker is an Australian living in Austria, now in Vienna. With a loving husband and gifted adult children' she excels at Communication, Family, Marriage and is an Organizational expert. As a retired International Civil Servant and dedicated Unificationist she motivates, inspires, engages, and makes a difference!

Subscribe

Connect with | [Login](#)



Be the First to Comment!

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#)

0 COMMENTS



[Follow Lilly on FaceBook here](#)