

GED_S01E02_The_Good_Enough_Dad_gus_worland_23101 8_MID18-20_FINAL.mp3

Anonymous female voice: [00:00:02] A LiSTNR production.

Maggie Dent: [00:00:04] This podcast was recorded on the ancient lands of the Gadigal peoples of the Eora Nation in Australia. I wish to acknowledge the rich and continuing culture and especially pay respect to the elders past, present and emerging, and to acknowledge and pay respect to any First Nations people from anywhere in the world who may come to hear this podcast. We hope that we may all come to walk with gentle feet, strong minds and compassionate hearts in this global village.

Maggie Dent: [00:00:35] Before we start this interview, a warning that this chat touches on suicide.

Maggie Dent: [00:00:47] No dad wants to be a lousy dad. Aiming to be a good dad is great. But you know what? Being a good enough dad is so much more important. I'm Maggie Dent, parenting educator and author and champion of boys and men, and this is The Good Enough Dad where I chat with committed, caring, sometimes confused and often funny dads about all the ways they've discovered to be good enough at this parenting gig. My Good Enough Dad Today is Gus Worland.

Gus Worland: [00:01:20] I'm a hugger.

Gus Worland: [00:01:24] Covid really knocked me for six. It's all about connection. It's all about making sure that you look after the people that are most important to you. Work can wait. It'll always be there. They'll always replace you. But not these people.

Maggie Dent: [00:01:37] That's Gus speaking at the TEDx Vancouver. It's a great little insight into the man you're about to meet. Gus is the co-host of Triple M Rush Hour and the founder of Gotcha for Life, a foundation that's working towards zero suicides by equipping us all with mental fitness. He's also someone I count as a mate, and he's a fellow hug-aholic. He's [00:02:00] been a husband to Vicky for over two decades, and his three kids, Ella, Jack and Abby, are all in their 20s. Hi, Gus.

Gus Worland: [00:02:09] G'day. How are you? Thanks for having me.

Maggie Dent: [00:02:10] Welcome to The Good Enough Dad.

Gus Worland: [00:02:12] Yeah, I'm excited. Thanks for having me.

Maggie Dent: [00:02:14] Now, yours are a bit older. Any of them still home?

Gus Worland: [00:02:17] One will be back in a couple of weeks time, but we have been empty nesters for about six months, which actually sounded a lot better than it actually was. We've actually sponsored in a few kids, i.e. mates of ours that we've met overseas who have kids travelling to Australia. I've been picking them up from the airport. We've been giving them our spare car. We've loved having them around us. So Vicks and I haven't quite been proper empty nesters yet, but it scares us to be honest, because we love our kids so much and we love our house being the party house, everyone can come and and be themselves.

Maggie Dent: [00:02:48] Our house was one of those. Jeez, it was so quiet afterwards. Now, Gus, your dad left when you were five, which is when Angus stepped in as that figure in your life. Can you tell me a bit about Angus?

Gus Worland: [00:03:01] Yeah. So Angus was the boyfriend of my cousin and ended up being my cousin's husband. And he was just this guy, he was a PE teacher. He taught us how to swim. He was just always athletic. Every time he turned up, there was just there was balls and bats and just stuff, you know? And for a young kid that was like me who was just craving that type of stuff, he was like a hero. And then he became so much more than that because he ended up doing the job of a father for me. And also on top of that, he really helped me even more than a lot of dads do, because he wasn't my dad. He could influence me in other areas and I'd probably listen more. And he ended up giving me that clip across the back of the head that I needed, to say, Come on, mate, stop goofing around. You know, you've got some potential. Go off and start your career properly. And I found out after I'd been in this career for a couple of years that he had gone to this guy and said, Hey, employ him. If it doesn't work out after three months, give him the flick. [00:04:00] I'll pay any money that you pay to him in the three months

back to you. But I promise you I'm going to back this kid in. And I ended up eight years at this particular firm and it really did allow me to earn enough money to get a mortgage and get a credit rating. It really did change my life in terms of that side of it as well. So and of course, you know, asking about should I date this girl or what should I be doing here and there. He was always very, very helpful with that as well.

Maggie Dent: [00:04:24] That lighthouse figure is what we kind of call that in every single young person kind of needs them because sometimes your parents are a little bit too close in, you know those questions, aren't they?

Gus Worland: [00:04:36] They are. And I talk to people all the time about building your village up. And if you can have your mum and dad in that village, fantastic. But if you can have someone who loves you but is not quite as close, I think that's the key person. And certainly that was that was Angus for me.

Maggie Dent: [00:04:50] So do you think he's also influenced how you became a dad, even though he was all those other things? You saw how he was a dad.

Gus Worland: [00:04:59] So I think he sort of moulded me, you know, if I was clay, I was very open to to being moulded and I always wanted to please people. I was a bit of a people pleaser and so I just saw him and went, well, he's successful, he's good. I'm going to do what he says. I'm not quite sure who else that would have been if it wasn't for him. So someone else might have popped up. I don't know. But that's why he was so important to me.

Maggie Dent: [00:05:23] Now. Sadly, he died by suicide when your children were teenagers. Tell me about the shockwaves that that sent through your life and how did you find your way through such a major loss?

Gus Worland: [00:05:36] Well, I was working for him over in England at the time, so I was working for Toshiba in the U.K. and I was about to come back to Australia and start a new career, or trying to, in media. And I got the phone call. I was about to be best man for one of my best mate's wedding in England. We were actually playing golf on the morning of the of the wedding. And that moment changed my life because I heard that he [00:06:00] died. But not until later did I realise he had actually taken his own life. And

I flew back to Australia and I went to Toshiba. I tried to find a note. I was trying to look a note book, a Palm Pilot back in the day, just trying to find somewhere that he might have left a note. We couldn't find one. And I just wanted answers because to me he was the least likely person because I had no idea, of course, that it doesn't discriminate. And I just thought, well, he's good looking. He's got three kids, he's got a wife, he's got status inside, outside of work. This guy's a legend. There's no way he'd take his own life. And that's when I learnt my first lesson that a copper put his arm around me and said, mate, it doesn't discriminate. Do you know the numbers? And I didn't. And I had to check them and so forth. But I did nothing about it. Of course I did absolutely nothing about it for years except get drunk on his anniversary and just feel sorry for myself that I'd lost such a great mate and mentor and obviously felt sorry for my cousin who had lost her husband and the three kids who were, you know, I mean, he took his own life on the day that Henry the third and final child, finished his HSC. So what should have been a really fantastic celebration, congratulation type night turned into the worst night of our family and community's life at the time.

Maggie Dent: [00:07:12] So had you experienced grief before?

Gus Worland: [00:07:16] I experienced grief when Dad had left the family home, but because Dad was actually a really good sort of dad that wasn't there every day, like he still popped in once a week. My dad was never going to be the dad that was going to sit me down and give me teach me how to do my shoes or, you know, talk about girls or whatever. But for what my dad was and how he was brought up, he was very solid. So that was grief. I still remember that day coming home from school and having a whole lot of boxes outside the door, and I was just wondering why that was. And then, you know, I soon realised that they were full of dad stuff and Mum and Dad sat my brother and I down and told us that Dad was leaving and I just left the family home and then ran down to my mate's place, thought that I was away from everyone. Of course, Mum had rung and said, is he safe at your place? This is what's happened. [00:08:00] And it took me years to really work out what exactly happened because my mum and dad were great mates and I never understood why they wouldn't be together. But six years later and when I was 18, it came out that my dad was gay and I totally then understood it. Not completely, but I certainly understood it more.

Gus Worland: [00:08:17] And then I went and spoke to him and said, okay, now I get it. Now tell me about what it's like for you to be married with two children and have to leave. Like, that's an incredible story. So everything tends to work out in time.

Maggie Dent: [00:08:31] But was that the first death of a person you cared for or a pet? Anything before that?

Gus Worland: [00:08:37] It was the first true trauma because when Grandma and Granddad passed away, it was sort of I don't know, it seemed to be what everyone was going through and they were in their 80s. So we didn't, you know, my grandma was in her 70s. But I just remember that's the first time as an adult I properly felt true sadness and uncontrollable emotions.

Maggie Dent: [00:09:00] And you cried.

Gus Worland: [00:09:01] Oh, I mean, I cried a drop of a hat any time. I wear my heart on my sleeve, I'm sort of always been that sort of bloke. But these tears were unbelievable. I couldn't be best man for my mate that day. He had no idea. I just collapsed on the golf course and he was looking around. He was going to call an ambulance and eventually he got the story and I said, Mate, I can't. I've got to go to Heathrow. I'm going to wait for the next plane. Like, I just can't be here. And he got that and he understood that. But yeah, the tears were real and they last a long time.

Maggie Dent: [00:09:35] You reconnected to your dad later in life. What did you learn about parenting from your dad? From either when he was there or when he was in and around?

Gus Worland: [00:09:44] Yeah. I suppose Dad was an old fashioned dad. Like he spent three months away and then he came back for a while and he was always busy and he was always late and out early and so forth. So, you know, I missed him mainly when I was little. But for me, for Dad, I suppose I learnt [00:10:00] my lesson after I heard that he was gay. How incredibly courageous that is at a time when, you know, homosexuals weren't looked upon anything like it is today, to actually have him be brave enough to talk to mum and walk away and live his life as full as he can be.

Maggie Dent: [00:10:21] So in an article in The Good Weekend, you said your brother once told you to pull your head in, referring to how you were being a parent and a father. Can you tell me what that was about?

Gus Worland: [00:10:31] Yes, I was being a little bit old school and my brother is married to Georgie Parker, the actress. My brother is a screenwriter, so he's sort of a bit arty farty, bit airy fairy.

Maggie Dent: [00:10:41] Little bit different.

Gus Worland: [00:10:42] Little bit different to me. And by no means ... He's got a beautiful daughter. He's done a great job with her. We just had different backgrounds. My wife was an English teacher from England. She was a bit old school as well. So I suppose we were going down the path of being a bit more stricter than normal. And Steve just noticed one day he said, you know, just relax. Relax, brother. You'll be right. You know, these kids are great kids and whatever. And I just took it on board and I said, I will be. And I think from that moment onwards, it was a huge relief to me because it took a bit of pressure off. And if my three kids came in now, you would be impressed by them. They're really good kids. They're good human world citizens. They're travelling all the time, having a good laugh, got a big sets of friends, so they haven't worked out exactly what they want to do yet, but we're pretty relaxed about that. I'm certainly not old school any more.

Maggie Dent: [00:11:33] So do you remember, you know, how challenging it might have been for you as a dad when they were little, you know, not sleeping and not, you know, that whole chaos stage?

Gus Worland: [00:11:42] Yeah.

Maggie Dent: [00:11:42] Do you remember how difficult that was as a dad?

Gus Worland: [00:11:44] Well, I was very lucky that Vicks was so wonderful. A lot of the time when the kids were little, I was on breakfast radio, so.

Maggie Dent: [00:11:51] That's a great way to miss breakfast.

Gus Worland: [00:11:53] See you later. I'm out of there at 330 anyway, babe. But I suppose for me, the hardest thing for me was to find that connection [00:12:00] point, with Jack it was all about finding that time where I could spend some time with him before he wanted to kick around the footy and that sort of thing. So that was key. And with Ella we just needed to feed Ella before anything. Like she's just seriously angry and fired up if she had an empty tummy, but as soon as she sort of filled her tummy up, then she was, she was happily to go to anyone. So it was easier with Ella. And, and Abby was the easiest of all three. So I found I loved the baby Bjorn. The baby Bjorn was absolutely my friend. I loved it. I loved having them so close there. And I felt like I was giving a little bit of time away from Vicks having to worry about them. And she could just walk by herself, especially when we only had one and without the pram too. Was nice to just not have to muck around with that. So Baby Bjorn was good.

Maggie Dent: [00:12:46] Oh my God. There was a time we never saw it. And now just wherever you go, there's babies tied onto, you know, dads tummies. And I just think, aren't we winning? Kicking ass for it? You know it was Steve Biddulph shared a story you know from his dad wheeled him down the street at one point in a pram and he was ridiculed out loud from men and women because it wasn't his job.

Gus Worland: [00:13:07] Wow.

Maggie Dent: [00:13:08] And look at how, you know, like as I've said before, we go to playgrounds on weekends as a nanny and we don't see many women anymore. It's mainly dads.

Gus Worland: [00:13:17] Yeah and I love that.

Maggie Dent: [00:13:17] Given the women a bit of a break in the morning, right? I love it.

Gus Worland: [00:13:20] I love it, too. And, you know, and and there's and those playgrounds have become better and more switched on to parents, too. There's a coffee shop there now, so all of a sudden it's like, I'm going to get a coffee. It's everyone's winning.

Maggie Dent: [00:13:32] That coffee's really made a lot of difference. Super. And the other thing I've noticed with a couple of mine is that they tend, you know, guys don't always want to chat, you know, they do with their mates and their friends. They're not really unless they're a chatty guy. I'm married to a guy, have a chat.

Gus Worland: [00:13:47] Yeah.

Maggie Dent: [00:13:48] Drives me mad. Um, but I've noticed that when my sons go to the same playground and the coffee shop nearby, they start to recognise and they start chatting to other parents, whether they're, you know, mums or dads. And I think everyone [00:14:00] wins.

Gus Worland: [00:14:01] Well, they've got something in common, right?

Maggie Dent: [00:14:03] Yeah.

Gus Worland: [00:14:03] So that's what I love. That's the one positive that came out of Covid. And of course, there's plenty of negatives, but all of a sudden we had something in common to talk about. So people could just go, How are you going? Have you had it? Oh, my mum's had it. Just started conversations. We're losing that again now. I was hoping we were going to continue just talking nonsense with strangers, but we seem to have gone back to a very quick pace, which annoys me.

Maggie Dent: [00:14:30] Gus your kids are now adults, and even though they're trekking around and things in the world, what did you find? Was there a tricky stage? You've already talked about the early years. How were they as teens? Because often dads tell me they find that hard because if they've got a son, they kind of get really hard on him so he doesn't become an idiot like they did. Or if the girls are just back away where the girls actually don't want dad to back away, they find it a little more confusing than the early years.

Gus Worland: [00:14:56] Well, I was lucky. Both my girls, they love Dad and they wanted to spend time with Dad, so that made it easy. I remember I had a bit of an issue with Jack where he came back one day and I was doing breakfast radio, so I was home

and he had all these markings on his hand where he'd actually marked himself with pen and there was like 20 and he had sort of five, ten, 15, 20. And then there was one more so you could see it was 21 marks. I said, What's that? And he said, That's how many times I've been called stupid today. And he just had a really, really tough day where his mates had turned on him for whatever reason.

Maggie Dent: [00:15:29] Banter.

Maggie Dent: [00:15:29] They thought they were being funny.

Maggie Dent: [00:15:31] Funny,

Gus Worland: [00:15:31] Absolutely. And it just and he hadn't been able to handle it, but he just copped it all. And then he got home. And when I asked him, he just broke into tears. Well, I just went right. That's the last day you're going to go to that school. I'm going to put you in the posh school down the road with the Blazers and da da da. And he's looking at me going, Oh, no, this is not the reaction I wanted. And then Mum got home and Mum was able to just go, everyone cool down. But by then I had phoned the school, I'd phoned the other school got him an appointment because I knew it was going to be hard to get [00:16:00] in. All this stuff had happened and of course I had to go back on all that because it was just a shitty day for him. It was just a tough day for him. Yeah. So I learnt a lesson that day, which I'll never forget, is just take a breath.

Maggie Dent: [00:16:11] Cool your jets, dad.

Gus Worland: [00:16:12] Jets and don't, you don't have to be the big pappa-dad. You can just wait for Mum to come home and you can work this stuff out together. And then we had a very similar situation with Abby where she had to leave a school that she was at because she just wasn't happy and we put her into TAFE to finish off year ten. And then we found her a school which was a co-ed school for years 11 and 12. We handled that situation so much better. And I think we did that because of the lessons we learned from Jack. So never, never be so up yourself to think that you know all the answers.

Maggie Dent: [00:16:47] Yeah, and I'm just pretty, pretty impressed that Jack was able to open up to you about something that obviously hurt him that much.

Gus Worland: [00:16:54] So it really did. And I think from the moment he was born, we've had a connection. But the connection through sport and our love of the same sporting teams has just he's seen all all my types of personalities, watching footy and watching cricket and so forth.

Maggie Dent: [00:17:11] Throw shoes at the screen.

Gus Worland: [00:17:14] I remember taking him out of his car seat and putting the car seat on the seat at the Sydney Football stadium, you know, because I wanted him to watch a game with me when he was like 18 months old. And he remembers that as well. And he's in Albania at the moment on tour. And he said, Did something arrive for me today in the post? And I said, Actually, there's something there. And he said, Open it up. I want to see make sure it's the right thing. And it was actually a Father's Day present of, of a Sydney Roosters cap that he that I'd been wanting but it was last year's cap couldn't get it and he found it somewhere on the on the web.

Maggie Dent: [00:17:46] That's real love.

Gus Worland: [00:17:48] So that was pretty cool. And then I wore it the next day and we haven't lost. We've had two wins since then. So I'm saying it's the Caps. It's the cap's reasoning.

Maggie Dent: [00:17:55] So it's making memories that matter. And that's what I keep saying to dads, You know, it doesn't matter what the activity [00:18:00] you do with your kids, you do it over and over.

Gus Worland: [00:18:02] Yeah.

Maggie Dent: [00:18:02] You know, dads and daughters, dads and sons, you've got to do it a lot. To anchor it deeply in the psyche. And then you watch what happens when they become a parent and it starts again.

Gus Worland: [00:18:14] It sure does.

Maggie Dent: [00:18:24] Now your kids are all, yeah, not quite all adults because the prefrontal lobe takes a while to finish, particularly for Jack. Do they still turn to you and Vicky? You know, like, for advice and guidance? Tell me about that.

Gus Worland: [00:18:37] Well, the other day, Ella, our number two, she's been in London for a couple of years. And so she comes to me for finance or lack of finance. She'll come to me for advice around some people at work that perhaps you're not quite clicking with because she knows that I tend to be able to work through that type of stuff. And you know, the FaceTiming she does with mum around all the emotional stuff or when things have gone not quite as she wanted them to or she's feeling a bit hung over and feeling a bit, you know, not quite at the races, just a little 10, 15 FaceTime with mum seems to do the trick and I think Jack now since I've done the Man Up Programme and now Gotcha for Life, he's got the Gotcha for Life tattoo done the other day and the kids are so proud of what we've achieved with Gotcha so far that I think they realise they can talk to us about absolutely anything because we have completely switched and realised and taken the pressure off.

Maggie Dent: [00:19:38] Can you explain to us what Gotcha for Life is for those who aren't familiar with it?

Gus Worland: [00:19:43] Yeah, of course. So I started Gotcha for life off the back of the Man Up programme, which I did on the ABC in 2017, which basically challenged masculinity in this country and why we lose so many blokes. So my friend who had taken his own life, it was my journey really talking to smart people about why you [00:20:00] think that might have happened. And the Man Up programme went well. I then went, I want to do more and I started Gotcha for Life. And we are six years in raised \$16 million so far and we give that to people that work in suicide prevention. I think there's a little too much focus everywhere when it comes to suicide at the crisis point and not enough in the prevention and changing people's way of looking at what it takes to be a man and a woman when they're a bit younger, to perhaps give them the skills to put their hand up and ask for help. So that's what we do now. I've got radio in Sydney, I do a drive show which pays the bills and then Gotcha for life really is my passion. That's what I want to be remembered for. And you know, I'm like you. We want to give some advice that makes life a bit easier for other people.

Maggie Dent: [00:20:45] When your kids contact either you or Vicky to bounce stuff off you. This is actually them building their own mental fitness for life.

Gus Worland: [00:20:52] Yeah.

Maggie Dent: [00:20:52] So it's exactly what your message is, is that we can't just keep thinking, oh, you know, when they get a bit older, they'll be right. No, we learn to make, how do we adapt when we're really struggling with a lot of anxiety? Or what do I do when I fail something that I really thought I was going to nail? Because it all feels crap.

Gus Worland: [00:21:08] Yeah

Maggie Dent: [00:21:08] Right. Feeling crap. If we keep multiplying that in our mind and don't feel we can go and chat to someone, then we can end in a dark hole.

Gus Worland: [00:21:16] Of course, you can end up making a permanent decision based on a temporary situation. The simple fact is, I've spoken to so many people that have tried to take their life and they're still with us. And the three things that come out of that is that they didn't want to die, but they're in pain and they were tired. So if you combine tiredness and pain together, you'll make a shit decision and they end up making this decision. But as soon as they've jumped or as soon as something's happened and they think it's all over, they're regretting it. So that's what we need to get to, is simplify it down to I want you to build some emotional muscle and some mental fitness when you're a 2 or 3 out of ten, don't go to the crisis point eight, nine, ten out of ten. Let's try to build a little bit lower. So that's the plan with Gotcha for life. And people seem to like the easy [00:22:00] way that we do things, the simple way that we explain it.

Maggie Dent: [00:22:03] And I love the fact you're getting into to connect with more men, you know, sporting clubs and workplaces, you know where they really are because they often suffer silently.

Gus Worland: [00:22:13] Oh, the men that I speak to that are in a team that has won a premiership, you know, but they're so lonely and they're just drinking for the sake of just getting drunk so they don't have to actually face how they truly feel.

Maggie Dent: [00:22:25] I've been sharing that wonderful video clip about having balls to cry, and in a lot of my seminars for parents around boys and one of the things I've discovered in my work over the years and I have counseled a lot of men and spoken to a lot of men and sheds in strange places.

Gus Worland: [00:22:42] I mean, just quietly, you're a legend in this space. People absolutely love you. If the people see you, they're just drawn to you because you've literally helped so many people that you probably don't even realise that have just heard you or read something from you and just gone, I'm going to do that. And it's worked. And they're like, Hallelujah. So I hope you know that.

Maggie Dent: [00:23:03] I didn't, actually, but I'm moving on from that. Thank you very much, Gus. That was lovely. But one of the things that I do say after that, which I discovered and this is a really important message for men of all ages, if you're married to a woman or in a committed relationship with a woman, that if you're struggling, men often say, I can't tell her it because then she how could she love me if I'm weak? Because all of that male conditioning and I say, I'm going to tell you a really beautiful secret that I've discovered is that when a man turns to that woman who he loves deeply and says, I'm struggling, I think I might need some help. I'm just, you know, the black dog's getting me. The woman does this amazing shift around and turns into a ferocious lioness. She will cover that man's back like he won't believe she will hold him till he's well. But if he doesn't say anything. Then she's not able to do that. Right. And there's that big message, you know, that came across in [00:24:00] a couple of the things I've done after From Boys to Men is that when men feel whatever they were shamed for as boys and teenage men, I've got to keep it hidden. Or in actual fact that could be part of the wound. That shine a light on it. If you can't talk to the partner with, go and have a talk to someone who might be able to help you or find a mate who can say, Gee, that's crap, but you're better than that. You're all right.

Gus Worland: [00:24:25] Yeah, we love you and we love the vulnerability. You know? We truly do. I've never known my group of mates to be closer. And we know everything about each other now. Good, bad, indifferent. The stuff we're worried about.

Maggie Dent: [00:24:38] It doesn't make a difference to guys.

Gus Worland: [00:24:38] Honestly, it just doesn't. You just go, mate. Thanks so much for telling me. Now the problem we have with guys sometimes is at that point everyone wants to fix it because we tend to want to be fixed.

Maggie Dent: [00:24:48] You are the fix its!

Gus Worland: [00:24:49] So what I'd like to say to any blokes out there now is to say if someone shares that with you, just go. Thanks for sharing it with me. Now, now I'm on a part of a team that we can get you the right help that you need, but you don't have to be the guy that fixes it. You can just be part of the. That's what I talk about the village piece. Just find people in your village that you can have those warts and all conversations with without any fear of judgement, but don't have to fix it. Just help them on their journey to getting that way.

Maggie Dent: [00:25:16] That's that kind of part of when men muck up. We all do. And this is what. You've got a moment now, let's be really human since you're talking about it. Gus, was there a particular significant parenting failure you'd like to own up to?

Gus Worland: [00:25:31] Well, I suppose my greatest failure as a father so far was to actually think that my life at some point could have been better without them and to leave their mum and the three kids. Now, I didn't do that, but I had lots of discussions with Vicks about it. In the end, we decided to work on it. I was Billy Big Boots thinking I was the latest and greatest, you know?

Maggie Dent: [00:25:57] Did you have a male ego that was a little out of control?
[00:26:00]

Gus Worland: [00:26:00] Strange that.

Maggie Dent: [00:26:01] Really? I've never heard much about.

Gus Worland: [00:26:02] No, never. I'm the first one ever. And I just remember having this moment where I'm like, okay, well, I can manage it all. I've got to be happy in everything.

Maggie Dent: [00:26:12] How old were you? Just give me an idea of that.

Gus Worland: [00:26:13] 40.

Maggie Dent: [00:26:14] Yeah, well, it's big around then.

Gus Worland: [00:26:16] Yeah, and I basically went and saw a friend of mine. He just listened, which was great. And then he said to me, Well, mate, I've been seeing this lady for a while. She's been helping me a lot with my stuff. And I looked at him, I said, What do you mean? You've been seeing this lady? He goes, Yeah, this counsellor lady. I'm like, You didn't tell me. He goes, Well, just didn't sort of feel like I wanted to tell anyone. And I was just getting on with it. But let me tell you, I'm telling you now, and I think she could help you. So next day, bang straight down there and then came back with all this stuff and told Vicks. And of course, Vicks is rolling her eyes going, Of course. Thank you. And I'm glad they're working on it. And then she started going to see the same lady. So we both worked on each other and separately. And I remember telling Vicky's mum that story because Vicky's mum had broken up with Vicky's dad and she heard it all and she was very proud of me for not just jumping overboard and whatever. And then she said, Oh, maybe, maybe I should have worked harder on my relationship with Vicky's dad. And I was smart enough to know at that point that the dad was already gone. I said that would have been a waste of time. But the thing is that Vicks and I weren't gone. We were still hanging in there hoping that we could get something together. And that was 14 years ago.

Gus Worland: [00:27:29] So, we came through that ended up being a positive. But I remember Jack saying to me once, Dad, are you and Mum getting a divorce? He was only little. Out of the mouths of babes. Right. And it just completely knocked me for six. And I'm like, okay, I've got to work at this. And if we work at it and doesn't work out, at least we can say that to the kids when they're a little bit older. But I'm not chucking this in yet. And thank God. I've never said that to anyone, by the way.

Maggie Dent: [00:27:57] Have now.

Gus Worland: [00:27:59] No one's listening [00:28:00] to us.

Maggie Dent: [00:28:00] No one's listening. It's going to be fine.

Maggie Dent: [00:28:08] Even though you're a great big, burly guy and you've learnt a lot along the years especially around mental fitness and staying well, what are your particular fears relating to your kids?

Gus Worland: [00:28:20] Yeah I suppose the fears, the fears grow as they get a little bit older. Like you hope they make a good set of mates, you hope that they're out of school and they do quite well. They don't have to be the best, but you don't want them to be at the bottom. So there was all those little fears. A little bit of ego goes in there around sport as well. And then of course, that first day they drive away in the car with the p plates on. Oh my goodness. If anyone listening when their kids were about to do that, that's a moment. And then eventually you go, okay, well actually quite good drivers and they're going to be okay. But then you worry about other idiots and so forth.

Maggie Dent: [00:28:53] Especially when you see it on the news.

Gus Worland: [00:28:54] Oh of course. And then I suppose for me, the fear of them just not fulfilling their potential, not being happy, whatever it might be. Now, when my brother said to me, Calm down, mate, and just relax and take it easy, I would have been going, Well, I want them to go to Sydney Uni and I want them to be honours. And all of a sudden we didn't even open up their Atar. We couldn't have given a monkey's because because the kids were they were just good kids.

Maggie Dent: [00:29:20] And they were mentally healthy. They were happy.

Gus Worland: [00:29:23] Absolutely! And they had mates and all good and they wanted to travel and you could just spend time with them and go, They'll be all right, these kids. So Vicks and I completely took that pressure off them. Jack aced it, got 98 something, the girls got 70 odd. Jack's gone to uni. The girls haven't. They might end up going. Doesn't matter. Don't care. Just want to be as proud of them as I am right now by having a good bunch of mates and someone that is loyal and respected is good to their mother. That's. That's all you want.

Maggie Dent: [00:29:54] Absolutely. You know, you've bragged about a few things, Gus, but what's a big brag? What is one that [00:30:00] you feel particularly proud of?

Gus Worland: [00:30:02] As a dad?

Maggie Dent: [00:30:02] Yeah, as a dad. It was all up to you. Yeah, well, nothing to do with that.

Gus Worland: [00:30:08] Vicky, Shut your ears, babe. Because I definitely think that Vicky and I as a combo, have been really good for our kids. So that's, that's the first thing I'd say. But Ella says to me, who's the number two, she's most like me. She goes, Dad, you know, I love the fact that I'm like you because she just bounces around groups and is popular and they like her and everyone invites her out for a drink or go to the party. She can get where water can't. Yeah, literally. She was at the Monaco Grand Prix the other day.

Maggie Dent: [00:30:37] What?

Gus Worland: [00:30:38] And I'm like, How did you get the Monaco Grand? Oh, I was chatting to this bloke at the pub and he said all come. And so the two girlfriends came and they all went and they ended up driving around the track in a Ferrari in the middle of the night. And she just has those experiences all the time. And it's because she puts herself in that position. She's always open to it and that, believe me, I've done that all my life.

Maggie Dent: [00:30:58] Sounds like a rooster extrovert. Bring me on the world.

Gus Worland: [00:31:01] She's absolutely and she's she's just got a heart of gold and she's just great to be around. So, you know, I'd like to think that that's a big piece of who I am.

Maggie Dent: [00:31:10] Am because she's like me.

Gus Worland: [00:31:12] You. Yeah. So that's a bit of a brag.

Maggie Dent: [00:31:14] You do realise that's just a bit genetic as well. So it actually came in through that. Okay, we'll move on. I get it. I get it. Yeah. But still, I'd take it. I'd absolutely take it.

Maggie Dent: [00:31:22] Now, I'm going to ask you a tricky question because I want to know what is the one thing. That you hope your three kids have learnt from you as their dad? Just one. You have to choose one.

Gus Worland: [00:31:33] Okay. Kindness. Kindness. I reckon that they would look at me and go, that dad will always try to find the the happy place. I was the one that gave the money to the homeless guy. I was the one that, you know, put the window down when someone was cleaning it, you know, at the light. Always find time for everyone and be kind to them, I think would be something that they would say that I've given them. [00:32:00]

Maggie Dent: [00:32:00] Beautiful. Okay. Final question. If you could wind back time to before you had the kids and can talk to yourself as a pre dad. What is some advice that you'd like to give to yourself before you even bring home that first baby?

Gus Worland: [00:32:18] Talking about bringing home that first baby. I reckon I drove 40 k's an hour the entire way from the hospital. And I reckon I must have checked and double checked that that baby seat.

Maggie Dent: [00:32:28] How hard is that thing to get in?

Gus Worland: [00:32:32] It was like four. There was four of us at the car park at Hornsby Hospital all looking at each other, going, You check mine, I'll check yours. I hadn't done mine right. This bloke came over to me and said, Mate, there's that extra little thing at the bottom because I was playing with it. It wasn't quite right. So I knew that was wrong, but I didn't know how to fix it. And this guy fixed it and we had a laugh together and high fived and wished each other all the best.

Gus Worland: [00:32:53] But I suppose for me, I was going to be more old school. I was going to be a bit more, well, this is the way that I was brought up.

Gus Worland: [00:33:02] And I say now, Maggie, to so many blokes that if you're bringing up your child the way that your dad brought you up; have a look at it, because it's a different world. I mean, just simply what we're doing now, this type of communication, telephones, the way that they're connected now, but not really connected these kids, you've got to literally be the best listener and we were never really taught that as well. So there's a lot going on. You have not swallowed the map, so listen and learn from your kids as well. I say quite often that Grandad and Dad will learn from the kid after they've been to one of our workshops because we're teaching the older generation the way it is now rather than the other way around. And I reckon 85% of it is okay to be old school. But there's got to be, you've got to have those tools now that are a little bit different. So I would have told myself to be the way I am now. I threw myself into being a dad, mainly just being available whenever I needed to be available. But Vicks did the crust of it I [00:34:00] reckon now we're a better combination than ever because she's learning as well. She's at Gotcha for Life, as you know. And so am I. So I think we're better now as parents than perhaps we were as they were growing up.

Maggie Dent: [00:34:13] So your brother was kind of right, really giving you a bit of a kick in the arse.

Gus Worland: [00:34:16] Always, Always. My brother and I, when we were growing up, he left at 15, went to America because he wanted to be a screenwriter. And he came back from that trip about 20 and said, You're actually not as bad as I thought. You know, like I was just this little pain in the arse brother to him that I just wanted to be with him. And then he spent time with foster families and over there and he's just like, actually, you go, okay. And we've been really good mates ever since. So he yeah, he rings me. He's proud of me. We've got this great combination and, you know, I'm glad that he gave me that advice.

Maggie Dent: [00:34:50] And I think the other part to that advice is that I know you value and you tell dads all the time that as dads, they really matter.

Speaker5: [00:34:57] Yeah, right.

Maggie Dent: [00:34:58] They really matter. And really, that's kind of the message of this. You don't have to be a perfect dad, but you've just got to turn up.

Speaker5: [00:35:05] Show up? Yeah.

Maggie Dent: [00:35:06] And connect.

Speaker5: [00:35:07] Yep.

Maggie Dent: [00:35:07] So tell me what your Tuesday catch up message is, please, Gus, just in case.

Gus Worland: [00:35:11] Basically, every Tuesday I send out on our socials many different sort of little lines or stories, if you like. But as I say to everyone in all my talks, write out a list of all the people that are important to you and then go to work on them. Don't take those people for granted, you know? So it's a little bit of connection is key and you don't have to have that face to face with the tears running down your eyes. You can literally do it. And I did it this morning where I just asked a group of men to send a text message to someone they loved, and then let's just wait for the responses back. Now, if a man sent that to a man, there was a phone call in 30 seconds and that was.. It happens everywhere. But if it was a text message, it was like, What have you done with my husband? Yeah. Who's nicked his phone?

Maggie Dent: [00:35:51] You been drinking?

Gus Worland: [00:35:51] Yeah. Have you been drinking? I thought you were meant to be at work. All these. All the banter that comes, which is what we love. But at the end of the day, you can go home tonight and [00:36:00] say. I was asked to send a note to someone I loved, and I thought of you. It's just such a simple little thing. The text message is not for you, it's for the person that receives it. And we've got to be better at looking after those people. But dads out there, it's a huge role. But turning up is just the absolute key and connecting. And you know, especially sports dads just relax a little bit, too. Not everyone's going to be Roger Federer. Not everyone's going to be Tiger Woods. You know, like just let your kids play and find their level and just be looked back on as someone that supported whatever they did.

Maggie Dent: [00:36:34] Thanks, Gus. I think Angus would be pretty proud of what you've done.

Gus Worland: [00:36:38] Oh, well. Well, that's very nice of you to say. I was with his daughter on the weekend, and she said pretty much the same thing. Um, yeah. Yeah, I hope so.

Gus Worland: [00:36:50] Thanks, Maggie.

Maggie Dent: [00:36:54] Gus Worland, founder of Gotcha for Life and co-host of Triple M's Rush Hour. Talking to Gus was so interesting. So let's grab a few of his suggestions and ideas for our good enough dad checklist.

Maggie Dent: [00:37:14] The first one is I think it's great for us to realise that you don't always have all the answers. It's okay not to have all the answers and that sometimes we work with our kids to help find possible solutions and answers.

Maggie Dent: [00:37:30] The second one. Co-parenting can be really hard at times, and it's really important to fight hard to preserve the team because that helps your kids in their relationships later in life. And it's absolutely okay to seek some help when things get bumpy.

Gus Worland: [00:37:50] And the third one. That was the one that Gus said about making it easy for your kids to come to you. Good, bad or otherwise. By [00:38:00] really listening to them and then again being available so that they know that there's somebody who can be a safe base for them no matter what life throws at them. I'm Maggie Dent and this is The Good Enough Dad. Follow us on the LiSTNR app or wherever you get your podcasts.