

PERSONAL AND OTHER INFORMATION



BR and wife Jacqueline

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TRAINING

Educational Qualifications:

Matriculation 1967 Perth, Western Australia (5 distinctions)
MBBS 1974 University of Western Australia
DTM&H 1976 University of Liverpool (School of Tropical Medicine)
MRCP 1977 Royal College of Physicians (United Kingdom)
FRACP 1981 Royal Australasian College of Physicians
FCCP 1987 American College of Chest Physicians
MD 1987 University of Western Australia
FRCP 1995 Royal College of Physicians (UK)

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Bruce was born in Fremantle in 1950 and raised in Bassendean, at the time a factory suburb in Perth. He has described, in recent interviews, his 'typical 50's-60's childhood' running around the neighbourhood with friends, swimming in the local river, riding his bicycle through floods, catching tadpoles from open drains, playing local football & cricket and camping out under the stars. He is fifth generation Western Australian, his ancestors (Seabrooks and Robinsons) having arrived in the Swan River Colony around 1840. He has had, from an early age, a rich experience of multicultural living. This was reinforced by seven years living and travelling overseas. He chose to return to Australia to participate in and contribute to Australian professional and community life.

BRUCE'S BACKGROUND

From: The Weekend West Australian Magazine, Jan 2012.

The "Basso boy" grew up playing cricket and footy, swimming in the river and burning around the streets on his pushbike. The Robinsons were the quintessential working class family; his mother was a housewife and his father a clerk in a factory. He is proud of his roots, describing his childhood as "rich and wonderful in that classic sense".

From: *Bright Lights, Dark Nights*. Simon Smart. BlueBottle Books. 2008

Despite his many and varied achievements, it is noticeable that he is most animated when talking about fathering, life-long friendships and his family. He is self-aware and conscious of his faults especially those he possessed as a younger man.

There is something very appealing about someone so accomplished and yet so unaffected. The positive side of Australian cynicism and egalitarianism provides a groundedness worth holding on to. It's not surprising that Robinson possesses this quality given his background.

He grew up on the baking sandy Swan coastal plain in working class Bassendean—a suburb of Perth that in the fifties sat on the fringe of the metropolitan area. Robinson remembers the bush beyond the playground of his school. 'Smoke rose from Aboriginal campfires and there was nothing between that and Darwin,' he says.

As a kid he ran 'feral' around the neighbourhood with his friends while their fathers worked in local factories. He remains friends with a number of the boys from this time. Robinson remembers this as a blissful existence of freedom, community; stability and love. 'We swam in the dirty brown water of the river flowing out of the hills, and we ran through the bush, and rode our bikes through the bush tracks,' recalls Robinson. 'We found little streams and dammed them up, and made dirt tracks here and there for competitions on our bikes. We played a lot of sport ... You'd disappear in the morning and all they'd say would be, "be back by five for dinner."' You could have drowned and no-one would have known.' Growing up in a stable and loving home is something people typically come to appreciate later in life, and Robinson looks back on a rich childhood, despite relative poverty 'We were dirt poor so we couldn't afford a TV or a car and ate cheap food like rabbit,' recalls Robinson. 'A fundamentally happy childhood gives you that feeling that you're actually worth being around; your ego's nurtured [but] all that happens without you knowing it.' Robinson speaks glowingly of his working class roots, and says he is completely at home in that environment

From: *CJ Weekly, Cyril Jackson High School, May 22, 2013*.

There have been countless CJ students who have gone on to successful careers in government, private industry and academia. Many, like Bruce Robinson, have also achieved national and international prominence.

Bruce, who was amongst the first students enrolled at Cyril Jackson Junior High School when it opened in 1963, has many fond memories - but not of the first day at school. For the misdemeanour of riding his bike in a forbidden area, he remembers '*getting the cane on the first day of high school. That was the first ever day of Cyril Jackson's existence*'.

As a mischievous year 10 student he remembers wagging school with his mates to go to Cottesloe beach for the day. He didn't get home until 9pm and because his parents didn't own a telephone, he couldn't call them. His punishment? '*My mum banned me from the school dance. She never relented, which meant I had to tell my hot date, Linda MacArthur, that I couldn't go. It was terribly embarrassing*'. Fortunately, Bruce was also a talented student who, with the support and guidance of his teachers, excelled in his studies.

He still keeps in touch with many friends from his days at CJ, mostly friends from the school football and cricket teams, with whom he also played in suburban teams over many years.

From: *ABC Radio interview with Geoff Hutchinson. Monday June 3, 2013*

Geoff: Bruce, what does WA Day mean to you as Western Australian of the Year?

Bruce: Actually it is funny you should ask, because just last night I was thinking about this. My wife Jacqui organised this overnight stay in a cottage in Mundaring for my birthday and last night we walked past an old schoolhouse, what looked like a heritage building. That got me thinking about my colonial ancestors, who came out the Swan River Colony and struggled for their existence, like most of the early settlers in Western Australia. When I thought about that, and realised that I had just been made Western Australian of the Year, I thought of them all and I got a bit misty eyed. It does mean a lot to me.

BRUCE'S PERSONAL INTEREST IN RESEARCH INTO ASBESTOS DISEASE



From: BR speech at the NCARD 20 year 'Cell-abration' 2012.

"My colleague and friend Bill Musk and I were in my office discussing the epidemic of mesothelioma in WA and the fact that it was hopeless and that we were just sending the patients home to die. He said to me "why don't you use some of that fancy technological research expertise you learnt at the NIH in America to try to do something for these people?" I had been toying with that idea for a while but that conversation galvanised me into action".

From: The Weekend West Australian Magazine, Jan 2012.

It is this mix of maverick and brains that has seen him effect so much change. Encouraging better parenting is, after all, not his day job. The 61 year old is one of the world's leading lights in mesothelioma research, developing a world-first blood test to help early detection of the deadly disease.

Mesothelioma is a menace. It takes up to 30 years for symptoms to develop; many sufferers are not diagnosed until the cancer has progressed and most die within 12 months. The breakthrough by Bruce and his researchers has been hugely significant, though he is not resting on his laurels. 'that blood test is the best in the world, but we need a better one. And we are determined to find one'.

During his early days at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, Bruce was horrified by the hopeless prognosis for sufferers. 'I was aghast at how many victims of asbestos-related disease we were sending home to die. We could offer them nothing'. He rang colleagues all over the world to gather data for mesothelioma research, but 'there was nobody with a single cell line, so we had t start from scratch' (cell lines are permanent cell cultures that divide indefinitely, making them invaluable to researchers).

In 2 months his research team celebrates the 20-year anniversary of creating the world's first mesothelioma cell lines. 'I have worked with terrific senior people who have become good friends and bright young junior students who always inspire me'.

'We have managed to do some great work that is hopefully helping people with asbestos cancer out there. But in the process I also deal with the victims. I consider it a privilege to care for people who are dying and find it profoundly moving to walk the journey of death with patients. I always think the patients deserve a gold medal for bravery. I have had four patients with mesothelioma in their 20s'.

BRUCE'S TRAINING OF MEDICAL STUDENTS IN HOW TO BREAK BAD NEWS.

From: The Weekend West Australian, July 2013.

Dying well – how to handle the bad news about terminal cancer.

As a lung specialist I have looked after hundreds of patients (lung cancer is the commonest lethal cancer) and have in the process watched and participated in the 'journey to death' of many patients and their families. This article is for carers and patients alike - it made my typist cry and it might make you cry

Dying is 'normal', but there is a good way to do it and a bad way to do it. And by good or bad ways of doing it, I am not just talking about the patient but about the family. When the dying process is handled badly, the survivors can be left with a life-long bitterness. You only have to open the daily newspapers

to see examples of bitterness that flow on from badly handled death – rage expressed at the hospital, the doctors, the government or God. But when death is handled well, there is a way in which the surviving family members often describe a positive effect on them, such that they say “I am glad we handled it that way”. This is a reflection of the old but true saying “death handled badly makes people bitter, death handled well makes people better”.

Handling death well starts from the time that the diagnosis is given. This is partly out of the control of the family because it depends a little bit on whether the doctor, or other person giving the news, knows how to do it according to best practice. For the past 23 years I have been responsible for the ‘Breaking Bad News’ course in the UWA Medical School. We teach what is best practice in this area. But not all doctors in WA have undergone this training and some get it wrong. The right approach involves selecting the right *site* (a quiet room, turning off a mobile phone or pager etc.), an empathetic *style* (sitting down, making eye contact etc.) and the right *words* (reaching out with words of empathy, not avoiding the use of the word cancer, not being afraid of your own tears etc.). The success or failure of that emotional and poignant event is not all up the doctor – it is also determined by the patient and the family. How?

Once the diagnosis has been explained and the treatment commenced, the journey to death continues. This sounds like an awful journey but it can be made better. Here are some of the things that I have noted that in my practice have worked well.

Ten tips if your loved one or friend has incurable cancer.

1. Overcome your avoidance urges – visit the patient and discuss the cancer
2. Don’t feel like you have to say the right things. If you don’t know what to say, be honest “I wish I knew what to say”. And silence is just fine.
3. If you find yourself getting teary, don’t feel embarrassed. Tears are one of the best expressions of empathy.
4. Be sensitive to spiritual issues – these are sensitive and often intense at this time.
5. Avoid unhelpful phrases e.g. “I know how you feel”, “move on”, “time to pull yourself together”, “if only you hadn’t smoked” and “it could be worse.
6. Do specific things to help e.g. shopping, helping with clinic visits, picking up their kids from school, cooking meals.
7. If you are struggling as a carer be willing to ask for help.
8. Look after yourself. Take breaks that don’t involve discussing your loved one’s terminal illness. And don’t feel guilty if you do so.
9. Resist the urge to express your anticipatory grief by giving false hope e.g. “I heard on TV about a new diet that cures cancer”, “I am sure the doctors have it wrong” and “just keep a positive mental attitude and you will be healed”
10. Don’t be afraid to get family counselling or grief counselling yourself.

HIS PERSONAL INTEREST IN IMPROVING FATHERING

From: The Weekend West Australian Magazine, Jan 2012.

In caring for asbestos victims Bruce Robinson has had to break very bad news many times over. “I’ve had so many men tell me they regret not spending more time with the children”, he recalls. “There is”, he adds, “hardly a more poignant moment”. This prompted him to co-found a pro-parenting campaign called The Fathering Project. But during the course of his research, Bruce discovered an even greater motive to help men develop solid bonds with their children. “I found that in the absence of a strong father figure there’s a big problem in the community when it comes to problems like drug taking and depression. I thought “Right, let’s try to intervene and fix this”.

From: Bright Lights, Dark Nights. Simon Smart. BlueBottle Books. 2008

Robinson says his Dad was his hero growing up and despite the fact that he often drank too much, was 'a good Dad, ahead of his time in many ways.'

From: The Weekend West Australian Magazine, Jan 2012.

Bruce was one of the lucky ones, blessed with a socially conscious father who imparted strong values. He was president of the RSL, served as deputy mayor and started a program to keep kids off the streets of Bassendean. "My father was never interested in his own glory, only in helping other people. He believed in leaving the world a better place".

From: Daughters and their Dads. Bruce Robinson. MACSIS Publishing. 2008

An example of how values are powerfully taught by modelling comes from my own father. A key example of this is not one of his higher profile community activities but a project he started 'to get kids off the streets'.

He formed a committee of young people from our working class neighbourhood to run a dance in a hall and to learn responsibility and leadership skills. It was a great success. It epitomized my dad's desire to undertake community service to help young people.

One night a carload of drunken young men tried to force their way into the dance hall. They tried to pull dad outside to beat him up but he put his hands on each side of the door and dug his heels in. They tore his shirt to pieces. My sister was screaming.

He was not a churchgoer and had some other problems in life at times with alcohol, illness and depression. I am intrigued to think of where his values came from. But he certainly modelled plenty of strong values for his three children. I probably wouldn't be writing this book but for him and I thank him for his example.

HIS PERSONAL INTEREST IN HELPING CARE FOR THOSE IN POORER NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES AND THE VICTIMS OF DISASTERS

From: BR speech to UWA medical students, Global Health Course

At the end of my fourth year I went to Nepal to do my overseas elective. I didn't have much interest in the medicine of developing countries but a couple of my mentors organised it for me so I went. I spent a couple of months in mission hospital in a very rural area of western Nepal. It changed my outlook. Not just seeing poor people who are suffering, but meeting the people who were serving them. One incident I remember clearly. I told an English surgeon and physician from Johns Hopkins Hospital in the USA how impressed I was that they had given up lucrative careers to serve the poor in Nepal. But, I said 'at least you have the gratitude of those poor people as a reward'. They looked at each other then looked at me and said "No. It doesn't work like that. We charge them the equivalent of 2c per day to attend, so that they keep their dignity and don't feel like it is charity, and this makes them think we have come here to make money out of them. You don't do this stuff for the gratitude of the poor, you do it because it is the right thing to do"

From: Graduate Medical Bulletin, UWA. 1979.

After 18 months of internship I sensed that I needed to travel and learn about the world, and myself. Against the advice of my bosses, I stopped 'climbing the ladder' and left. I ended up carrying my rucksack around Asia, Europe, Britain, North America and South Africa. I'm glad I did it. On my long backpacking trip through Asia I slept on luggage racks on Indian trains, when not sleeping on the floor clutching my rucksack as the teeming hordes stepped over me at each stop. I visited many mission hospitals, outposts and refugee camps that still tear at my chordae tendinae*.

(*chordae tendinae = a medical term for heart strings)

From: The Weekend West Australian Magazine, Jan 2012.



Bruce's mantra is a simple one – 'better to light a candle than to curse the darkness'. When the tsunami hit Asia in 2004 he flew up to Aceh and rolled up his sleeves. The scenes made him weep. "It's pretty raw to see the devastation caused. You see a child's tricycle in the mud and you know just what has happened to that child. Everything was still there – the clothes, the family photos, the kettle that had been on the stove - and the survivors suffered greatly. But that is what is motivating. If you love your neighbour you get out there and help, simple as that

From: Bright Lights, Dark Nights. Simon Smart. BlueBottle Books. 2008

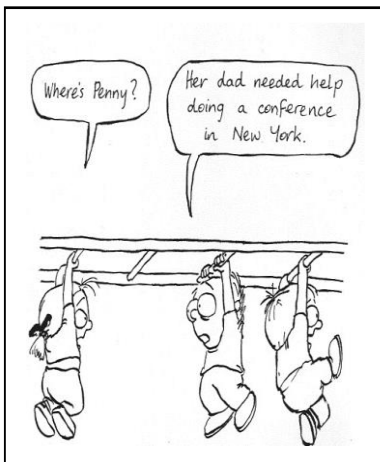
When on a camping holiday in 2004, the news of the tsunami came through. When the death toll climbed to sixty thousand, Robinson picked up his mobile phone and volunteered to go. 'In this team in Aceh there were 120 Indonesians and one Aussie, which is why I learned to speak Indonesian so fast,' he laughs. 'First of all it was an act of compassion, a desire to help - I'm just trying to show some kindness.' Working in Indonesia after the Boxing Day Tsunami was one of his most intense confrontations with human struggle and loss. 'The amount of suffering was mind-boggling,' he says. 'Some days I just had to shut my door and weep.'



BRUCE'S PARTICULAR INTEREST IN HOW MEN CAN ENCOURAGE AND EMPOWER GIRLS

From: The Weekend West Australian Magazine, Jan 2012.

There's an added bonus (to being involved in the Fathering Project). It has absolutely helped me become a better dad. For example my daughter wanted me to drill a hole in the wall so she could hang a picture up. Normally I would just drill the hole, but this time I gave her the drill and I said 'I will teach you to do it'. What I had learnt is that you need to empower young women. As a father one of your jobs is to empower them to be strong. You can't do everything for them and protect them all the time.'



Cartoons on the building or erosion of confidence in women from *Fathering from the Fast Lane* and *Daughters and their Dads* by Bruce Robinson.

LEADERSHIP

From: Notes from Leadership Training Course, Siloam Health, Jakarta, Feb 2012.
Learning to be authentic as a leader

People can easily spot a leader who is faking it, no matter how noble the sentiments expressed by that person. I hold authenticity in leadership to be a fundamental value. It can permeate the whole of your leadership – how you make decisions, how you deal with people, your capacity for vision and your willingness to be open to feedback and change. How did it become so important to me? It only happened because I had the courage to take a particular long journey.

In my first few years as a doctor I became a bit unsettled. I had a strong inner sense that I needed to expand my horizons – I felt that I was ‘a boy in a man's body’. I had little wisdom and had little experience in life. I was a boy from Bassendean brought up in the cloister of a loving home for 24 years, gone to medical school which is another cloister and had very little exposure to the outside world and other ways of thinking.

It is interesting to think about how different I am as a leader now compared to what I was like then. Because I was pretty capable I had ended up in leadership positions fairly early in life. Although I enjoyed them, I sensed that I was often living a life based on what I should be doing rather than what was authentic to me. Even worse for me and more importantly, I was living a life saying what I thought I should be saying in leadership, rather than thinking through things myself.



Why did I sense that? I guess that a notion of authenticity is integral to the people around me who grew up in the hippie generation – it is important to be authentic rather than automatically following rules set by somebody else and adhering to a way of being purely out of a sense of obligation. It occurred to me at the time that so many people were living what seemed to be ‘semi-programmed’ lives – many people voted for the same political party that their parents voted for, often simply because their parents voted for that party, or they believed what they had been told with regard to religion for the same reasons. That didn't make their views wrong, just, I sensed, less considered – what had they worked out for themselves? I really don't wish to sound judgemental, and I feel a bit bad saying this – maybe it was just me. But something deep within me told me that I didn't know myself and I hadn't understood enough about the real me and the real world in order to live that authentic life. That may sound like waffle, but throughout 1974/5 that was a very strong feeling that was evolving within me and it caused me to make a big decision that has profoundly affected the way I am today.

So after working in PNG I flew down to Brisbane then backpacked up the coast of Queensland, across to Alice Springs, then flew up to Darwin to provide volunteer help there after Cyclone Tracy before hitchhiking down the west coast on the way home.

I then thought about a plan to backpack across Asia, to ultimately end up in England. I was advised not to do this because I would use up all of my savings doing this, and it was a good time to invest, and I would definitely ‘lose my place on the ladder’ of medicine. But I sensed that these economic and professional losses would be outweighed by the potential gain I foresaw if I undertook this personal journey.

So I packed some interesting books into a backpack, books that might expand my mind, took my guitar and headed off through Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, India, Nepal, Afghanistan, Iran and Israel. I then worked in the UK at various times to work, study and replenish my bank account. I did additional long backpacking trips around Europe, Britain, the USA, Canada and South Africa.

Fundamental to this process of ‘finding myself’ was *disentanglement from my culture and background*. I think each of us is like our own unique cube of sugar, a cube that is dissolved in a hot cup of coffee (the coffee being our upbringing/life/culture). It is hard to visualise who we really are because we are so well dissolved – we of course have flavour and if we are not there it is noticed, kind of, but nevertheless

it is difficult to visualise who we are. My overall sense of my eventual three year trip was that it was like the sugar crystallising out of solution and being slowly pulled out of that cup, like those copper sulphate crystallisation experiments we did at school. That enabled me to 'see myself'. Then once having been pulled out of the cup and inspected and learnt about myself, I knew who I was and was then free to be re-dissolved in the cup of my culture, family, friends, sports interests etc. because I knew, and it had the realisation and insight, to know who I really was as a person, what I really believed, what my own process for ongoing discovery and learning was going to be. That might all sound a cliché, but that is truly how it worked for me.

But equally important for me on that trip was *the intentional welcoming and understanding of ideas*. I read as much as I could about philosophy, politics, religions, people etc. and listened to as many new and old ideas as I could from other people, all the time keeping an open mind. I observed life and used it as a mirror for self-reflection. I came home a different person.

This has led me to be more confident within myself. That confidence is not because I am now sure that what I say in leadership is right - quite the opposite; I now welcome challenging and opposing ideas because I might continue to learn something new and get a bit closer to what is really so. All new ideas become opportunities, not threats, because of that.

This approach underlies the passion that I bring to the tasks I undertake (because I have always given these tasks a lot of open thought), honesty (only acting authentically with people and situations) and thoughtfulness (I tend to take a thoughtful, scientific approach to most situations that the team seem to find helpful).

I am not saying I am brilliant at all of these things, but I am way better than I would have been otherwise and this approach seems to have worked well for me in leadership and in the rest of my life. Nor am I saying everyone should do this sort of trip. Maybe others don't need to - it worked for me but sometimes I think I have been a bit of a slow learner in life, and certainly lacked self awareness when I was younger, and hence maybe I needed such a dramatic journey to change me. But it is the end result that matters is the sort of leader you become – leading with authenticity, welcoming new ideas, being open to criticism as well as being honest, passionate and thoughtful. I would like to be better at all of these things. But I would love for you to think about your own 'journeys in life' at some stage during this course and ask how you might better develop into that sort of leader.

From: Humilitas – a lost key to life, love and leadership. John Dickson. Zondervan. 2011.

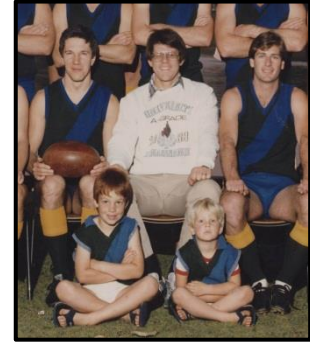
Humility in leadership

Or there's my good friend Professor Bruce Robinson, in international authority on respiratory disease from the University of WA. At home and among friends he is unassuming in the extreme. He is happier reclining on the couch in shorts with a beer in hand, quizzing others about their opinions on life (especially if they come from outside his educated middle-class circle of friends) than he is standing before the medical world informing peers of his research team's latest discoveries. As I said to his friends at a dinner party recently, he is one of the few people in my life whose opinions I find *almost* as compelling as my own!! Influence through humility is a key theme of this book.

Leadership as a sports coach

From: The Green Machine - an Anecdotal History of the University Football Club. James Wieland. UWA, Crawley, W.A. University Football Club, 2008

Bruce Robinson admits that he had often thought he would like to do some coaching since, as a teacher and a researcher in the Medical School he saw coaching as another vehicle for the exploration and expression of ideas. An innovative coach who had thought deeply about how the game was played and about how to 'manage' young men, Robby was keen to implement some of the technical skills that were beginning to influence and shape the modern game. Often the players would adjourn to his place to watch and discuss various aspects of their play. He invented new training drills that were based on statistics and were often unconventional, and his man-management skills sought to take account of the individual while being alert to team dynamics where they might be affected by significant events outside of one's control.



A young married man, Robby also made sure that during the season each of his players had specially cooked meals at his home with him, his wife and his young family, in small groups of about four or so, seeing this as an element in their social development. Talk of football was banned. He wanted to get to know them as people and help them realise they were special in themselves, not just players responding to his coaching instructions and fulfilling his coaching dreams.

Notes from speech to Swan Districts Football Club, Swansmen dinner, 2013.

Coaches are leaders and it is amazing how much players in the football club watch their coach in the same inobtrusive way that they watch any other leader. I got a shock recently when my wife came home and told me she had run into the parents of one of my former players – actually a player who had captained one of my teams. We had seen him around the suburb and he was a terrific dad. So my wife said to his parents ‘Wow, he is such a great dad, you should be proud of yourselves for that’. They looked at her and immediately said ‘No, it is no thanks to us, but to your husband. When he was coaching him all those years ago our son was watching him all the time and listening to him, learning how to live as a father. So did the other players’. That made me kind of scared – I wasn’t a fantastic dad and in any case I never realised just how much I was being watched. I think it is the case with all people in leadership – you are an influencer, for good or bad, whether you know it or not.

‘MATESHIP’

From: Climbing Kilimanjaro in a Blizzard. Robinson BWS and Edwards MG. Med Journal of Australia 2004;181:646-648



It is hard to describe how much emotional effort was required to keep climbing through the blizzard. We continued to struggle on up the steep slope towards the summit, kicking our boots as deeply into the snow as best we could to gain precarious foothold. Taking each step required every bit of mental endurance and concentration. Everything in our lives – our families, our professions and all our previous life experiences – faded into a vague dark background as our whole world was reduced to the small space between our ice-encrusted eyes and the snow slope in front of us. Then Mark slipped and began sliding down the mountain. He frantically grabbed at a rock protruding from the snow and this stopped his fall. He probably would have died otherwise. He hugged the rock above his head with both hands, his body hanging down and his feet flailing helplessly, unable to get any foothold. I pitched over to him and tried to help him but couldn't - he was in a fix. I just encouraged him to hang on. The guide retreated down to our position, cut a foot hole with his ice axe and then helped Mark climb above the rock. Mark collapsed next to me, prostrate in the snow, unable to catch his breath.

Then he looked over to me and threw his left arm out around my waist. It was an exquisite and unforgettable moment of close bonded friendship.

Simon Robinson – notes from speech at BR 60th birthday

Dad has lots of famous friends. But I appreciate that he treats his friends all the same. It doesn't matter if they are a famous person or a hospital orderly, dad treats them all the same. And another thing – when they stop being famous dad never stops being their friend. It makes no difference to him.

BRUCE'S OWN FAMILY

He has been married to Jacqueline for 35 years and has 3 children, Simon, Scott and Amy and 2 grandchildren. Family has always been his priority.

After nearly dying after a major backyard circular saw accident in 1988 he began to re-evaluate his family life. He challenged himself to do better as a father and began to learn about parenting and to change how he functioned. That challenge, along with his experiences of listening to dying patients talk about how they wished they had spent more time with their kids, was the initial trigger for his fathering books, the Fathering Project and most importantly to him, a greater commitment to his own family.

From: Doctor in Pain – learning as a patient. Med Journal of Australia 1992;156:356-358

In an indefinable sort of way, I feel that this experience of suffering has 'softened me up' and helped me to appreciate the difficulties that patients, medical students, junior staff, colleagues and friends at times, and am more sympathetic.

I had the same experience that many colleagues have had when ill, of re-evaluating life's priorities, particularly the importance of family.

Scott Robinson – quote from Fathering from the Fast Lane, Finch Publishing, 2001 + notes from speech at BR 60th birthday

Dad and I have done lots of things together, like going around the world together when I was in year 6, going on a few footy trips to Melbourne and recently doing some volunteer medical work together in Bali. You talk to other kids at school and the majority have never been anywhere or done anything special with their dads. But it's not like their dads don't love them. It's just that dad makes an effort and that makes me feel special, that I really mean something to him.

But I also love my times when dad and I just spend time together, sitting and watching footy and stuff like that. Not necessarily talking a lot - but just being together.

Seeing how much dad goes away now with his work makes me realise how much he didn't do it when we were young. I realise that he chose not to do those things so he could spend more time with his family.

Simon Robinson – quote from Fathering from the Fast Lane, Finch Publishing, 2001.

I can admit when I am wrong and apologise and dad taught me that. He would help to do that through my life by telling me in a kind way and also by apologising himself to me when he was wrong – maybe he does it too much.

It is good that dad laughs a lot and is not a serious bugger. You meet men who are too serious. They tend to keep to themselves.

Amy Robinson – quote from Fathering from the Fast Lane, Finch Publishing, 2001.

I love the way dad gives each of us a shot to spend about a month with him so we can talk by ourselves and have practically 100% of time with him, except for some meetings he has to go to. We went to Sydney, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Calgary, Chicago, Pittsburgh, England and Paris. On the trip I did a journal and one question was 'how does dad feel?' He said 'I love being with my daughter'.

ADDITIONAL PERSONAL INTERESTS

Australian Rules Football

University Football Club from 1968.

Selected in All-Australian Interschool Football Team, 1972 and 1973.

Reserves and League Football, Swan Districts Football Club, 1974.

Life Time Social Member, Swan Districts Football Club

Coach, University A-grade Colts Football Team (1981, 1985, 1986, 1987), Head Coach and A-grade Coach (1988, 1989). 3 premierships. Held a coaching record of WAAFL record of 52 consecutive games undefeated.

Clubman of the Year 1987.

Life member from 1989.

Member, Australian Coaching Association

Author, Australian Football Coaching Manual (<http://www.bruceroobinson.com.au/leadership/>).

Cricket

Played with Bassendean-Bayswater, University and Nedlands (Western Australia), Goroka (Papua New Guinea) and Southchurch (United Kingdom) Cricket Clubs.

Member, Western Australian Cricket Association.

He has described his sporting abilities as '*only a little bit above average – enough to enjoy the games & the team spirit, to get the credentials to coach senior teams and to generate life-long memories and friendships without ever being a champion*'.

Also:

Member of Mensa (a high IQ society whose role is to identify, research and foster human intelligence for the benefit of humanity)

Speaks 5 languages (English, French, Indonesian, Tok Pisin, Italian).

Enjoys windsurfing, music, hiking, wine tasting, travel, computing and kayaking.

Other community service

In addition to the activities described above, Bruce is or has been involved in a number of other community activities, such as being Board Member of Tall Trees Inc. (largely supporting the leadership role of Ian Robinson, including involvement in the Stolen Generations Alliance/reconciliation plus engagement in the Australian desert).

He has also participated in 21st Century Men, Fairbridge Music Festival, Opportunity International (a microfinancing NGO in developing nations, especially focussed on lifting women out of poverty) and a number of sporting past players associations.