

Ade Djajamihardja with Kate Stephens

THE LITTLE BOOK OF  
**HOPE**



FOR STROKE SURVIVORS, CARE GIVERS AND  
ANYONE ELSE GOING THROUGH A REALLY SHIT TIME

DRAFT 2:

Ade has included here for you a sneak peek at Draft 2 of his book which carries the working title: **"The Little Book of Hope –for Stroke Survivors, Care Givers and Anyone Else Going Through a Really Shit Time."**

You will soon be able get your hands on a copy of the completed book and the entire 10 chapters. Get ready for a rollercoaster ride of learning and laughing as you turn the pages. Ade has bared his soul in the hope that this will help others through their own challenges. Enjoy! We will let you know when the full manuscript is available for you and your friends.

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## Table of Contents

About the author: .....	3
Introduction: .....	5
Chapter 1. The Power of Appreciation.....	10
Chapter 2. Always look on the bright side of life and fit in the laughs where you can.....	11



Here's Kate and me near our home in Brighton, Australia

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## About the author:

Ade Djajamihardja has been actively engaged in the film and television industry at a national and international level for the past 25 years.

Ade's professional career began at a young age when he floor-managed the news for ABCTV (Australia's national public broadcaster) at just 19.

During this time, his passion for community-spirited volunteerism, took him to SKATV (St Kilda Access Television), where he served as their first ever program manager in 1989. His professional career then progressed to Assistant Director positions with ABC's Light Entertainment, Comedy and Drama Units for such iconic Australian programs as: "Countdown Revolution", "The Big Gig", "DAAS KAPITAL", "The Late Show" and "Phoenix".

Overseas expatriate tenures then followed in Singapore, where he helped establish and train the country's first forays into English language drama and English language comedy. During this time Ade also gained invaluable experience producing and directing Entertainment, Specials and Event Television.

Seeking experiences again in Australia but outside the sphere of network television, Ade joined Open Channel as facilities and Production Services Manager, which also afforded opportunities to work with state and federal screen industry funding bodies.

Ade's passion for media development in Asia continued again in 2001 when he worked for 2004 Asian broadcaster of the year, SPH Mediaworks in Singapore, as their Head of Facilities and Resource Development. Ade was then poached by prominent Malaysian production companies, Ten on Ten Pictures and Enfiniti Productions, as Senior Producer and Chief Executive Officer. There, he also co-produced the biggest historical epic film in Malaysia's history "Puteri Gunung Ledang" aka "A Legendary Love", which was also the first film from Malaysia to be short-listed to be considered for Oscar nomination.

Ade, with wife and primary carer, Kate Stephens, own and run A2K Media, which they formed in 2007. A2K Media specializes in media collaborations with Asia- - and beyond. They both currently reside in Melbourne's bayside suburb of Brighton in Victoria, Australia. It was during this era of Ade's life that he co-created and executive produced both Indonesian Film Education Screenings and the Australian Malaysian Film Festival. He also co-produced the Indonesian feature film "Kambing Jantan" (Male Goat) and was one of the producers for GNW TV's "Salam Café", which was a pioneering comedy panel talk-show that screened on SBS; based on life within Australia's Muslim community.

As life's twists would have it, Ade joined the board of the not-for-profit organisation,

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Disability Media Australia, just three days prior to suffering a massive brain hemorrhage stroke. Due to this stroke, Ade required emergency life-saving brain surgery under an induced coma, seven months in hospital, learning how to sit upright, feed himself, then learning how to read and talk.

He is now in the process of learning to walk (and hopefully dance) again! Ade's spirits remain high, positive, and very much future-focused. He exercises a very clear "attitude of gratitude" for all his friends and family! Ade experiences the quite unique position of being a media specialist, volunteering for a disability-focused media organisation, while himself having a genuine serious disability! Ade is looking forward to making a substantial contribution to highlighting Disability Media Australia's vision and mission, to advance the rights, inclusion and increased visibility of people with disabilities in the media, by sharing their stories and their talent. This book, *The Little Book of Hope for Stroke Survivors, Care Givers and Anyone Else Going Through a Really Shit Time* is Ade's first book. Ade's wish is that this book will inspire, motivate and give hope to stroke survivors and care givers as well as anyone else who may be struggling.

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## Introduction:

The sense of humour I express in this book is very much me. You may like to apply the tools in this book in a style that's in keeping with your own humour.

I've been very upfront and honest about my journey. I wrote this with only love in my heart and the best of intentions. Take from this story what can work for you.

This is my personal experience and does not constitute medical advice. I am just a guy who has survived two strokes, and this is how I did it.

You may find there are many similarities with your own situation, as well as points that are unique to yourself. My intention is to remind you that I'd like to help walk you out of the darkness - and the shock, isolation and the fear that feeds it; and into the light (no, nothing religious, so don't panic). So come and take a walk with me.

“With what I have learnt through my journey, I'd like to help you through yours”.

When I was 37, I suffered my first brain hemorrhage stroke and paid for it with a series of intensely annoying, painful and debilitating headaches and two weeks under hospital observation, enduring some seriously average hospital food.

Two years ago, when I was 42, I suffered my second brain hemorrhage stroke. I paid for this one with three weeks in an induced coma in Intensive Care and emergency life-saving brain surgery - from which I was NOT expected to survive. I spent seven months in hospital, and was initiated back into life via my two new best friends; my wheelchair and my walking stick. I have had to learn how to sit upright again, learn to speak clearly and coherently, read, feed myself, and now I am in the process of learning to walk again, which is no easy task! I am discovering for myself how babies must do it!

At the time of the stroke, I was in the process of helping organize a film festival on the other side of the country, when I realized that my stress levels were at critical levels consumed totally by a myriad of financial and professional concerns. The night of the stroke, I told my Kate that I needed to unwind and play some guitar, so I headed off to see my friend and former student Gavin.

After parking my hire car at a reserve near his house, I walked to his door, thinking about the chords I wanted to play that night, and I noticed that my left hand felt a little numb. Gavin greeted me at the door, handed me a fruit juice, as I helped myself to one of his acoustic guitars that he had ready for me. Checking to see if it was tuned or not, I went to strum a bar chord only to realize that I could only

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produce a muffled crappy sound. Oh no I thought to myself. Was I always this crap?! Surely Not!

Upon reflection, this was my first clue that something was afoot!

I then sampled some of the dinner Gav had prepared for me. After just a few mouthfuls, a familiar grumbling in my tummy had me quickly and embarrassingly asking to use his toilet. I had barely got there when I realized that both my balance and bowels had totally given way!

I was very outside my comfort zone and severely embarrassed.

Luckily for me his bathroom had a support bar, which I will always be grateful for! Having had experienced a stroke once before, my mind immediately raced to the recent Stroke awareness campaign commercial, Think F.A.S.T:

Face – Check their face. Has their mouth drooped?

Arms – Can they lift, both arms?

Speech – Is speech slurred? Do they understand you?

Time – Is critical. If you see any of these signs call 000 straight away.

At the time of my stroke I remembered it a little differently.

F is for Face – Can I move my face? I was looking straight into his bathroom mirror, and everything looked fine.

A is for arms - Can I move my Arms?

My left arm then could move, but couldn't grip anything.

For some strange and ridiculous reason though, I convinced myself that A was also for Accent, and that I had to make sure that I could pull off a convincing accent. My accent of choice was of a Russian living in London (what I imagine the English Premier League side Chelsea Football Club's Russian owner, Roman Abramovich might sound like in a few decades time).

I then re-focused and asked Gavin to phone Kate for help, and to come and get me. That was my second warning sign that something was afoot!

Kate soon came and helped me, and without doubt ensured my survival. She immediately rang for an ambulance.

In the ensuing days, weeks and months afterwards, all preoccupations of money, outstanding bills, film festivals, car payments etc then landed unceremoniously on Kate's lap, and for her alone to prioritize, organize - and just basically fix.

My heart and soul was just totally focused on surviving through all this...

When I look back at this pre-stroke time, I realize that my stress levels were the highest they had ever been. As well as business stress, a lot of unusual things were

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happening. Several appliances had blown up in our home. My car was being fixed for a minor dent and believe it or not, the panel beater's building had burnt down and therefore my car was burnt-out and totally gone. What were the odds of that?!



This is me at the Alfred Hospital. It was 6 weeks before I could utter my first sound. The sign on my head says "No Bone".

"They" say we all learn by doing, so I deduced that I was going to have to figure out some way to get through all this. I was advised, counseled, and instructed repeatedly by many well-intentioned loved ones, to remain patient and stay positive, but those same voices became deathly silent when I asked, "how do I actually do that?"

I wanted tools, not just opinions! I wanted to know how to keep positive and how to find the courage. I wanted techniques and strategies to do this. I decided that I had to create the tools myself to keep myself positive, patient, brave, and all those states I was told to stay in. I vaguely started to recall some key words and messages from inspirational leaders and some books by some seriously progressive thinkers whose work I had read and respected (Jack Canfield and Dr John Demartini as well as lessons from Liliane Grace's *"The Mastery Club"*, just to name a few). I also remembered stories told by my martial arts masters and professional mentors from many years ago.

I have learned more about myself than I ever thought possible, and hit the lowest of lows. I've whispered, chatted, begged, screamed, cried, and laughed at God, and his surrounding Angels, as well as to Satan and his sales rep demons.

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There were many times when I thought my time on Earth, as I knew it, was well and truly over. At one stage, one night my headache became so intense I was convinced that I was going to literally die from the pain. I am constantly staggered by where the mind strays when assured and self-brainwashed that this is the end of everything!

I made a clear mental note then and there NEVER to judge another in how they dealt with their own personal apocalypse and Judgement Day!



Kate, myself, and Jack Canfield in Bali, Indonesia. Kate and I finally had our honeymoon and we were thrilled to meet someone who we consider a great

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business coach/mentor/guru, and all round great guy! This was the first time that I had travelled since my stroke. Travelling with a wheelchair is an experience!



Dr John Demartini and me in 2010.

The same mythical "Council of They" also say that extreme situations define and magnify a person's personality and character. Although in this situation I was dealing with some serious shit, I was steadfast in my belief that **I was going to get through all this with as much class and dignity intact as possible...**

As I said repeatedly ad nauseam to my gorgeous sweetheart, Kate, who never ceased in her support and admiration of my positivity and mental strength,

**“How we respond to any situation in life is far more important and defining than the situation itself!”**

One of the key comfort strategies to help me move forward was the realization that my psychological health could be greatly improved through finding intestinal fortitude and mental strength. **Keeping positive and finding courage was far more an activity than merely just a state.** Like a muscle group my emotional and mental state required exercise to be kept strong.

Like life, it is highly participatory. You have to DO things (get involved) to make it work. It's like, when you are feeling down or depressed; you are actually better off going for a walk (if you can walk) in the fresh air and taking in some nice, deep breaths. Vitamin D and the clean air will do wonders and will literally change your disposition.

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## Chapter 1. The Power of Appreciation

“When you are grateful, fear disappears and abundance appears”.  
Anthony Robbins

It dawned on me pretty quickly, especially after a particularly shitty day, that the focus of my gratitude could be very simple and minute. It's like that famous Jewish proverb: “I felt sorry for myself because I had no shoes...until I met a man who had no feet”! Ok, I thought; I get it! I was getting fed regularly, receiving consistent rehab with Physios, Speech pathologists and Occupational Therapists. **Of course there was my wife- more loyal than the world's most devoted Bodyguard**, for her companionship and support and her presence, my family- my parents who were very willing and able to help with my personal care and whatever they could do to help, my son, who I love dearly, friends – the joy of Facebook and the support and encouragement I got was fantastic, even from ex girlfriends and others I didn't know so well.

Before going to sleep every night, I would list five things in my life for which I was grateful. Suffice to say that my then partner - and now wife, Kate, always got a very generous mention.

There's always some poor bastard who's got it worse than you/me! This simple exercise made a huge difference to me. Try it; you'll feel a difference. I promise!

And while I'm on this topic, I must also mention that there were a few, very kind people who sent us money, helped with our accounting and bookwork, and dropped off food at home, and other acts of kindness. This was hard for Kate and me to accept; however this really helped us at that time, and we just had to learn to be humble and accept others' help, and tell ourselves that it is OK to ask for help and OK to accept help. Just continue to be grateful and gracious!

Power of Appreciation (Attitude of Gratitude) became my Daily Rule/ Habit/ Tool Number One.



### Tool 1:

Every night ask yourself: “What are 5 things that I am truly grateful for?” (There's always something).

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overflow, and I also had man bags, and I'll leave you to deduce what area that referred to!

When I was scared and sometimes in pain as various needles were jabbed into me, or I had to practice various activities that were uncomfortable, I would say jokingly "While I like you and also respect and appreciate what you are doing to try and help me, I AM still going to press charges", and I would say to the medical and allied health professionals (including the brain surgeons), "So what qualifies you to do your job? Did you do just do the weekend TAFE course, or did you do the full four week course"? My brain surgeon joked along with me and replied that he did the online course.

The healing power of humour has long been recognized and now has also been validated by medical science, giving birth to the old phrase "laughter is the best medicine". New research in Japan has shown that laughter therapy is an efficient low-cost medical treatment that cuts health costs. Geneticist Kazuo Murakami considers that laughter is a stimulant, which can trigger energy inside a person's DNA, potentially helping cure disease. The Humour Foundation here in Australia is a charity with the aim of promoting the health benefits of humour.

John Paul Bell, a performer, and Dr Peter Spitzer, a general practitioner founded the Humour Foundation in 1997, and now Clown Doctors make a difference to about 75,000 people a year. Among other benefits, some professionals acknowledge that humour and laughter boost the immune system, improve blood circulation, lower blood pressure, make the heart stronger, reduce stress, stimulate the nervous system, enhance concentration and memory, and relax the muscles. Laughter can give great emotional release. Even if only a few of these claims are true, I think it is clear that humour and laughter are a positive therapy for healing and health.

Combining my two new tools, gratitude and humour, then seemed like the obvious next sequential step.

- What was something I was truly grateful for that was also kinda funny?
- Where was I?
- What was happening around me?



I was in Melbourne, in a world-class public hospital, with my taxes hard at work- Tick, receiving world-class medical attention - with the regular opportunity of being touched inappropriately by a scorching hot nurse!! Tick, Tick! Take a bow, Ade!

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My aim was to make the people around me laugh but definitely NOT to make anyone uncomfortable or creep them out! ... because I have a ruthless loyalty to Kate and a strong instinct to provide and protect for her forever. She is the holder and keeper of my heart and soul for eternity. Kate was always “in” on all the jokes.



My sense of humour was tested when an Occupational Therapist was introduced to me. At that time I had never heard of the term Occupational Therapist (OT), yet I found myself being treated by one. My wife was convinced that the entire OT department was exclusively staffed by Super Models.

The head OT said to me, “next week Ade, we are going to practice dressing, undressing and showering”! I said, “High fives all round!” To play along with the joke a little more, I asked if it was OK for us to continue seeing each other outside of work. She was the only woman, besides my wife, and I guess my mother when I was a child, who had washed me in the shower. Culturally, this had its challenges for me, however my humour helped to get me through this.

When I moved to the rehabilitation hospital, Kate was no longer allowed to stay overnight. One incident that still echoes loud and clear to this day is how some night nurses had a tendency to be what I can only describe as over zealous in their tactile enthusiasms to assist me with using my overnight urinal bottles. I'd spring bolt upright shouting, Oi!! There are only a few people who can touch "Professor Percy! That's me, my wife and this specially created list of my closest and most trusted friends!!"

Then there was Speech Therapy. This included lessons in language, literacy and numeracy. I was amazed that they suggested that I play games like “Angry Birds” and “Contract Killer” on my iphone, games where I could scan with my eyes from left to right (because I had something called “left neglect”). They taught me funny and naughty tongue twisters like ... “I may not be a pheasant plucker, but I am a pheasant plucker’s son, and I’ll keep on pheasant plucking until the pheasant plucking’s done.” That was just so so cheeky and naughty. I knew they were just trying to get me to say Pleasant f..... To which I replied to them, “I might not be a cunning linguist, but I am a master debater” 😊 Well, they started it.

Above all, I knew I had to keep my sense of humour, which has always been very important to me. That became a big thing, to make sure I could find a funny side to challenging and serious situations. I also wanted to try and keep my head clear, which became increasingly difficult because every day, I had more medication which made me feel more blurry and displaced and sometimes I felt like I could have just switched off and drifted off into nothing; but I didn’t. My sense of humour proved key in the upcoming months.

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I had super weird dreams. They were usually about war and water. I dreamt I was leading the allied attack on Normandy, France on D-Day, though not as a paratrooper, but as a concert pianist (because that was the key to the allied forces defeating the Nazis in WW II). I woke up and asked the nurse which flag we were fighting under and she played along and said "Caulfield Hospital", to which I replied that Caulfield did not have a navy. I was drifting between my dreams and reality and it was at times very confusing. I also dreamt that my organs were being harvested and sold on the black market. I told the nurse, who assured me that this would never happen in Australia. Another nurse played along with me and remarked, "What, you've only just realized?!".

My wife read me some of the book "*The Brain that Changes itself*" by Norman Doidge, MD, and "*A Stroke of insight*" by Jill Bolte Taylor, who was a brain scientist who had experienced a massive stroke.

I noted that one of the key points that helped Jill Bolte Taylor during her stroke rehabilitation was to let people know, when necessary, that she was not stupid, just injured. With all that was happening and my weird dreams, [I had to keep reminding myself that I wasn't stupid and that my brain was just injured.](#)

The hospital psychologist assessed my intelligence as being in the very superior category, and I used to have an IQ of a very respectable 155, however, please don't ask me to thread a needle or point you in the direction of the local shops! Although I had been in the same ward in the hospital for months, I still could not even tell you where the bathroom next to my room was.

I had to continually ask myself what is good about this scenario, and what about this situation could possibly make me laugh in a week or a month or even a year's time. This helped me to see the funny side of the situation. It was almost as if I had to become an observer and view myself and my current circumstances from a distance; so that I can look at the whole situation with some true perspective.

It was amazing how distorted my sense of tiredness was throughout that period. At this stage I only had the energy to see visitors for five to ten minutes at the most. They would ask me how I was, and I would say, "Oh my God, you wouldn't believe the day that I've had. Oh, I've had a huge day!" I'm exhausted!

- I woke up
- Had my breakfast
- Had a shower
- Then had a nap
- Looked at some pictures
- Rolled over

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- Had another nap
- Had lunch
- Tried to draw a circle
- Read 2 sentences
- Practised sitting up
- Intertwined my fingers

I'm exhausted, knackered...Massive day!

My Daily Rule/ Habit/ Tool Number Two.

## Tool 2:

All the time – Ask yourself, “What is good about this, and is there a funny side to this situation”?

Thank you for reading the draft of the first couple of chapters of this book. I will be in touch soon so that you have the opportunity to purchase the complete 10 Chapters of the manuscript. Kate and I look forward to keeping in contact with you via [www.LittleBookOfHope.com](http://www.LittleBookOfHope.com) and on Facebook by going to: [www.facebook.com/LittleBookofHope](http://www.facebook.com/LittleBookofHope)

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