

I'm Justine Bennett, your SLES trainer



I can't remember a time that I wasn't curious about people, how we're the same, how we're also different, how some are great at some things and not so great at others. I'm interested in how people think and I see the beauty in the differences.

I grew up with a cousin (relative of the heart rather than blood) who was termed a "slow learner". I don't know what his diagnosis was, I didn't care, I just knew he was Jamie. I loved him like a brother and protected him fiercely, particularly when he started at my primary school. I babysat Jamie, spent many hours helping him with homework and watching as his brain worked differently to mine. I was fascinated and seemed to have access to a giant well of patience when I was with him.

Fast forward a few years and I'd finished school, quit uni and was a ski instructor with a kids ski school in Canada. The best job in the world except on those days when it's colder than you could ever imagine and you're standing on the side of a mountain with a group of kids encouraging them to have fun. Not fun on those days!

I was a couple of years older than most of the other instructors so I was given the more responsible tasks. These included teaching the local kids (with fussy parents) and also the kids with special needs. I loved it. Every day was different. Seeing the kids learn something new and practice, practice, practice until they became competent was thrilling. Handing them back to their parents each day with their report card was a highlight. Watching kids who struggled to learn at school or who were non-verbal or had physical limitations, ski down the mountain with confidence (sometimes just a little) and a smile (often huge) filled me with pride and excitement at the possibilities they were unleashing.

Fast forward again and I returned to Sydney to be "responsible". I got a job working in fashion then for a regional airline where I started in admin and after some study, started their HR department and was in charge of policy development, recruitment, training, performance management, etc.

This led me to more study, particularly in the psychosocial area and I gained a Diploma in Counselling & Communication and Master Practitioner in Neuro Linguistic Programming.

My combination of business and psychosocial skills saw me successfully gain a role as NSW Coordinator of CanTeen, working with teenage cancer patients and their siblings. Again, this was a role that I loved as it took me from corporate boardrooms raising money to running training sessions, organising camps, facilitating discussion groups and building peer support networks. Our mission was to support, deliver and empower the young people and we did this with every action we took and it was a truly life changing role. It was also the kind of job that had a time limit because burnout was high.

My next challenge took me back to uni where I gained an MBA while setting up a consulting practice in business coaching, marketing and HR. I've worked with Taronga Zoo, QantasLink and a multitude of small businesses.

Which brings us to today. I have added a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment to my qualifications, I'm still running a successful consulting practice, I'm mum to a teenage daughter and I'm the Facilitator of Fun & Education at A Slice of Life. I support with social activities and am really excited to be launching our inaugural School Leaver Employment Support (SLES) training in 2022. Our goal is to work with school graduates with mild to moderate intellectual disability and train, coach, equip and support them to get and retain a job that matches their skills and interests. As a small business owner, I'm also keen to unleash and support entrepreneurial spirit if that's an option! Our sub-plot is to facilitate friendships amongst the attendees and this will be supported by our social activities.



I look forward to meeting you in person!

For more information please call me

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