Beat: Lifestyle

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL

STARING THE GRIM REAPER IN THE EYES

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USPA NEWS - Darren, sometimes referred to as the “Provocateur“ for his ability to stir up a group or as the “People Whisperer“ for his coaching skill that brings out the best in people, and is known for his practical, street-savvy style but at the age of just sixteen he was handed the 'Death Sentence.'

Darren was born a haemophiliac (a bleeder) a fall , a cut could result in his death. Diagnosed “˜HIV Positive´ at the age of just sixteen in 1984 as a result of poor blood screening by “˜The Commonwealth Serum Laboratory “˜ (CSL) , Darren spoke to me of the highly unethical days where CSL was involved in the controversial practice of mixing blood a common practice in the 80´s . This practice involved the collection of unscreened blood from donors in “˜Africa´ and the “˜Philippines´ being mixed with Australian blood reserves to keep up the minimum levels of plasma required by hospitals all over Australia. This practice stopped in the 1984 where the “˜RED CROSS´ now has compulsory screening of all known infections. Speaking from the heart Darren said, “I see myself as a survivor who has “˜thrived and survived´ through the stigma of “˜HIV´ and “˜Hep C´. I was unofficially awarded a medical assistance package in the 1991 by the Australian Federal Government along with many other “˜haemophiliacs´ infected in the 80´s to assist with treatment and medical expenses without liability. The health system to date has never directly apologised to me or others for being infected because of poor blood screening in the 80´s through the Red Cross or “˜CSL´.“ Said Vernede.

Darren turned to public speaking in his early 20´s when he felt there was little support from people experienced dealing with chronic and life threatening illnesses. Married to loving wife Puspa in 2001 now with three children aged eleven, five and four all healthy and “˜HIV Negative´ His family has learnt at a young age to live with the “˜GRIM REAPER´ constantly knocking on their door explained Vernede. Darren explained that public perception has been an ordeal and how it has and can alienate people affected with AIDS. In Vernedes book “˜Resilience´ Bouncing back from the edge of death he explains in detail his feelings at the age of sixteen when “˜Authorities´ told him he may have a “˜Gay´ related disease called “˜AIDS´ but not to worry because Australian donated blood underwent rigorous testing. “They were wrong“, said Darren. “ In my mind, that life-or-death defining moment marked the beginning of my end, and I could see my body waste away to a living skeleton, pocked with sores and rashes all over my skin.“ He said.

Today Darren talks to companies all over the world about courage and how to work through adversity and resilience . Represented by Beverly Hills agent Joey Sulfaro from “˜The Satellite Agency better known for representing celebrities such as Jennifer Lopez, Janet Jackson, Heidi Klum, Tyra Banks, Deepak Chopra , Brittany Murphy , Nelly Futardo and Australia´s own social media guru and celebrity host Krystle McGill. Sulfaro welcomes Vernede to his stable of high profile speakers. Darren is the HIV positive representative on the Western Australian Aids Council Board (WAAC). The WAAC was established in 1985 and leads the Western Australian community in the provision of a wide range of services for the prevention of HIV and the treatment and care of those living with HIV/AIDS. He is also on the WAAC financial subcommittee which oversees the financial health of the council and puts forward changes to finance policies of WAAC. Darren also oversees the financial viability of events such as “˜STYLEAID´, Event manager Mark Reid has touted “˜STYLEAID´ as one of Western Australia´s premium fashion evenings showcasing some of the best fashion designers and visual artists in the State. According to documents publicly available In 2014 alone STLEAID raised $240,961 AUD but expenses for 2014 for the event were $158,208 AUD. Staff wages for WAAC “˜s 38 staff were in excess of $2,253,081 AUD thank goodness the Department of Health's $2,554,446 AUD and other government departments who collectively donated $3,114,633. AUD to WAAC. On 17 June this year, DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville “” Minister for Health) announced that reforms were required to modernise the governance of WA Health by clarifying roles, responsibilities and accountabilities system-wide, and by devolving decision-making to the local level to drive the continued delivery of high-quality health care. Og Mandino once said,"Treasure the love you receive above all. It will survive long after your good health has vanished." . Namaste

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