

GIRLY WHITE PARTY

SUNSHINE COAST WOMEN SPEND QUALITY TIME TOGETHER IN A PRE-CHRISTMAS CATCH-UP

WORDS: TRENA-JANE ROWLANDS

PHOTOS: JASON HAY

Christmas is my favourite time of the year! What's not to love about being on holiday, having lots of excuses for cocktails and receiving presents? One of the things I value most though is spending quality time with those you love.

Recently, I was invited to spend an afternoon celebrating one of life's most treasured gifts, friendship.

Helene Dyke and Tanya Young, who are the faces behind 'Secret Women's Business', had the genius idea to host a White Party to end off the year in style.

I had no clue what was in store other than the brief was to wear white, bring a gift to exchange and be prepared to have a fabulous time.

We began our afternoon at the home of our gorgeous interior designer friend, Danni Morrison sipping French Champagne. It was so lovely to hit the pause button, relax and enjoy a long overdue girly catch-up.

We then ventured up the hill to Aimee Provence High Tea Parlour in Buderim. We were greeted as we arrived by our favourite photographer Jason Hay to capture our time together. What a treat it was to have a professional to take photos to look back on.

Stepping into Aimee Provence, I was instantly taken in by the luxurious surroundings, carefully selected furnishings, embossed tablecloths, fresh flowers and exquisite tableware.

Our host Aimee Russell and her friendly

team indulged us with a selection of tea, delicious ribbon sandwiches, savoury canapes and sweet treats like Macaroons and scones served with jam and clotted cream. I've enjoyed high tea many times before but without question this would be top of my list to date.

This local treasure ticks all the boxes for an experience to remember and exceeds expectations.

We toasted our afternoon with more bubbles. I must mention they have a great selection of Champagne and we played a gift exchange game that was loads of fun.

The day was a wonderful opportunity to spend time with familiar faces but make some new friends at the same time. I love the

Sunshine Coast, we live in such a warm community and get-togethers like these remind me of how lucky we are to be local. Christmas cheer is something we need to spread like glitter on everyone around us.

My special afternoon with the girls reminded me how important it is to be thankful and always make this time of year one to remember.

Trena-Jane is the Director/Marketing Co-ordinator of Wealth Directions. When she's not crunching numbers, Trena-Jane is reviewing the latest clubs, products, gadgets or bits and pieces around the Coast. Follow her on www.littletoomuch.com.au.



LONELY THIS CHRISTMAS?

WORDS: JOANNE WILSON

Ever felt like the party is pumping and you're watching alone and sad with your nose pressed up against the window from outside? We've all been there at some time and cried those uninvited or isolated tears.

As it turns out, loneliness is not a flaw but a symptom of being inherently created to be connected. If you're lonely, there's nothing wrong with you, it's because of something that is right. This discomfort alerts you to engage with others to get healthy, be known, be loved and befriend others. This is how you're designed!

Why should you do something about it? Lack of meaningful relationships can lead to ill health as it compromises your immune system and can increase blood pressure. Lonely people react more strongly to stressful situations than those who are not. It even affects your quality of sleep.

I would concur with increasing findings that somewhere along the journey of addictive behaviours such as alcohol, drug and gambling abuse; there's a link to disconnection or rejection.

As an extrovert, I've learnt to respect the introverts' need for solitude and quiet rejuvenation.

There is however, a difference between being alone and being lonely. I've also felt



lonely surrounded by people in a crowded room too.

Reaching out takes courage to push beyond your internal critical editor within your retreat to be vulnerable, genuine and transparent with others. Life's roller-coaster of highs and lows does not stop at Christmas time and can even amplify.

My observation of the causes of loneliness in my Counselling room are:

- Depression and Social Anxiety
- Illness
- Separation, Divorce or spouse death
- Infidelity
- Work commitments
- Family or friendship conflict
- Superficial or untrustworthy

relationships (Thanks to social media we are more connected than ever and lonelier than ever!)

This Christmas, I encourage the lonely and loved to be bold and spirited with my ideas:

- You've still got a day to cook or pop out and grab something thoughtful for your neighbours. If you're on your own, take a wander and spread the love in your street with a delightful surprise that doesn't have to be expensive – just because! The Bureau

keeps telling us there's going to be another storm, so how about handing out brollies with tinsel on them?

■ Get connected off-line. All those likes, follows, feeds and fans are feeble imitations of actual in-the-flesh friends who seldom meet your expectations. Before you switch off your screen though, do an online search for groups you might be interested in such as Meetup.com on the Sunshine Coast or those super active bunch at "Lively50plus.com.au".

■ Start up your own gatherings. Theurbanlist.com will ensure you've got the latest of what's on trend to do on the Coast.

■ Look up from your belly button and find 12 things to be grateful for. It will give you a nice little reset and could well inspire you to be generous with what you have or your time. Check out Volunteeringsunshinecoast.org.au for more ideas.

■ Take a walk along our awesome coastline and see how many "Hellos" you can get returned. You'll get all the happy chemicals from exercise and connect as you do it. Alternatively, join in on one of those hard-core exercise groups and set yourself some big fat hairy training goals.

■ Got children? Pop a reminder in your Christmas tree box to make your own advent calendar next year that incorporates fun surprises as well as tasks to reach out to the lonely in hospital or elderly home visits? (This will help ensure our next generation avoids the narcissistic traits the social researchers are getting concerned about!)

■ Start planning for next year. Do it differently this time round. Brainstorm on your own or with others as to how you will live and maximise the benefit of living in our glorious community in 2018. "It is never too late to begin."

Now that you know how much a little bit of contact can impact your health, you can't NOT be brave and step out if you're alone. You are enough. Comparing yourself to others is a dead-set joy stealer. Anchor your self-worth in what's meaningful (usually the things you can't see). If you were stripped of your career and possessions would you still have an identity?

If you're like me, it's time to halt the busyness, screen distractions to slow down, look around, give and receive emotional attentiveness. If you're one of the lucky ones surrounded by love, I urge you to be generous with your smile, wave, call or visit. Befriend the unfriendly.

Joanne is a neuro-psychotherapist and relationship specialist at The Confidante Counselling. Email jo@theconfidantecounselling.com or visit www.sunshinecoastcounselling.com

YOUR SAY

I'd love your ideas on what you've done to overcome loneliness on the Sunshine Coast. Email me on jo@theconfidantecounselling.com