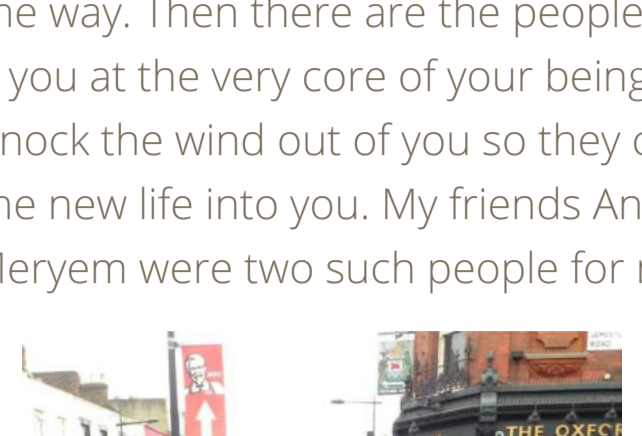
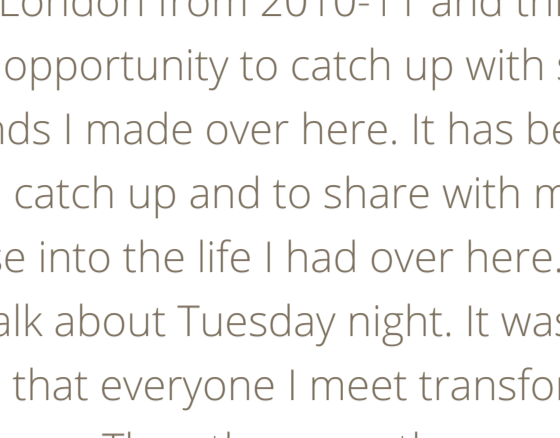




# GET ON UP

Get on up is founded on my belief in the power of the human connection. It is fuelled by people, stories and ideas that will challenge, change, inspire, encourage and engage, allowing you to be the best version of YOU possible. Every now and then life will knock the wind out of you, send you tumbling to the floor and have you wondering where to go from here. The resounding message of this space is that it is ok to give in for a while, to be vulnerable, but always know you have the ability to "get on up" again. Unlike our feline friends, we only have one life. Get on up and make it worth remembering.



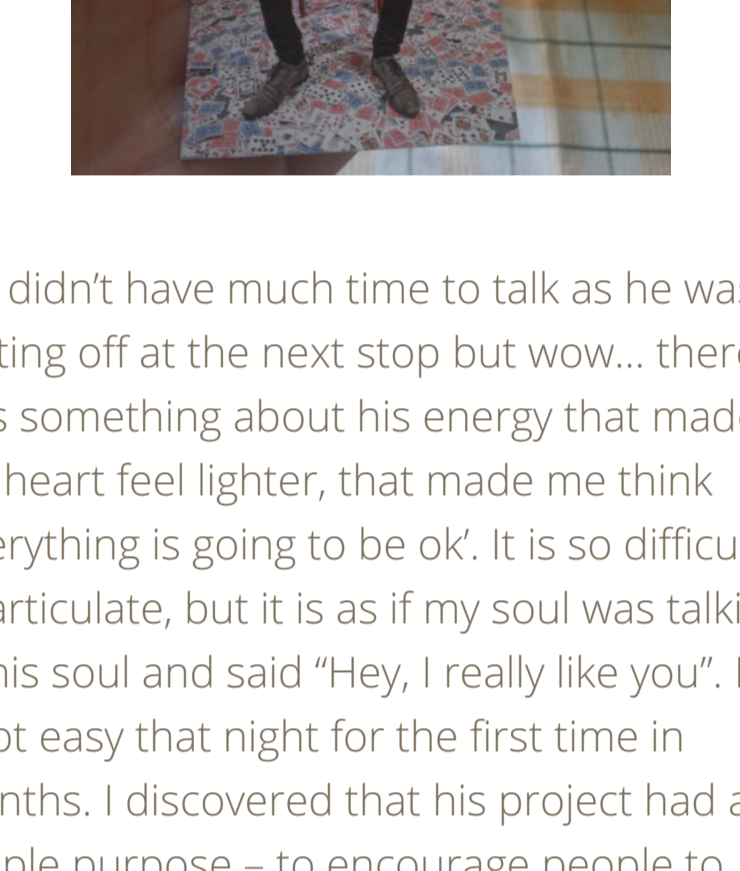
## The story of a happy heart (Meryem and Angelo edition)

APRIL 2, 2015  
GETONUP

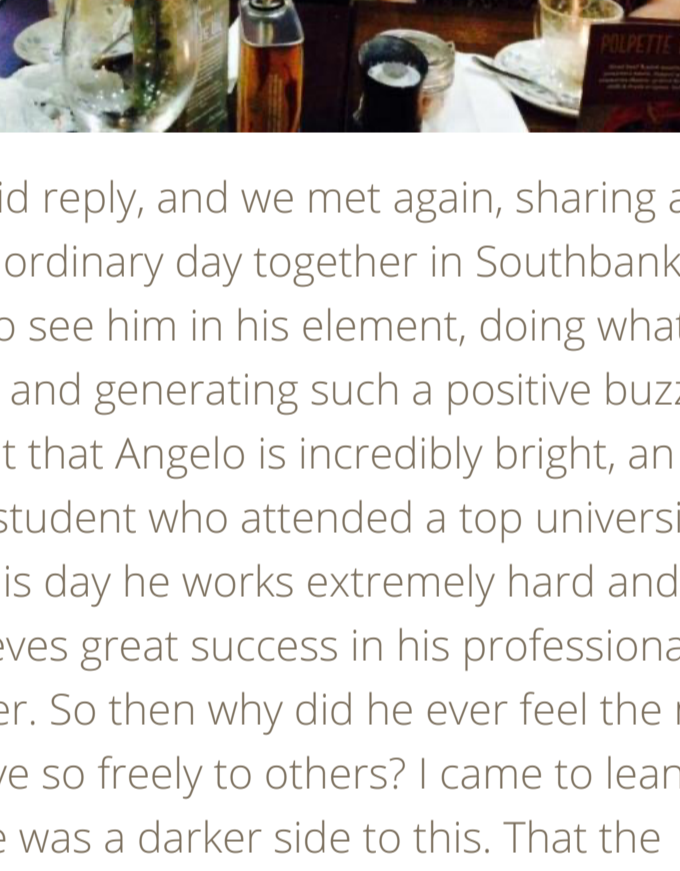
I'm writing this from London with a heart that is happy and inspired. I spent 18 months living in London from 2010-11 and this week I had the opportunity to catch up with some of the friends I made over here. It has been lovely to catch up and to share with my mum a glimpse into the life I had over here. Today let me talk about Tuesday night. It was Magic. I believe that everyone I meet transforms me in some way. Then there are the people that shake you at the very core of your being and who knock the wind out of you so they can breathe new life into you. My friends Angelo and Meryem were two such people for me.



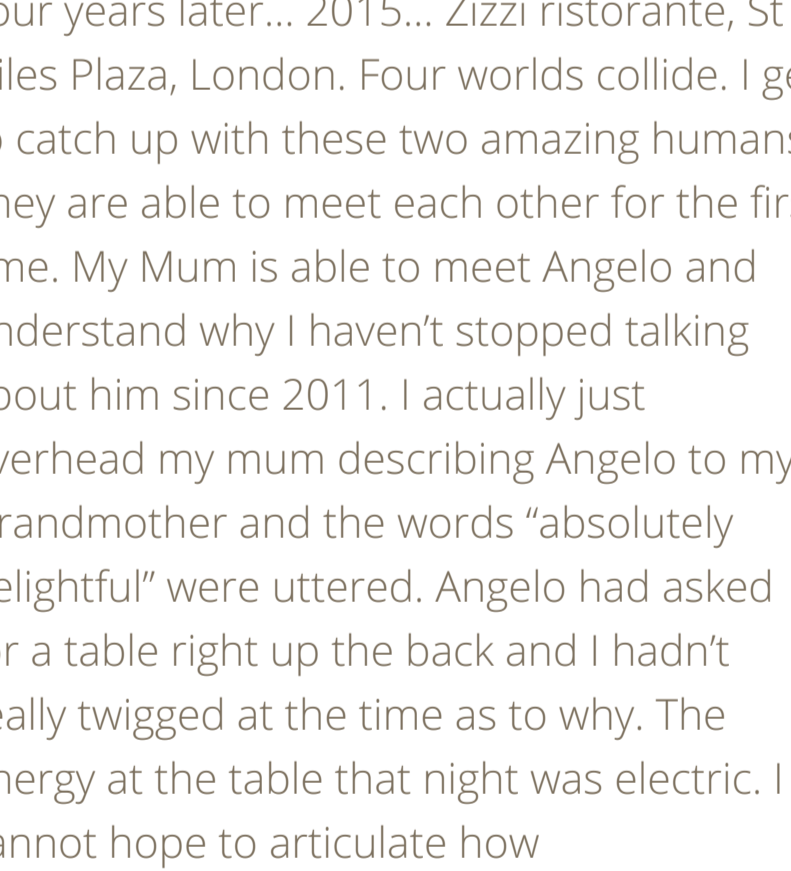
Meryem taught me to never stop asking "why", to be proud of who I was and that if you don't ask for what you want then the answer is already 'no'. We met in line for a New Year's Eve party, she quite literally turned around and said "I'm new to London, can we be friends?" and that was that, sort of. We exchanged numbers and danced the night away, then as the sun rose so too did the realisation that all our group's belongings had been stolen. The next morning I remember feeling sad most of all that because I'd lost my phone I wouldn't get to see her again. Fast forward to Friday and I've got a new phone and successfully ported my old number, then the delightful \*ping\* and my face lit up because there was a message from Meryem. As we were both unemployed at this point we had plenty of time to get to know each other and soon became inseparable. What I loved and still love about her is her insatiable curiosity and her tenacity in going after what she wants. From the little things like asking for a nicer table in the restaurant so we could enjoy a better view, to curating the transformation of several London streets into a gallery to share a message with the community and prove to herself that she could do it on her own.



I met Angelo by a trick of fate on the Tube. After a string of unfortunate events I was at this point in life where I was just going through the motions. I had lost the spring in my step and felt so alone. It had been a struggle to find the energy to go to the gym that day, but I went anyway. On the tube home I found a card on the seat next to me and was attracted by the design so had picked it up like the magpie I am to have a closer look. Angelo had been standing a short distance away and explained that this was one of his cards, he had been giving them out to earlier passengers and one of them had left it behind. The card was for a project of his, **'Forward the Smile'** (Click [here](#) and [here](#) to learn more).



We didn't have much time to talk as he was getting off at the next stop but wow... there was something about his energy that made my heart feel lighter, that made me think 'everything is going to be ok'. It is so difficult to articulate, but it is as if my soul was talking to his soul and said "Hey, I really like you". I slept easy that night for the first time in months. I discovered that his project had a simple purpose - to encourage people to share a smile with a stranger, his way of doing this was through song and magic. He makes his way around London doing pop up performances encompassing card tricks and singing songs with his guitar in tow. So I got in touch to let him know that I love his work. One of the things I noticed when I started commuting in London was how miserable everyone on the tube looked. I had this little game I used to play... smile at a stranger and see if they smile back, each day I would try to beat yesterday's score of how many people smiled back. So to meet someone who was actively trying to make other people smile felt pretty good to me. I didn't expect him to write back, I just wanted to let him know from one happy seeker to another that I respected the energy he was putting out into the community.



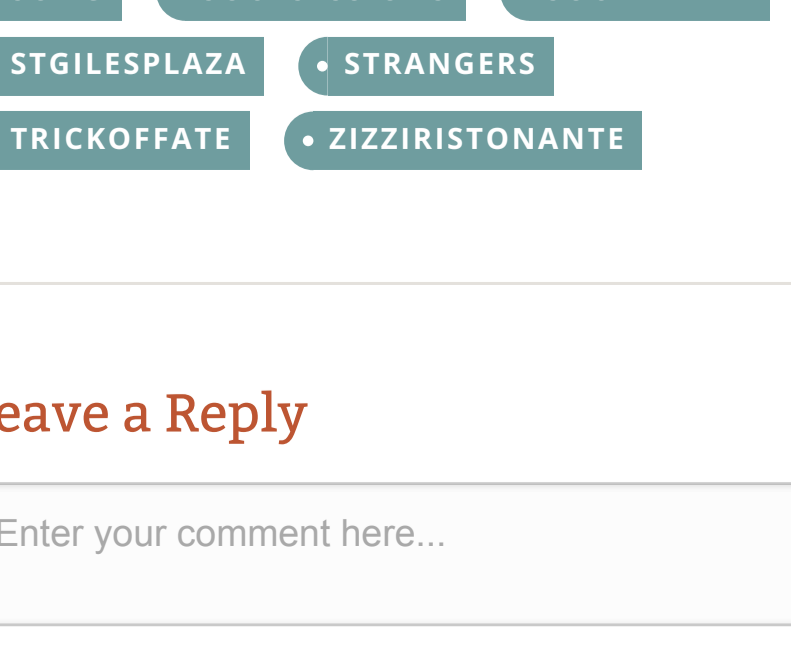
He did reply, and we met again, sharing an extraordinary day together in Southbank. I got to see him in his element, doing what he does and generating such a positive buzz. I learnt that Angelo is incredibly bright, an A star student who attended a top university. To this day he works extremely hard and achieves great success in his professional career. So then why did he ever feel the need to give so freely to others? I came to learn that there was a darker side to this. That the project was bred out of his need to give to someone what he didn't have - a smile. I can't do his story the justice it deserves, but let me say that my heart feels heavy knowing that he had to suffer the way he did. It was from the despair that he had to reach inward and find something within that would keep him going. He has said himself that was timid and shy at the beginning but he got on the tube anyway, started singing and performing magic tricks to strangers and over time something remarkable happened. The positive energy he was putting out came back in spades. When you are able to make others feel good about themselves you start to feel good yourself. Of course he still faces rejection, cynicism and snide comments, but as the lucky ones know - it is the few who appreciate what you're doing that make it all worthwhile. If you can make a difference to one, you've made a difference. Energy spreads like wildfire... make sure you are spreading the good shit. Seeing a carriage full of strangers become a carriage full of singing friends isn't something I'll forget in a hurry.

We caught up several more times and then it was time for me to move back to Sydney.



Four years later... 2015... Zizzi ristorante, St Giles Plaza, London. Four worlds collide. I get to catch up with these two amazing humans. They are able to meet each other for the first time. My Mum is able to meet Angelo and understand why I haven't stopped talking about him since 2011. I actually just overheard my mum describing Angelo to my Grandmother and the words "absolutely delightful" were uttered. Angelo had asked for a table right up the back and I hadn't really twigged at the time as to why. The energy at the table that night was electric. I cannot hope to articulate how overwhelmingly joyous it was for me to have this much love in the one space. I am normally a 'look forward' type but I just keep replaying that night over and over in my head because I feel so fortunate to have these three humans in my life and extremely grateful that they all got to meet each other and share the night with me. Throughout the meal I am reminded of Angelo's incredible ability to make everyday occurrences something special. The way he treats everyone he meets as a friend he just hasn't been introduced to yet. When the food has been eaten and the wine drunk, Angelo pulls out his guitar along with a mountain of music and asks Mum and Meryem to pick songs for me and him to sing together. This was Mum's only disappointment for the evening - that he didn't have any selections from the Sound of Music. And so we sang and sang until we realised that there there was no longer anyone else in the restaurant and that all they had left to turn off were the lights. Then we sang once more so Angelo could dedicate a song to the waiter.

And now the night is over but I feel as though new energy has been embedded into me as I soak up the words I heard and feelings created that night. As I remember how and why I came to love Meryem and Angelo the way I do, as I learn to love them all over again and as I say goodbye for now but pack them neatly away in my heart until we meet again.



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