

Dear Counsellor

I am taking the liberty of informing you of two books I have written which may be of use to you, especially in counselling people in situations of trauma and in the supervision work you do.

By way of background, I have had a fifty-year career in television news and current affairs specialising in health issues, as a documentary-maker and a 15-year stint as a church pastor.

Among the seven books I have written, many of the stories deal with the people I have encountered in war zones, situations of great tragedy, terminal illness and other challenging issues.

In addition, I have made a special study of how professionals who must deal with trauma, grim experiences and pain as part of their work develop coping strategies.

My book 'A Safe Place to Cry' is subtitled 'How to handle pain like a pro.' In this book I seek out the stories and the learnings of a range of New Zealanders who are right at the sharp end of trauma.

I interview and unpack the stories of everyone from a frontline worker in international disaster zones, a senior homicide detective, two intensive care specialists, a church pastor, a funeral director, the head of the Family Court, a top prosecutor, a counsellor whose speciality is helping families deal with suicide, and even a war crimes prosecutor from the Rwanda genocide.

Reviewing this book, a seasoned counsellor specialising in trauma writes:

“In 'A Safe Place to Cry' we are wonderfully challenged to sit with the pain and questions that arise when trauma comes to us. Each story shared here opens a soul window that lets the air of reality into the thinking of all who sit long enough with each of these people.” *[Dr John C McEwan MA(Hons), Dip Tchg, PhD, MNZAC, VRD.]*

In my more recent book, “The Courage of Women – Journeys to the Crossroads of Resilience,” I explore the stories of eleven women who have taken on huge odds in their personal struggles and have prevailed.

In the book the stories are wide-ranging. It begins with the story of a Māori woman battling lung cancer in a tale which explores courage at many levels – personal and political.

There's a story about some determined Asian women fighting to keep their sisters safe from abuse and harm. And powerful tales about forgiveness.

You will learn about the incredible struggle of the women of Ngāti Whātua – trying to figure out how to keep their baby boys free of an awful inherited disease. That is just one of three tales of incredibly hard decisions about which babies deserve to be born.

You'll be taken abroad too – to where extremely determined women – a couple of them from the deep south Waikato - are taking on child abuse and slavery in astonishing ways.

And you'll see what happens when a couple of determined young women pick up a camera and tell stories about other courageous women.

In the foreword to this book, written by our former Prime Minister Helen Clark, you'll get a glimpse of the kind of courage it takes to bring about change and save lives.

Having read 'The Courage of Women,' one of Aotearoa's most perceptive workers in the area of mental health writes:

"Rob Harley has been a keen 'watcher' of people for more than fifty years in journalism. He writes in ways that highlight the work of great souls and tries to affect change in the lives of the hurting and the marginalised.

"This book delivers powerfully on those aspirations. You will, like me, be greatly moved, humbled, and determined to put some of the principles in this book into practice."

Naomi Cowan MNZM CEO Equip Mental Health Services

Journalist Mary Jane Aggett who's previewed the book says "I had to keep reading as I was afraid of the words but had to find out where they would lead. Beautifully put together. Understated and powerful. It will stay with me."

Award-winning *Newshub* reporter Karen Rutherford says, "Rob Harley has an innate gift. He draws you in with his unique perspective and genuine tenderness for those whose stories he tells. 'The Courage of Women' is a beautifully crafted, compelling read. It will leave you blubbing, and have you in awe of incredible women from whom we can all learn powerful, everyday lessons.

Both books are being well received in Aotearoa. I would like to get them into the hands of professionals such as yourselves who I believe would find them useful in your practice.

One further note of background which may be helpful, is that I myself have received lengthy treatment for depression and suicidal ideation over a number of years, and I currently provide friendship support to numerous people who have these conditions.

I know books can be expensive, but I have priced these books at what I hope are reasonable rates.

To order, simply go to my website robharley.co.nz/shop/

Thanks for taking the time to read my pitch.

Rob Harley