

Workspaces part 11

*The **cattle-herding gadget queen**,
the **gun-collecting computer fixer**,
the **psychotherapist and forensic psych**,
the **roadie**, and the **dowager queen***

I met my first **ISTP** over 20 years ago, as a sessional lecturer in part-time postgrad courses at a university.

Joan was already ensconced at the back of the room, half-turned away, facing an open window, busy smoking while playing games on her laptop. Wearing a snappy red waistcoat and sporting a slick ponytail, she flashed a menacing smile and said that she really didn't want to be there because theory was a waste of time and she'd been easily running her TAFE business administration role for ten years.

With an uncanny physical resemblance to Kathleen Turner (or a stylish 40-something matador), I suspected she was an SP.

'Fine with me', I managed to casually shrug:

Leave the room the second you start noticing you've become bored with a night's activity ... up to you to figure out how you'll pass the subject.

Internally, I felt discombobulated, hoping that my theoretical appreciation of type could create a win-win – or I'd become dogmeat. Leaving her alone, I concentrated on setting up the class of earnest education administrators as self-allocating topic project teams. Some insisted that she should join a group.

I suggested she might if the urge grabbed her, but if not, we could explore the real-life experience of how robust work groups cope with members leaving, staying, partially engaging, and never engaging. Given her 'get out of jail free' card, she became more prone to stay as the night went on.

Next session, someone made an overheard plea for a stapler. Joan produced one from her bag. The night after, the class needed

a tape measure. Joan nonchalantly produced one. Murmurs of appreciation and astonishment. She deftly suggested some clever tricks to get their tasks done more easily.

After that, Joan somehow became a roving consultant to several groups.

One night someone desperately wanted a yellow highlighter. All eyes turned to Joan, languidly draped across two chairs, doodling. She fished around in her bag, then held one up with a flourish. People were impressed with this sole SP.

For the following class she procured some resources for class members, and patiently explained how she performed such feats.

Joan admitted she'd never understood why other people weren't able to 'just do it'. She was picking up a new appreciation for the people who performed the functions she didn't want to do, and methods to talk to people she normally wouldn't relate to.

The night project teams were finalising handouts for presentations, the copier refused to function. Agitation prevailed. One person muttered sarcastically: 'I don't suppose you've got something to fix that?' Then, the *coup de grace*: Joan pulled out a mammoth keyring and proceeded to fix the copier with an attached miniature tool.

Everyone clapped. Any lingering resentment of this maverick from a couple of diligent students disappeared. 'Ah', observed one. 'I've always resented those ISTP smartarses who got away with breaking the rules. Now I get it! She's been a plant to *show* us how Belbin's Resource Investigator operates! To recognise it viscerally.'

'Nah', I 'fessed up, 'we were just lucky that her boss enrolled her'.



Meredith Fuller

I clear	N very clear	F moderate	P very clear
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ISTP Allan and his daughter



They show their love through deed and physical affection



ISTP Don and his daughter

Hirsh and Kise point out that 'ISTPs prefer to remain in the background unless there are extenuating circumstances – then they act quickly to come to the rescue.'

A significant gift I've noticed with my case studies Ann, Joan and Allan is their total focus in a crisis or an emergency: whether dealing with a distressed client, a non-coping friend, or a shattered community. Possessing delightful good humour and an easygoing attitude, their immediacy in switching to seriously-caring 'take charge' mode brings safety and relief to the troubled or endangered.

One of Ann's most powerful gifts is her devoted concern for her at-risk clients. Her potent psychological care 'holds' her clients as firmly as the physical rescues performed by Allan, or the save-the-day improvisations from Don.

Teaching counselling skills sessionally over 15 years, I explored a range of approaches and tools, including Jung and type. There was an ISTP in every second or third class (of 10 to 20 participants). They invariably worked in, or were particularly drawn to, trauma counselling, substance abuse and outreach work, or body work, including hypnotherapy and eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR).

Their succinct appreciation for the 'here and now', combined with their artfulness in picking up on deception or avoidance, complemented other students' fascination with transpersonal, theoretical or metaphorical abstractions.

Like Ann and Allan, Joan is known for her demonstrable caretaking of friends or situations in turbulent times. A woman of few words, Joan is disarmingly honest and self-reliant.

Yet, she has a keen sense of loyalty and a fierce devotion to the people who matter to her, and, by extension, what they need. Like the other case studies, she shows her love through deed and physical affection.

But, similar to the other cases, she'd make a formidable enemy. Don't mess with Joan, be you man or beast; I pity any of her cattle that misbehave – her scary stare-downs will have them quaking!

At work, as in friendship, the ISTJs tend toward regular, consistent and ongoing commitment. When the work day begins, we expect to find them at their desk – or there'll be a notification advising their estimated time of return.

On the other hand, the ISTPs have either disappeared, off doing their own thing, forgotten something was scheduled, or are totally in your face, fixing or fidgeting. While they may not do the NF 'holding in heart-mind' in both virtual and real time and space, the ISTPs tend to live a more pragmatic philosophy about the other (whether a job or friend): 'if you're here, you're here, if you're not, you're not: you exist when we are here-and-now together but you don't exist in the gaps between.'

'Just do it!' applies. Lui-san happily wandered from one adventure to another, sanguine whether times were easy or tough, with or without wealth, with or without the presence of her husband and son. Her ingenuity for self-preservation and general survival was not without implications for other people in her orbit. This tension can be seen enacted in workplaces and social groups.

On the downside, other people are likely to consider ISTPs infuriating to corral at work and for social get-togethers, or feel incredulous and hurt that they've chopped off contact for extended periods without having handed in their work, and without having missed them.

On the upside, when they do turn up for work or play, they're very useful, strongly connected and disarmingly appealing. They will drift in and out, as long as they're not nailed down or told how to do anything (which may trigger their oppositional defiant streak). Unlike a stoic ISTJ, a bored ISTP doesn't tend to hang around!

We can appreciate why ISTPs are thought to epitomise our wide brown land's archetypal larrikin: 'She'll be right, mate'; 'I was only down at the pub – don't worry about it'; 'Keep your shirt on, it'll get done!' And the first friend to silently pitch in and help: 'You're my mate, aren't you!' 'Don't tell anyone, I don't want gratitude or recognition.'

Reassuringly adroit, I have witnessed them repair whatever or whoever is broken, without getting infected by panic-stricken or frozen recipients. This 'calm under pressure' response when faced with the unexpected remains a key feature in the lives of the five case studies, and other ISTPs I have met.

Allan observed that most of his old mates with similar histories and personalities had gravitated to the Country Fire Authority: 'What else would you join if you were ex-Defence, now working in demolitions, trucks, law enforcement or security contracting?' He mentioned how well they all get on with other firefighters, whether at the training/competitions and events, or during occasional collaborations with the regulars over the years.

That's how you keep track of what happened to your ex-service mates. Most of the CFA volunteers have also joined the rifle club. We all help each other, if anyone's in trouble or they need a hand with something, we are there in a flash.

Ian Ball, manager of the Psychological Type Research Unit, cites Jo Clarke's research on personality types of firefighters in the Melbourne Fire Brigade. As she reported in the *Australian Psychological Type Review* (July 2004), Jo found significant preferences for extraversion, sensing and thinking. The four most-represented types were all STs. ESTJ (29%) and ISTJ (21%) accounted for half of the firefighters sample, with ESTP (10%) third and ISTP (6%) fourth.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, several Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade HR practitioners commented to me that ISTJs were over-represented in the profession. Anecdotally, they discussed how well the ISTJ firefighters teamed with the ISTPs. This seems to fit with how the STJs and STPs each 'firefight' well, but differently.



ISTP Don at work with fellow roadies

In contrast to the ISTJs, who are practical, orderly and well-organised and steadily follow through, most of the texts note that ISTPs are:

- troubleshooters, initiators, negotiators: 'firefighters', and untanglers of messy moments
- acute observers of the environment, ready to gracefully pounce or procure
- interested in cause and effect, and in how and why things work
- seekers of efficiencies and shortcuts to avoid wasted efforts or pedantic bureaucracy
- better at verbal planning and decisions than at producing written documents

Montgomery notes that ISTPs

don't only play musical instruments, but operate any number of instruments or tools that amplify human capabilities, from the chainsaw to the scalpel, from the race car to the handgun.

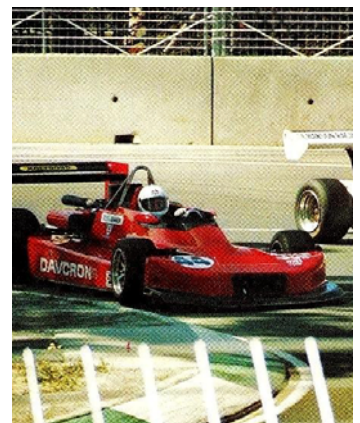
Montgomery argues that an artist shows mastery of any freely-changing physical activity, regardless of the medium – whether pilots, surgeons or shooters using speed and conquest, or fine artists using chisels or brushes, line and form. He agrees with David Kiersey, who cites Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci as examples of this typical ISTP talent –alongside their fierce insubordination to rules.

Martin notes that their 'keen powers of observation and desire for a wealth of hands-on and sensory experiences often lead ISTPs to develop an exceptionally high level of skill with the tools or instruments they choose to use, whether that tool is a computer, hammer, spreadsheet or sailboat.'

Consequently, ISTPs are often found in fields requiring a craftsman-like approach. They enjoy jobs that involve a measure of adventure, excitement and independence. Chosen careers often include military or corrections work, farming, law, electronic engineering and computers.



They don't only play musical instruments



but operate tools, from the race car to the handgun



A few of ISTP Allan's 'toys'

Montgomery likens the extreme ISTP female to Ibsen's Hedda Gabler – sassy women who long for action, adventure, speed and power. How dreadful for these freedom-loving women to be born into repressive cultures and polite societies. Hedda denies she is pregnant, detesting the commitment involved. 'I won't have responsibilities!' she cries ... As she faces the galling truth of the 'tight little world' closing in, she recoils ... (*clenching her fists*) 'Oh, I'll die – I'll die of all this!'

We certainly can't accuse our five case studies of living dreary lives! Diana was the goddess of the hunt and wild things; a virtuoso and tactician of weapons and gadgets. Our case studies share many interests – a love of gadgets in particular. Ann, Joan and Lui-san all have a taste for expensive fountain pens and beautiful writing implements. Joan, Don and Ann drive Honda CRVs, and Allan has similar vehicles. (Lui-san never drove.)



Find a way around it
and get on with it —
no noise, no fuss

Joan Wilder

One of my closest friends is an ISTP. She is a gadget-toting photographic whiz and fast-cars addict, an obsessive car buff who can perform most of her own mechanical maintenance. I marvel at her tinkering that can fix anything, having great fun as she breezes through, maintaining impeccable nail extensions. My short-nailed hands are stained with ink (pens, let alone fountain pens, are shockers for lefthanders), but her perfectly-manicured talons never chip.

I love feeling physically safe with my friend. Once, as we were waiting for the lights to change, a P-plate driver flew over a steep hill and into the back of her car. She saw what was about to happen in the mirror and lunged at me (oblivious as usual!) to protect me from injury.

A favoured pastime for all five of our case studies is travel. Their favourite words are 'adventure', 'happy' and 'excitement'. All love sleeping, and all have an affinity with nature and animals – birds in particular. Joan, Don and Allan like country music. Don, Allan and Ann describe themselves as dyslexic.

Joan and Ann did not have children. Don and Lui-san did not raise their children, and Allan was prevented from raising his daughter until she was 15.

The cattle-herding gadget queen

Joan Wilder, ISTP

I clear	S clear	T clear	P clear
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Coming from a large family, practical Joan left school early and figured out how to do anything required as she went along, whether office jobs, fixing cars, computers or fountain pens.

Her motto is: 'Take life as it comes, and whenever you hit an obstacle, grit your teeth and remind yourself "I can do this". Find a way around it, and get on with it. No noise, no fuss.'

Fleeing empty-handed from a disastrous early marriage, Joan lived alone for over three decades.

On a whim, she left the country TAFE and relocated interstate to work for an international firm specialising in pens and writing equipment, which required many negotiation trips overseas. Her favourite memories are driving on the autobahn, and trouble-shooting with the boys on the factory floor, or with the executives struggling with computer technology.

With a fridge filled with only her perfume bottles and frozen veggie packs to make fast soups, her flat by the sea provided easy access to nightly walks or swims.

Joan's favourite pastime has always been travelling the world, having new adventures. In her 30s she met a James Bond type who lived in Europe, consulting on top-secret aerospace design. Both smitten, he invited her over for a holiday, with a view to testing their compatibility for a serious relationship.

Fiercely independent, Joan has always paid her own way, regardless of income disparity or no-strings-attached offers. As she alighted from the plane, he informed her that during the intervening month he'd

met someone else – but they could still have a great holiday.

Nope! I got on the next plane out and went straight home. He was surprised – accustomed to having his own way, he'd never met anyone like me before.

20 years later, he turned up and asked Joan to marry him.

He had decided that I was the only woman in the world he trusted with his life, considerable assets, head and heart. I put him to the test and, convinced, I agreed – on the condition that we kept our finances separate so no one could ever think I was after his money.

'I've taken care of myself all my life, and that's how I like it', says Joan.

Joan and her partner both love travel and challenges. They lead busy lives, taking on work contracts that often mean they are in different countries.

With a penchant for fine Scotch, belly-dancing, and reading sci-fi fantasy, the impeccably-groomed Joan is immensely good fun, competent, proud, and very private. Shrewd and uncomplaining, she knows she is a survivor. 'I don't tolerate many people, self-pity, or excuses', she says, rolling her eyes.



When it was time to retire, Joan and her partner bought a farm for fun.

So as you can see I've been keeping out of mischief. I really needed to get away from the city, so am loving the change of scenery.

Joan took on the site management of the building of their house. She takes on whatever is required with gusto – chopping trees, building fences, manicuring nails, and throwing barbecues.

Farm is going well. We have some new boys in the paddocks – we're now up to 18 steers, some Hereford, some Angus. Not much happening there during winter and until Andrew gets back from his overseas aeronautical engineering project.

Joan has kept busy in the country, setting up a new business, 'an extra little sideline', filling ink tanks:

It could be messy if you weren't as anal as I am, and it can be time-consuming – but during the evening it's fine, and every little bit helps.

Filling the ink tanks takes Joan back to her work with fountain pens:

The company always gave me any broken, damaged or returned fountain pens. I would fiddle with them and make many work, then give them to staff to use at work.

She ended up collecting beautiful fountain pens – but had to buy the limited-edition specials.

Joan has always been able to mix it with pensioners or millionaires, doing glitzy or down-and-dirty, celebrating a champagne taste on a beer budget, as easily as blowing windfalls on high-risk speculations, then living rough.

A cheeky loner, Joan 'lives in the here and now, and refuses to be beholden to anyone for anything'.



I've taken care of myself all my life—that's how I like it

Joan Wilder

The gun-collecting computer fixer

Allan Cook, ISTP

Ex-Navy, ex-security guard, volunteer firefighter, computer whiz, biker, occasional drummer

I	S	T	P
slight	clear	clear	clear



I'm more interested in having fun with all of my toys.

Allan Cook

Allan, in his late 50s, has a long history of dangerous, isolated work, living on the edge of life and death. This cuddly teddy bear is a former defence forces member, munitions specialist, security expert and computer technology trouble-shooter – and can be a real softie.

Allan is cool in the face of danger, and switches from lazy to alert when the situation calls for action. He is also unpredictable if bored, and has been known to stir things up with practical jokes so people don't become complacent.

An only child, his parents divorced when he was a baby, and his mother remarried a kind man when he was 8. Allan gained an older brother on alternate weekends and the family got on well.

Allan's cheeky humour, practical jokes and love of the outdoors were evident before he started school. He loved playing with guns, taking toys apart, and disappearing for hours on his trike, bike, and anything that moved.



A mischievous boy but a good Sea Cadet, Allan joined the Navy as soon as possible. He was involved in the Vietnam War. 'Ex-service keep silent', he says:

Most of the time I try not to think about the stories from my past. Lots of bad times, pictures of kill confirmation, Executions, collateral damage photos, and what the VC did to children. I vividly remember when we hit them with a 50 cal machine gun.

'We started with 34 people in 1968', says Allan. 'In 2008 there are just two of us left. I'm a survivor.'

Allan left the service at 48. He 'can't say anything' about his past as it comes under the *Official Secrets Act*: 'If you breach the Act, you lose your support pension':

Add 30 years and some information will become available, but most of the information will never be available to the public. If there's no information, then it never happened.

'Not much to tell about me', Allan claims:

I'm shy with social events, but since I hate feeling trapped into anything, it doesn't bother me that I don't do relationships. I'd only consider a sweet young movie star who didn't expect me to clean up the house or keep normal hours, *ha ha!*

How does Allan feel about himself?

On bad days, I am a boring nothing which does not have a place in 2008. I think the word for it is a 'dinosaur'.

On the other days I know I've had fun with all my toys. Still do.

A long-term rifle club member, Allan has won many shooting awards and medals for Australia, and amassed a huge collection of Confederate rifles from the Civil War. He ran his own security business, doing late-night rounds in the mean streets of Sydney. While softhearted and protective toward women, children and animals, he has no qualms about using his firearms and sorting out troublemakers.

Allan hated school. 'I've been pretty well the same sort of person all my life', he says, 'I get bored unless I'm doing something with my hands. I'm dyslexic, too.'

At 20, Allan was married for a short time and had a daughter. He spent many years in custody battles, and when his daughter turned 15 she chose to live with him. She was a tomboy who enjoyed driving trucks, firefighting with the CFA, trailbike riding and mechanical tinkering with him.

Now in her 30s, she was never bothered by the house that resembles a hardware store and garage, and she moved out only recently to get married. Allan has taken the loss hard, but hopes that grandkids might soften the blow.

Allan buys lots of 'toys', and many things remain unfinished on his lounge room floor, including hundreds of computer parts, a motorbike in pieces, and his drum kit. His front and backyards boast an array of old buses, cars, motorbikes, ride-on mowers and tools.

Allan has spent most of his life working or tinkering at night, which suits him as he doesn't sleep too well, due to past injuries and a shiftwork habit. He spent years as a volunteer firefighter, go-cart racer and amateur racing car driver.



More about my gadgets:

I have recently purchased a car hoist like the service stations have. I'm too old to get under cars. I've got a very comfy big motorbike I take out when I feel like a burn. I play drums in a band that gets together now and then.

The house is very bad, don't get around to doing it. More interested in fiddling round with computers, locksmithing, pulling stuff apart, making spare parts, and having fun with my toys.

On a diet of Coke and takeaway food, Allan steadily gained weight over the years. This led to knee problems, and eventually loss of security work as he became less mobile. He switched to tinkering with computers, all self taught. A good skill was 'procuring' bits and pieces, and solving dilemmas by making spare parts for anything mechanical, especially for alarms, safes and firearms.

Emotionally, Allan knows he has remained damaged and childlike.

I'm like a big kid. I've always been defiant. I'll do the opposite of what's expected just for fun. I'm great with dogs, kids, love country and western music and driving anything fast.

'I enjoy freedom and my own company', Allan says:

I know I am stubborn and I don't wish to change who I am. I have a few good mates who keep similar hours and we'll use Skype. My married friends accept me as I am.

I'm in a lot of physical pain from my injuries but I just ignore it. You just live day by day.



I'll do the opposite of what's expected just for fun

Allan Cook

The psychotherapist and forensic psych

Ann Irwin, ISTP

I	S	T	P
moderate	slight	moderate	moderate

With blue-grey eyes and a relaxed, casual dress style, Ann is a well-regarded expert in her field:

I love going to court and being on the stand! I'm experienced in family report writing for the Family and Federal Magistrates Courts, Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal reports, and giving expert testimony



What's happening right here, right now?

Ann Irwin

Ann is shrewd and smart, endearing and ingenuous, with an infectious laugh, cheeky grin and sense of the absurd. She knows her stuff and can go against the prevailing winds with equanimity. She drives a Honda CRV, and is the first to proclaim that 'the emperor's got no clothes'.

Now in her late 50s, Ann has qualifications as a psychologist and teacher – a BEd in counselling and graduate diploma in family therapy from La Trobe, a BA in psychology (Clark University, USA), and a graduate diploma in drug and alcohol rehabilitation (Worcester State College, USA).

'My work has two roles', says Ann:

1. Psychotherapist, dealing with individuals: long-term work, often with very disturbed or damaged people.
2. Assessments and reports – forensic, Family Court, Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal, giving expert testimony.

In her psychotherapist role, Ann's areas of expertise are childhood trauma/abuse, anxiety disorders, dissociative disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, depressive disorders, life-cycle adjustment, and relationship and family issues/assessments.

'I fell into my clientele population' says Ann.

I was working in a community health centre and the job required that I facilitate a local group for sexual assault survivors, so I had to do a fair bit of investigating of that field, and one thing led to another.

I became interested, recognising that when I used to teach in schools years earlier, many of the kids had obviously been abused. This connects with the dissociative identity disorder work I focus on.

Ann loves the convenience of working from home: 'I can make my own hours, and I choose to work odd ones!'

I see clients for counselling anywhere between 10am and 2pm, and 5pm to 9pm, and start working in my office around 11pm into the dead of night. This unusual habit of working very late into the night, writing my reports, means no distractions – I am easily distracted otherwise!

'I'm not easily motivated', Ann observes. 'I really only do what I like to do.'

The only thing that motivates me is the deadlines for those reports I dislike writing, and the fact that if I don't do it, I don't get paid for it.

Ann loves the slow pace of her psychotherapy work, with its challenge of 'reading' the other, of 'trying to remove yourself from the situation and just take in what's coming from the other person':

I like the challenge of creating the safe environment, so they can go some place emotionally they haven't been before – that is a big challenge.

But there's none of that in the other side of what Ann does, with her court work, with its 'challenge of fast diagnosis':

When I taught in high schools, I loved emergency teaching – most teachers don't! You go into a classroom and you have two minutes to figure out who is trouble, who is helpful, etc.

'I just love making a quick analysis of group dynamics!' says Ann. 'What's happening

right here, right now? I only have a few hours to do the interviews for the court reports and gain a comprehensive picture of what is going on. And while I like this part of the work, I hate actually writing reports.'

When I have to go to court, I enjoy sizing up what's going on – the intention of the barrister to try to discredit you, their attempts to try to unravel you!

Ann finds this a test of her ability to stay neutral and not take anything personally: 'a good challenge'. It reminds her of the classroom: 'There's a captive audience, intent on what you say, and you have information they don't have.'

I like the excitement of taking the stand, knowing something interesting and challenging is about to happen. I like how the law works: it is so different to psychology. So much posturing and pretence in law, the opposite of working in psychotherapy.

Ann's massive desk is a 'total disaster', a 'nightmare of papers everywhere':

I have a picture of my partner, my medical scripts for Ventolin, my iPod touch, iPod shuffle, PDA, mobile phone, handbag, computer attachments, external hard drive, concert tickets, personal mail, webcam stuff, a box of 24 luxury pens, and my collection of limited-edition fountain pens.

'There is so much shit', says Ann, 'stacks of things you should find useful to organise yourself, but they don't help to organise me! I know where everything is, even if it looks like a mess.'

Ann loves audio visual equipment, and pursues 'everything imaginable in the field':

I have a 46' LCD high-def Sony, a mini Mac computer attached to the TV, a three-disc DVD/CD player, Foxtel box, VHS-and-CD combo player, tuner, and five speakers – stunning handmade Italian speakers, chest height, subwoofers, and ceiling speakers.

Ann's house is structurally cabled, with speakers everywhere: 'The sound booms, and I listen to music all the time.'

Ann built a dedicated entertainment room with remote-control operated blinds and lights, and semicircular leather furniture in anthracite. She loves classical and folk music, as well as Sixties rock.

I watch all kinds of movies, documentaries. It removes me from my work. I have a tolerance for some of the most inane TV rubbish.

Ann is originally from Brooklyn Heights, New York City.

I like to have travel 'adventures' and need excitement. I like the different experiences you get from travel.

That's how she came to live in Australia in 1975. She got a 'great teaching job' and found it easy living here:

The population is small, no problems, not as much red tape: easy. At first I complained about the slackness. But when I returned to the States, I quickly came back to Australia because I missed the laid-back, low-key, easy attitude.

Ann also liked the income: 'My big travel desires mean you really don't belong anywhere, so you might as well stay in the place that is easiest!'

I like the city: multicultural, exciting. I enjoy going to a Melbourne northern suburbs Medicare office, it is like visiting the United Nations!

Ann caught the travel bug in 1968, and has never been able to shake it off.

I wish I could travel all the time. I've been across Asia, Russia, Japan, Europe 4 or 5 times, Britain, Mexico, New Zealand, and I wound up in Australia. Our next adventure is an exchange to Vancouver for 6 months, swapping with people from over there.

She loves gadgets and is 'a sucker for the newest, latest, greatest thing' – 'anything with technology that is new and different':

Since I was a child I have always liked taking things apart – radios, etc. I may not always put them back together!

What do you value most?

My relationship and good health.

What is most important that you want for yourself?

Happiness: absence of misery, being without pressure or worry. I am happy most of the time.

What are your passions?

My partner, my work in psychotherapy, and making money.

I also love a really good meal!



What do you enjoy on a daily basis?

Sleeping.

Where is the fun?

Going on 'excursions' with my partner, and travelling.

What excites you?

Travelling to places I haven't been before. Somewhere new.

Ideal day in your fantasy life?

Sleep in, go out for breakfast, go for a swim or take a bath, have a good meal, and watch a good movie. (This would be different if we were on a trip.)

She also loves hand-held video games and computer games, and puzzles like sudoku: 'I like figuring it out'.

Love reading the *Financial Review*, financial sections of papers, anything on business and money and philosophies around it. Like reading Alan Greenspan.

I also like historical documentaries – e.g., all the *Monarchy* stuff.

'I am an observer', says Ann. 'I prefer to watch than participate.' She loves going to cafes and people-watching – 'I don't get bored.'

This morning I took the paper outside to read on the decking. Nothing interesting in it, so I started watching the birds. I was engaged in that for over an hour, just sitting. I could tell you all about them. Had a great time.

Getting the best out of Ann isn't hard, as long as you're not sending ill-will. 'If you try to give your best, you get the best of me. Then we see where that leads.'

Ann is annoyed by hypocrites and narcissists – 'particularly hypocritical narcissists!'

I lack pretension. I am genuine and real.

Ann has 'an incredibly large capacity to stay with something' – a topic, an emotion, a conversation: 'Infinite preparedness to figure out and understand, so I don't give up.'

She also has a 'hysterical sense of humour':

If I ever lost my sense of humour, it would be the end of me. When I don't find things funny and people don't find me funny, it's time to turn up my toes.

Her sense of humour is one of her best aspects, 'an uninhibited sense of fun and foolishness':

I'm not sensitive, I tease and can be teased, I am quirky, deadpan, and love one-liners. It cuts through everything and connects you, and is really useful in working with children and adolescents.

Ann dislikes her lack of organisation and untidiness:

It smacks of adolescence. I leave my clothes lying around, I don't care if dishes are left on the counter, that kind of lingering student mentality.

Ann's parents both worked: her father as a 'socialist kind of pharmacist', her mother as a paralegal.

I'm the elder of two – my brother is a professor of computer science. I was never expected to clean up after myself growing up, someone else did it.

Ann was brought up by the housekeeper, Catherine, 'a fantastic black woman'. Her earliest recollection is sitting on a bench at the age of two and a half, watching children play in a sandbox. 'Even then', Ann notes, 'I preferred to do my own thing, not participate in the group.'

Catherine had her arm around me. I was snuggled in to her breast, stroking her arm that enveloped me, when I spontaneously enquired 'When am I going to turn brown?' I had a loud voice, and the others around the playground began laughing.

From the age of 13, Ann knew exactly what she wanted to do:

I wanted to be a teacher for maybe five years and then I would become a school psychologist, and after that I would have my own business, working for myself. And I suppose I pretty much did it all.

At school, Ann was a 'problem child'.

I realise now that I was dyslexic, but it wasn't diagnosed. I had no sense of how things were spelt.

'Third grade wasn't good', says Ann. She was 'the only white kid in the class, bullied by them all'. Then 'big black Emma' took Ann under her wing. Kept down several times, 14 year old Emma was still in 3rd grade, waiting to turn 15 and leave school. She decided to become Ann's bodyguard, and no one messed with her after that.



I am an observer:
I prefer to watch
than participate.

Ann Irwin

On the day she turned 15, before walking out the door forever, Emma kicked the teacher down the stairs, breaking her arm.

Losing my protector against the bullying, life quickly got shitty again, so my parents moved me to a private school that shaped me enormously. Packer Collegiate Institute - a prestigious New York private school that is well regarded. I was still misbehaving, but they soon taught me how to read!

Because of her 'appalling' behaviour, the school recommended that Ann's parents take her to a psychologist, who discovered she was acting up because of her brother.

With a 180+ IQ, he was being studied by universities and feted everywhere. He was skipping grades, and we ended up in the same year level. Awfully hard.

Ann's parents put her brother into a school for gifted children, which proposed to accelerate him a year ahead of her. The psychologist was concerned that would harm her, as well him, because he wasn't emotionally or socially mature enough. Her parents listened, and they remained in the same year levels.

Ann quickly settled into the private school and did well. Offered a place the prominent Vassar College, she declined because she was '18 and defiant':

Coming from the traditional all-girl private school, I wanted to try co-ed university. I do regret it now - my only regret in life.

Ann's brother became an academic, but he has struggled with expectations. 'I'm no academic', says Ann, 'I'm a doer!'

Her personal philosophy is simple: 'do no harm'. 'I don't mind if people "get" me or not', she adds.

You're here by an accident of genetics, and then you die, and that's it! Don't see myself as anything other than another speck on the planet.

'I'm not a very ambitious person', says Ann. 'I just want to live comfortably and satisfy my hedonistic tendencies.'

'Nothing makes me unique', she believes, 'other than my DNA, reason, humour, good commonsense and sound judgment.'

I don't believe in chance or dumb luck: there are always decisions and choices. I made those decisions along the way that have brought me to where I am. I take responsibility for myself.

'I don't think I am special', says Ann.

Fundamentally I'm existential in my thinking. I am completely dispensable to everyone but my partner and my brother. I'm enormously loyal to the people I care about.

'I like how Ann is in the world', her partner comments:

She is savvy, smart, and capable in the outside world. But then there's that other, private part - how she is with her clients, absolutely *there* for them. On holidays her phone is on, because someone could be suicidal, she honours the sacred space.

She's got business smarts, but she doesn't manage her time well. Writing is agony for her! Those court reports!

Ann laughs. 'We have a standing joke: as soon as I get a gadget I get it out, immediately put it together and start using it. My partner goes straight to the manual and is still reading the fine print.'

Ann and her partner are in a state of limbo about their future:

We don't know where we'll end up. We may move to Canada permanently, or return to remain in Australia. I don't know. If we return, I guess I want to retire around 70.

'I wouldn't want to be anywhere else in my life than where I'm at now', says Ann. 'I am happy in my relationship. I'm doing my best work.'

I've realised my lifelong dream: a happy, loving relationship; work I like to do; and enough money to live very comfortably.

What are you most proud of having accomplished?

A healthy relationship. It seems a rare achievement in this world, and it is enormously satisfying.

Who do you admire?

Eleanor Roosevelt. She had an incredibly positive sense of herself and seemed to take her direction from something internal within her.

She said, 'No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.' I think that's true.



What are you addicted to?

Food, and making money

Where are you most irresponsible?

Doing tasks I dislike doing.

Except for report-writing, I don't do what I don't enjoy.

One thing you could do that would make a positive impact on the quality of your life?

Lose weight.

What are you putting up with in your life?

Nothing really. I just don't put up with things.

The roadie

Don Sutherland, ISTP

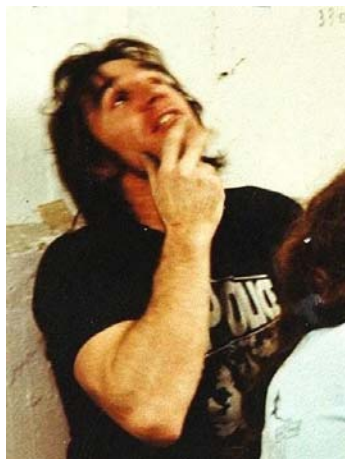
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During his colourful life Don has worked as a roadie, truckie, slaughterman, roof tiler and storeman. For a hobby he makes beautiful furniture—mirrors, cabinets, tables and stools. A left-hander, Don is a classic artisan. His affinity with wood is awesome.

He trained with Sammy Parker, coach of the Australian wrestling team. 'But I was so sick of training I gave it up', he says, 'because there was too much happening with partying and drugs.'

Most of Don's life—what he can remember of it—has been 'a blur of sex, drugs, rock and roll'. For 21 years he travelled with bands. Setting up shows meant driving 300 km from one place to another. Acts he has worked for include Skyhooks, U2 and Cliff Richard (*opposite*).

Don, a first-born twin, was the eldest of five children. He hated school and never tried to outdo anyone: 'Accept me as I am, or not! I'm not into competition.'

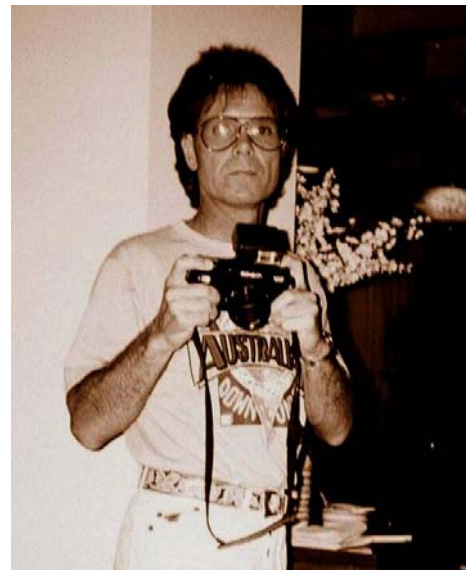


Accept me as I am,
or not! I'm not into
competition.

Don Sutherland



Cliff Richard, snapped by roadie Don Sutherland



However, Don did like carpentry, and he has maintained his interest in woodwork throughout his life.

Working as a roadie, stage lighting hand and general troubleshooter on tours has been his major role. 'I helped some guys out, and it went from there', Don says. Everything he did for the concerts, the complex lighting included, was self-taught. Eventually he worked for the entrepreneur who ran Artist Concert Tours.



I've never worried about the heights or having accidents. I like a job with no discipline—as long as the show went on, I could do whatever I liked.

'It's not easy to describe myself', he says Don. 'I don't know. I'm not egotistical, so I can't ...' When invited to consider it, he noted that:

I'm quiet, and easygoing ... although I'm argumentative, it's rare for me to have outbursts. If I do, I get over it quickly and then it's forgotten.

'I'm OK with a buzzsaw', says Don. 'I like making furniture. I'll copy from a piece of paper, but I can't come up with an idea for myself.'

I like doing things, making things, going to the gym, eating, and loving my partner.

Don is funny, disarmingly honest, and good company. Rarely still, he jumps up from dinner tables or weaves around the Saturday market like a youth, instead of a man in his late 50s. He loves listening to music, fidgeting in rhythm, and riding his bike. 'He lives totally in the moment', says his partner (an NT):

He makes a joke out of everything, and he just acts. If I say, 'We need a watering system', he's out digging in the garden before we've discussed where it will be.



Don loves building and puddling around in his shed, but he's known to be messy. In his eagerness to get going he shifts piles around and doesn't tend to clean up. His partner laughingly analyses his process:

He rushes into doing something without thinking about it. I call it a fast failure. We row. He redoes it. But not to my standard. We row. Then he does it again, properly. The finished product is great.



Love

In her early twenties, Don's partner did some catering for big tours. At a party he spied her across the room cosied up with Wilbur Wilde. He strode up, saying, 'Hey, that's my woman—leave her alone!' She was smitten and they began a passionate relationship.

After a few years Don was purloined by a hippie type for a while and they had a child. But their feelings for each other remained strong, and eventually they ended up back together. 'He's the sexiest man I've ever met', she says.

Don continued his glamorous life on the road that took him away for five out of every six weeks, until he was issued with an ultimatum: 'Go on without me, or find something that keeps you here and have a relationship with me.'

Don quit immediately. He now works as a storeman for a publishing company.



I like doing things,
making things,
going to the gym

Don Sutherland

The dowager queen

Lui-san Maxwell, ISTP

**War refugee, romantic,
and eyebrow plucker**

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Lui-san is very elderly, but looks much the same as she did as a beautiful young woman – under 5 foot tall, 50 kilos, with jet black hair. Paradoxically imperious and delightfully playful, she follows a health-conscious vegetarian lifestyle.

Lui-san was an orphan:

I don't remember my childhood in Shanghai. Nothing before the age of 8, when I was at boarding school in Britain. School was fun.

Lui-san's guardian, a Chinese mandarin, told her that her parents were missionaries who had gone to inner China to work with the peasants when she was 4:

He called on me at the British Boarding School one day with the news that my parents had died, but, as they had been friends, I could to continue to rely on him to take care of me.

Lui-san returned home to the East at 15.

Shortly after I turned 16, my guardian died. Someone suggested that, since I spoke fluent English and Cantonese, I could apply to the local hospital. I become a lady almoner, rolling bandages.

At 16, she married an important man in his forties who had been so captivated by her coquettish beauty, he was unconcerned about her dubious heritage.

One of the nurses said, 'Someone's just been taken into the ward I think you should meet. This British fellow never married; he has an important job, he's a good catch, try to hook him, for protection.' So I did.

Besides, having attended a British school, Lui San was adamant that she, too, was of British heritage. By 17 she had had a baby, much to his disgust. 'You worked in a hospital, you should have known how to avoid it!' he growled.

Charles was a commissioner for maritime customs in Amoy on the coast of China. His high rank and relative wealth had even greater currency for pleasure-loving Lui-san when they moved to Hong Kong.

The exquisite Asian girl with a slight scowl twirled away from her portly, red-haired British husband with clammy pig's-rotters hands. 'I'm too old for a child, and it better not interfere with official entertaining engagements', he insisted. He often sighed:

How many times have I said, 'King of the Shit in Asia instead of being the Shit of the King in England: but no making Little Shits!'

'Oh well', Lui-san thought, 'I miss going dancing – it shouldn't be too long before I can accompany the old man to parties again.' Over the years, as was the custom of the time and culture, they visited their child for a few minutes each evening before their balls, and included him at the dinner table on Sundays.

The *amahs* raised the child. Each Sunday the boy was presented to his parents. His strict father would lock him in the bathroom and hit him with a razor strop for any disobedience. The boy loved the few minutes each evening when his beautiful mother popped in on her way out for the night.

Lui-san loved the parties for dignitaries, the evenings dancing at the Peninsular Hotel, and her afternoon beauty naps. She had silver-service afternoon teas at the Peak with the expat wives.

But the rumblings of Japanese aggression would soon change their idyllic world of privilege, balls, servants, gold crockery and opulent clothes. Soldiers began arriving from several countries. Lui-san recalls the British officers she danced with in 1940, before the Japanese claimed the Peninsular for the general's headquarters. 'The hotel ballroom was pale blue. and they looked so handsome in their uniforms.'



I've never felt worried
or frightened about
things

Lui-san Maxwell

'I have never felt worried or frightened about things', says Lui-san.

I had an Alsatian dog in the East. He was fierce, intelligent and faithful. He'd take visitors by their hand in his mouth and walk them through, then escort them out the same way.

On Christmas Day in 1941, Hong Kong surrendered to Japan. There were rumours of hideous atrocities. All the male expats were placed in Stanley prison camp. Lui-san and the boy were swiftly evacuated with all the white expats:

Women and children had only minutes to pack before evacuation. In the chaos we told the servants they could have the house. We sailed for Australia. I thought it was a great adventure.

Sailing on the *Empress of Japan*, they had a choice of disembarking in Melbourne or Sydney. 'M' was a nicer initial, so Lui-san chose Melbourne: 'I figured I was a Maxwell before I was married, and I was even happier then, without the old man.'

When Charles was released at the war's end, he visited Australia to find Lui-san. He found her uninterested and uncooperative about moving to Britain: 'I was having fun here, and I didn't want to reunite with him!' He returned to his birthplace and opened a tobacconists in London. They had no further contact.

The mystery surrounding her early years has never been discussed or unearthed. Essentially, Lui-san had been plucked from the privileged life she had known from the age of 16 and thrust onto a ship from war-torn Asia to Australia. She disembarked with a suitcase packed with ballgowns and embroidered slippers. Other refugees had opted for more practical items: 'Pots and pans', she says. 'How plebeian and dreary!'

When the ship docked I asked, 'Where are the servants to take our things?' While the others struggled off the ship lugging their possessions, I stood imperiously on the deck until a couple of deckhands hoisted my trunk down the gangplank.

On arrival, refugees were treated as outcasts, dropped into an alien culture with no money, friends or support. Lui-san was neither able to assimilate nor interested in doing it. When she first arrived, she treated those who were billeting her like servants and was regularly asked to leave.

Adaptation was difficult. She was mortified when Australians refused to perform tasks for her. 'They're convicts after all! And I don't know how to cook or wash!' she sniffed. Lui-san chuckles, reflecting back:

The immigration officials were in despair. They told me if I kept insisting on treating the host families as my servants they'd run out of options. I spent about a fortnight at each place before they sent me back.

'Look at this latest complaint', they'd say. 'You sat on your arse all week, expecting to be waited on, and then you struck the host for not doing your washing properly.'

Well, I'm a gentle soul, not accustomed to a backwater filled with convicts. I was so bored in Melbourne. I missed the wonderful life we had back home.

One day I decided to move to Kings Cross in Sydney. People said it was more cosmopolitan and colourful. Kings Cross was so alive after the dead city of Melbourne where everything shut at 6pm. The only decent thing there was the Astor picture theatre!

Sydney was 'bright and friendly', Lui-san recalls, 'with plenty of action, night lights, bohemians, and movement.'

The view from my flat is the closest to my earlier life. The East was a wonderful world of comfort, and ahead of this country in every aspect – my memories momentarily preserve me from time's erosion. I'm a romantic, and my colourful earlier life will always remain my best companion.

Following a period of billeting on arrival, refugees were expected to work for their living. With few transferable skills, Lui-san initially had to work at Stephanie Dest's beauty salon, plucking the eyebrows of rich old ladies. 'It was shocking!' she says.



The life of a queen with all the curiosity of a vagabond

Lui-san Maxwell

Hard work and having to make decisions creates turmoil and frustration, leaves me drained and tired.

Lui-san knew she couldn't raise a child:

My husband was a Grand Master in the Masons, so I showed the photo to school headmasters of boarding schools. My son was taken in for free, until he was old enough to join the Army as an apprentice.

As soon as she became eligible, she lived on a pension, renting a small flat and enjoying the lights, smells, sounds and frivolity of the neighbourhood. 'These days', says Lui-san, 'I am having my usual love affair with life in a simple way with what zest there is left in me.'

When I listen to the radio Saturday nights, my thoughts take wings to another world I know, because memories can be like precious jewels, and sentiment is what adorns life – giving it charm and flavour.

Lui-san practices tai chi in the park each morning, and amuses herself by reading poetry or watching the world.

A well-exercised body will keep its flexibility and grace for a very long time. The secret is to never neglect oneself, and diet and bowel regularity can accomplish wonders. I also love my sleep, and have as much as possible. Sufficient sleep is great Nature's second course of health.

'We are masters of our destiny', Lui-san maintains.

In old age faults of the mind increase as do those of the physical body as it withers the soul, rendering adventures difficult. If we accept without too much dreariness the thought that life's span is limited, then one can hope to reach the end of our course with healthy minds and bodies.

'But Father Time is close at my heels', she adds. 'I intend to live what time is left enjoying the tang and flavour, since I have lived the life of a queen with all the curiosity of a vagabond.'

Lui-san observes that the elderly are well catered for in her vicinity, with 'plenty of concerts where my heart takes flight with every note'. But she does not understand the others at the Senior Citizen's Club:

They no longer derive happiness from anything! No exaltation at being alive! They seem to be victims of their own limits – they seem to have little reason for living, so they seem disappointed all the time.

Lui-san's motto is 'Be happy. Be free. Be healthy.' She contends that diet plays a major part in nourishing brain and body.

I stay happy and often take myself back in time when the gay life I led was exciting – a pattern woven by the multitudinous threads of adventures, and I carry these precious memories in my mind to keep me oblivious to the world today.

Living in Australia has robbed Lui-san of the high society she knew in her prime, but she sees it as 'another adventure'.

When I take my strolls, I return to those brisk, exciting days, but now my new adventures are days of tranquillity and repose.

'Nature is wonderful', says Lui-san.

I have a couple of feathered friends, and every night at the same time on the dot, they call from some tree outside my window, so I do without my clock. Small pleasures now!

Lui-san's view is that 'we each must weave pleasure from the fabric of our own being'.

I savour the beauty in life. Sometimes I would like to turn back the clock for happier times, and be covered in snow. I remember when I was young I relished the snowy winters, especially when our boarding school played hockey against another school.

I was watching a cartoon, and I am amazed at man's ability to bring to life inanimate objects with expression and movement – nothing is impossible!



Kings Cross was so alive after the dead city of Melbourne

Lui-san Maxwell

Lui-san found that 'so much of the MBTI report was correct, except for one thing':

I am hopeless when it comes to mastering tools as technical and mechanical devices hold no interest for me. Art, music, poetry and adventurous living are the pursuits that create the excitement I require.

'Yes, I do prize freedom', says Lui-san.

I would hate to be shackled to domesticity and the encroachment it would have on my individuality, and I have avoided it my entire life. I would hate to be hampered by rules and regulations. If I were to live again, I would live as I have lived, with no regrets of things past nor fear for the future.

Lui-san has travelled to many exotic places, and the wonder of each country has left an indelible memory.

I learned to rely on my instincts, and the experiences have shaped my philosophies and understanding of life. Travel has given me strength and courage to meet obstacles, and to acquire the habits of self repression, so that nothing in me will be squandered in obedience to the expectations of others.

Lui-san has since died

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Lanois and his crew kept a bunch of vintage Harleys ... Mostly Panheads with Hydra-Glide front forks, chrome driving lamps, mostly solo seated, wide tires, tombstone taillights. I had to have one of these bikes. Mark Howard ... found me one—a '66 Harley Police Special out of Florida, with a powder-coated frame, stainless steel spokes, black-powdered rim and hubs, everything original, and it ran good.

Bob Dylan, *Chronicles, Volume I*

Self-portrait of an ISTP

At an AusAPT Queensland event in 2006, Steve Wood appeared as a member of an ISTP panel. In Steve's memory, here is a selection of his responses.

I like the 'doing' side [of engineering], rather than the people and politics. I like technical challenges.

I admire people in careers that demand a high level of mechanical skills. I admire excavator operators who can get a smooth cut.

Describe yourself.

I'll try anything once.

What are your strengths?

Flexible, pragmatic, logical. Not overly sensitive.

What are your challenges?

Being sensitive to others' feelings. Developing empathy.

Appreciating intangible concepts. Accepting new concepts.

Stressors?

Deadlines – I hate working to them.

Emotional people. People who react irrationally to innocuous comments.

Leisure activities?

Pulling things apart to see how they work: computers, clocks, toys, cars. Gardening—but I like to see instant results. Sailing—manipulating the wind.

I hate getting involved in politics, but I like watching polities trying to squeeze out of trouble.

Your strengths in a team?

Attention to detail. Retention of knowledge of what has happened earlier.

Getting back on track, rather than going round in circles.

Filtering out the bullshit. I do that very easily – but sometimes it doesn't help to identify it!

The best thing about being your type?

All the other types are aberrations! [*laughter*]



Nothing in me will be squandered in obedience to others' expectations

Lui-san Maxwell
with Meredith Fuller

Brenda & Andrew Campbell and Kay Wood
remember Steve Wood ►► pages 55 – 56