



The good, the bad and the wet

Anke Richter

7 April

Kia ora and welcome to my first newsletter!

If you're like me and want to stop scrolling on social media – hello, stolen focus! – then an update in your inbox every now and then might work better for you. If not, please ignore this blog (or unsubscribe at the bottom). I won't spam you.

Since my new book "Cult Trip: Inside the world of coercion & control" came out last November with HarperCollins, I've been on a whirlwind tour of events, festivals, podcasts and media interviews.

[Being grilled by Kim Hill on National Radio](#) was as much a highlight as speaking to some lesser-known cult podcasters around the world. There are so many out there – I had no idea! Each one approached the topic with their specific angle, passion and curiosity. I'll make a list for some binge listening soon.



With Stephen Judd from FACT, Holly Hunter from Harper Collins and MC Henry Bersani at my book launch at the XCHC in Christchurch, Nov 2022

Photo: Federico Corradi

CULT TRIP made the New Zealand bestseller list and was voted one of the ten best non-fiction books of 2022 by Newsroom. Today, it was released internationally as a paperback by Ad Lib in the UK. That means that it can now be [shipped for free around the world](#) and I can share my research of ten years with more people overseas. Feels like a milestone - please celebrate it with me!

So many good things have come out of this project already. I'm humbled and touched by the many heartfelt and generous responses, like this one by an acclaimed [US cult expert](#):

'Cult Trip is
incredibly painful
and powerful - an
eye opener, a tour
de force and a call
for justice. Those
voices of survivors
can't be silenced.

Thanks to Anke
Richter's courage
and compassion,
they will be heard.'

Prof Janja Lalich,
author of
Take Back Your Life



Survivors who can use their voice are more empowered – like the women from Gloriavale [who are now fighting for their rights in court](#), which might lead to a sea change in their former community. Or even bring the leaders down for good. Watch this space!

Many readers have contacted me about their own history in a high-demand group, one even slipping me a note after a book festival. Networking is my middle name, so it made perfect sense to start a Facebook group called [“Culty Conversations NZ”](#) to raise more awareness about cultic influence. Especially in Aotearoa New Zealand where we don’t have a professional “cult watch” organisation yet. It’s overdue, and I hope one day soon we’ll have better services set up for exit counselling and cult prevention.

Another offspring from CULT TRIP is [my workshop “How not to start a cult”](#) that covers [red flags in groups](#) and my personal learning from many new-age explorations. I’ve toured this talk at

summer festivals this year and [gave a run-down of the good, the bad and the wet on The Spinoff](#) (including a run-in with an infamous anti-vax lawyer). If you'd like to book me for a presentation as well, let me know.

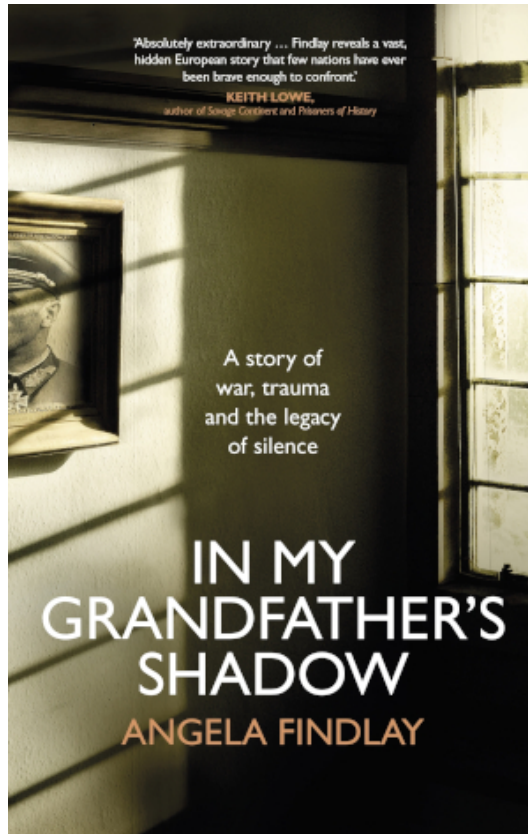


Holding my workshop at Earth Beat and at Kiwiburn (where I channelled “Midsommar” cult fashion) - before being accosted by Sue Grey.

It's very exciting that my baby – one that feels like a miracle birth after a miscarriage – is now taking its first steps out into the wider world. It's also a bit daunting. I'm preparing myself for reactions from those who are still enamored with the international yoga cults I examine in the second part of CULT TRIP, “Toxic Tantra”. But the tide is changing. More and more victims and activists are holding abusive organisations accountable. #MeToo has finally arrived in the spiritual and

wellness world, and I'm excited to be part of it.

So stay tuned. Be aware. Speak up.



And please read more books. My recommendation for this month is [Angela Findlay's](#) "In my Grandfather's Shadow" – a deeply personal reckoning with her family's WWII history. Even though we circle different drains as authors, I found many similarities not just in our

biography, but in how we advocate for truth and reconciliation. Angela's powerful book moved me profoundly.

Wishing you a happy Easter!
With aroha from Aotearoa,

Anke

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