

GSS 2026



GLOBAL SPEAKERS SUMMIT | Cairns, Australia

IGNITE

**FROM
ROCKSLIDES TO
RESILIENCE**

PSA

COURAGE, PURPOSE & INCLUSION

**EXPECT EVERYTHING,
AND LAUGH ANYWAY**

FROM FLOODWATERS TO FLOURISHING

**OCT 2025
ISSUE 3/5**

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From the Editor

Every spark begins with a whisper: what if?

What if courage is simply purpose, spoken out loud?
What if leadership is the quiet flame that lets others shine?
What if reinvention is not a leap, but a steady, honest step toward who we've always been?

This IGNITE issue gathers those sparks and turns them into fuel.

You'll feel it in Fadzi Whande's purpose-in-action—how empathy moves from idea to impact, and how resilience is really “strategy after the shock.” You'll see it in Shari Bricks, the steady flame of the Global Speakers Federation—proof that connection across 17 associations is not logistics; it's leadership with heart. You'll travel with Chantelle Botha, an “Identity Architect” who traded certainty for soul and reminds us that the most brilliant journeys are paced by relationships. And you'll laugh (loudly) with Paul Huschilt, who alchemizes stress into joy and lets humour do its healing work.

Then there's Cairns—where reef meets rainforest and our global community meets momentum. In these pages you'll find our Top 10 Things to Do in Cairns so that between plenaries and panels you can soak in wonder... because awe is also an accelerant.

And when keynote Warren McDonald reframes adversity into a new way of seeing, you'll remember: perception is the pilot light. Shift it—and possibility shows up.

If you've been waiting for a sign to pitch the talk, write the chapter, book the flight, or raise your hand—this is it. Your voice is not an echo; it's a spark. And when we bring our sparks together, we don't just light a room. We light a way.

See you in Cairns, 13–16 March 2026.

With heart and harmony,

DR. WENDY LEE, CSP
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
WENDY@CHAP-ONE.COM

Message from The President



Dear Friends,

Professional Speakers Australia and the GSS2026 organising team are in full ignition mode. It is exciting, humbling, and awe-inspiring to watch ideas catch light and plans take shape as we bring this iconic event to life.

As we count down to our extraordinary gathering in Cairns in March 2026, the Global Speakers Summit is where voices ignite action and spark change. In this IGNITE edition, consider this your spark and your fuel. Together we will kindle conversations, fan the flames of learning, and power a summit that lights the way forward for our profession.

Every Global Speakers Summit has its own rhythm, and GSS2026 promises a chorus of ideas, experiences, and energy like never before. This is more than an event, it is a movement of voices coming together to shape what is next. Your voice will be amplified through rich conversations, thought-provoking sessions, and powerful connections that spark new possibilities.

From mainstage moments that light a fire within, to breakout sessions that sharpen your skills, to the warm glow of conversations in the corridors, every element has been designed to help you grow, contribute, and be heard. The magic of GSS is in the synergy. When voices from different cultures, industries, and experiences converge, innovation catches fire and friendships flourish. This is not just about listening. It is about leaning in, speaking up, and leaving transformed. If ever there was a time to invest in your voice and your vision, it is now. GSS2026 is your ignition point. Answer the call.

I am thrilled to be attending GSS2026 in person, and I invite you to register and help spark and fuel the fire for GSS. Beyond the learning and networking, be inspired by the voices you will hear and be energised by the opportunities Cairns offers as a destination.

We will see you in Cairns!

Warm regards,

SALLY FOLEY-LEWIS, CSP
NATIONAL PRESIDENT 2025 & 2026
PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS AUSTRALIA LIMITED

Message from The Chair



As Chair of the Global Speakers Summit 2026, I want to extend a very personal invitation to you. Sally has spoken beautifully about the spark and the ignition of this event, and she's right, GSS is a place where inspiration is everywhere.

However, here's the truth: the Summit is only complete when you bring your voice, your story, and your curiosity.

The magic of the Summit isn't confined to the mainstage.

It happens in the hallways between sessions, over coffee tables, during a shared laugh at a social event, or in a spontaneous conversation that leads to a future collaboration. Every handshake, every question, every story shared adds to the rich tapestry of what makes GSS so powerful.

Think of yourself not just as an attendee, but as a contributor.

Whether you're asking a bold question, offering encouragement to a peer, or sparking a connection that crosses borders and cultures, your presence makes this Summit truly global.

Cairns is ready to welcome you, from the rainforest to the reef, it's a destination that will inspire as much as the conversations inside the Convention Centre.

More importantly, our international community is ready to welcome you.

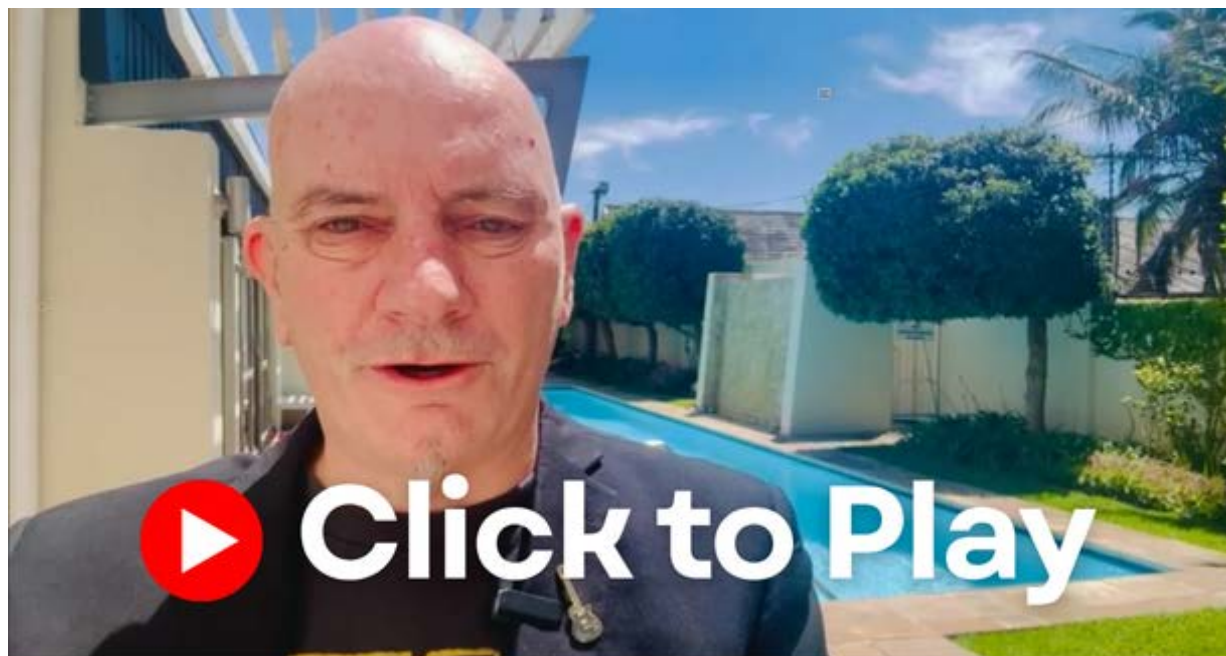
Please don't wait on the sidelines. Join us, bring your unique energy, and help shape the story of GSS2026. Together, we will create not just an event, but a memory, a movement, and a milestone in our profession.

I can't wait to welcome you in person in Cairns.

Warm regards,

LINDSAY ADAMS, OAM CSP
CHAIR,
GLOBAL SPEAKERS SUMMIT 2026

Message from The GSF President



Empowering Voices: The Global Speakers Federation's Vision for the Future

In the next 12 months, the Global Speakers Federation (GSF) is igniting a revolution in the speaking world, uniting 17 associations across the globe under three powerful communication pillars: collaboration, innovation, and impact.

Collaboration is our heartbeat—through leader-to-leader calls, idea-sharing committees, and diverse multi-association teams, we're harnessing collective wisdom to propel our initiatives forward. Imagine speakers from every corner of the earth exchanging best practices, forging unbreakable bonds and working together on the 21 points of our strategic plan.

Innovation drives us to elevate the speaking profession to the global stature of law, medicine, and accounting. We're pioneering potential new certifications, hosting expansive global events, and blending international voices. Our soon to be launched Global Speakers Network invites you to connect, collaborate, and co-create, breaking barriers and redefining excellence.

Impact is our legacy—building authentic global influence with purpose. We envision higher-paid speakers, nurtured through top-tier training and development from their associations in partnership with GSF. Embracing AI in our Leaders' Library and mastering hybrid online-offline models, we're transforming how thought leaders thrive. Celebrate with us on 14 March, Professional Speakers Day, dive into our collaborative book to be launched that day, get involved in master classes, and the Global Speaking Summit 2026

At the new GSF you will: Amplify your voice, inspire the world, and leave an indelible mark. Together, we're not just speaking—we're changing lives.

Warm regards,

MIKE HANDCOCK
PRESIDENT, GLOBAL SPEAKERS FEDERATION

inspire

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He is an active property investor himself, and combines his personal experience with his extensive career in education, property, and finance to get the best outcomes for his clients.

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DR. WENDY LEE, CSP

GSS 2026 Team

PSA



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Ignite the Force Behind the Federation

SHARI BRICKS

If there's one person whose fingerprints are quietly yet powerfully imprinted on the global speaking community—it's Shari Bricks.

As Executive Director of the Global Speakers Federation (GSF), Shari isn't just the operations lead—she's the steady flame that connects, unites, and uplifts 17 professional speaking associations around the world. From aligning board members, presidents, committee members, and other stakeholders, across time zones to creating harmony between diverse cultures and leadership styles, Shari is the calm force in the global whirlwind.

I had the joy of witnessing her incredible leadership during the GSS 2024 Summit in Bali. While speakers were lighting up the stage, Shari, and her team, were behind the scenes, ensuring every detail ran flawlessly. That Summit's success wasn't luck—it was Shari-level precision, commitment, and care. In this IGNITE issue, we step behind the curtain to meet the woman who makes the global magic happen.

1 When you first joined GSF, did you imagine you'd become such a pivotal figure? Or did it all just... unfold?

I officially joined the Federation in 2012 when my company, Bond Association Management, became the Association Management Company (AMC) of choice for the GSF. I'd been at the table for annual meetings before but that year everything changed –new doors opened, and so did the world, for me and my team. And let's be clear: I'm not a one-woman powerhouse behind the GSF – I have a strong team of dedicated professionals, many of whom have never met our global leaders, but are absolutely essential to what we do every day. I didn't plan on being pivotal; I just kept saying yes to making things better... and suddenly I was holding more keys than I realized we even had! And for the record - Michael Smith, Anthony Nijmeh, Trisha Persaud, and the rest of the BAM crew? Absolute legends.

2 You work with associations across multiple time zones, cultures, and leadership styles. How do you keep everything aligned and everyone connected?

I track more than time zones – I track priorities, moods, and even beverage preferences!! Keeping all of us connected beyond the calendar is what is key. In a global organization like the GSF we have to sometimes forget the clock – we have to respect time of day, even if it means a call at 1 am, 3 am, or 5 am.

Everyone gives a little to impact the greater whole, and thankfully, our global team isn't driven by ego, but by the desire to help make a difference.

And if there's one thing I've learned, it's this: One person's summer is another person's winter – literally!



3 What's the most rewarding part of working with such a diverse mix of personalities, presidents, and passionate volunteers from around the world?

Exactly that - the incredible diversity of volunteers and leaders I get to work with every day.

The magic happens when wildly different personalities click together, like a global jigsaw puzzle where everyone insists their piece is the most important. I often help interpret ideas to keep things clear and aligned with GSF's goals, especially for those navigating language barriers – slowing down, making sure every voice is heard and understood.

I have been privileged and blessed to attend member events around the world including, APSS (Singapore), MAPS (Kuala Lumpur), PSA NZ (Auckland), PSA NL (Noordwijk), PSA Namibia (Swakopmund), PSA UKI (Dublin), GSA (Potsdam), VSAI (Bali), and of course my home country events – CAPS (all across Canada and even Costa Rica!), is what makes me grateful for the privilege to serve and truly understand our member associations' needs.

Next stop... PSA (Cairns) – can't wait!



4 Be honest—what’s the most unusual time or place you’ve had to solve a GSF situation?

Great question! As we plan the 2026 GSS in Cairns, Australia, I’m regularly on a call at 3 am my time – but that’s all part of the adventure.

I’ve been known to bring my trusty laptop along during a pedicure or a hair colour just to make sure replies are timely!

That’s me, sharing a little behind-the-scenes – the mission doesn’t keep standard office hours, and apparently, neither do I!

5 With recent shifts like NSA’s exit from GSF, what are your hopes, dreams, and vision for the future of the Federation? How do you see GSF evolving from here?

The future of the GSF feels like a Yellow Brick Road – full of dreams, hopes, and opportunity. While I was saddened to see NSA withdraw from the Federation, the bright light was seeing how strong and intact our collective collaboration remains. I think of the GSF as a global clubhouse – filled with professional speakers from around the world, each with a message to motivate, teach, and inspire.

We’re uniquely positioned to be a catalyst, spreading the message of professional speaking and harnessing the power of collective minds from our member associations to meet clients’ needs in real time. Our recent strategy session in Scottsdale, Arizona was a perfect example - brilliant minds, both in person and on Zoom, already paving the road toward a stronger, more connected GSF.

6 Years from now, if someone says, “Because of Shari, we...” — how would you love them to finish that sentence?

Because of Shari, we knew she had our backs - and we felt connected no matter where in the world we were... or what time zone our meeting accidentally landed in. She made sure the global community stayed informed, kept the Presidential Leadership Team (PLT) focused, and brought the voice of GSF’s history and reason when it mattered most.

And most importantly, my incredibly valuable right arm, Michael G. Smith, not only keeps me on track, but helps ensure all things GSF run efficiently, transparently, and – most of all – stay truly connected and united.

“Global connections aren’t just about time zones – they’re about people, priorities, and a little, well a lot of patience.

Working with Michael, and our incredible team at Bond, we don’t just manage the GSF – we help build a global community that inspires and ignites change.”

In a world that often celebrates the ones on stage, it’s time we celebrate the one behind it all—strategizing, connecting, calming, and making the impossible possible. Shari Bricks is more than an Executive Director. She’s the Federation’s heartbeat, its north star, and the unseen hand that helps every speaker, Summit, and strategy IGNITE.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Courage, Coffee, and Coconuts

AMANDA LAMBROS

(Relationship Expert, Global Speaker, and Energy Dynamo)

Amanda Lambros is known for her contagious energy, her unfiltered authenticity, and her ability to light up any stage she steps on. From leading retreats and delivering keynote talks around the globe to raising teenage sons and running a thriving business, Amanda does it all with a mix of humor, heart, and unapologetic honesty. Yet, beyond the professional accolades, it's her quirks, rituals, and deeply human moments that make her story unforgettable.

In this candid interview, Amanda shares the surprising fears that keep her grounded, the morning rituals that fuel her busy days, and the heart-touching stories that remind her why she does what she does. As she helps shape the vision of GSS2026, Amanda brings her signature warmth and wit to the conversation—reminding us that connection is the heartbeat of every summit, and courage is the spark that ignites lasting change.

1 Amanda, you're famous for your vibrant energy—but give us a peek behind the curtain! Share a quirky or delightful detail about yourself that even your closest friends might find surprising.

Despite spending years talking about vulnerability on stage, I've got one deep, non-negotiable nope: snakes. I'm not talking about the metaphorical kind, I mean the slithery, scaly, surprise-you-on-a-bushwalk kind. I once became a perfectly good statue, because a baby tiger snake appeared on a nearby rock...yes, nearby! My inner calm said, "Stay grounded." My legs said, "STOP." Let's just say it's the only time I've never been able to move.

2 Life juggling global speaking, running a thriving business, and being present with family can be a delightful circus! Tell us about a personal ritual or mantra that keeps you joyfully balanced when things get wild.

"Coffee. Deep breaths. Then conquer." That's the daily mantra. Mornings start early with a walk, a gratitude list scribbled in a notebook, and then coffee—the kind that could kickstart a jet engine. That ritual grounds me before I dive into the glorious chaos of sessions, emails, and parenting two teenage boys who eat like professional athletes and text like philosophers-in-training.

3 Your work has taken you across continents, touching countless lives along the way. Reflect on a particularly heartwarming moment from your travels that still fills your heart with happiness today.

In Thailand, after a Self-care Retreat, a woman approached me with tears in her eyes and said, "You made me feel like I'm allowed to take care of myself, not just everyone else."

We hugged, cried, and laughed through mascara. That single moment reminded me that even across cultures, the need for self-care and connection is universal. It's why I do what I do.



4 Thinking forward to GSS2026, share an inspiring insight from past summits or global adventures that's shaping your vision for making Cairns unforgettable.

At the last summit I attended, someone said, “We come for the content, but we return for the connection.” That stuck with me. For GSS2026 in Cairns, we’re not just creating a speaker’s event—we’re creating a heart-first experience. I want attendees to feel like they’ve found their people, their passion, and maybe even their next big idea while soaking in the tropical magic of Far North Queensland.



5 Picture attendees leaving GSS2026 feeling deeply moved. Describe the emotional experience you'd love for them to take home—and why that's personally meaningful to you

I want people to leave GSS2026 feeling re-ignited, like their message matters again. We’ve all been tired, stretched thin, or second-guessing our impact. But I want every speaker, trainer, and facilitator to walk away with goosebumps and a full heart, knowing their voice is needed now more than ever. That ripple of purpose? That’s the legacy I hope we co-create in Cairns.



“I want every speaker to leave **GSS2026** with goosebumps and a full heart, knowing their voice is needed now more than ever.”

6 Finally, complete this heartfelt thought: “I believe GSS2026 will ignite

...a global wildfire of courage, connection, and coconut-scented inspiration. (Because let’s be honest, everything’s better when you smell like a tropical holiday.)





Jeffrey Owens



Eva Koeck-Eripek



Tracey McGrath



Cyriel Kortleven



Jane Anderson



Antoni Lacina



Dr. Celina Peerman



Dave Greenberg



Nikolai A. Behr



Chris Wildeboer



Carolyn Shaw



Suzanne Rath



Mel Sherwood



Cristy Burne



Susan Luke Evans



Miroslav Bardovic



Julia Grace



Nicolai Christ



Karen Jacobsen



Laura Baxter



Nicole Van Valen



Rahul Karan Sharma



Jonathan Low



Tim Gard



Iris Zepezauer



Joe Curcillo



Nienke Bloem



Martin Brooker



Belinda J Shaw



Dr. Yaniv Zaid



Jessica Breitenfeld



Sally Foley-Lewis



Brad Shorkend



Rael Bricker



Lesa Hinchliffe



Donna Thistlethwaite



Arthur Goldstuck

Early Adopters' CLUB



Gijs Hillmann



Nina Deissler



Amanda Lambros



Peter Milligan



Kristin Arnold



Grace Sha



Erik Larson



Ally Nitschke



Liz Hardwick



Diane Demetre



Dr. Wendy Lee



Eric Ng



Heather Wright



Gabriele Wimmer



Marta Pardo



Christian Thiele



Susanne Le Boutillier

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

A portrait of Nancy Youssef, a woman with long, wavy brown hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a bright red blazer over a black top and large gold hoop earrings. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

Heart, Hustle, and the Power of Saying Yes

NANCY YOUSSEF

(Finance Guru, Mentorship Champion, and Warm-Hearted Change-Maker)

When you meet Nancy Youssef, you immediately sense her warmth, wisdom, and generosity of spirit. A finance expert who has built and sold businesses, an author whose words empower others to step boldly into their purpose, and a mentor who tirelessly champions growth, Nancy is living proof of the magic that unfolds when you simply say “yes” to opportunities.

Her journey is filled with courageous pivots—from scaling companies and writing bestselling books to joining the leadership of PSA and shaping the vision of GSS2026. Yet what stands out most is not her impressive list of achievements, but her ability to connect, inspire, and create meaningful impact wherever she goes. In this interview, Nancy invites us into her world of passions, turning points, and big-picture thinking—reminding us all that the real value of GSS2026 lies not just in the stage moments, but in the conversations and connections that change lives.

1 Nancy, beyond your professional success, give us a peek into one surprising passion or quirky interest you love to indulge in when you're off-duty.

When I'm off the clock, you'll usually find me doing something that fills my soul—entertaining friends over great food and wine, getting lost in deep conversation, planning my next travel adventure, or immersing myself in music. I love the theatre and can happily lose myself in a live performance. I enjoy the creativity of an art class, the discovery of a new gin, and the adventure of an unplanned wine tasting, some of which have taken me to unexpected places and introduced me to unforgettable people. I also treasure quieter moments—sitting in a cosy café with a book, simply people-watching. Travel, music, food, theatre, wine, gin, and deep conversation are my idea of joy.

2 You're often guiding others toward meaningful growth, but let's flip that around—who's someone who's guided or inspired you profoundly, and how has their influence shaped who you are today?

I have been blessed to meet many leaders and changemakers who have inspired me in different ways, but my earliest and most enduring influence came from my dad. He was the first philanthropist I ever knew. Despite being an immigrant with strong cultural traditions, he encouraged me to grow beyond the expectations of my upbringing. My parents instilled in me the values of giving back when fortunate enough to succeed—together with humility, honesty, and an unwavering work ethic. I have always wanted to be a high achiever, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunities I have been given.

Two experiences have shaped me in very different ways. In 2015, visiting Necker Island was all about investing in myself and surrounding myself with people doing the kind of work and living the kind of life I aspired to. I have always believed that if you are the smartest person in the room, you are in the wrong room—and while that may sound like a cliché, it is one I have truly lived by.

Then in 2017, travelling to Malawi with The Hunger Project was the opposite kind of lesson. It was about experiencing the power of the human spirit when people are given the tools to lift themselves out of poverty and create generational change.

“Growth comes from who you choose to be around and from seeing what is possible when opportunity meets determination.”



3 Life often gifts us unexpected turning points. Can you share a personal “aha!” moment that significantly changed your approach to leadership or life in general?

In 2019, after nearly two decades of running my businesses, I released my first book, *Fear Money Purpose*. That process compelled me to step back and reflect on the bigger picture of both my life and work. It became the catalyst for one of the boldest decisions I have ever made—selling my long-standing finance business, the one that generated the most revenue, and pivoting from mentoring startups for over a decade to focusing on an entirely new target market. I began working with established businesses to help them scale, grow, find their purpose, and create sustainable impact. It was a leap into uncertainty, but it taught me that the most meaningful growth often comes when you step away from what is safe and step into what is calling you.



4 As you’ve stepped into shaping the vision for GSS2026, tell us about an innovative idea or fresh perspective you’re thrilled to bring to life at the summit.

Attending GSS in Bali last year reminded me just how powerful these gatherings can be. That trip led me to meet my publisher, which opened the door to my newest book, and it gave me connections and friendships I could never have planned for. Little did I know that less than six months later I would be on the GSS committee for 2026, and only a few weeks after that, joining the Board of PSA. You never know where these experiences might take you—or how profoundly they can inspire you.

For GSS2026, I want to harness that same spirit while adding more opportunities for mentoring and meaningful connection. I see the summit as a place where speakers at every stage can collaborate, grow their reach, and discover ways to share their message with audiences they may never have reached before. The GSS community has the ability to spark practical ideas and lasting relationships that delegates can take home and put into action.

5 Fast-forwarding to after the summit, how do you hope delegates will describe their most valuable takeaway from GSS2026—something that makes a genuine difference in their journey?

Speaking from my own experience, after hearing about GSS for the first time in March last year while at the PSA convention in Perth, I raced back to my room hoping there were still tickets left and registered that night. I knew I had to put myself in the room to make new connections, gain ideas, and find new opportunities. Attending my first GSS in Bali was exactly that—it reminded me how much smaller and more accessible the world becomes when you reach out.

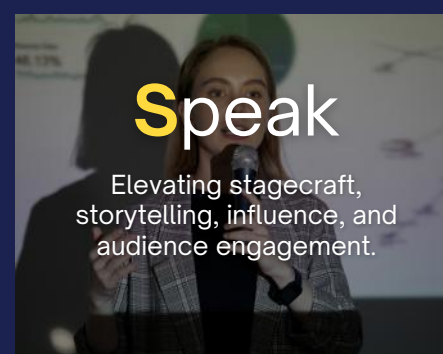
I hope delegates leave GSS2026 with that same feeling—that they put their hand up, connected with people, asked questions, embraced the community, and didn't shy away from the next introduction. The idyllic setting of Cairns will be one thing—but the real value will lie in the conversations, the openness to new ideas, the willingness to make the next move, and the courage to keep thinking big, if that is what they truly want.

“The real value is in the conversations, the openness to new ideas, the willingness to make the next move, and the courage to keep thinking big.” My hope is they leave feeling energised, inspired, and certain that they have a global network to support them.

6 Complete this sentence from your heart: “The real magic of GSS2026 will be _____.”

...found in the in-between moments—the unexpected conversations, the real connections that happen over breakfast, in hallways, or during quiet reflections. That's where the gold lives. That's what people remember.

GSS2026 | Apply to present under one of our four key themes:



Who Can Apply?

All registered attendees of GSS2026.

How to Apply?

Submit your proposal at Call for Speakers – Global Speakers Summit 2026

Deadline:

The first round of applications close on 1 July 2025.



From Phoenix Rising to Cairns:

CHANTELLE BOTHA

(Identity Architect, Founder of Dragonfly, Author of Phoenix Rising, VP Membership for VSAI – and a first-time GSS adventurer!)

When you meet Chantelle Botha, you don't just meet a speaker—you meet a force of transformation. She calls herself an "Identity Architect," but that title barely scratches the surface.

Chantelle is the kind of person who helps others reclaim their flame, then shows up courageously in her own life to model what it means to live with integrity and adventure. From storing her house away in South Africa to embracing the life of a "slomad" (a slow-travelling nomad), Chantelle has turned reinvention into an art form.

And now, with her debut at the Global Speakers Summit 2026 in Cairns, she's ready to ignite sparks, deepen relationships, and maybe even surprise herself with a little magic along the way.

1 Chantelle, as VSAI's VP Membership, you're basically the "welcome committee" for speakers worldwide. Now it's your turn to step into a new community! What made you say, "Cairns, here I come!" for your very first GSS?

In 2021, I put my house into storage and started travelling through southern Africa as a nomad. Over the years, I downsized my storage unit more than once and increasingly felt called to expand my nomadic footprint. This always felt a bit like a pipe dream—until I joined VSAI in 2023 and became a board member in 2024. The more involved I got with VSAI, the more I met others who were living the way I did, and the idea started taking shape. It wasn't until GSS was advertised early in 2025 that I decided I wanted to meet my fellow board members and the people I interact with monthly on our webinars.

I am hosting my first retreat in Mauritius at the end of 2024, and it occurred to me how silly it would be to fly home and then fly back past the island in March. That cemented it—and I embarked on my international slomad adventure just a few weeks ago, in early August.

2 You've spent years helping people "reclaim their flame" through your work with Phoenix Rising. How does hopping on a plane to GSS2026 feel like lighting a whole new spark for you?

GSS feels like the culmination of what will be nearly two years of work with VSAI, so it feels like a celebration. By the time I arrive, I will be nine months into my international slomad adventure, and it will be the third country on my list. If you're wondering what a slomad is—it's a nomad who travels slowly.

I realised in my first year of nomading that relationships are important to me, and I cannot spend less than a month in a place, although my ideal is around three months. Since arriving in Mauritius, I've felt as though I have shed the last layers of the identity that tethered me to South Africa—and this indeed qualifies as a new spark.

My biggest impact in speaking comes from firsthand experience, so when I talk about the integrity of identity, it means I must constantly put myself in places that stretch me. Getting out of the comfort zone always feels like a new spark—and I'm lighting new ones all over the world!

3 Deciding to leave work behind for a summit halfway around the world isn't exactly a tiny decision. What was the aha! moment that made you hit register—was it the speakers, the vibe, or the lure of Aussie adventure?

I have loved every minute of my service at VSAI – this is my tribe. And as good as it is to build relationships all over the world virtually, there is nothing quite as soul stirring as that first face-to-face meeting. The big lure for me was the desire to hug my people.

My secondary lure was of course the speakers, the buzz, the vibe – the whole shindig. I have learned loads over my years as a member, but GSS feels like the space to take it deeper. Of course, the challenge is always going to be implementing all those nuggets of wisdom, but I'll figure that out after the conference.

And finally – Australia. I have friends and clients on the continent, and plan to spend some time both sightseeing and cementing the relationships that I have been building for years.

4 First time summits come with equal parts excitement and butterflies. What are you most looking forward to experiencing when you walk into GSS2026 for the very first time?

When I walk into the Cairns Convention Centre at 7am on the 13th of March, I'll be greeted by the faces I've only ever seen in a Zoom box. I'll finally get to see just how tall Vikram is, and I'll probably laugh when I meet those who projected tallness on Zoom but are actually quite short. There will be a sea of familiar faces waiting for me with smiles and hugs. We will linger and chat like we never do online.

I'll be able to ask the deep questions over lingering lunches and learn what inspires and terrifies you in equal measure. We will dance together in our finery at the gala dinner and deepen the bonds that were formed so long ago across the ether.

When I leave on the 17th of March, it will be with a circle of friends and a full heart. Not to mention a to-do list of sparkling new ideas 😊

5 You're all about creating magical experiences for other people—what's one magical moment you secretly hope happens to you at GSS2026?

That would be telling, wouldn't it?

But because I believe in living the most honest version of myself, I'll share two of my secret wishes.

My poor life choices in the last 20 years damaged many of my relationships, and I've lived single for ages. I've spent the last few years healing, both myself and my relationships. I finally understood that the reason I have never "settled down" was because emotional intimacy sent me running for the hills. Having done the work, I'm not running anymore – I'm ready to meet my partner. I feel like I'll meet him on my travels, but wouldn't it be cool if it was at GSS?

My second secret wish is far more ego-based. Having only ever qualified as a top-tier finalist in various award categories, I'd really like an award. I might be being optimistic for the 2026 round, but if not then, it will definitely be the next one.



"Since arriving in Mauritius, I've shed the last layers of the identity that tethered me to South Africa."



6 And finally—speak straight to the other “maybe next year” people out there. What’s your cheeky, heartfelt nudge for them to stop waiting and join you in Cairns?

Every speaker I network with is all about impact. Leaving the world a better place. Transforming lives. Igniting change. Interestingly, only about 20% of them (my own research), are invested in relationships. I spoke with someone recently who told me he doesn’t have time for community, and my jaw nearly hit the floor. But then I understood why this person was struggling in their business. I speak on integrity – and that starts with your relationships. How you relate to yourself determines how you relate to others. How you relate to others determines how far you’re going to go.

If you want to go far in this business, invest in the relationships that will pick you up when the road to the top becomes lonely. The relationships that know what it feels like to be waiting in yet another airport lounge. The relationships that will celebrate your hard-won victories with you in a way that your family never will because they don’t know the road we walk.

Our journey is a solo one – build your tribe first. Success will follow.



“When I walk into Cairns at 7am, I’ll finally see the faces I’ve only ever known in a Zoom box.”



A man and a woman are standing on the back of a tractor, which is partially submerged in floodwater. The woman is wearing a blue shirt and black shorts, and the man is wearing a black shirt and dark shorts. They are both looking towards the camera. The tractor is a green and blue model. The background shows rolling green hills under a cloudy sky, with some trees and a utility pole visible. The water is murky and reflects the sky.

From Floodwaters to Flourishing:

FIVE LESSONS THAT TRANSFORMED MY SPEAKING CAREER

The water was rising on all sides.

The river upstream had unexpectedly burst its banks and in less than an hour, muddy water was lapping at my doorstep. The good news? Our kids were safely off at school. The bad news? I was home alone.

I'd just got off the phone to my husband, who had been helping the neighbours get their sheep to safety. He said he was about to try to swim back to me at the house. I replied, "Are you sure?", thinking that this was how people lost their lives in a flood.

Fortunately, he made it back safely. We had a 30-second 'meeting' in the hallway, packed up a few essentials – including the cat in her cat cage – and got up on the roof. We were rescued on the front forks of a tractor, leaving behind a flood-ruined home (and home office).

You can see the photos and full story here:

<https://laurenparsonswellbeing.com/item/our-flood-what-its-taught-me/>

Can you picture how it would feel, in an instant, having no office, no home to return to, and no clear path ahead?

That first week, as we started the heartbreaking, backbreaking job of the clean-up, I felt like I was hanging on by my fingernails, surviving on an hour's sleep a night. So many decisions to make – it was like juggling dozens of balls, and some of them felt like boulders.

As I look back now on that devastating year, while I wouldn't wish a flood on anyone, I am grateful for the lessons we learned. Having spoken about wellbeing and resilience for decades, it's shown me two important things:

1. The keys I share – they really do work, and
2. You have to apply them even when you don't feel like it.

As speakers, there is often that silver lining – that whatever we go through can become something to share with others, to help them navigate similar challenges.

Here are five lessons I've learnt along the way as a speaker. They've transformed how I speak, lead, and live. I hope they are of value to you.

Your Greatest Mess Can Become Your Most Powerful Message

That experience stripped away any illusion of control. It reinforced what real-world resilience looks and feels like – what works and what doesn't. It reminded me that audiences don't need flawless delivery – they need authenticity.

Vulnerability isn't weakness – it's what builds trust. When I share this story from the stage, people lean in – not because I'm extraordinary, but because they see their own resilience reflected back at them.

I'm sure you do this with your own speaking. It's a good reminder that people don't want perfection – they want connection. What's one moment of imperfection you could share to help someone else feel less alone?



Resilience-Proof Your Business

The flood also made me reflect on my business resilience. Having everything stored on my laptop – and backed up online – meant I could continue delivering for clients, even while camped out at my parents' and living in emergency accommodation. It was far from ideal, but possible because the essentials were already in place.

If you had to pare your business back to the bare bones, what would you need to keep going? What systems, files or contacts would you need at your fingertips? Reflect on that now – and make sure they're safely stored and accessible if the unexpected hits. You can achieve a lot with your digital files, a webcam and three nice jackets!

As a result of this experience, I also created an 'In Case of Emergency' file with a list of instructions for my husband – just in case I don't make it home one day. After step one – “Make a strong cup of tea” – it links to my speaker log with contact details for all upcoming events so he could notify clients, and lets my VA know to pause scheduled content. It even includes a drafted 'in loving memory' post ready to publish.

I hope it's never needed – but each time I board a flight, I feel calmer knowing those details are in place. Peace of mind is a powerful thing.

Start Before You're Ready – Make the Most of Now

When we moved to Ottawa, Canada, for my husband's two-year army posting, I felt isolated. I didn't know a single person. Then I visited CAPS and found my speaker family. I realised how much I loved talking to other experts and hearing their fascinating stories.

That sense of connection gave birth to the Thrive TV Show. I started it not because I had all the gear or a grand plan – but because I wanted to create a positive ripple in the world. It's become a powerful way to connect with inspiring people globally and amplify their voices. It's opened doors to collaborations, friendships and even paid speaking events.

Whether you've launched a podcast, written a book or created a course – you know the magic of starting before you're ready. Just. Start.

Package Your Expertise to Multiply Your Impact

Keynotes are incredible – energising and memorable. But real transformation often needs more. That's why I've created programmes like the THRIVE Partnership Programme™ and online courses like Leading So People Thrive™ and Overcome the Overwhelm™.

These allow me to support clients well beyond event day. They've also created revenue stability. If you've ever thought about turning your expertise into a programme or course – take that first step. You can change lives at scale.

Not only does this allow you to leverage your time and boost your income – it also enables you to create a bigger positive ripple in the world.



Community Is Everything

Speaking can be a lonely path – but it doesn't have to be. Attending speaker conventions like CAPS in Canada, PSA in Australia and PSANZ Summits in New Zealand have been absolute highlights – both personally and professionally. Where else can you connect with this wonderful tribe who spend their lives doing what most people fear?

There's something powerful about being with people who get you. Who cheer for your success and walk with you through the dips. This community is one of the greatest gifts of this career. I can't wait to attend my first Global Speakers Summit in Cairns in March. I look forward to hearing your stories. Who knows how we might help one another create an even bigger positive ripple – together.

We rise by lifting others.



Lauren Parsons, CSP, AS is a wellbeing and productivity expert, international keynote speaker, and author of *Thriving Leaders*, *Thriving Teams* and *Real Food Less Fuss*. With over 20 years' experience and a background in business, coaching, and behaviour change, she helps leaders create thriving workplace cultures where people and performance flourish.

Named NZ Keynote Speaker and Educator of the Year for 2023/24, Lauren is also the host of the Thrive TV Show, where she connects with experts from around the world to share insights on leadership, resilience, and creating a positive ripple.

Known for her warmth, energy, and practical tools, Lauren speaks at conferences, retreats, and summits globally. Based in the lower North Island of New Zealand on a lifestyle farm, when she's not on stage or behind the mic, you'll find her hiking, reading, or dancing in the kitchen with her family.

From Chaos to Clarity –

THE SYSTEM EVERY SPEAKER NEEDS TO SCALE

The Hidden Cost of “Duct-Tape Systems”

Most speakers don't struggle with talent, message, or delivery. They struggle with business. Ask any speaker, and they'll describe their jungle of tools: Google calendars, Excel spreadsheets for leads, Gmail for client follow-ups, Calendly for booking calls, Mailchimp for email campaigns, plus half a dozen sticky notes and late-night reminders on your desk.

On the surface, it “works.” But beneath the hustle is a fragile system held together with duct tape and hope. Eventually, cracks appear: a missed email, a forgotten proposal, a double-booked date.

Opportunities slip away quietly. Fees stagnate because there's no time to negotiate strategically. And speakers are left asking the dreaded question: How did I miss that gig?

Why Your Systems Are Costing You Stages

Event organizers expect professionalism at every touchpoint. They want to feel confident they're hiring someone who can deliver both on and off the stage.

- Fast replies signal you're dependable.
- Polished proposals signal you're worth premium fees.
- Clear contracts and seamless follow-up make the decision to hire you easy.

If your systems are messy, they'll notice. The harsh truth? You often won't even know you lost the opportunity, because they simply move on to a competitor who looked sharper, faster, and more organized.

Scaling as a speaker isn't about adding more talent; it's about mastering the business side of your career.

The Single System Fix

Imagine this instead: one system, one clear picture of your speaking business. Every lead in a pipeline. Every booked event has tasks and action items lined up for you. Every proposal, email, and reminder is tracked automatically.

That's what eSpeakers PRO delivers. And now, it's even more powerful, because every PRO subscription includes HighLevel CRM + Marketing Suite at no extra cost.

That means:

- Automated Lead Funnels → No more forgetting to follow up with hot prospects.
- Built-In Email + Text Sequences → Warm up planners until they're ready to book.
- One Dashboard for All Communication → No more bouncing between six different tools.

It's not just organized, it's a growth engine.

Scale Without Sacrificing Sleep

The best part? You don't have to reinvent your business from scratch.

eSpeakers has been serving speakers for over 26 years, building tools designed for your world. Including HighLevel CRM with eSpeakers PRO now takes our service to another level by giving you the same automation Fortune 500 companies pay thousands per month for, now integrated right into your speaking business.

Picture this: while you're on stage delivering your keynote, HighLevel is sending nurturing emails, tracking which buyer opened them, and reminding you to follow up. Instead of chasing your business, your business chases opportunities for you.

From Hobby to Empire

Here's the truth: disorganization keeps too many talented speakers stuck at "hobby level." They're incredible on stage but constantly scrambling off stage.

The speakers who rise to the top don't just have charisma, they have systems. Systems that make them look professional, keep them consistent, and free them to focus on what they do best: inspiring audiences. If content is King, systems are Queen!

The Sticky-Note Speaker

Before: Leads lost in notebooks and sticky notes.

After: Within 30 days of using eSpeakers PRO + HighLevel CRM, every lead was tracked, every followup automated, and bookings doubled.



For speakers serious about moving from chaos to clarity, and from hobby to empire, the system is finally here.

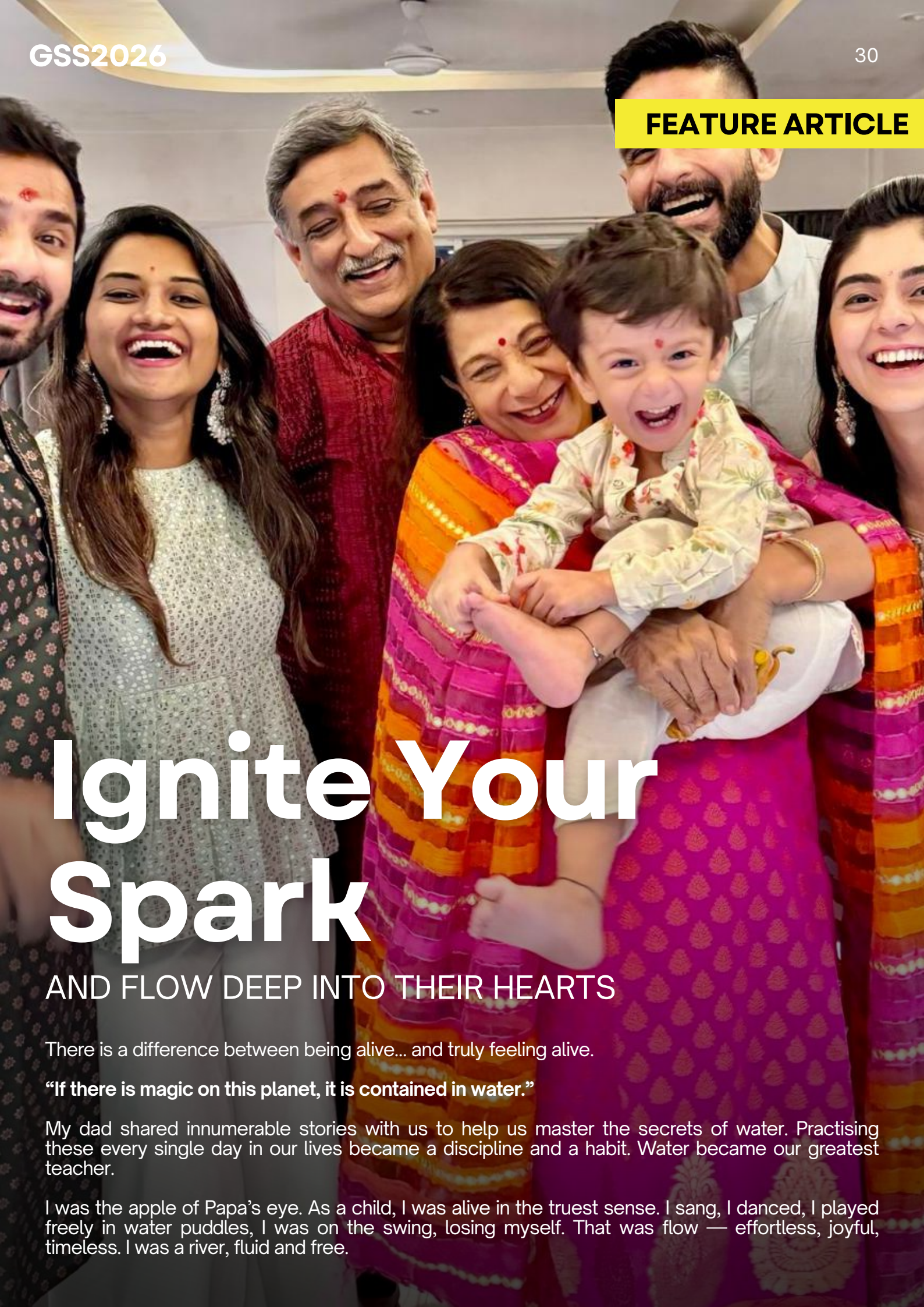
The 2026 Global Speakers Summit is about big ideas. Here's one for your business:



eSpeakers PRO + HighLevel CRM
One system. Endless clarity.
Start at espeakers.com/speakers



FEATURE ARTICLE



Ignite Your Spark

AND FLOW DEEP INTO THEIR HEARTS

There is a difference between being alive... and truly feeling alive.

“If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water.”

My dad shared innumerable stories with us to help us master the secrets of water. Practising these every single day in our lives became a discipline and a habit. Water became our greatest teacher.

I was the apple of Papa's eye. As a child, I was alive in the truest sense. I sang, I danced, I played freely in water puddles, I was on the swing, losing myself. That was flow — effortless, joyful, timeless. I was a river, fluid and free.

“A river seems a magic thing. A magic, moving, living part of the very earth itself.”

But somewhere along the way, ambition built a dam. Medical school demanded perfection. My role as an Associate Professor, building my home brick by brick from my salary, weighed heavily. I had loans for a house, a car, a clinic, and equipment. I was scared of life itself, scared of what kind of doctor or human I had become, unable to give my family a secure future. Fear and anxiety gripped me.

My poetry was silenced. My music muted. My spark was gone.

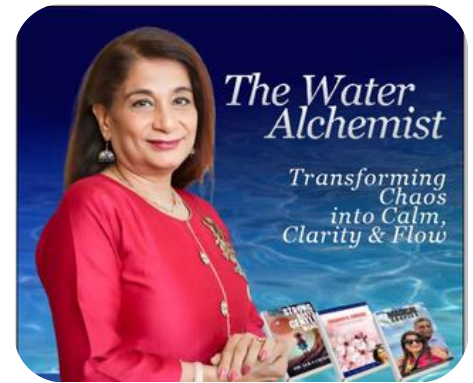
One morning, hurrying with my children, I tripped and fractured my ankle. The pain was searing, but the deeper pain was inside: a realisation that I had become rigid, brittle, and joyless. I felt disconnected, derailed, and demoralised. That fall was my pause button.

“Walk slowly, talk slowly, smell the flowers on the way, listen more, listen to the people around you, listen to the water, listen to the breeze, listen to the rustling of the leaves. What’s the hurry? Move like water – gently, effortlessly.”

This was Reflection Time. Do we ever reflect on our lives? I was guilty as charged, and I was crying. My husband held my hand tightly and supported me. Just then, my little one crawled towards me, offering me a sip of water as if he understood my pain. As if he was saying, “Mama, don’t cry, I am here to support you. I am here to help you.” That, my friends, was my life-changing moment.

I had to take action. I sent in my resignation.

As I returned to playing with my children, telling them stories, the joy and creativity of the children passed on to me. I rediscovered that to be alive is to play, to connect with people, and to flow with passion.



“In one drop of water are found all the secrets of all the oceans.”

– Kahlil Gibran

The 3 P's That Helped Me

People

Connection is currency. Our words must meet the hearts of our listeners.

Play

Playfulness keeps us fluid and creative, dissolving rigidity into flow.

Passion

Passion is the current that carries our message deep into every heart.

“The cure for anything is salt water: sweat, tears or the sea.” – Isak Dinesen.

Timeless Wisdom from Water

Water is playful – it dances, it sings, it flows with ease. On stage, playfulness sparks creativity, dissolves fear, and keeps energy alive.

Water adapts – it takes the shape of whatever vessel it enters. Speakers adapt to the energy of their audience, to the room, to the moment.

Water nourishes – it sustains life and brings beauty. Our words, too, can nourish, heal, inspire, and empower.

Water is flexible – it finds its way around obstacles, whether small pebbles or giant boulders. If a mic fails or slides don't work, can we still flow?

Water is egoless – always moving from high to low, teaching humility. A speaker's humility creates connection. When we drop ego, we rise in authenticity.

1. People – Connection is Currency

When I fractured my ankle, it was people who helped me. My husband, my friends, and my colleagues stood by me. My paediatrician sat me down and said, “Take care of yourself, you are dying every day, your health is declining.” It was his empathy and care that made me feel seen, heard, and valued. That transformed me completely.

I realised that people are my strength, my asset. Connection is survival. Neuroscience proves it. Human connection releases oxytocin, the bonding hormone, which lowers cortisol, the stress chemical. Connection also triggers dopamine, the feel-good neurotransmitter that fuels motivation.



2. Play – My Gateway to Flow

Playfulness gradually returned to my life. I began telling my children stories. I formed a teenage group. Then a bigger one. Soon, parents joined in.

That became my Happiness School. Later, I started my Seniors Club, where elders shared their experiences and stories of resilience with youth, creating an intergenerational river of wisdom. We sang, we danced, we laughed together.

Play was my medicine.

3. Passion – The Fire in the Flow

People and Play lit the spark of my creativity again. I found myself singing, dancing, and writing, just like before. Then a new passion was born: service.

As I listened to seniors share their powerful stories of resilience, I realised these voices needed to be heard. We began recording them, and soon a book emerged: “Your Story in Your Words.”

This gave me deep meaning. Because real passion is not what consumes us, it's what frees us.

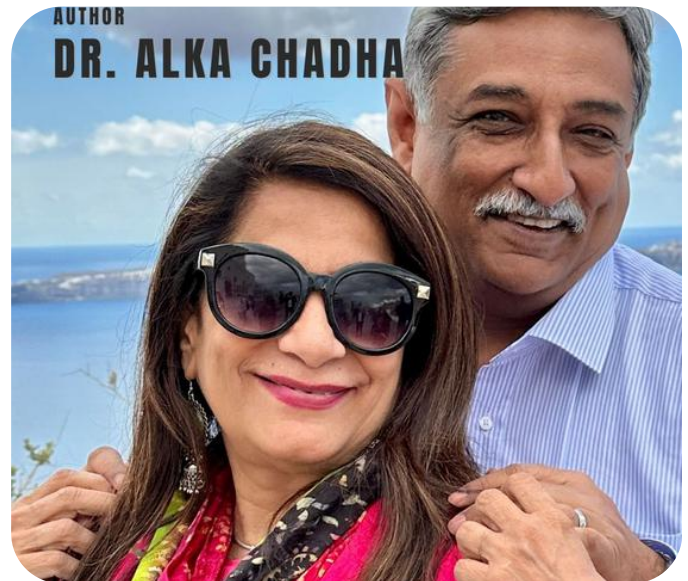
“That is what Ignite truly means. It is not applause, not recognition — it is the return of your inner song.”

Remember: when you reconnect with your spark, your audience doesn't just hear you, they feel you. Like water, you flow.

Like a spark, you ignite. The song within you erupts. That is your true ignite.

“The nightingale sings, not for recognition, not for an audience, but because it has a song.”

What's your song?
What's the song you are humming?



With over 30 years in healthcare, **Dr. Alka Chadha** the water alchemist, transforms Chaos, into calm, clarity and flow. A practising doctor, blends Medical Science, Yoga and Meditation, NLP, and water wisdom to build adaptability, resilience, and playfulness. Bridging Eastern thought and Western innovation she empowers organizations through science-backed tools to build harmonious high-performing workplaces.

A featured speaker a PSS 2024, MAPS Kuala Lumpur, and the International Congress on Diabetes 2025, She is going to speak at the PSANZ Trailblazers Convention at New Zealand in September 2025.

Dr Alka has actively participated in the APSS (past 3 years), GSS, and has been in the core of PSS India for 4 years. Dr Alka serves as President of PSAI Mumbai Chapter (2025-26), and has been the Editor of the Newsletter of PSAI for the past 3 years. She has hosted 80+ LinkedIn Live sessions conversing with leaders all around the globe.

Founder of her 'Endocrine Centre', her 'Happiness School,' and 'Seniors Club,' she's the author of 3 transformational books 1. Shukriya Zindagi (Thank you, Life) 2. Magical Couples 3. Daughters.

She shares her story of personal transformation, turning life's challenges into purposeful action and lasting impact. Her sessions inspire action with clarity, purpose and heart.



Levelling the Playing Field

HOW SPEAKERS CAN OUTPERFORM THE GIANTS

Have you ever walked into a room with massive brands, huge teams, and what feels like unlimited budgets and thought, “How do I level the playing field, between me and the client”

Here is an idea: Imagine for a moment that you are competing in a Formula 1 race, with you as the driver and the team and client as the car. How can you get them over the finish line, without crashing and burning?

The moment we make it less about us, and more about driving the car -driving the core outcomes of the buyer and audience. And ensuring that they get safely to the other side, without crashing and burning(creating psychological safety, challenging, but a safe space, that leads to a long-term benefit) -suddenly our imposter syndrome disappears. As speakers and facilitators, we are not the hero of the story, we are simply the guide, the driver to achieving those results.

I recently shared a keynote on this topic at a PSASA conference, and the audience could relate well to these topics, perhaps you will too.

I get inspiration in strange places, I was watching a documentary on Senna, the race-car driver with my husband, and was deeply inspired-when after years of racing in Formula, 4, 3, 2 finally he was in the big leagues. The only problem, he was driving probably the worst car, with a team that hadn't seen the podium in years.

His concerned father phoned him and said: "Senna, how can you possibly win, driving in the worst car", and he said: "Dad by being the best driver". As speakers, we need to be the best drivers. Senna found his hidden advantage, in some ways this was also Schumacher's hidden trick, being able to drive in the rain.

Secret #1: Driving in the rain

Senna once famously said, "“You cannot overtake 15 cars in sunny weather, but you can when it's raining.”"

In 1985 Senna dominated the race from pole position, he set the fastest time during qualifying, and led every lap while finishing the race with a gap of at least a minute between him and the second driver. Senna knew that rain is the ultimate equaliser, for cars, but not for drivers.

True professional speakers don't blink an eye when the Power cuts out, when the data projector doesn't work, when rain strikes, they know how to pivot and adapt.

I remember experiencing rain. After 11 months of negotiating a leadership journey, I was collecting my workbooks in Johannesburg, and someone made an illegal U-turn on a busy road. I braked, but somehow landed up in a car pile-up, squashed between 5 cars.

With an undrivable car, slightly in shock, operating on adrenaline, my husband drove me to do the work over the next 2 days.

What type of rain can you expect -

The audience mentioned:

- Speaking Infront of a drunk audience
- Power cuts
- Throwing your clicker into the audience
- Breaking a shoe, tearing of pants, coffee thrown over outfit.
- Speaking to an audience that just heard that the company is restructuring
- A very hungry audience

Here are some ways for you to practice driving in the rain:

- Practice in tough environments at a Comedy club where people would have alcohol.
- Develop multiple versions of your talk, so you can change it at a moment's notice.
- Develop emotional resilience and practice reframing techniques to shift a toxic environment.
- Don't be reliant on your slides, have cards, mind maps or stories that you can use to anchor your talk if technology fails.



Secret #2: Driving through the mist

If you want to be the best driver, you will also need to be able to drive through mist. While rain represents chaos, mist represents uncertainty.

David Rock, a neuro Leadership specialist says that certainty, especially when we deal with clients, makes us feel much calmer because we have a clear goal and a roadmap when we know where we are and where we are going and how we will get there.

But in the world of work, we are operating in the mist where clients give us a great deal of uncertainty.

Mist could represent a unclear client brief , little or no feedback, changes of scope, last minute venue changes.

So what did Senna do to help him drive through the mist? He memorized his entire route before a race and as he was driving, he was visualising it and tracking where he was in the race through following it in his head.

How can you learn to drive through mist?

- When you are writing your presentation can you visualise yourself doing it, so you can actually find the place where you were, should you forget you're positioning.
- What he also did, a weekend before race- he would walk the track and study every bump and chamber. Can you physically walk the stage before events, and visit the venue or walk through your entire program to ensure that you know the timing, and can quickly find your feet again, if you forget where your at?
- Can you eliminate uncertainty by having a detailed brief with your client a week before your training or your speaking gig to really ensure that you are certain of what is expected.
- Can you also set up a feedback session with your client, to see how it went and how you can change your gameplan in the future?

Secret #3: Listen to the engine

In 1981 Senna' s British championship was hanging by a thread, and as he listened to his engine, he knew that it needed fixing urgently.

He reviewed the mechanics available and decided that he needed to get it serviced in Italy. So, Senna drove through the night to Italy to get his Formula Ford engine serviced, with the Giancarlo Minardi's team.



Do you listen to your clients like a driver listens to an engine. Are there signs of burnout? Are performance issues a minor hiccup, or a deeper mechanical failure? And most importantly—do you have the right people to service the engine when something goes wrong, or are you trying to fix it all yourself?

Or do you need to bring another specialist on board to overhaul the engine? Do you make use of focus rooms, surveys or meetings to find out how the team is doing? Great leaders don't ignore warning signs. They listen, they assess, and they bring in the right expertise to ensure the entire team operates at peak performance.

So the next time, you are working with, or pitching to work with a large brand, big team and massive budgets-level the playing field by learning how to drive in the rain, to drive through mist(eliminate uncertainty, get clear on the core needs of the client, do the dry-runs) and truly listen to the engine.

When we focus on driving that car, and getting it safely to the other side, reaching the core objectives of the clients, and not damaging the audience in the process, we can outperform giants.



Yoke van Dam, widely known as the Kintsugi Queen™, is a transformational speaker, coach, and trainer celebrated for her ability to turn fractured teams into cohesive, high-performing units. With over 17 years of experience, she has worked with more than 2,000 team members and delivered over 2,300 hours of training, helping leaders and teams turn challenges into opportunities and elevate performance.

Yoke's expertise spans behavioural change, leadership development, and emotional intelligence, equipping leaders to navigate ambiguity, embrace flexibility, and cultivate a growth mindset in today's competitive, fast-changing environment. She often runs Women in leadership programs in Dubai and in South Africa and is on her way to deliver 2 masterclasses at the Global SME Summit in Davos Switzerland.

As founder of Y-Connect and a PSASA Professional Member, Yoke empowers individuals and teams across industries—from engineering to retail—to lead with purpose, resilience, and impact.

GSS2026 | Apply to present under one of our four key themes:

Grow

Strategies for business growth, personal development, and scaling your speaking career.

Sell

Mastering the business of speaking, sales, marketing, and monetization.

Speak

Elevating stagecraft, storytelling, influence, and audience engagement.

26 & Beyond

The future of speaking: trends, technology, and innovations shaping the industry.

Who Can Apply?

All registered attendees of GSS2026.

How to Apply?

Submit your proposal at Call for Speakers – Global Speakers Summit 2026

Deadline:

The first round of applications close on 1 July 2025.



Your Book Is the Door, Not the Destination

WHY MARKETING TURNS AUTHORSHIP INTO BOOKINGS

You did it.

AYou did it. You wrestled your ideas onto the page, survived editing, and held that first box of books like a proud parent. Here's the blunt truth every professional speaker eventually learns: the book gets you in the conversation, your marketing gets you on the stage.

The Crowded Bookshelf Problem

Publishing has never been more accessible, which is both a blessing and a bottleneck. Bowker reported that self-published titles with ISBNs rose in 2023 to 2.6 million, up 7.2 percent in a single year.

That output has more than doubled in the last decade.
[Source: Publishers Weekly]

In other words, your book is entering a river in flood. Great ideas still matter, but discoverability now decides who gets noticed, remembered, and booked.

What Buyers Actually Use to Find Speakers

If your goal is to turn pages into paid platforms, pay attention to how event decision-makers search. A 2024 keynote industry survey found:

- Word of mouth and bureaus are tied as the top discovery channels for speakers at 67 percent.
- LinkedIn is the leading social platform used in speaker searches at 69 percent.
- The most common search window is 2–3 months before the event.
- Books (Authors) appear as a discovery path for 26 percent, which helps, but it is only one lane in a busy highway.

And it's competitive. A separate survey of conference managers reported that almost half accept fewer than 20 percent of speaker suggestions, with a third taking one in ten or less. [Source: Scarlino Speaker Strategies]

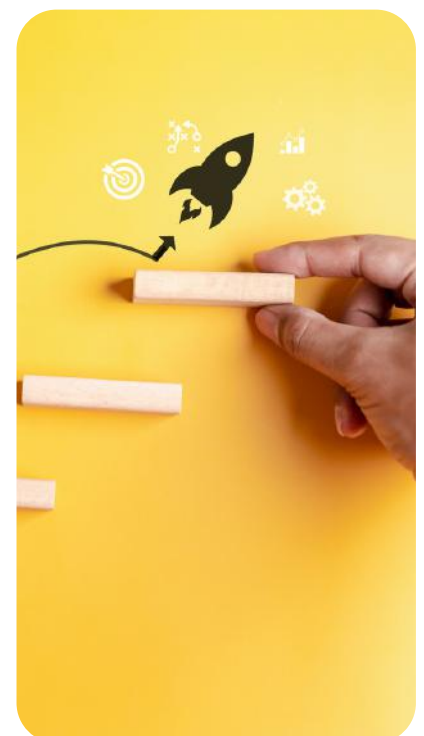
The takeaway is simple: a book signals authority, but marketing builds the pathways that help planners find, vet, and champion you inside their organisations.

A Smart Shortcut: Package Your Book Inside a Platform

Look at how the **Global Speakers Summit 2026 Author Showcase** treats a book as a marketing engine, not just a product. Only nine authors will receive:

- A mainstage interview professionally recorded for reuse.
- Pro photography you can deploy across your site and socials.
- A full-page spread and editorial feature in the Summit eZine, distributed across Global Speakers Federation associations. [This is time limited to the number of editions remaining - don't miss out.]
- A dedicated Authors Corner at the Global Speakers Summit to sell books and capture leads across 400 attendees from 30 countries over four days.

That is what modern book marketing looks like: staged visibility, repurposable media assets, and built-in lead flow.



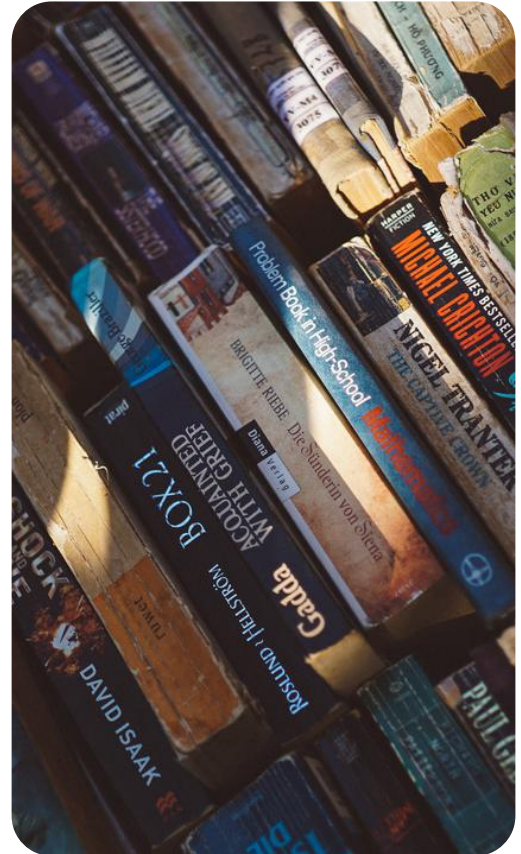
Case In Point 1: The Brilliant Book That Booked... Nothing

“Amelia”, a cyber security leader, wrote a sharp, timely book. She launched with pride, then waited. And waited. Crickets. When Amelia rebuilt the launch as if the book were a product inside a campaign:

- A one-page talk page with a 90-second video of key ideas.
- A weekly LinkedIn content series tied to the book’s chapters.
- A targeted podcast tour in her niche.
- A short demo reel pulled from webinars and media.
- A five-email nurture sequence for meeting planners.

Result:

Within a quarter, Amelia had three paid keynotes and two executive roundtables. Nothing in the manuscript changed. The marketing did.



Case In Point 2: The Showcase Flywheel

“Raj”, a leadership coach, joined an author showcase at a global event. He walked away with a mainstage clip, new photos, an eZine feature, and fifty warm conversations from his table.

He snipped the interview into six LinkedIn posts, pitched five podcasts with the clip, and added the eZine feature to his speaker one-sheet.

Two months later he’d closed four paid presentation and a private workshop series. The flywheel wasn’t the book alone. It was book + platform + assets + follow-up.

The GSS Author Showcase is designed exactly for that kind of leverage.

The mindset shift that unlocks momentum

Think of your book as the master key, not the finished house. The key only works if you build doors in the right places: a discovery door (LinkedIn and podcasts), a trust door (demo reel and case studies), and a conversion door (email and a clear offer). The authors who get booked most aren't necessarily the best writers. They are the best marketers of their ideas.

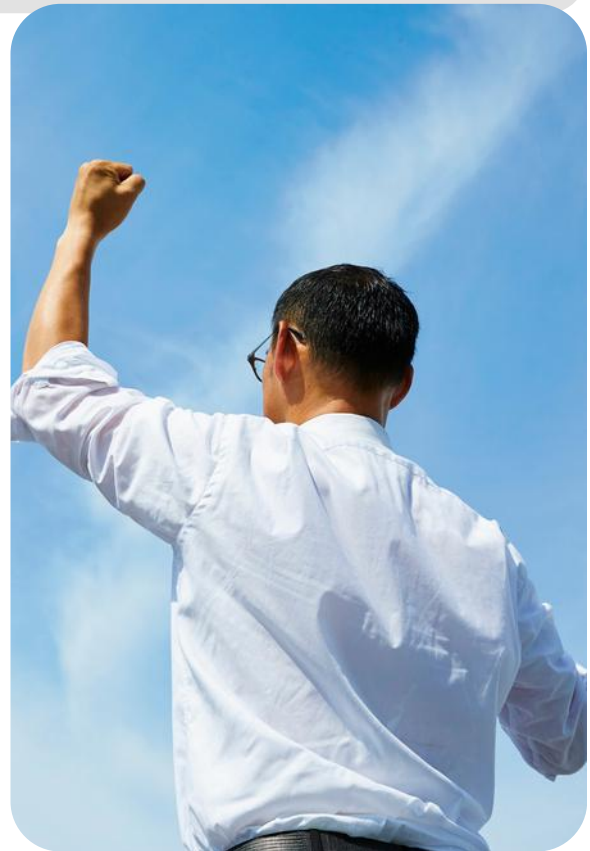
One last encouragement.

The market is competitive, yes, yet that is good news. It means event organisers are buying outcomes, not hype. When your marketing shows how your book moves real metrics, the doors open.

If your book is ready, your next job is simple: build the pathways so the right people can find it, believe it, and book you. The stage is closer than it looks.

Don't miss out grabbing one of the limited Author Showcase spots:

<https://gss2026.com/author-showcase>



Sally Foley-Lewis, CSP is a global expert in middle management leadership and productivity. With over 20 years of experience, Sally empowers middle managers to boost performance, delegate with confidence, give feedback that sticks, and lead with purpose.

A multi-award-winning speaker, educator, author and mentor, she's known for her practical, no-fluff style, a dash of humour, and deep commitment to unlocking leadership potential in the often-overlooked middle.

As the creator of six books, including, *The Productive Leader* and *The 5 Key Ingredients (and Secret Sauce) to High-Performing Middle Managers*, Sally's mission is simple: lift leaders to lead.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

A photograph of Fadzi Whande, a Black woman with long, curly hair, smiling and speaking into a microphone. She is wearing a red long-sleeved top and a patterned skirt. The background is dark with some stage lighting.

Courage, Purpose, and Inclusion

A CONVERSATION WITH FADZI WHANDE

From refugee camps in Kenya to global boardrooms, Fadzi Whande's journey is a masterclass in leading with heart and conviction. In this exclusive GSS2026 feature, the award-winning global diversity strategist and speaker reflects on what it means to live purposefully, stay courageous amidst chaos, and embrace inclusion as a daily act of humility and curiosity.

With her trademark warmth and candour, Fadzi reminds us that leadership isn't about perfection—it's about presence, empathy, and the courage to keep expanding the circle of who belongs.

1 You often speak passionately about purpose-driven leadership. Can you share a specific moment or story from your journey where you truly felt aligned with your purpose?

One moment that stays with me was a visit to a refugee camp in Kenya where I met a 16-year-old boy who had lost his entire family and walked for nearly a month to find safety. Despite everything he'd been through, he spoke about his dreams and how he wanted to honour his family's legacy. That interaction moved me deeply. It reminded me that purpose isn't always loud or visible, it often shows up in the quiet moments when humanity and hope intersect. That was a powerful confirmation that the work I do isn't just about systems or strategies, it's about people.



2 In times of uncertainty, such as financial pressures, restructuring, or shifts in organizational priorities, how do you personally maintain resilience and courage to keep moving forward?

For me, resilience starts with accepting that life is made up of constant change. Whether it's a relationship breakdown, the loss of a loved one, a health crisis, or a job shift we're always navigating transitions. The workplace is no different. Change may be uncomfortable, but it's also a natural part of growth. I believe in doing what we can to minimise risk, but also in preparing ourselves emotionally, mentally, and spiritually for the unexpected.

One of the most impactful pieces of advice I received was from a mentor who told me, "Fadzi, you need to get over disbelief."

At the time, I was constantly saying things like "I can't believe this happened" or "I can't believe they did that." He challenged me to stop being surprised that life would present difficult, even unfair, situations.

That perspective shift helped me move from shock to strategy focusing less on why something happened and more on how I respond. Adaptability is courage in motion.

3 What's one powerful insight or unexpected lesson you've learned from working in diverse global environments that you'd love to pass on to others?

One of the most transformative lessons I've learned is that inclusion is a personal responsibility. It's easy to frame it as the job of institutions, policies, or leaders but at its core, it starts with each of us. No matter the cultural or social context, everyone has a role to play in creating spaces where others feel seen, heard, and valued.

In my own journey, I had to confront the fact that I was practising exclusion under the banner of inclusion. For years, I didn't intentionally engage middle-aged white men in conversations about equity. I assumed their privilege meant they didn't need to be part of the dialogue. But I came to realize that inclusion that only includes some is not inclusion at all. When we exclude, whether subtly or with good intentions, we risk reinforcing the very systems we're trying to transform.

Working in global spaces has taught me that the most effective DEI work happens when we combine courage with humility when we're willing to challenge our own assumptions just as much as we challenge the structures around us. In diverse environments especially, cultural humility, curiosity, and self-reflection are essential. We all carry bias, and the work lies in being brave enough to face our own.

This shift taught me that inclusion is not just about who we advocate for it's also about who we're willing to listen to.

4 Every speaker has a ritual or habit that boosts their energy before stepping onto the stage. What's your fun or quirky pre keynote ritual?

Of course, I do a last-minute check for any wardrobe malfunctions, lipstick on teeth, or stray food crumbs! LOL

I have a playlist called "Speak Life" that's my go-to pre-stage soundtrack.

It's packed with worship, gospel, R&B, and golden oldies it gets my heart aligned and energy lifted. I also say a quick prayer, then I take three deep breaths, channel joy, and step onto the stage with full presence.



"Of course, I do a last-minute check for any wardrobe malfunctions, lipstick on teeth, or stray food crumbs! LOL"

5 You're known for championing diversity and inclusion globally. What small, everyday action can individuals take to build stronger connections across diverse communities?

Ask better questions and listen to understand, not to respond. One of the most powerful things you can ask someone is, "What's something people often misunderstand about your experience?" That kind of question opens the door to empathy, trust, and connection.

Inclusion doesn't always require grand gestures it often starts with intentional listening and genuine curiosity. Try learning one new thing about someone whose background or worldview differs from yours. Invite someone into a conversation who's often left out. Reflect on whose voices are missing from the spaces you're in, then make space for them.

Practically, it can be as simple as:

- Swapping your usual lunch partner for someone new.
- Starting team meetings with a check-in that includes everyone's voice.
- Choosing to read, watch, or listen to media that reflects experiences different from your own.
- Asking, "Whose story haven't we heard?" before making a group decision.

Small actions done consistently can create ripple effects. The goal isn't to have all the answers, it's to stay open, curious, and committed to growth.



Favourite motivational quote?

Do not shrink to fit into places you've outgrown."

Song that sparks your creativity?

"Optimistic" by Sounds of Blackness

One thing you'd start doing immediately if fear wasn't a factor?

Start a Talk Show



Fadzi Whande is an award-winning Global Diversity and Inclusion Strategist, Executive Leadership Coach, and international speaker with a passion for driving transformational change across sectors. She currently leads the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Section at the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), based in Geneva.

A TEDx presenter and values-driven leader, she integrates insights from behavioral science to design practical, system-level solutions that create lasting impact. Her work spans corporate, government, academic, and humanitarian sectors, where she has led large-scale DEI initiatives to shift culture and drive measurable change. Fadzi also serves on multiple boards and advisory groups, contributing to leadership development and strategic transformation.

She holds an Executive MSc in Behavioral Science from the London School of Economics and an Executive MBA from the University of Western Australia.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

A photograph of Paul Huschilt on a stage. He is wearing a dark suit, a blue shirt, and a yellow tie. He has his arms raised in the air, and he is holding a yellow rubber chicken in his left hand. He is looking towards the audience with a wide-eyed, expressive face. The background is a large screen displaying a circular graphic. In the foreground, the back of a person's head is visible, looking towards the stage.

Expect Everything— and Laugh Anyway

THE BRILLIANTLY UNPREDICTABLE WORLD OF
PAUL HUSCHILT

Behind the rubber chickens, roaring laughter, and standing ovations lies a storyteller who never quite planned to be one. Paul Huschilt—actor, humorist, and accidental keynote legend—has built a career out of turning chaos into comedy and conferences into unforgettable experiences.

From accidentally shutting down an airport with “trace chemicals” to transforming stress into laughter through his famed “comic re-enactments,” Paul’s journey is equal parts heart, hilarity, and humility. In this GSS2026 feature, he reminds us that humour isn’t just entertainment—it’s a survival skill, a bridge between people, and, sometimes, the only sane response to an unpredictable world.

1 People know you as the guy who leaves audiences in stitches, but who is Paul when the mic is off? What quirky habit or little-known fact would surprise us?

I once drove Debbie Reynolds to dinner. I once handed Eva Gabor a mic on stage. For two seasons I sang professionally in the chorus of the Canadian Opera Company. I've performed on Broadway. Not in a theatre - a convention centre. But, still...

When I was 6, I lived in Switzerland for a year with my family of 10, consisting of a mom, a dad, and 8 kids. On weekends and holidays the 10 of us squeezed into a Volkswagen Camper and travelled around Europe.

I will admit to being on the nerd spectrum. During the pandemic, I took up birding. So far, I have seen or heard over 500 species, several of which have used me for target practice, including a Canada Goose. Grossly unpleasant. But apparently, it's supreme good luck.

Since 2003, I have written a weekly newsletter that comes out twice a year.

2 You spend a lot of time on the road and on the stage—what's the most memorable or hilarious thing that's ever happened to you while travelling for work?

Once going through airport security they swabbed my laptop and it set off all of the alarms. Bells rang. Agents scrambled. A printer clanked out an endless ribbon of warnings across the desk like ticker tape.

An agent looked up at me over his glasses and deadpanned, "I hope you aren't in a hurry."

That's when every other line was shut down and all available agents converged on me. Paul Huschilt, Internationally-known conference summarizer had just closed the Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport. A show-stopper.

"Put your hands out to the sides!"

"What do you do for a living?"

I present funny talks at conventions about managing stress and dealing with change, and perform comic re-enactments of conferences.

"Show me a business card".

I pull out a business card. It has a photo of me smirking at the camera with three rubber ducks resting on my shoulder.

The agent looks at the business card and then at me.

AND THEN,...

He flips over the card. It has the title of one of my shows. We both look shocked when he reads

"EVERYBODY STAY CALM".

Things didn't exactly go well after that.

An agent opens my suitcase and discovers more rubber ducks and a rubber chicken. He squeezes the rubber chicken to see if it's real. It squeaks. Authenticity confirmed.

Eventually, they decide I must be harmless. A rubber-gloved agent places the rubber ducks back into my suitcase and I am sent on my way.

As it turns out, I had innocently placed my laptop on a wooden desk I'd just refinished. The trace chemicals from that shut down an airport. Who knew? I thought it wise to make a note about this for future travel.

3 You're famous for wrapping up entire conventions with your comedy. How do you actually prepare—doodles in the margins, secret code notes, or pure improvisation magic?

You got it. Magic. But the scary kind. In the beginning, there was no template. I did it by the seat of my pants. Believe it or not, there were times when I would write for 45 minutes, and then perform for 45 minutes. My guiding principle was to accept everything that popped into my head. Write it down. Work with it and have fun.

In the early days I wrote a lot of satirical songs that conveyed speakers' main messages. Later, I would spoof their PowerPoint slides too.

As I gained experience and with help from my partner Joel, I developed more of a system for collecting information. This allowed me to prepare for how to prepare on-site, saving some sleep.

And I set up the outline of the show with the conference agenda in hand and talking with the planners and MCs. I set maximum show times against the slots so that I use my overnight time wisely and be sure I cover everything I want to.

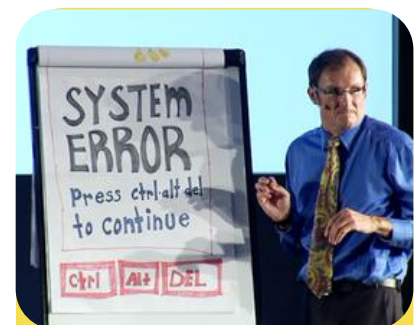
Before leaving for a conference, we also do as much research as we can to learn about the speakers and their topics. I sometimes reach out to presenters to ask what kinds of things they will speak on and ask if they are willing to share any materials in advance. This, as you can imagine, is much appreciated.

At the conference, Joel and I divvy up plenaries and breakouts for each to attend. We write, laugh, argue, and compare notes. I compile everything into a master script. For multi-day conventions, there is actually a lot of eliminating and editing down. I print the script, place it in a three-ringed binder and score it with colour-coded stage directions so I know what to do where and how. Generally, once printed, I have time to re-read the script once, before performing it live. The resulting immediacy is a large part of the fun. Oh, and, it's scary. It's fun, great fun, and scary.

4 If your sense of humour were a toolbox, what would be inside—bananas, dad jokes, wigs, or something else only you could explain?

All of those for sure! Comedy also needs a certain amount of joy, sadness, frustration... Whatever I have, I try to use. It also helps to imagine the contents of audience members' minds. If you can do nothing more than say out loud what they are thinking, you will likely get a laugh.

Rubber chickens are good too - sometimes. I also try to remember to give an audience time to laugh completely. If I talk over their laughs, I quickly teach them to sit still and listen up instead - which isn't what any of us want.



“Oh, and, it’s scary. It’s fun, great fun, and scary.”

5 Your motto is “Expect Everything.” Has there ever been a time in your own life when you were totally blindsided by the unexpected—and how did you handle it?

HA! My entire career blindsided me. I never expected to be a professional speaker. I hardly knew such a job existed. In 1999, I had gone back to college to study career counselling. My latest gig - singing in the chorus of the Canadian Opera Company - had taught me that it was incredibly difficult to earn a living in Canada as a performer.

Here I was working for the Dominion’s premier opera company and I could not make a complete living at it. So I decided to call it quits. I would go back to school and learn to help other people get the career of their dreams. If I couldn’t do that for myself, at least I could do it for others.

I was hired to do a serious career counselling talk but was asked to do something funny for 5 minutes at lunch in front of all of the attendees. I did and someone in the audience thought it was so funny, they wanted to hire me as their keynote speaker. I told them I could not do it - I would have no idea what to do. But they insisted.

With their help, that initial keynote led to others through word of mouth. Over about 3 years, it snowballed into a career that has survived a Global Financial Crisis and Pandemic.



You’ve seen how humour heals stress, connects strangers, and lightens heavy rooms. If you could write one “laughter prescription” for the world right now, what would it be?

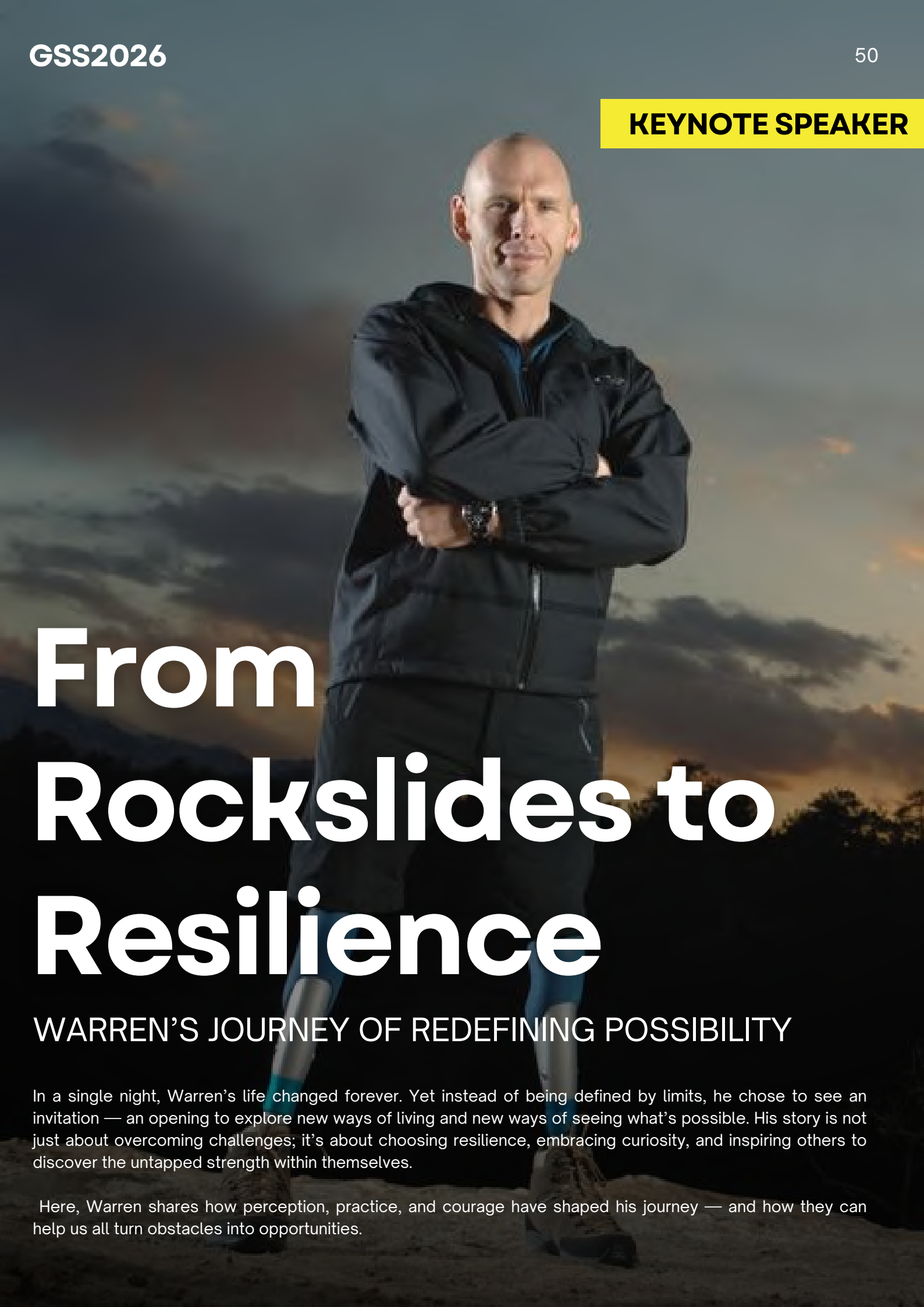
RUN!



Paul Huschilt is an award winning speaker and storyteller who is passionate about helping people be mentally healthy during stressful times. He inspires people to be the best that they can be. From the big stage or from the small screen of any device, he delivers important messages in fun and funny ways.

Paul holds degrees in Management and Acting, a diploma in Career and Work Development, training in Adult Education, and has sung with the Canadian Opera Company. This varied background and 25 years of professional speaking experience give Paul a one-of-a-kind style.

He has the ability to promote learning and excite audiences whether together in a conference centre or apart in their dining room table home offices. Paul is an inductee into the Canadian Speaking Hall of Fame.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERA man, Warren, stands with his arms crossed, wearing a dark blue jacket and dark pants. He is positioned in the center of the frame, with a dramatic sunset or sunrise sky in the background. The sky is filled with soft, glowing clouds in shades of orange, yellow, and blue. The overall mood is inspirational and resilient.

From Rockslides to Resilience

WARREN'S JOURNEY OF REDEFINING POSSIBILITY

In a single night, Warren's life changed forever. Yet instead of being defined by limits, he chose to see an invitation — an opening to explore new ways of living and new ways of seeing what's possible. His story is not just about overcoming challenges; it's about choosing resilience, embracing curiosity, and inspiring others to discover the untapped strength within themselves.

Here, Warren shares how perception, practice, and courage have shaped his journey — and how they can help us all turn obstacles into opportunities.

1 In one night, your life shifted from ordinary to extraordinary. When you reflect on that turning point, do you see it as a tragedy that happened to you — or as a gift that happened for you?

You know, I've never really seen it as either of those. For me it became obvious early on that it was an opportunity, an invitation if you like, to forge a new path, to find a new way. To explore what might be possible in this new form.

From there, this concept of perception arose. Of how important it is that we question what we see as options. "Am I missing something? Is there another way to look at this? Is that possible? If not, why not?"

Through trying on these various lenses, I came to a place where I decided I was going to look at life through the eyes of an explorer. I mean, who else gets to experience life like this? Rather than being beaten down by the challenges that surrounded me, I started to get a kick out of overcoming them, and once I'd made that mental shift, everything changed.

2 You've scaled mountains that most of us wouldn't dare attempt. What goes through your mind at the base of a climb, and how do you silence the inner voice that says, "this is impossible"?

By the time you get to the base of a climb you've already got most of it figured out. Not all of it, not by a long shot, but I'm not sure you'd be there if you thought it was impossible. The mindset is more about figuring out the unknown pieces as you get to them.

As an example, when I told people of my intention to climb Federation Peak in southwest Tasmania, one person in particular told me it was a bad idea, that there was a section of the route called the Four Peaks that I wouldn't be able to get through. This caused me to pause for some time, as I respected John (he'd been in there many times), but at the end of the day I decided that by the time I reached the Four Peaks (I estimated it would take two to three weeks) I'd be a different person than I was when I set out. I'd have solved so many problems by then I'd be in a different place mindset-wise.

So it's not so much about "silencing" the inner voice, rather about training the inner voice to be curious; to seek solutions rather than sow doubt.

3 Resilience is often described as bouncing back, yet your story is about forging a whole new path forward. How do you personally define resilience in today's ever-changing world?

I've often described bouncing back as just the beginning, but you still need resilience to do that. I refer to resilience as a practice. Much like riding a bike, you have to do it to get good at it.

When asked if I can teach someone to be resilient, the answer is no. What I can do is show you what I do in terms of my resilience practice, and then you can either use those same tools or come up with some of your own, but to build resilience you have to challenge yourself; there is simply no way around that.

You have to choose to do something hard.

The beauty of resilience is it's transferable, i.e. when you get in the habit of doing hard things, for example physically, it puts you in a better space to make a hard decision emotionally, or in regard to work or family life, because you're more used to discomfort.

4 Adversity can break us... or remake us. What did your journey through loss and survival reveal about human potential that you believe most people haven't yet discovered in themselves?

My experience taught me that we're much stronger than we think; we can handle a lot more than we imagine. The main reason we don't achieve our full potential is because we're too comfortable.

Unless we go out of our way, unless we purposefully leave our comfort zone, it's much safer and easier to just stay the same. Until things change around us...

Without resilience, we're then at the mercy of the world around us, which to me is a dangerous state to be in.

5 Climbing physical mountains is one thing. But how do you approach the emotional mountains — fear, grief, uncertainty — that don't have a summit marker or a clear route?

Now that is a great question. Climbing mountains, the physical part of my journey, is actually the easy part. The much harder part is developing the mindset that overcomes programming instilled over a lifetime. Programming that tells you you're not good enough, or "who do you think you are trying to do that?"

Fear, grief, and uncertainty all have to be felt, then traversed. Sometimes only time heals, and often, the simple act of forward movement, as small and seemingly insignificant as the steps may be, is enough to give you the momentum needed to continue on.



"Through trying on these various lenses, I came to a place where I decided I was going to look at life through the eyes of an explorer."

6 Leaders everywhere face their own “rockslide moments.” What is one mindset shift or practical tool you’d challenge them to adopt right now to turn obstacles into opportunities?

Perception is key. I call this piece the perception choice, in that there is a critical moment, right there in the beginning when things hit the fan or go sideways, where you have the opportunity to frame what’s happened; how you see what’s happening.

In that instant, I’d encourage leaders to think about how they’re seeing the event, as that’s what’s going to create the paths available for you moving forward, the very perception of what’s happening.

Unless you can see an option, it’s simply not going to be available.

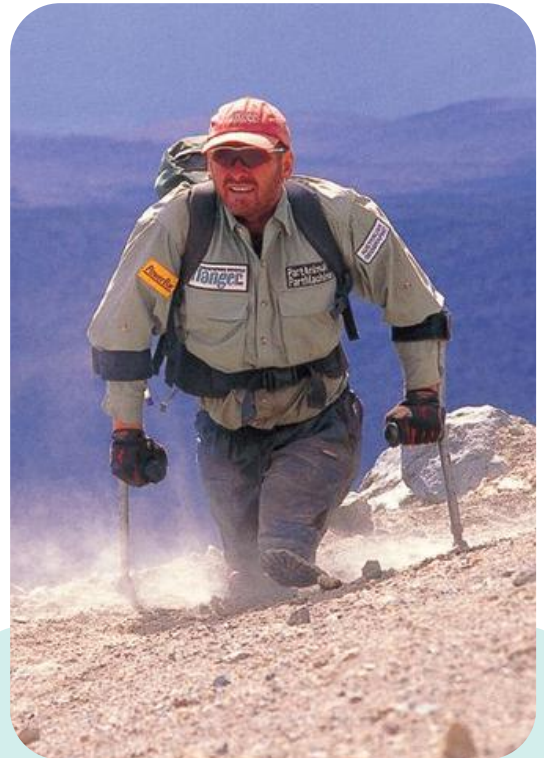
Sounds super obvious, but I’m constantly amazed at how often we don’t take that step back and ask ourselves: “How am I seeing this?”

7 At GSS2026 in Cairns, you’ll stand as a living testament to courage. If every single delegate left the Summit with just one message from you etched in their hearts, what would it be?

You make a difference.

By choosing to speak, you’re sharing something of yourself. And if that something sparks something in someone else; a shift, an impetus to move forward, a change in the way they see, then you’ve really created something special. Something that matters.

Keep doing that; we need more of it.



Warren Macdonald’s life’s boundaries were redefined in April 1997 with his accident on North Queensland’s Hinchinbrook Island. Climbing to the Island’s tallest peak, he became trapped beneath a one-ton slab boulder in a freak rock fall. Two days later he was rescued, only to undergo the amputation of both legs at mid thigh.

Just ten months later, he climbed Tasmania’s Cradle Mountain using a modified wheelchair and the seat of his pants, and the year after that, Tassie’s iconic Federation Peak.

In February 2003, he became the first double above-knee amputee to reach the summit of Africa’s tallest peak, Mt Kilimanjaro (19,222ft). That year he also made an ascent of Yosemite’s El Capitan, an effort requiring 2800 chin ups over three days.

Warren’s bestselling book, “A Test of Will” was the subject of the “Trapped under a Boulder” episode of the series “I Shouldn’t Be Alive”, now screening on Amazon Prime.

Warren has appeared on “Larry King Live”, “The Oprah Winfrey Show”, and “60 Minutes”. He has made it his mission to help you change the way you see the world, and your place in it.

He splits his time between his hometown of Melbourne, and the Canadian Rockies.

13- 16 MARCH 2026

AUTHOR SHOWCASE



- 📢 Online promotion
- 📖 GSS eZine feature
- 📷 Photoshoot
- 🎤 Main stage Interview (recorded)
- 📄 A3 poster of book cover
- 📺 Trade spot



📧 president@professionalspeakers.org.au

🌐 <https://gss2026.com/author-showcase>



VSA INTERNATIONAL

Virtual Speakers Association

Your Global Stage, Without Borders

In a world where ideas travel faster than flights, the Virtual Speakers Association International (VSAI) stands as a vibrant hub where connection transcends geography. We are a global home for professional speakers, trainers, emcees, consultants, and thought leaders who believe that influence has no borders — only bridges waiting to be built.

As a proud sponsor of GSS2026, VSAI embodies the IGNITE spirit — uniting voices, stories, and cultures in one powerful movement of shared purpose. Through our thriving online ecosystem, we enable members to connect, learn, and collaborate seamlessly across time zones. From masterminds and mentoring to international showcases and networking events, VSAI is where the speaking world truly comes together — virtually and vibrantly.

Part of the Global Speakers Federation (GSF) family, VSAI proudly represents speakers in over 170 countries, especially those in regions without a local association. As the GSF's 17th member association, we are a bridge-builder — creating access, visibility, and opportunity for emerging and established voices to be heard on the world stage.

What makes VSAI extraordinary is not just its reach, but its heart. Our Board Members and Ambassadors — spanning continents and cultures — are united by one mission: to nurture a space where collaboration replaces competition, learning fuels leadership, and every voice feels at home.

In this special feature, you'll see their faces and read their words mapped across the globe — a tapestry of connection, courage, and compassion. Each reflection is a reminder that while our accents may differ, our purpose resonates the same: to inspire, uplift, and ignite change through the power of speaking.

At VSAI, every conversation opens a new world. Every collaboration sparks an idea. And every speaker — wherever they are — becomes part of something bigger.

So, whether you already belong to a home association or are a travelling speaker searching for your global tribe, VSAI welcomes you home — your second home, or perhaps your first, in a world without borders.

Visit www.vsainternational.org.

Presidential Leadership Team



Dr. Wendy Lee, CSP
President



Lindsay Adams, OAM CSP
Immediate Past President

For me, global connection means transforming distance into possibility — opening our hearts across cultures to share stories, hope, and kindness, creating ripples of opportunity and belonging that remind us how beautifully connected we truly are.

For me global connection means VSAI. This is the organisation that brings speakers together across the world, spanning 170 countries, multiple time zones & languages. A real global speaking family.



Liz Hardwick
Vice President



Dr. Celina Peerman, CSP
Task Force Chair -
Education

For me, global connection means raising a coffee with fellow speakers—across time zones, cultures, and calls—paired with a local sweet treat. Shared moments, real stories, lasting connection. 🍰🌍🍰

When we connect across borders, we remind ourselves that possibility grows when voices join. We expand perspective, deepen empathy, and discover that we do not have to be limited by geography, our messages are amplified by a global community.



Chantelle Botha
Task Force Chair -
Membership

Relationship unlocks opportunity. Without connection, we'd have no business.



Sandeep Nath
Task Force Chair -
Expansion

When we connect across borders, we dissolve the borders. We eliminate the barriers to realizing that we all laugh, cry, and dream about the exact same things. We come closer to oneness. To peace.



Vikram Anand
Task Force Chair -
Branding & PR

Global Connection to me is connecting without boundaries & without expectations at a humane level understanding & accepting each other's cultures, nuances towards supporting a wider goal for the speaking community in the world !



Eytan Segev
Task Force Chair -
Marketing

Global connection means learning to truly listen and understand each other, no matter where we come from. My vision is a world where empathy and respect cross all borders, creating deeper human connection and genuine understanding beyond differences.

Ambassadors



Adrienne Gibson
Ambassador

Global connection matters because we can improve ourselves and our profession by learning from each other and sharing global opportunities.



Limor Jasinski
Ambassador

Connection is the invisible power that elevates us as speakers and thought leaders. By uniting across borders, we share wisdom, spark courage, and strengthen our collective ability to influence audiences and inspire transformation worldwide.



Harriet L. Russell
Ambassador

Global connection creates deeper cultural awareness. Countries have borders, but people do not. The journeys across the world bring us back home to the journey within, hearts open and collaboration blooms.

Important Information for Our International Guests

APPLY

FOR YOUR AUSTRALIAN VISA

If you're joining us in Cairns for the Global Speakers Summit 2026, we are thrilled to welcome you! To make your travel smooth and stress-free, we want to remind all international delegates that you will need a visa to enter Australia.

This is a simple, yet necessary process that can easily be overlooked in the excitement of preparing for the Summit. The good news is that the application is straightforward and can be completed online.

Which Visa Should You Apply For?

Most international visitors coming to attend a conference or event in Australia can apply for either:

- Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) (subclass 601) – available to passport holders from eligible countries.
- Visitor Visa (subclass 600) – for those who are not eligible for an ETA.

Where to Apply

All applications are handled through the official Australian Government immigration website:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing>

For information about the ETA (subclass 601):

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/electronic-travel-authority-601>

For information about the Visitor Visa (subclass 600):

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/visitor-600>

When Should You Apply?

We strongly recommend applying at least 6–8 weeks before you travel to allow for processing time. Some visas are approved within a few days, while others may take longer depending on your nationality and personal circumstances. Applying early gives you peace of mind and ensures there are no last-minute delays.

A Small but Vital Task

Securing your visa may feel like just another item on your travel checklist, but it's an essential step to ensure your entry into Australia. Please don't leave it to the last minute, do it sooner rather than later.

We can't wait to welcome you to Cairns in March 2026 for an unforgettable Global Speakers Summit!

AUTHOR SHOWCASE



BE. DO. GIVE. LOVE

Your life story in four words

What if the answers to life's biggest questions could be found in just four words?

Be Do Give Love is a father-daughter memoir born in the aftermath of a winter funeral, a spring reboot, and a summer of road trips and reflection. What began as grief, trauma, and crisis became an unexpected opportunity to work together, launch a publishing imprint, and complete the work of bringing a grandfather's World War II memoir to a wider audience.

At the heart of their journey is a framework not invented but revealed through lived experience, centered around four words and life's most basic questions: Be: Who am I? Do: What am I doing? Give: What difference does it make? Love: Why does it matter?

With honesty, humor, and vulnerability, Erik Larson and Maddie Larson share stories of loss and renewal, breakdowns and breakthroughs, faith and doubt. Along the way, they share three lessons to ensure we are living with purpose.

Discover identity before achievement, choose generosity over scarcity, and believe that your story, however ordinary, broken, or unexpected, is worth telling.

1 **“Be. Do. Give. Love.” — four little words that sound like a life compass. If the whole world lived by this, what kind of magical ripple effect do you think we’d see?**

I like to think of Be Do Give Love in terms of the ripple effect. We all know the image of a single drop hitting a still pond, sending out neat circles. But real life looks more like a rainstorm: countless drops falling at once, creating waves that intersect, overlap, and expand with unexpected energy.

If the whole world lived by Be Do Give Love, those ripples would turn into tides. Giving and receiving would be seen as connected, not opposed. The true opposite of give is not receive but take. Too often our culture celebrates taking: taking credit, taking power, taking money, taking resources. Both history and the news are full of examples where that mindset and way of life create division and harm.

But imagine leaders, families, and communities choosing to give rather than take. Every act of generosity would amplify another, multiplying the impact instead of diminishing it. In business, in relationships, and in daily choices, what if the center of gravity shifted from consumption to contribution? The ripple effect of that kind of thinking would grow into tides strong enough to change the world.

2 **Every book has a spark moment — that lightning bolt that says, “This needs to be written.” What was yours, and how did it change the way you saw life?**

On a chilly January morning, standing by the pond in the nature preserve near our house, I watched the ducks dip their heads beneath the surface and send ripples across the water. That’s when it struck me: the fourth word in this unfolding sequence wasn’t “have” but “love”.

And that changed everything: not just the title of the book or the website domain, but the very content and substance of the message, and especially the application and implications.

So much of life is lived chasing the illusion of gaining or having: possessions, titles, recognition, achievements. It’s as if we believe in the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, and that it would actually satisfy, if attained.

There’s always another pot of gold, or a bigger one, or a more exotic one. No pot of gold or any of that other stuff carries over into the reality beyond. The only thing that continues forever is love.



A Quote to Live by

**What you do is not who you are. Actions are not Identity.
Be then Do.**

3 Your philosophy makes love sound less like a feeling and more like superpower fuel. How can leaders, speakers, and everyday people actually use love as rocket fuel for what they do?

When we talk about Love in the book, it's not the mushy rom-com version or the quick-hit social media soundbites. Fuel is a better metaphor. Fuel only fulfills its purpose when it's expended. You can store it, and there's value in reserves, but fuel is most in line with its intended purpose, most effective, we might say, when it's being used to propel something forward.

For leaders, speakers, or anyone who wants to create impact, love works the same way. It's not meant to be hoarded as a private resource. It's meant to be spent through presence, attention, generosity, and courage. When you choose to lead with love, your words carry weight, your actions gain traction, and your influence compounds.

And the unbelievable part about love? Unlike gasoline or rocket fuel, love doesn't run out when you use it. Quite the opposite. The more you spend it, the more it grows. It multiplies. In a culture obsessed with having and holding, tapping into the power of love fuels that mindset shift from scarcity to abundance.



4 We're constantly juggling between "being" and "doing." How does your philosophy help us dance between the two, without burning out or losing ourselves along the way?

If you define being as "who I am" and doing as "what I do," how many people have the same answer for both questions? Lawyer, doctor, baseball player, speaker, coach. The temptation is real: to answer the first question of identity with the second question of activity.

Most of us live in the tension between being and doing, scheduling time to slow down, reflect, and take inventory of who we are while we're constantly doing, doing, doing (and going, going, going). The philosophy of Be Do Give Love offers a different rhythm. It starts with "be" and gaining clarity about who you are at the core, apart from titles or tasks, current responsibilities and obligations.

In other words, don't start by looking at your inbox or your calendar, but work backwards. Tune out the noise of action and activity and get clear(er) on all those pesky "why" questions. From there, the "do" can naturally follow.

When you reverse the order, you risk burnout and confusion, because your doing tries to define your being. But when you get the order right—being first, doing second—there is alignment. That alignment generates energy instead of draining it. It's not about balancing two competing forces; it's about sequencing these two cooperating forces so your doing flows out of your being, enabling you to move with purpose without losing yourself along the way.

One Daily Habit You Swear By

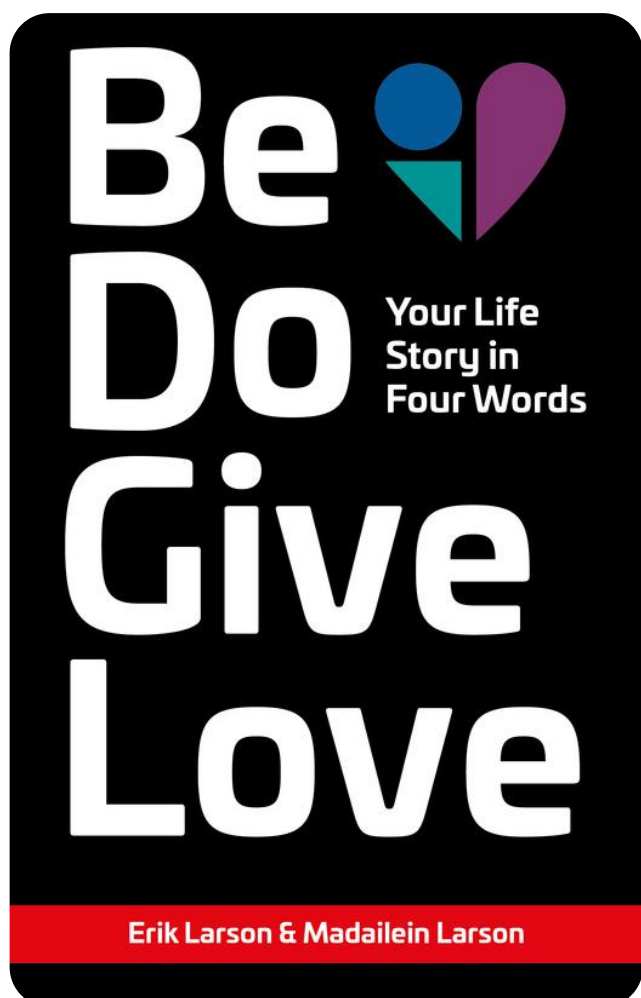
An evening (or late-night) walk to get some fresh air, clarity, and inspiration

5 Beyond the pages of your book, where do you see this message going? Could Be Do Give Love evolve into a movement, a leadership model, or maybe even a legacy that lights up generations?

From the beginning, Be Do Give Love was never just a book. People call it a framework, but that word makes it sound more technical than it really is. At its heart, it's a way of living that applies to both internal and external. On an internal, personal level, it's four essential questions: Who am I? What am I doing? What impact will it make? What's the point of all this?

At the external or group level, imagine if leaders, teams, companies, and communities asked similar questions and then set out to create, build, and rebuild. If that broader transformation is where we're headed, it will take a larger team than we have today.

For now, I'm grateful to be working with my kids, telling and re-telling our family's multi-generational stories and creating tangible and digital works of art. Our plan is to help other individuals and families capture the memories, preserve the legacies, and publish the stories of love.



[**PRE-ORDER HERE**](#)



Erik Larson is a strategic advisor for private equity, tech builder, author and speaker. With a diverse background spanning education, software development, consulting, and executive leadership, his work focuses on building scalable systems, preserving legacies through publishing, and helping leaders create collaborative environments where teams can deliver maximum value.

Madailein (Maddie) Larson is part of the next generation of storytellers and leaders, and co-author of Be Do Give Love. She is currently studying at the University of Arkansas, graduating in 2026. On stage and on the page, Maddie's voice brings vulnerability, humor, and courage to conversations about resilience, identity, and love.

AUTHOR SHOWCASE



BEAUTIFULLY OVER IT

Dr. Celina Peerman has spent her career helping leaders and teams navigate change, resilience, and the very human side of work. With her book, *Beautifully Over It*, she offers a reminder that sometimes the most powerful breakthroughs happen not when we push harder, but when we choose to pause, release, and find the beauty in letting go.

In this special feature, Celina shares her “Beautifully Over It Moment” — a story of renewal and perspective that invites us to rethink what it means to show up fully, even in seasons of stress or overwhelm. Her voice is both practical and deeply human, reminding us that resilience is less about perfection and more about presence, hope, and courage.

There came a point when I was just done. Not in a dramatic way, not even in a breaking point kind of way—just deeply, quietly done.

I was sitting in my office, surrounded by notebooks, travel itineraries, and projects that had all begun to blur together. I had been pushing through a long stretch of work that I loved, but it felt like I was constantly sprinting toward a finish line that kept moving. For someone who helps others navigate change and burnout, that realization came with a sting of irony.

That afternoon, I didn't make another list. I didn't open another file. I simply stopped. I looked around and said out loud, "I'm over it."

Those three words landed differently than I expected. They didn't sound like surrender—they sounded like relief. It wasn't that I was over my work or the people I serve; I was over the relentless striving. The constant reaching. The need to prove I could handle it all.

For years, I'd built a career on helping leaders and teams grow stronger through change, resilience, and the human side of work. But in that quiet moment, I realized I'd spent less time honoring my own humanness. I had been measuring progress by speed and output, not by peace or presence.

So I gave myself permission to pause.

And in that pause, something remarkable happened: the noise began to clear. I started to see beauty in what I had been avoiding—the endings, the transitions, the uncertainty that comes before something new. It wasn't about giving up. It was about letting go of what was finished so I could make space for what was next.

That moment became the seed for Beautifully Over It. It began as notes scribbled on plane napkins and in the margins of meeting agendas—tiny reminders to myself that the goal isn't perfection, it's presence. It's not about avoiding the hard parts, but finding grace in them.

Being "beautifully over it" isn't about bitterness or burnout. It's about releasing what no longer serves you so you can fully return to what does.

It's recognizing that strength doesn't always roar—it sometimes whispers, "Rest now."

Over the last few years, I've watched this message resonate with leaders, teachers, parents, and professionals across so many walks of life. We are collectively tired of being told to hustle harder, to do more with less, to smile through the strain. Yet beneath that fatigue, I see incredible courage—people who still show up every day, even when their hearts are heavy.

In my work, I remind leaders that resilience isn't about bouncing back; it's about integrating what you've learned along the way. Growth doesn't mean pretending you're fine; it means being honest about where you are, and allowing yourself to be shaped by the journey.

When I'm standing in front of a room full of people, I sometimes pause and ask them, "What if being over it is actually the beginning of something better?" That question usually draws a knowing smile, or a sigh of relief. Because we all know that moment when we realize something has to change.

And that's where transformation begins.

A Quote to Live by

"You don't have to hustle to be whole."

(From Beautifully Over It - The Myth of Busy (and Other Lies I've Believed))



To be beautifully over it is to choose peace instead of pressure. It's to walk away from what drains you so you can move toward what sustains you. It's deciding that the world doesn't need your exhaustion—it needs your wholeness.

I'm still learning this every day. There are times I slip back into old habits of rushing, proving, or trying to hold everything together. But then I remember: being over it doesn't mean I've failed. It means I'm awake enough to notice what no longer fits, brave enough to release it, and wise enough to keep growing forward.

We can't control every storm, but we can decide who we'll be inside it. We can't stop uncertainty, but we can anchor ourselves in grace.

That's the heart of Beautifully Over It. It's not about having it all figured out. It's about finding beauty in the middle of the mess, and realizing that sometimes, the most powerful act of strength is simply letting go.

1 In one line, what does it truly mean to be beautifully over it?

It means releasing what no longer serves you—with grace, not guilt—and choosing peace over perfection as you move forward.

2 Who did you write this book for — and what do you hope it unlocks for them?

I wrote this book for the ones who carry so much—the leaders, caregivers, and quiet doers who keep showing up even when they're exhausted.

I hope it unlocks a gentler way to keep going, one rooted in self-trust, rest, and the beauty of becoming rather than performing.

3 When life feels heavy, what's one small practice you use to reclaim calm and courage?

I step outside and look up. Even for a minute, seeing the sky reminds me that the world is bigger than my worries - and that I can start again, one breath at a time.

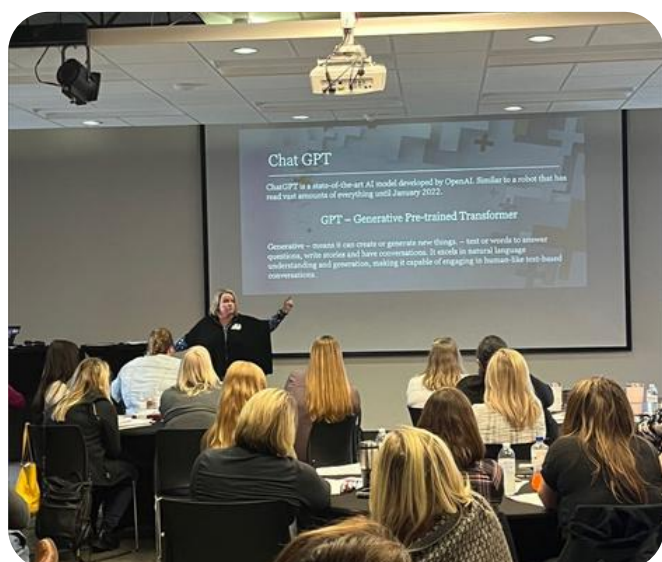
4 Can you share a story — your own, or from a reader — that captures the heart of this book's impact?

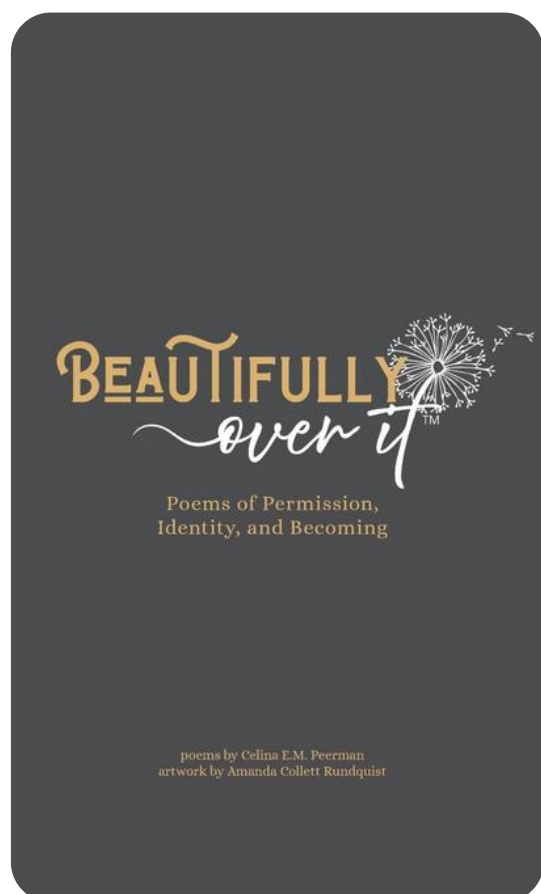
Readers tell me it feels like I've borrowed their words—that the pages say what they've been thinking but hadn't yet spoken aloud. One told me she read a passage at work, closed the book, and whispered, "Yes, that's it."

That moment of recognition—that exhale—is exactly what I hoped the book would offer.

5 If Beautifully Over It leaves behind one lasting legacy, what would you want it to be?

I hope the legacy is that my daughters and anyone who's ever felt unseen will finally feel permission to stop pretending and start reclaiming who they are. You belong here, just as you are.





ORDER HERE



Dr. Celina Peerman, Ph.D., SHRM-SCP, CSP, is an organizational psychologist, speaker, and author who has spent over 30 years helping leaders and teams navigate change and the very human side of work. Known for her energy, humor, and heart, Celina brings practical insight and authentic connection to audiences around the world.

Her latest book, *Beautifully Over It*, is a collection of poems and reflections on resilience, release, and renewal—offering readers permission to pause, breathe, and begin again. Whether on stage, in conversation, or through her writing, Celina’s work centers on one goal: creating spaces where people can grow, heal, and lead with purpose.

GSS2026 | Apply to present under one of our four key themes:



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All registered attendees of GSS2026.

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AUTHOR SHOWCASE



Someone Has to Be the Most Expensive, Why Not Make It You?

In a business world where AI and automation are driving alarming levels of sameness, Andrew Griffiths stands out as a powerful voice urging entrepreneurs to think bigger, bolder, and braver. His bestselling book, **Someone Has to Be the Most Expensive, Why Not Make It You?**, is more than a clever title—it's a call to arms for those ready to break free from the race to the bottom.

In this GSS2026 feature, the acclaimed Entrepreneurial Futurist unpacks how pricing is not just a commercial strategy but a profound reflection of self-worth. Drawing from his own story of turning a struggling SCUBA business into a thriving premium brand, Andrew challenges leaders to see that differentiation begins in the mind, not the market.

With clarity and conviction, he reminds us that when you own your value, you elevate everything around you—your confidence, your customers, and your capacity to create lasting impact.

1 **Your book title dares people to think bigger: Someone Has to Be the Most Expensive, Why Not Make It You? If everyone truly lived by that mantra, how would it change the way we do business... and the way we see ourselves?**

It would be revolutionary. Most businesses today are slipping into sameness. AI, for all its brilliance, is creating homogenisation, meaning businesses are really starting to look and sound exactly the same - with websites that look the same, marketing that sounds the same, content that looks the same.

With homogenisation, businesses become transactions - the only way they can differentiate is on price, generally being the cheapest, in what is well known as the race to the bottom. This breeds a lack of loyalty with customers, price driven customers and a terrible lack of financial resilience within a business.

If people truly embraced being “the most expensive,” they’d be forced to differentiate, to zig when everyone else is zagging. You can’t just quadruple your prices and offer the same product or service. The concept here is that someone has to be the most expensive, why not make it you, but if you’re going to be the most expensive, you have to be the best. This is a big mind shift for many people, but once made, you can never go back.

I’ve worked with so many entrepreneurs and organisations helping them to fix their broken pricing culture, and whilst so much is fixed within the business, the biggest shifts are those that occur within the minds of the owners and managers. That sense of pride, confidence and excitement extends throughout the entire business. Everyone walks a little taller, their language changes, their ability to sell changes and naturally, every single part of the business is impacted.

Our pricing is a reflection of our own self worth. Fix that and it can’t help but be profound.

2 **So many entrepreneurs wrestle with “imposter pricing.” Was there a moment in your own journey where you drew a line in the sand and said, “Enough. My value is worth more”? What happened next?**

Absolutely. Many years ago I bought my first business, a SCUBA school and retail business. I had such a poverty mindset, the guy I bought the shop off had a poverty mindset and the industry as a whole had a poverty mindset.

So you can imagine what kind of business it was. I lived in fear of charging more because of all of the villains rattling around in my mind told me I had to compete on price.

Finally, I got desperate enough to do something about it. My business was failing spectacularly, I was going broke in a big way.



That’s when the concept of “Someone has to be the most expensive, why not make it me” was born. I knew I needed to make some radical and significant changes, and that moment in time, a whole new reality was birthed.

I completely reinvented the business, renamed, rebranded, redefined value and became a premium business. Everything changed. The customers I attracted changed, the financial strength of the business changed, the opportunities I attracted changed. But most significantly I changed and I’ve never looked back.

3 You've written 13 bestselling books, but this one feels like a bold call to arms. What makes this message about stepping up and owning your value the most urgent right now?

We live in such a rapidly evolving, chaotic and fast moving world, that it's actually hard to keep up. The real risk is that you don't. Because if you don't, you lose relevance with your customers, and it's all over. Once you lose relevance, it's virtually impossible to get it back.

Businesses owners, entrepreneurs, corporations - all need to find ways to create deeper engagement with their customers, to become more memorable, more valued and hence more valuable. In a world hurtling towards sameness, we need better strategies to differentiate. And to me, this is where the concept of "Someone has to be the most expensive, why not make it you?" shines.

But in staying that - there are so many challenges for business today - from dealing with rapidly increasing competition, being heard above the clutter, finding the right staff, finding the right customers and so on, to me the single greatest strategy is to stand out and build an extraordinary business by having the courage to charge what you are truly worth and ideally being brave enough to be the most expensive - which has dramatic flow on to every element of a business.



4 This issue of our eZine is all about IGNITE. From your book, what's one mindset shift or bold action that can instantly ignite the courage to raise prices, elevate positioning, and play at a higher level?

I generally find the business owners and entrepreneurs start with a competitive pricing model in the beginning, simply because they lack any other strategy. But over time, they get busier, they sell more stuff, but they don't make any money.

They find themselves working harder than ever, dealing with the wrong kinds of customers who only want cheap and who have no loyalty and they are battling week to week just to pay rent.

One day, they say "ENOUGH".

This is the moment where they decide something needs to change. People reading this will know that crossroad well.

Andrew's Quick IGNITE Tip

"No one on planet earth has the same experiences, trials, tribulations, realisations, battles, victories or bazinga moments as you.

Use what makes you unique."

It serves as a major catalyst to change and do what previously felt impossible. It helps people to reassess the value they bring to the table and their willingness to charge accordingly.

That is the IGNITION piece that drives powerful change in just about every way within the business.

5 Behind every powerful idea is a story. Can you share one unforgettable moment, whether your own or someone you've coached, where daring to "be the most expensive" completely transformed their world?

In reality I've worked with so many people over the years, coaching them through this concept, to the point where I've got many wonderful stories. But they all share a similar journey. What I love the most is seeing the change in their confidence, seeing the businesses become financially resilient, attracting wonderful new customers who value the business, recruiting the best staff because they want to work for this business and so much more. And without exception, every single business says the same thing to me "I wish I did this years ago".

6 As The Entrepreneurial Futurist, you're known for spotting what's coming next. Where do you see the future of value, pricing, and positioning heading in the next 5-10 years for entrepreneurs and thought leaders?

I think you can see my common theme coming through - logic says that business is only going to get more competitive because it's pretty easy to start a business now, especially with AI. And the huge sea of same same that I've mentioned a lot here makes differentiation non existent. Meaning vast number of the same kind of business, in the same market, selling the same stuff, looking and sounds the same, with access to the same customers, means a mighty battle over the same price driven end of town.

The end result is huge numbers of non profitable, financially weak businesses that fail at the first hiccup (just as they did in COVID).

The opportunity lay in being at the other end of the pricing market, the more expensive end, where there is far less competition and increasing demand. This is where uniqueness is valued in a big way. Where businesses can do what they do really, really well.

Where profit margins lead to financial resilience. And perhaps most importantly, where your customers will be your main marketing machine.

Your word of mouth at this end of the market is driven by people who love everything about you and what you do, and they are prepared to tell the world. And they do.

Which end of the pricing scale would you want to be now or in ten years time?

ANDREW GRIFFITHS
The Entrepreneurial Futurist - Author of 13 Bestselling Books

**SOMEONE
HAS TO BE THE
MOST
EXPENSIVE**

WHY NOT MAKE IT YOU?

ORDER HERE



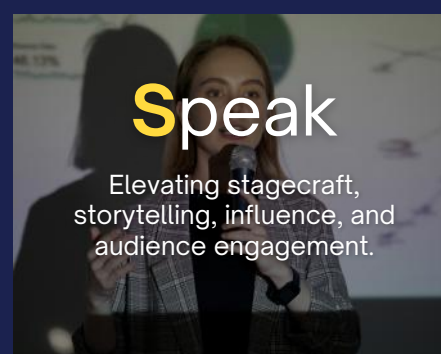
Andrew Griffiths is Australia's #1 business author and a globally respected entrepreneurial futurist. With 14 bestselling books sold in 65 countries and more than 500 media interviews, he has become a trusted voice for organisations as diverse as CBS, Hewlett Packard, the European Union and countless other businesses worldwide.

Andrew has delivered more than 1,000 presentations in 25 countries, captivating audiences with his rare blend of future-focused insight and lived entrepreneurial experience. He speaks passionately from the trenches, having built and rebuilt businesses through crises and reinventions. His storytelling is raw, real, inspiring and deeply human.

His latest book, *Someone Has to Be the Most Expensive - Why Not Make It You?*, is resonating globally across business and corporate sectors, challenging entrepreneurs and corporate leaders to redefine value, showcase credibility and embrace uniqueness. His forthcoming book, *The Bigger Button* (2026), is set to inspire millions to live bigger, more expansive lives.

Andrew Griffiths is a truly unique voice, his extraordinary life story, raw authenticity and global perspective make him one of the world's most compelling storytellers.

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TOP 10

Things to Do in Cairns

Global Speakers Summit – 13–16 March 2026

Welcome to Cairns! While you're here for the Global Speakers Summit 2026, take some time to explore the wonders of Tropical North Queensland. From the Great Barrier Reef to the Daintree Rainforest, Cairns offers a wealth of experiences for every type of traveller.

Here's your curated list of must-do activities during your stay.

1 Attend the Global Speakers Summit

Immerse in four days of inspiration, networking, and learning from some of the world's leading speakers, thought leaders, and industry experts. This is the reason you're here—make the most of every session, conversation, and connection.



CREDIT : GSS2026.COM

3 Ride the Skyrail Rainforest Cableway

Glide above the ancient Wet Tropics Rainforest to the mountain village of Kuranda.

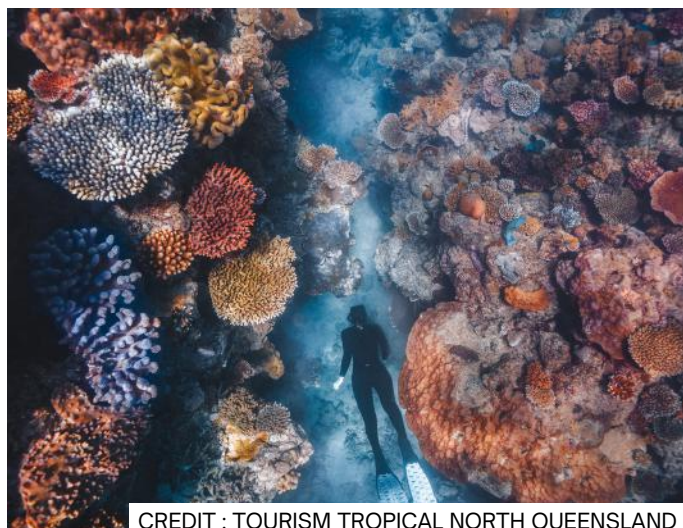
Enjoy breathtaking views, rainforest boardwalks, and charming local markets.



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

2 Snorkel or Dive the Great Barrier Reef

Experience one of the world's natural wonders up close. Join a guided day tour to vibrant coral gardens, swim alongside tropical fish, and, if you're lucky, spot a sea turtle.



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

4 Explore the Daintree Rainforest & Cape Tribulation

Visit the oldest tropical rainforest on Earth, where lush greenery meets pristine beaches. Guided eco-tours offer wildlife spotting and cultural insights from local Indigenous guides.



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

5 Take a Sunset Cruise on Trinity Inlet

Relax after a conference day with a tranquil evening cruise, sipping a drink as the sun sets over the Coral Sea and the city lights begin to sparkle.



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

6 Visit the Cairns Esplanade Lagoon

Experience one of the world's natural wonders up close. Join a guided day tour to vibrant coral gardens, swim alongside tropical fish, and, if you're lucky, spot a sea turtle.



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

7 Sample Local Cuisine & Nightlife

Discover fresh seafood, tropical fruits, and innovative Australian dishes at Cairns' restaurants. End the night in one of the city's lively bars or cocktail lounges.



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

8 Chase Waterfalls in the Atherton Tablelands

Take a day trip inland to see stunning cascades like Millaa Millaa Falls, swim in volcanic crater lakes, and enjoy lush countryside views.



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

9 Experience Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park

Learn about the rich traditions, art, and storytelling of the local Djabugay people through performances, workshops, and bush tucker tastings.



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

10 Adventure Sports & Scenic Flights

If you're feeling adventurous, try white-water rafting on the Barron River or book a scenic helicopter flight for a bird's-eye view of the reef and rainforest.



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND



TOP 10

Eating Spots in Cairns

For Visitors to the Global Speakers Summit – March 2026

Cairns is a tropical food lover's paradise, offering everything from freshly caught seafood to contemporary Australian cuisine and vibrant street food.

Whether you're after fine dining, casual bites, or something uniquely local, here's a curated list of the top 10 places to eat while you're in town for the Global Speakers Summit.

1 Ochre Restaurant

An award-winning waterfront restaurant specialising in Modern Australian cuisine with a focus on native ingredients like kangaroo, barramundi, and wattleseed. Perfect for an authentic Australian dining experience.



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

3 Salt House

A chic, open-air venue offering fresh seafood, wood-fired pizzas, and craft cocktails with stunning marina views.



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

2 Yaya's Hellenic Kitchen & Bar

A lively Greek restaurant offering a feast of traditional Mediterranean flavours – think chargrilled meats, fresh seafood, and mezze platters, all served with warm hospitality.



CREDIT : YAYASHELLENICKITCHEN.COM.AU

4 Prawn Star

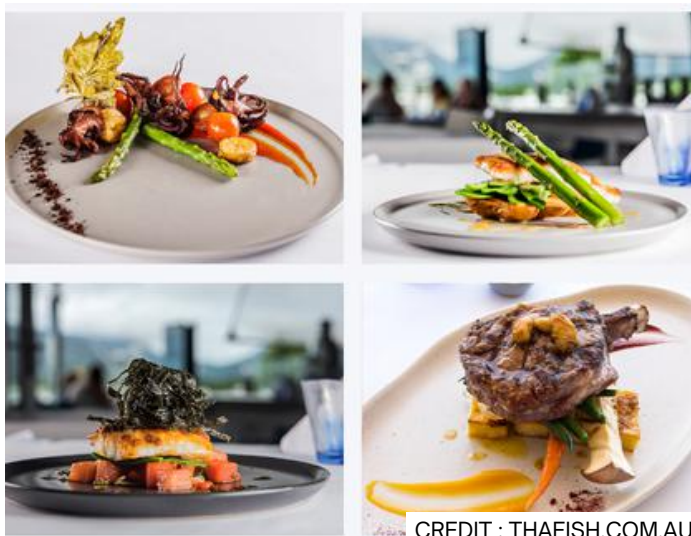
Enjoy fresh prawns, oysters, and bugs served straight from fishing trawlers docked at the marina – casual, fresh, and unforgettable.



CREDIT : TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

5 Tha Fish

Renowned for its 'design your own fish dish' concept, offering locally caught fish prepared exactly the way you like it.



CREDIT : THAFISH.COM.AU

7 Cairns Night Markets & Food Court

Explore a variety of affordable eats from Asian street food to crepes and gelato, all under one bustling roof.



CREDIT : TRIP.COM

6 Bayleaf Balinese Restaurant

A Cairns institution serving authentic Balinese cuisine in a warm, tropical setting – aromatic curries and satay are a must.



CREDIT : BAYVILLAGE.COM.AU



CREDIT : CAIRNS TOURS



CREDIT : TRIPADVISOR

8 Waterbar & Grill Steakhouse

A favourite for perfectly grilled steaks and ribs, paired with hearty sides and a lively atmosphere.



CREDIT : @WATERBARANDGRILL



CREDIT : @WATERBARANDGRILL

9 Green Ant Cantina

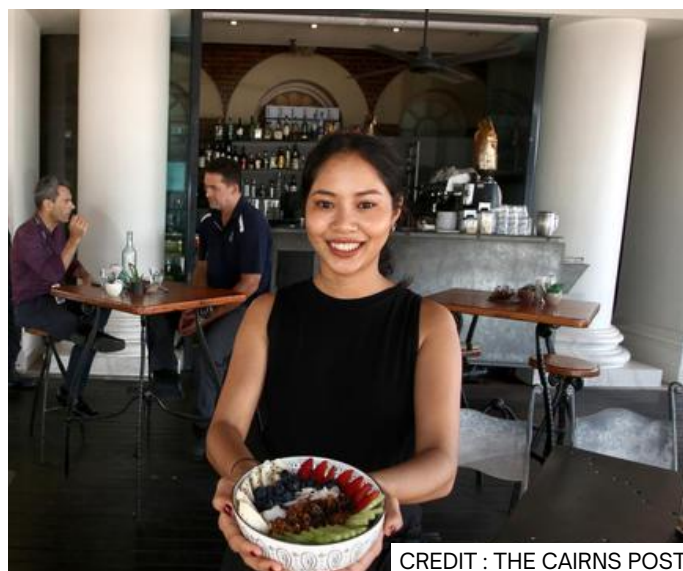
An eclectic Mexican and Latin American-inspired eatery with a laid-back vibe, craft beers, and adventurous specials.



CREDIT : YELP.COM

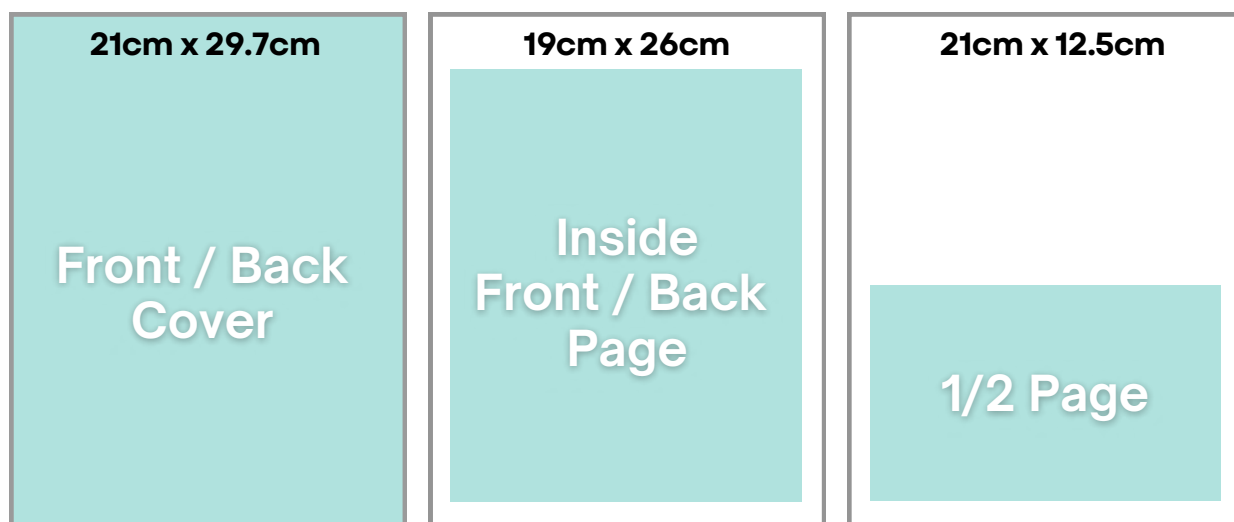
10 Perrotta's at the Gallery

A stylish café and restaurant beside the Cairns Art Gallery, perfect for brunch, lunch, or dinner with a creative twist.



CREDIT : THE CAIRNS POST

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