

Jane Bennett

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PROFESSIONAL LIFE

I originally trained in Social Work (Monash University, 1981) and Clinical Hypnotherapy (Australian College of Clinical Hypnotherapy, 1987) and now work as a researcher, writer, counsellor and educator. As a member of the Natural Fertility Management Pty Ltd team since 1990 I have organised and co-taught training seminars from 1993 onwards and offer ongoing support for health professionals wishing to use the NFM methods in their practice.

I designed and wrote *The Natural Fertility Management Conception Kit* and *The Natural Fertility Management Contraception Kit* with the founder of Natural Fertility Management and best-selling author, Francesca Naish. These kits were published in 2004 and represent 'state of the art' knowledge and method in fertility awareness, offering highly effective natural contraception and optimum conception that is easy to learn and use. For more information about the Natural Fertility Management methods and kits go to www.fertility.com.au or www.nfmcontraception.com.

Since coming off the pill and starting to use my NFM Kit I feel much more alive, much more in tune with my body and senses, and, on top of all that the side effects of the pill are gradually disappearing. I feel like my old self - fit, healthy, energetic, young, vibrant, happy...and very attracted to my husband!!!
Caitlin Sharp

WORKSHOPS

Through my work with Natural Fertility Management I became interested in working with women who want to transform inherited attitudes of embarrassment, shame and negligence around menstruation into an experience of empowerment, embodiment, creativity and celebration for themselves and their daughters.

Since 2000 I have run these workshops:

- **A Blessing Not a Curse** for mothers of daughters and other women, and
- **A Celebration Day for Girls** for 10-12 year old girls with their mothers. These have been held at schools and for school communities in Victoria, New South Wales, the ACT and South Australia. For more information go to www.fertility.com.au and click on 'puberty'.

Since the Celebration Day Sophie has been so chatty and open - asking questions about menstruation and talking about all the changes and experiences of puberty. I'm so pleased. Caroline

*Thank you for giving us the opportunity to share this wonderful day with our precious daughters.
Sandra, Karen, Andrea, Deb, Janice, Iona, and Paula*

In 2005, responding to requests from parents and girls and my own expanding interests, I began facilitating:

- **Fathers Celebrating Daughters** for fathers of daughters and other interested men, a two hour workshop, and
- **Cool on the Inside.** A day of activities, discussion and fun for 14-16 year old girls (or thereabouts).

During 2007 I began working with **St Lukes Innovative Resources** on a contractual basis presenting workshops for welfare, health and education professionals. In 2008 my workshop **Celebrating Girls** was offered in regional and metropolitan Victoria.

While I have run workshops primarily for girls and women I am also very interested in the journey of adolescence as it is experienced by boys, as well as the very important role of fathers.

BOOKS

In 2002 ***A Blessing Not a Curse** – a mother-daughter guidebook about menarche, menstruation and the menstrual cycle* was published by Sally Milner Publishing. In this book I explore the origin of ‘the curse’ and seek to replace this notion with a positive and enlightened view of menarche (first period) and menstruation. The book includes practical advice about how to talk about menstruation with girls, celebrate menarche, choose menstrual products, manage adolescent menstrual problems and learn the steps to achieve and sustain menstrual wellbeing.

I just loved reading ‘A Blessing Not a Curse’ and feel it carries a really profound message for women today – to embrace our unique, special and most fundamental female experience, positively, and share this with our daughters. Written with a wonderful mix of fascinating information, facts figures and useful stuff, as well as stories, humour and lightness, this book appealed to my whole being – heart, soul and intellect.

Jane Watson, mother of Ruby

In May 2008 Alexandra Pope’s and my book ***THE PILL: Are you sure it’s for you?*** was published by Allen and Unwin. In writing this book we sought to address the many myths concerning the pill, other contraceptives, fertility awareness and women’s’ bodies and cycles. We advocate truly informed choice, contraceptive literacy and partners sharing responsibility for their fertility. The book includes many practical tips about thinking through contraceptive needs and STD protection.

At last an easy to read, comprehensive, well-researched book about an extremely important, but as yet rarely discussed, topic. I think THE PILL is a real treasure and have complete confidence in recommending it to my patients, colleagues and friends as a great read as well as an empowering tool to help women become more in tune with their natural cycles.

Wendy Dumaresq, medical herbalist and author

MEDIA

In March 2008 Iris Pictures filmed one of my **Celebration Day for Girls** workshops as part of their **About Women** series, which was aired on SBS in September 2009. DVDs are available from SBS and part of an interview with me can be seen on <http://www.sbs.com.au/shows/aboutmenaboutwomen/listings/page/i/4/show/aboutmenaboutwomen>.

On the 8th of March 2009, on International Women's Day, ARTE presented the TV premier of **The Moon Inside You** – a documentary on menstruation that features both Alexandra and I – which was shown throughout France, Germany and the Slovak Republic. Television stations in thirteen European countries have bought it so far. The movie length version has been shown at film festivals throughout Europe and North America to very enthusiastic critics and audiences. For more information go to www.mooninsideyou.com.

Since the publication of **THE PILL: Are you sure it's for you?** I have been interviewed for 9am with David and Kim on Channel Ten, The Morning Show on Channel Nine, The Women's Healing Circle with Sherrill Sellman on Progressive Radio Network in the US, Juice Box Radio on CiTR 101.9FM in Vancouver, The Afternoon Show with Jim Mora for National Radio in New Zealand, as well as numerous print and web media interviews and reviews.

Since 1977 I have had articles published in magazines, including Byron Child, Kindred, Natural Parenting, Living Now and Earth Garden and a three-year series for Australian Wellbeing. I have also contributed chapters to *Love, Sex and Fertility* (Wellspring Press, 1989) and *The Lunar Cycle* (Prism Press, 1989).

THE RITE JOURNEY

Since 2009 I have collaborated with Andrew Lines, Graham Gallach and Amrita Hobbs to prepare course materials, write manuals and train teachers to facilitate a year-long program called The Rite Journey for year 9 girls (14-15 year olds). Andrew and Graham had been training teachers to run The Rite Journey for boys for a number of years and now, with the inclusion of the girl's program, a growing number of schools throughout Australia and New Zealand are implementing The Rite Journey for all their year 9 students. Since its inception The Rite Journey has been very well received and is frequently recommended by respected authors and speakers, including Steve Biddulph, Peter Ellyard and Maggie Hamilton. For more information go to www.theritejourney.com.au.

The Rite Journey process is designed to help the shift to being grown up. It's well thought out, respectful and enjoyable, and has a special sense of awe about life that kids respond really well to. Young people crave meaning and rituals in their life and as a society we haven't provided this very well in the past.

Steve Biddulph, psychologist and author

The Rite Journey is the most stunning educational initiative I have seen in my 35 years of teaching.

Kevin O'Sullivan, principal at Timaru Boys' High School

GIRLTOPIA

During 2010 I worked with the Innovative Resources team to produce *Girltopia: a world of real conversations for real girls*, a set of 70 colourful and quirky cards for girls aged 10 to 18, and women of any age. These cards are a useful conversational tool for teachers, school nurses and welfare workers, school chaplains, parents, counsellors and anyone else who works or lives with girls. As with all Innovative Resources cards sets the aim of the *Girltopia* cards is to stimulate conversation, connection and reflection and support girl's growing awareness of their own strengths. For more information about the *Girltopia* cards and *Girltopia* training seminars for health, welfare and educational professionals go to www.innovativeresources.org.

I have looked through your fantastic resource 'Girltopia' ... they are a really positive and attractive tool and I think the topics you've covered are very diverse and relevant to young girls. It'd be great if every person who worked with young girls had these.

Danni Watts, Education Manager, The Butterfly Foundation

AND HOME AGAIN

I have a daughter and three step-sons, all inspiring young adults now. I live with an intriguing man amongst 500 million year old granite boulders, soaring eagles, kangaroos, wallabies and snakes. I love to practice yoga and enjoy (mostly) the challenge of creating a garden in a dry climate.

Fertility is an intrinsically valuable aspect of our health and wellbeing and a powerful metaphor for our creativity and life-giving capacities - for girls entering puberty to women approaching menopause (after which other metaphors apply!) as well as for boys and men.