

Janet Cohen's advice to herself.

For many people, chronic illness brings the world into sharper focus and kindles the desire for reflection.

The Hastings Cancer Trust "Our Stories" Project offers the chance for people whose lives have been affected by cancer to write about or record interviews about their lives, thereby passing wisdom from one individual to another.

These stories and recordings also leave a legacy for the future.

Janet Cohen has a type of cancer that is not curable, but can be treated with life-extending medication.

These are the sage words of advice she wrote to herself.

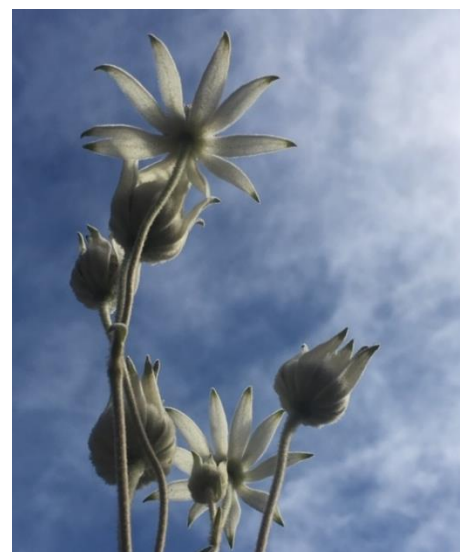
Advice from a wise friend

by Janet Cohen

Put yourself at the centre, grow from the inside out. Abandon duty, fear and guilt as a way of life. Take a risk and then another. There is no life without risk and even if you fail, you'll have stories to tell.

Creativity is your life force and it has its own process and timing. Nurture it, love it, encourage it, take it for walks to beautiful places. Allow it to take the lead, even if at times it seems to lead nowhere or to places you don't want to go. It has a habit of changing shape just when you're ready to give up. Don't overwork it...it has its own life.

Have inspiring conversations with friends and strangers. Explore the boundaries of each limitless moment. Keep company with those who support your will towards a joyous, creative life.



Give yourself the space and the time to rest. Becoming re-energised can't be rushed. Don't short-change yourself and rush back to work because you think people expect you to. You don't have anything to prove, no-one to please but yourself.

Be open and honest about your hopes and fears. Laugh loudly every day. Allow yourself to be vulnerable.

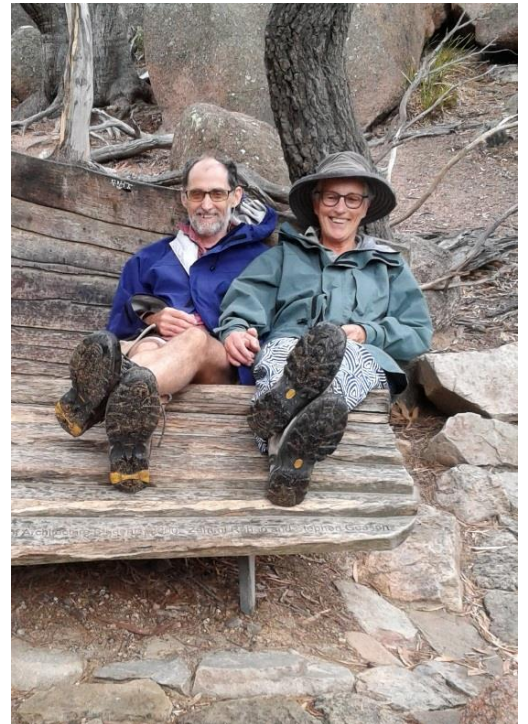
Determine to be free and fearless. Imagine the life you want. Write about it, sing and talk about it. Change your mind daily.

Give yourself the time to rest and enjoy the seasons before even thinking about going back to the world of doing. Start when you feel your sap rising. Then and only then throw in a line, cast way out into the deepest water and see what you land.

You might get snagged or reel in an old shoe, but it could be a gleaming Estuary Cod!

Thank you for sharing Janet.

“Be open and honest about your hopes and fears. Laugh loudly every day. Allow yourself to be vulnerable.”



Janet Cohen with partner Glenn

¹ Other stories written by Janet Cohen and included in the “Our Stores” Project include “Rediscovering myself” and “A Matter of time”.

More about Janet

Janet Cohen is a passionate advocate for protecting the natural environment and for community the arts and culture. She is perhaps best known for her work with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, redeveloping and managing Sea Acres Rainforest Centre in Port Macquarie NSW, a unique visitor centre featuring rare coastal subtropical and littoral rainforest and Aboriginal cultural programs.

Not one to shy away from a challenge, Janet and her partner Glenn spent three months as volunteer caretakers on remote Deal Island, in Bass Strait, where they grew veggies in howling gales, survived the wild Bass Strait weather and worked to conserve the island's natural and cultural heritage. Janet and Glenn love the bush and have spent time backpacking in remote areas.

Janet has also been active with local community projects including Friends of Kattang Nature Reserve, Camden Haven Protection Society and Camden Head Pilot Station.

Janet has been vocal in her support of the introduction of Voluntary Assisted Dying in NSW and will continue to share her story about living with a terminal illness to add to the call for legislative change on this issue.

Janet says the "Our Stories" project has given her the opportunity to reflect on and validate her experience of cancer and to connect with fellow travellers who are on or have gone through the cancer "journey".

"Our Stories" Project – empowering people to share their stories.

To see read more stories, go to www.hastingscancertrust.org.au/our-stories

Contact: OurStoriesProject1@gmail.com



This story was written by Janet Cohen and forms part of the "Our Stories" Project, which was funded by a grant from The Hastings Cancer Trust.

The Hastings Cancer Trust is a local, not-for-profit organisation that supports local cancer services via their annual grants program. For more information go to www.hastingscancertrust.org.au.